

# DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **INMATES VOLUNTEER TO HELP IDITAROD, PROVIDE CARE FOR DROPPED DOGS**

(JUNEAU) – Staff and inmates at Hiland Mountain/Meadow Creek Correctional Centers in Eagle River have again volunteered to care for sled dogs dropped from teams competing in the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race, Superintendent Dean Marshall said.

Hiland Mountain/Meadow Creek has become an important link in maintaining the highest standards of dog care demanded by the Iditarod Trail Committee. Mushers competing in the race frequently remove dogs from their teams at checkpoints. Dogs dropped before the midway point of the race are returned to Anchorage by air, and then transported to Hiland Mountain where they are cared for until their owners retrieve them.

The volunteer dog handlers consist of minimum custody inmate volunteers working in teams. The volunteer crew logs in and tags each dog brought in, making note of medications and any veterinary treatment that might be required. The crew then makes sure each dog has water, food and clean straw bedding.

This year a record 44 inmates have volunteered, Supt. Marshall said. Dog food and straw is provided by the Iditarod Trail Committee.

The dog care project began in 1974 under the direction of then-deputy superintendent Dan Reynolds, who was also a dog musher. In 2004, the facility cared for about 300 dogs with a single day record of 80 dogs.

“The dogs also receive a lot of love and attention,” said commissioner Marc Antrim. “The staff at Hiland Mountain does an excellent job with this program. Dogs are well-cared-for and inmates have an opportunity to give something back to the community.”