Connecting the community that supports the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail
It’s been a full three years since we launched the Continental Divide Trail Coalition (CDTC). When we launched the Coalition, we did so because we knew we couldn’t let the CDT fall on our watch. That a conservation legacy so rich was worth saving and fighting for, and ensuring that no one ever doubted it was in the public’s best interest to protect the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail.

And, it has been an amazing three years. Today we are recognized as the lead national partner working on behalf of the CDT by our Federal Agency partners. We have made huge strides in uniting all the voices of those who love, care, steward, enjoy, and wish to see the CDT flourish. Since 2012, our membership has grown from 25 to over 1200 members, our annual budget from $4,000 to over $225,000; our volunteer hours have grown from 5,913 to over 14,600 hours, and their value from $131,000 and $340,000 respectively. All combined, that equals 40,488 hours of volunteer labor valued at $922,000. And that’s just the work we have done. Combined with the work of our partners in 2015 alone totals 45,830 hours valued at $1,057,298 dollars!!!

Working together, the CDT Community and its Federal Agency partners have moved protection of the CDT from 75% to 95% protected, and our work this fall to reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) paid off. The LWCF was not only included in the 2016 President’s Budget, but we secured the $2.7 million needed to purchase 5,000 acres of land that will help us close the gap on the CDT and eliminate the road walk between Pie Town and Grants, NM! At the same time, the recognition, reach and support of the CDT continue to grow beyond our wildest dreams.

We wish to dedicate this issue of our newsletter to all of you. For helping us accomplish big things in a short amount of time. We are proud of what we have accomplished to date on behalf of the CDT, and that because of these accomplishments, more people than ever before are able to experience the natural, cultural, historical, and even spiritual significance of the CDT.

President’s Letter
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South Fork, Colorado Designated the First Continental Divide Trail Community in Colorado

On November 12, 2015, the Continental Divide Trail Coalition (CDTC) and town leaders from South Fork, CO designated the community as the first Continental Divide Trail Community in Colorado with a proclamation signing by the Mayor of Town of South Fork, Jerry Hixson and CDTC Executive Director Teresa Martinez.

The Continental Divide Trail Community designation program is program of the Continental Divide Trail Coalition that seeks benefit the Communities along the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDT). Launched in 2013, this program recognizes communities for their part in promoting awareness of the CDT as an important national and local resource. Towns, counties and communities along the CDTC’s corridor are considered assets by CDT travelers, and many of these towns act as good friends and neighbors to the Trail.

Designation as a Continental Divide Trail Community and participation in the program is aimed to:

• Engage community citizens, Trail visitors and stewards
• Thank communities for their decades of service to hikers
• Act as a catalyst for enhancing sustainable economic development
• Aid local municipalities and regional areas with conservation planning
• Help local community members see the Trail as a resource and asset

“The Continental Divide Trail Coalition is proud to celebrate communities that are helping to protect and promote the Continental Divide Trail,” stated Teresa Martinez, Director of the Continental Divide Trail Coalition. “These new partnerships will increase local stewardship of public lands, support community initiatives for sustainable economic development and conservation planning as well as support healthy lifestyles for community citizens.”

“South Fork recognizes the importance of community support for CDT hikers and what it means to those who have been on the trail. We are proud to be the First Colorado CDT Gateway Community and look forward to a long and symbiotic relationship with the CDTC and CDT hikers,” said Town of South Fork Trustee Rodney Reed.

The Town of South Fork approved the designation on Thursday November 12, 2015. The official ceremony will be held on July 31, 2016 in the town of South Fork. The designation ceremony will take place at the Town Hall and a reception at Ramone’s Mexican Restaurant will follow. During the ceremony, the Town of South Fork will celebrate their Continental Divide Trail Gateway Community designation and welcome travelers in the midst of hiking over 3,000 miles along the Continental Divide, those who enjoy shorter sections of the CDT, as well as local citizens who use the iconic Trail.
CDTC Accomplishments in 2015

Achievements

Aside from the day-to-day operations of the organization, CDTC made huge strides in 2015 with reaching even more individuals through events like the First Annual CDT Rockies Ruck, held in March of 2015. This event drew 85 CDT enthusiasts together for one day to learn techniques and skills necessary for a successfully long-distance experience on the CDT. In 2016 we expect over 200 people in attendance.

In addition, CDTC once again operated the Southern Terminus Shuttle and delivered over 257 people to the Southern Terminus of the CDT to begin long distance hikes on the CDT. CDTC reports that only 35-40% of these individuals completed successful thru hikes for one reason or another.

CDTC hosted 12 events throughout the 2015 fiscal year and reached over 1230 people with exciting and interesting presentations on the CDT and other long distance hiking trails.

CDTC continues to manage the GIS data in support of the US Forest Service. In addition GIS Volunteers produced maps for a new “20 Best Hikes of the CDT in CO” publication due out in Spring of 2016 in partnership with the Colorado Mountain Club; they produced maps for the new non fiction book by Mary “Speedstick” Moynihan entitled “Married to the Trail”, and produced over 2 dozen other pieces for various applications ranging from administrative meetings, to fire maps. Overall CDTC GIS Volunteers contributed over 3,304 volunteer hours in 2015 valued at $76,223.

CDTC worked with local government officials to continue support of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), including participating in the LWCF Coalition’s work to maintain awareness and build strong support amongst NM and CO delegations for the Program.

CDTC worked closely with the CDT Program Administrator to begin to define consistent management direction for Forest Planning efforts that will begin in earnest in 2016.

CDTC also applied for and “won” a $25k grant from Michelob Ultra and American Hiking Society in support of the Superior Trails Challenge. It required daily voting by CDT supporters for two months between 9/1-10/31/2015. The effort will support trail development and Trail Adopter Programs across New Mexico in 2016. The effort garnered over 54,000 votes for the CDT during the time period!

Executive Director Teresa Martinez successfully submitted an editorial on the importance of the LWCF program to the Summit Daily. The editorial was well received throughout the Trail and nationwide.

CDTC hosted a summer intern from Yale School of Forestry to help develop and author a Corridor Protection Policy for the CDT. This also helped begin the important development of Optimal Location Review processes, a desired future condition statement and other critical foundational documents for the administration and management of the CDT.

Most importantly to us at CDTC, in 2015, we have strengthened relationships with our gateway communities, our partners like the Montana Wilderness Association and Colorado Trail Foundation, and the general public, all of which are critical in order to protect and preserve the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail.

CDTC Membership grew in 2015 from 800 members to 1,235 members.

In general support of the CDTC operations, volunteers contributed 4,216 volunteer hours (valued at $97,263) in support of CDTC operations and 716 volunteer hours (valued at $16,518) in support of the administration and management of the CDT.

Total contributions by CDTC in FS Fiscal 2015 were 14,589 volunteer hours valued at $336,568.

In Comparison

In the three years of CDTC’s existence, we have made huge strides in uniting all the voices of those who love, care, steward, enjoy, and wish to see the CDT flourish. Since 2012, our membership has grown from 25 to over 1200 members, our annual budget from $4,000 to over $225,000. Since 2012, our volunteer hours have grown from 5,913 to over 14,500 hours in 2015, and their value from $131,000 and $336,000 respectively. All combined, that equals 40,488 hours of volunteer labor valued at $922,000.
CDTC will continue there support of the work necessary to help administer and manage the CDT in partnership with the USFS and looks forward to another successful year in 2016.

Gateway Community Programs

In 2015, the CDTC designated three Gateway Communities: Chama, NM; South Fork, CO; and Pagosa Springs, CO. In addition to these communities we are supporting the development of five (5) additional communities across the Trail that will become designated communities in 2016. To support this work, CDTC was awarded an AmeriCorps Vista Position through the Office of Surface Mining and Reclamation to support the Gateway Program for the next three (3) years. The position was filled in March 2016.

By the numbers

Stewardship update:

CDTC Volunteer Projects: The 2015 trail season has proved to be our most successful yet. CDTC hosted 7 projects in 5 different National Forests with the help of 73 volunteers who contributed over 2,000 hours of volunteer time to the CDT.

These volunteer projects resulted in 9.3 miles of the CDT built and maintained. Volunteer built structures to prevent erosion, restored damaged trail, installed signs and fences and built stream crossings. Highlights included:

• Installation of 3 new trailhead kiosks on the Rio Grande National Forest that were sponsored as part of the “Finding our Way” Indiegogo campaign
• An equestrian and hiker friendly turnpike over 30 feet in length constructed over Sweetwater Creek in the Wind River Range, requiring over 200 cubic yards of rock to build
• 16 New volunteers and Adopters trained in conjunction with the CDT Trail Fest/Kick off in Silver City, NM

CDTC hosted the First Annual CDT Trail Days celebration in April 2015 in Silver City, NM. This event drew over 250 people to the town to explore, celebrate and learn about the CDT and its partners. The weekend event began with a celebration, continued with a Gear and Organizational Expo, and ended with participants exploring the CDT in and around Silver City, including a trail workday.

Gateway Community Volunteers across the CDT contributed 3,056 Volunteer hours valued at $70,502.

Highlights:

Colorado Native Adopter Project/Building partnerships: In 2015, AC Golden Brewing and the Colorado Native Brew Crew, adopted a 23-mile stretch of the Continental Divide Trail, becoming the first group in Colorado to join the Trail Adopter program. The Brew Crew will be maintaining the section between Herman Gulch and Berthoud Pass, a segment that includes the headwaters for the water that ends up in the brewery’s beer. As Adopters, the Colorado Native Brew Crew’s responsibility is to complete the annual maintenance of this section of the CDT and work with CDTC to ensure the Trail remains a high quality and safe recreational experience for all users of the CDT.

On July 17-19, the Brew Crew and CDTC hosted the first volunteer project on the newly adopted segment. 15 volunteers worked on clearing and signing the trail and completing minor maintenance and repair nearby the popular Herman Gulch Trailhead. Several volunteers hiked from Berthoud pass to the group’s camp at Jones Pass, scouting and reporting on trail conditions. The crew covered over 10 miles of trail in the weekend!
Refreshments for the volunteer team were provided by AC Golden and staying true to the Colorado theme, Great Harvest Lakewood donated bread and rolls baked with CO Native Lager. The inaugural project was a great success, and the first of many to come. Cheers to the Brew Crew!

Looking ahead to 2016:

2016 should prove to be yet another exciting year for CDTC. Trail season kicked off in March with projects in the Gila National Forest, just outside of Silver City, NM. These projects are the result of the Michelob ULTRA and American Hiking Society Superior Trails Contest, where CDTC was awarded funding towards completion of the trail in the Silver City area. Another highlight of the 2016 projects will be trail reconstruction on the newly opened Knight Ridge segment near Grand Lake, CO. The trail was opened by volunteers, youth corps and USFS partners in 2015 after a multi-year closure due to over 700 downed trees. We will also be hosting our annual projects on the Carson National forest and projects throughout Colorado and Wyoming. Check out our Volunteer Guide for a listing of all of all the great ways you can get involved this year.

Photo by Mike Henrick
The Numbers, 2015  (labor and value)

Volunteers
7 Projects in 2015
• Gila National Forest
• Carson National Forest (2 projects)
• Rio Grande
• CO Native
• CO College
• Bridger Teton

Adopters
2015
1,079 hours
$24,900
119 miles adopted

General Administration
2015
4,216
$97,200

Geographic Information System (GIS)
2015
3,300 hours
$76,220

Gateway Community
2015
3,056 hours
$70,500

Trail Management
Canada
2015
716 hours
$16,500

CDTC Partnership Contributions
$1,057,298 Total Value

CDTC Volunteer Growth
New Faces at CDTC!

Last Fall CDTC was awarded an Americorp Vista Position by the Office of Surface Mining, Reclamation, and Enforcement to help us further develop and support our growing CDT Gateway Community program. This December, we hired Christy Curd as our first Vista and she will be starting her work with CDTC in February. Her position will be based in Silver City, NM which we know will help us continue to not only support our work in and across New Mexico, but trail-wide as well.

Christy Curd, Gateway Community Coordinator

Christy is a Montana native and has worked as a farm hand, a trail crew member and leader, worked with non profits helping with communication and events, and is a Wilderness First Responder. She has also worked as part of a campaign team with our partners, the Montana Wilderness Association. Her previous positions has allowed her to work in Moscow, ID, Pinedale, WY, Missoula, Big Fork and Helena, MT, and even Gaborone, Botswana. We are thrilled to bring Christy on board and hope you’ll help us welcome her to the CDTC family!

Those of you attending our 2016 CDT Trail Days and Kick Off event in Silver City, NM will get a chance to meet Christy. And any of you passing through please stop in and say hi as her office will be based out of the Visitor’s Center right in down town! A huge thank you to the community of Silver City for hosting our Vista Position and to the OSMRE for their support of our efforts!

Guthrie Alexander, Visual Information Management Specialist

CDTC has also hired Guthrie Alexander to join our staff as our Visual Information Management Specialist. Guthrie hails from Comanche, TX and has resided in Austin for the last 11 years. A University of Texas at Austin graduate in Geography and the Environment, he has been a practicing geographer for the last 7 years in the Landscape Architecture and Planning field. In 2014 he took time off and decided to hike the Pacific Crest Trail, and when he finished the hike, it further reminded him that he desperately missed the mountains. After travelling around the Western US and hiking 1,000 miles across some of our most scenic public lands, he made the decision to move to Golden, CO.

Since joining our team, Guthrie has overhauled our website and serves as our point person for trail information related materials, mapping needs, and pretty much everything else we throw at him. His hope is to help redevelop and revitalize our trail information pages and resources so that our website becomes your one stop shop for all trail information needs.

Guthrie seeking out his favorite pastime

Christy in Montana
Rachel Brown, Trail Information Specialist

Rachel is a Massachusetts native, and has an MPH in Maternal & Child Health from Boston University. Rachel has experience working in nonprofit membership & development, program planning, research, and educational outreach. She thru-hiked the Long Trail in Vermont in 2013, and in 2015 hiked approximately 3600 miles along the Arizona Trail, Continental Divide Trail, and Grand Enchantment Trail.

Chad Angell, Field Program Coordinator

Chad Angell has 9 years of experience working for multiple non-profits, managing volunteers and projects. This includes two years of National Service with an AmeriCorps program where he led teams on conservation projects in three different states building and maintaining trails, bridges and fire lines and removing invasive species. Chad recently moved to Denver, CO to be closer to the mountains and enjoys hiking and camping with his wife.

Whitney “Allgood” LaRuffa, Trail Ambassador

CDTC is excited to introduce everyone to our 2016 CDT Trail Ambassador, Whitney “Allgood” LaRuffa. Whitney began his journey along the CDT this year on April 18 at the Southern Terminus monument.

Whitney grew up in rural New Hampshire where he forged his love of the outdoors and activities such as fishing, skiing, and his true love, backpacking. His time spent in Boy Scouts helped him hone his outdoor skills as he worked his way to becoming an Eagle Scout and fueled his passion for long distance hiking.

Whitney has hiked over 6,000 miles with his K-9 companions over the years. After finding a dog on the Appalachian Trail in 1996, his life was forever changed. Whitney and his first dog Erwin (named after the trail town along the Appalachian Trail, Erwin, TN) worked on the Appalachian Trail in the 1990’s as ridge runners after their thru hike, where they provided education and support to a variety of trail users.

Whitney has hiked many long trails in the United States, but is most proud of his 2014 pioneering first thru hike of the Chinook Trail, a 293 mile route through the Columbia River Gorge in Washington and Oregon. He is also the current president of the American Long Distance Hiker’s Association –West (alda-West). When not helping others learn about hiking, you will find Whitney walking the trails around the US in need of a shower, a cold beer, and a pint of Ben and Jerry's.

Follow along his 2016 journey of the CDT here at his blog: http://thedagodiaries.com/ and we hope you enjoy his journey as much as we will!
We Won $25k from Michelob Ultra!

In December 2015, the CDT was named a ‘Superior Trail’ and awarded $25,000 to help complete the Trail in the Land of Enchantment.

After two long months of daily voting, in September and October, supporters of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDT) received the news they had waited to hear: the CDT will receive one (1) of two (2) $25,000 grants being awarded by Michelob ULTRA through its Superior Trails program. Working with the American Hiking Society (AHS), Michelob ULTRA identified 10 deserving trails across the country and gave their supporters the chance to vote for which sites they’d like to see improved, maintained and protected. One of these selected Trails was the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDT) that would help support two trail completion projects and efforts near the communities of Silver City and Chama, New Mexico.

“We know that Michelob ULTRA drinkers are active, outdoor adventurists who love to celebrate a great journey with a great beer,” said Edison Yu, Vice President, Michelob ULTRA. “Through our partnership with the American Hiking Society, we’ll be able to spruce up two scenic trails in order to encourage more of these people to get outside and create some superior moments of their own.”

“American Hiking Society’s mission is to promote and protect the places where Americans love to hike and, by partnering with Michelob ULTRA for Superior Trails, we’ll be accomplishing exactly this,” added Gregory Miller, president, American Hiking Society. “Our National Trail Fund has worked on more than 150 trail projects across the country since 1998 to make America’s trails superior, which is made possible by incredible partners like Michelob ULTRA.”

From Sept. 1 through Oct. 31, people voted daily for their favorite trails. At the end of the voting period the Ice Age Trail Alliance, the lead national partner for the Ice Age national Scenic Trail, and the Continental Divide Trail Coalition, the lead national partner for the CDT held the top two vote tallies with 54,210 and 52,471 respectively and were awarded the two $25,000 grants.

“The CDT Community is excited to have the chance to showcase the amazing landscapes, cultures and communities of New Mexico. As one of the grant recipients, we are extremely grateful to Michelob Ultra and AHS for the grant program and that we were able to mobilize our supporters the way we did. We hope our efforts shared our entire community’s passion for the CDT. We are thrilled to be able to use this opportunity to give back to the people of New Mexico who have been such amazing stewards, hosts and supporters of the CDT in the Land of Enchantment” shared Teresa Martinez, Executive Director of the Continental Divide Trail Coalition. “This also helps us to celebrate the great strides we have made across the entire trail to move from 75% to 95% complete and help raise awareness of how folks can join in the movement to finish this Trail not only in New Mexico but across it’s entire length.”

About Anheuser-Busch

For more than 160 years, Anheuser-Busch and its world-class brewmasters have carried on a legacy of brewing America’s most-popular beers. Starting with the finest ingredients sourced from Anheuser-Busch’s family of growers, every batch is crafted using the same exacting standards and time-honored traditions passed down through generations of proud Anheuser-Busch brewmasters and employees. Best known for its fine American-style lagers, Budweiser and Bud Light, the company’s beers lead numerous beer segments and combined hold 47.2 percent share of the U.S. beer market. Anheuser-Busch is the U.S. arm of Anheuser-Busch InBev and operates 14 local breweries, 17 distributorships and 23 agricultural and packaging facilities across the United States, representing a capital investment of more than $15.5 billion. Its flagship brewery remains in St. Louis, Mo., and is among the global company’s largest and most technologically capable breweries. Visitor and special brewmaster tours are available at its St. Louis and four other Anheuser-Busch breweries. For more information, visit www.anheuser-busch.com.

About the American Hiking Society

Founded in 1976, American Hiking Society is the only national, recreation-based nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting and protecting America’s hiking trails, their surrounding natural areas and the hiking experience. To learn more about American Hiking Society and its mission and programs, please visit www.AmericanHiking.org or call (301) 565-6704 or visit us on Facebook https://www.facebook.com/AmericanHiking
Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, aka The CDT

**BASICS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td>About 3,100 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Terminus</td>
<td>Canadian Border, Glacier National Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Terminus</td>
<td>Mexican Border, Big Hatchets Wilderness Conservation Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest Point</td>
<td>Gray’s Peak, Colorado at 14,270 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowest Point</td>
<td>Waterton Lake, in Glacier National Park at 4,200 feet</td>
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<tr>
<td>States it Travels through</td>
<td>Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, &amp; New Mexico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses</td>
<td>Hiking, horseback riding, cross country skiing, hunting, sight seeing, wildlife watching, contemplation, solitude and community.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FACTS**

| Protection | The CDT was designated as a National Scenic Trail in 1978 by the Congressional oversight Committee of the National Trails System. |
| Thru Hikers | In 2016 we estimate 250 people will attempt an end to end continuous thru hike of the CDT each year. The average time to complete it is six months, averaging 17 miles per day. |
| Stand Alone | The CDT is the highest and most remote of the National Scenic Trails. It is also the longest of the Triple Crown Trails that include the Appalachian and Pacific Crest Trails. |
| Longest Roadless Section | Weminuche Wilderness, Colorado |
| Founded by | Benton MacKaye and members of the Rocky Mountain Trail Association and the Colorado Mountain Club originally developed the concept of the CDT. Jim Wolf and the Continental Divide Trail Society built upon their work and helped ensure the CDT was included in the 1978 National Trails System Act. |
| First thru hike | David Maceyka and a small group documented the first hike of the CDT in the 1930’s. |
Original Name: The Blue Can Trail. Named for the founders who first walked the Trail, marking their path with blue cans nailed to trees.

Proposed to Congress: 1966

Designated: 1978

Sources: Continental Divide Trail Coalition, USFS

**INCLUDES**

- 25 National Forests
- 21 wilderness areas
- 3 National Parks
- 1 National Monument
- 8 Bureau of Land Management resource areas

The Hike:

- Best place/time to start:
  - Northbound: March or April from Mexico/New Mexico Border
  - Southbound: June from the Montana/Canada border
- Both directions have challenges related to weather and terrain.
- Most people who travel Northbound end up “flip flopping” along the way to find best travel conditions, while most South bounders have the best chance of a continuous thru hike.

Permits: There isn’t a broad permit for the entire CDT, but there are separate ones for Glacier National Park, Yellowstone National Park, Rocky Mountain National Park, and South San Juan and Weminuche Wilderness areas.

Wildlife: Mountain lions, grizzly bears, elk, rattlesnakes, Moose, wolves, javelinas – name it and you will probably see it along the CDT.

Challenge and Risks: Lightning, moving water, avalanche, hypothermia, heat exhaustion and heat stroke, Giardiasis, altitude, snow and sun blindness, wildlife and human error can all play into the chances of a successful “thru-hike” along the Trail.
You don’t always get to decide, when you are on the divide.

Rain or shine, we have you covered under the CDTC Mont-Bell Umbrella

Announcing a CDTC exclusive collaboration with Mont-Bell. The re-designed 2016 CDTC Branded Mont-Bell Umbrella.
An Adopter Story

by Bob Gosney

I became a trail maintainer in 1999 and now Adopt a CDT Segment in the Gila National Forest. “My” trail is about 9 miles long starting at the trailhead on forest road 506 and runs mostly east to route 15 just north of the town of Pinos Altos. I live about halfway and 600 yards from the trail. The trailhead at 506 is where the critical decision of going the Gila river route or the official Black Range route is made. I have helped out on various parts of the trail in New Mexico at the Mexico border and near Beaverhead.

I tend to the trail a little differently than most. Because I frequently hike around this area I am regularly on parts of the trail. I will stop and do maintenance for 1-3 hours. I cover the entire trail at least 2/year and spend 20-25 hours/year. I often have one of my grandchildren or house guests accompany me. Some of my grandchildren have helped me many times over the 16 years and feel it is "their" trail! House guests get a kick out of learning about and hiking a little part of the CDT.

Most of the effort is to cut brush/limbs, cut fallen trees, replace signs/cairns, reduce erosion, and improve ease of navigation. It is a popular trail for hikers, horse riders and bikers that live around Silver City. I enjoy running into the users and especially the end-to-end hikers.
CDTC Partnership with the Montana Wilderness Association

CDTC establishes strong community-based relationships through activities that support the construction, maintenance and support of the CDT. We engage a wide audience of volunteers, supporters, and partners in an on-going process that will inform the work and the priorities of CDTC as the organization evolves. We feel that building stronger local relationships with communities adjacent to the Trail and involving volunteers on the ground is the most powerful way to build our movement and preserve and protect the CDT. This includes municipalities, “gateway communities,” state and federal governments, public entities, and tribal communities and governments. While we always look outward to build a diverse and broad coalition of supporters for the Trail, we are mindful of our closest allies, including but not limited to: the federal and state agencies whom we depend on for support and guidance; the Trail’s users, particularly hikers and equestrians; and the volunteer stewardship organizations along the trail who have adopted many sections of the CDT as their own and work independently with local land managers to implement projects. Through building this network of individuals, groups, and local communities, we will build a strong and healthy voice for the CDT that will help promote the Vision for the CDT and ensure it remains a national landmark for generations to come.

One of our most effective partners is Montana Wilderness Association’s CDT Montana program. And we’d like to highlight and thank them for all of their efforts over the past 4 years. CDT Montana was able to step in when the former CDT Alliance closed its doors and ensured that the progress achieved in Montana was not hindered by the shifts on the National level. They have been the heroes of the CDT in the northern region ever since. CDTC is proud to be working with MWA and knows that our partnership strengthens the voice for the CDT not just in Montana, but Trailwide!

MWA’s CDT Montana Program staff of John Gatchell, Shannon Freix, Zuri Morena, and Meg Killen have been working hard to keep volunteers engaged and the Trail protected. Sonny Mazullo describes the work of CDT Montana as “the boots on the ground branch of Montana Wilderness Association. Trail stewardship projects on the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail take volunteers into some of Montana’s most cherished landscapes while helping complete and maintain one of our nation’s longest mountain trails. Whether it is new trail construction, routine drainage maintenance or structure installation, our volunteers put sweat equity back into trails on the public lands which make Montana such a special place to live.

“The hard work and dedication of our volunteers is indicative of how important our public lands are to our identity as Montanans and Americans. Since I started with CDT Montana in 2014, I’ve worked with volunteers from all walks of life- retired veterans from across the country, rugged cowgirls and packers from local Back Country Horsemen of America chapters, college students, tribal youth groups and volunteers who come from Europe to experience Montana’s vastness and beauty. This diverse cast of characters choose to spend their vacation time digging dirt in the rain, snow and sleet rather than lounge on a beach with an umbrella in their drink. It’s hard not to be inspired by their self-less passion. Every swing of their pulaski and every load packed into the Wilderness is a yes vote for improving trail access and keeping public lands in public hands.”

In the words of volunteer Tim Wenthe of Livingston, MT: “I have learned that a diversity of people enjoy wilderness, for a diversity of reasons. For example: volunteering with
Backcountry Horsemen has given me a new appreciation for the quality of trail required for pack animals; volunteering alongside a trapper has provided impetus to rethink my adamant opposition to public lands trapping. After all, if different groups can all agree that wilderness is mere scenery if devoid of wildlife, including predators, then wilderness will survive."

In 2015 CDT Montana had the following accomplishments:

• 159 volunteers
• Volunteers from England, Austria, Canada
• Built 270 feet of turnpike
• Installed 4 new trail head kiosks outside Anaconda Pintler Wilderness
• Built 20 feet of rock crib wall
• Built 25’ long x 5’ wide log crib wall
• Rescued 2 lost dogs
• Built 2 miles of new trail
• Brushed 25 miles of trail
• Cooked 2,625 camp meals

Wanna work on the CDT? You’re in luck! MWA has Summer openings and is looking for CDT Co-Leader positions

Here’s the [website](#) with a detailed job description.

**CDT Montana Volunteer Construction Projects**

In 2016, Montana Wilderness Association is thrilled to be hosting a full summer of volunteer trail stewardship projects. They’ll be facilitating 15 projects this summer, including backcountry projects in Glacier NP, the Anaconda Pintler Wilderness and Yellowstone NP. They’ll also be adding new miles to the CDT in Idaho near Lemhi Pass and Salmon!

Project registration is now live! Make sure to visit [wildmontana.org/our-work/stewarding-the-cdt/](http://wildmontana.org/our-work/stewarding-the-cdt/) this Spring and register for a trail project to help complete and maintain the CDT in Montana and Idaho! Make sure the register early- all our projects were filled to capacity last summer.
Corporate Program Update

by Peter Sustr

The Continental Divide Trail has seen huge growth and awareness over the past year with the addition of many new sponsors, great events and a new exciting book. We are excited to have joined the Thru Hiker Syndicate, a group of brands that sponsors hikers on all 3 of the major trails. This year the Thru Hiker Syndicate as expanded to include the CDT and several hikers are currently making their way on the trail. Brands such as Vasque, Darn Tough, Osprey and Leki have joined forces to provide product for these hikers tackling the trail. We wish those hikers a great and successful time on the trail.

In January, the CDTC was honored to host Scott Jurek, who broke the speed record for the fasted supported time on the Appalachian Trail. This was his first event in Colorado to talk about his extraordinary accomplishment. With over 200 attendee’s it was a great nice of first hand experience, photo’s and videos showing how he accomplished this feat. Followed by a long Q & A, the audience got to have all their questions answered and then a autograph and picture with Scott. Thank you Scott for such a great talk.

In April, we hosted our Second Annual CDT Trail days in Silver City, New Mexico with our title sponsor Vasque. We had wonderful attendance for dozens of sponsors including the Thru hiker syndicate, local organizations and businesses. All of the hikers enjoyed educational talks, round table discussions for former thru hikers and skill building classes for their upcoming journey. The local community enjoyed hosting us and we look forward to the 3rd annual event scheduled for April 21-23rd 2017.

In May we released a new book, 20 best hikes on the CDT that features hikes along the CDT in Colorado. It’s a collection of hikes from easy to hard that allows everyone to get a taste of what the CDT is all about. Look for dates for book signings with lead contributor Liz “Snorkel” Thomas.

It’s exciting times at the CDTC and we look forward to engaging more brands with the CDTC, strengthening our relationships with sponsors and you, our beloved tribe of supporters. Also, don’t forget to support the CDTC with the purchase of one of our brand Mont-Bell umbrellas for only $50, all money goes directly back to our organization.

God speed and safe travels!

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CDT Montana is a trail stewardship program with the Montana Wilderness Association dedicated to helping complete the Continental Divide Trail on the northern portion of the trail with the help of partners, dedicated volunteers and land agencies. Check out more about CDT Montana online or donate to our efforts at cdtmontana.org.
Are you a CDT thru hiker?

Section hikers and thru hikers who complete the CDT can report their journey to the Continental Divide Trail Coalition by filling out the Continental Divide Trail Completion Form. Those who complete the CDT can report their adventure along the CDT will be added to our official completion list and will receive a certificate of recognition and a CDT Patch. Also, each year’s thru hiker roster is published in the Passages newsletter. In order to be included in the magazine, regardless of the year of completion, applications must be sent to CDTC by December 31st of the current year.

Link to Completion Form

Join or renew your CDTC membership for $100 or more between June 15th and September 15th and receive a pair of CDT socks and chocolate from our partners Salazon Chocolate and Point 6 socks!
Lessons Learned from a CDT ThruHike

by Renee Patrick, 2015 CDTC Trail Ambassador

“If the Pacific Crest Trail is a purring kitten, then the Appalachian Trail is an angry house cat that still has its claws, and the Continental Divide Trail is a mountain lion about to take your face off with one wrong move.” Day 3 on the CDT.

Thruhiking the Continental Divide Trail (CDT) has always been a difficult endeavor. Yes, the trail isn’t complete and crosses terrain that is strenuous and/or paved. Yes, the weather can throw down the gauntlet, and the isolation and remote conditions can gnaw into the psyche of even the most stalwart of hikers. But the reward for pushing through all the snow and rain and loneliness is well worth it. For me the challenge of completing a CDT thru-hike was so much bigger than merely walking across the country.

My 2015 thru-hike came many years after my other long trail adventures: it had been 13 years since completing the Appalachian Trail, and 9 years since finishing the Pacific Crest Trail. Prior to setting foot on the CDT this past April, I’ll be the first to admit I had doubts. Could my almost 40 year old body handle the miles? Could I spend the whole hike solo if I didn’t find others to hike with? Could I handle the harsh conditions that are often found on the Divide?

Now that I’m at the reflection stage of the hike I know the answers, and after reading back through my daily journal I am able to look back at a few things I learned, or was reminded of, along the way.

It’s ok to be Uncomfortable

“I was going to town! Now I know I just left Pie Town, but there are towns where you have to wash your hair in a trickle of warm water with dish soap, and there are towns with hotel hot tubs, Denny’s restaurants, and just about any kind of fried food imaginable.” Day 24

I knew going into the hike that big goals like walking across the country can be scary, and putting yourself in uncomfortable situations is a great way to grow. The CDT is definitely scary and uncomfortable, but I knew that by trusting in my abilities that I could handle what the trail could serve up and possibly learn a thing or two.

I had moments on the trail where I knew for a fact that there were no other thruhikers within a few days ahead or behind me. The isolation is real, and at times I was nervous about the implications of needing help in such situations. So I would dig deep, remind myself this level of solitude is quite unique in our connected/populated world, and try to revel in the freedom of hiking alone... sometimes.

“Getting grumpy when you are hiking by yourself really doesn’t mean much. If you have no one to complain to, what’s the point? This is the second day in a row that I haven’t seen anyone, and all I wanted to do was bitch about the wind and terrain (yes the same terrain I loved this morning).”

I had to be my own cheerleader and companion, and trust myself to make the right decisions. Sometimes that meant going low, bypassing a summit, or carrying extra water. It usually came down to making safe, smart decisions.

Oh yes, being uncomfortable can also mean the simplest pleasures are magnified. “The suffering was expected and highlighted every small pleasure to an excruciating degree. Being dry was a luxury. Warm? Even better. Food took on a mythical status and prior to getting to each town stop I would daydream about what I would stuff in my face.”

Self Reliance leads to Flexibility

“I’m just going to go ahead and not worry about it.” Words of wisdom from fellow thru hiker Pimp Limp

I was prepared to be make decisions on the ground. A lot of the CDT is an unknown until you are in the middle of freaking nowhere and need to decide how to get up that mountain without hurting yourself. I liked to call the CDT the PhD of hiking trails because often I had to draw on other hiking/backcountry experiences to make the right decisions. That came in the form of very little advance planning.

The CDT is a trail with hundreds of alternates, I knew trying to decide which routes to take as I was packing my boxes and splitting up my maps would be next to impossible. Instead I sent myself all the materials I would
need to make those decisions on the ground and let the trial and weather and my body decided which way I would go. And I knew I could trust myself to make those decisions because I had spent most of my adult life in outdoor/backcountry environment. I could draw on those experiences.

Here’s a journal excerpt from one particular day that I couldn’t plan for after burning myself in a stove accident: “As with my lost sunglasses, burned up thermarest, patched but trashy repair jobs on my tarp and down jacket, burned tyvek, broken watch, and lost handkerchief, I swear I thought it was a decent day. Oh and I shouldn’t forget needing to keep the blisters on my fingers, hands, and arms clean and uninfected.” For all intents and purposes it was a disaster of a day, even though I didn’t realize it until my end of the day tally. But instead of throwing in the towel and hiking out on the nearest road, I patched what I could, cleaned the blisters best I knew how, evaluated my health and safety of continuing to hike to the next town, and just did it.

Snow and storms were a major stressor this year, but again, having backcountry shoulder season and winter experience came in handy when I had to deal with the wettest spring New Mexico, Colorado, and Wyoming had on record. I was prepared; my gear was prepared. Gortex socks, gaiters, and pants came in handy in Colorado. Rain mittens, extra trash bags, and an umbrella helped keep me dry in the storms, and shoe bindings on touring skis kept me on top of the snow instead of slogging through it. If you think you might encounter snow on your hike, go hike in the snow. If you are worried about staying dry in a rainstorm, go hike in a rain storm. I believe having faced these conditions before gave me an advantage, especially when faced with how to keep myself safe out there as a solo hiker. It’s not really an option to go in unprepared when the stakes are as high as they can be on the CDT.

This is my Vacation

“Two weeks on the trail, 200 miles, and I can’t imagine being anywhere else. Sleeping when the sun goes down, waking just before the day begins...it’s as if I’ve been transported to an alternate universe where time takes on a different pace. Two weeks back in Bend pass quickly...the routine of the everyday has certain qualities that are blissfully absent out here. No bills to pay, no obligations other than to my feet and stomach. I’ve already lived a lifetime in these two weeks, and the prospect of 45 more months of this is pretty exhilarating.” After a soak in the Gila Hotsprings, NM

At the heart of my 160 days on the CDT was the fact that this was my vacation. It had been years since I had taken any real time off of my job; I was working a deskbound, weekend warrior existence, and come rain or snow, I was determined to enjoy my thru hike.

How an experience is framed can mean all the difference. Yes, completing the CDT this year would mean earning my triple crown. Completing the CDT would mean I can hike through challenging conditions, but really, hiking the CDT meant I could do what I enjoy doing more than almost anything: backpacking long distances in the backcountry.

Having that as my main goal changed the way I hiked. I enjoyed getting to camp early and reading. I took lots of zeros and neros because I wanted to. I connected with friends I hadn’t seen in years, and took the time to meet new people and make new friends. I carried a french press coffee mug because I wanted to enjoy a great cup of hot coffee in the mornings, and slept on an inflatable pillow because I could. Why not? It’s my vacation!

Put one Step in Front of the Other

“One step at a time” repeated over and over and over on my approach to the 14er Grays Peak, CO

Due to the various challenges I would face (sometimes daily, sometimes hourly, sometimes even by the minute) I found it essential to focus on one step at a time. I had to be completely present in those times, or would risk missing an important turn, falling off a mountain, or getting swept away in a river. Each step needed to be intentional.

During my second week on the trail I received this message loud and clear. Navigating what might have been my 60th river crossing of the day in the Gila River, I found myself in a foul mood. I had wet feet with the promise of continued wet feet. I started to wish I was out of the river canyon and walking on dry ground when Woosh! I slipped and fell in the river. Yes, I was crossing a slippery, mossy rock shelf, but instead of paying attention to my footing,
I was dreaming of walking on dry ground until the Gila slapped me in the face. It was a very clear message: “Pay attention.”

When I was picking my way across the knife’s edge between Edwards Mountain and Gray’s Peak in Colorado I simply couldn’t let my mind wander. The ridge was so steep and the consequences of one wrong step so severe, I had to be 100% present. In fact I even muttered the mantra, “One step at a time,” to keep myself calm and on track.

Each day required focus, and this little tidbit from my journal speaks to that: “The consequences are immense with one mistake out here, I’m confident in my abilities, but I’ve never been on a trail with this many challenges. Today, the wind.”

**What is in my Control?**

“I had several plans for the day and my plans had plans. But really who can plan on the CDT? What I had for the day were vague ideas of what I would do if certain conditions existed...and back up ideas. Plans on the CDT are for suckers.” On whether I would continue skiing the divide to Spring Creek Pass

I am normally not an anxious person, but at times had a lot of anxiety on the trail and had to find a way to deal with it. Much of the stress came in the form of how to properly deal with sketchy conditions.

In mid July I was racing across a 10 mile section of above-treeline trail towards Berthoud Pass as storm clouds threatened to unleash their fury. At 11:30 in the morning 15 people were hit by lightning a short distance from where I was hiking. I descended the ridge that day at 1:30 pm, well after the recommended noon hour on storm days in Colorado. The next day of hiking looked to be another long section above treeline with the continued storm cycle, and I really didn’t want to go back up there. I started stressing out, so much so that it was manifesting in an upset stomach and feelings of panic. After a calming phone conversation with my boyfriend, he reminded me of what I had forgotten. What is in my control? Can I control when and where the lightning will strike? No. Can I control the fact that I would need to hike 25+ miles tomorrow, primarily above treeline? Turns out I could. I had already needed to find alternates around a very avalanche prone section in the San Juans; I could find an alternate around my current problem too. I pieced together a series of roads to bypass the high country...an exercise that was as much for my peace of mind as it was for not getting caught in a lightning storm above treeline. The decision helped remind myself of what was in my control, and that it was my hike to hike.

But it wasn’t always easy to make those decisions: “I left the mountains. Amid some self-berating about taking the easy way out and not rising to the navigational challenge of the trail ahead, was a deep sense of relief. I would be safe today. And tomorrow. I would get myself out of these mountains safely and not get caught in a potentially dangerous situation of hiking through the terrain ahead alone.”

**Readjustment is Hard**

Thru hiking the CDT has been a goal for a long time. Completing the hike felt amazing, but was soon followed by a gaping hole where that goal had been. What now? Fortunately I live in a community with dozens of thru-hikers who understood that hole, and as I was struggling with the absence of what had consumed so much of my time and energy over the past few years, they reminded me it was ok. It was ok to feel a bit lost; it was ok to be unsure of my next steps. I needed to give myself permission to struggle.

Ultimately what these past few months have highlighted is my desire to have another goal. It’s time to dream up something scary to do. Something I’m not sure I can do. But I know this much, I’m capable of so much more now that I’ve hiked the CDT.
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http://www.continentaldividetrail.org/get-involved/join-2/

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1972
Eric Ryback

1977
David O’Dell

1978
Nancy “Mile-A-Minute” Andujar
Jean Ella
Lynne Wisehart

2002
Michelle “Shell” Ellinwood
Bob “Dr. Bob” Ellinwood
Tim “Camel/Starrman” Hart
Robert “Shy” Sylvester
Pete “Smokey Pete” Schlott
Joseph “Joe/Joseph” Santiago

2004
Jackie “Yogi” McDonnell
David “Joe Moon” Wynn

2005
Clifford “Cliffhanger” Hardin
At “Learned” Learned

2006
Shawn “Pepper” Forry
Lawton “Disco” Grinther
Felicia “P.O.D. Hermosilla
The Lewis Family (Bobby, Natalie, Cody, Jessie
and their two burros Wellstone and Pingora,
and their dog Deso)
Paul “Mags” Magnanti

2008
Brian Miller
Barry “Cubby” King
Julie “Boston” Obear
2009
Dylan Carlson
Jacob “Don’t Panic” Down

2010
jack “Found” Haskel
Phillip “Nowhere Man” Hough
Katie “Wing it” Howe
Deb “Walking Carrot” Hunsicker
Avelino “Makai” Tamayo

2011
Drew “Abear” Hebert
Kevin “Fandango” Jacobs
Brian “Gadget” Lewis
Ben “Smooth” Newkirk
Scott “Voyager” Piddington
Mary “Speedstick” Moynhian
Kim “SOL” Geisreiter

2012
Kaitlin “Jetpack” Allen
Elaine “Brazil Nut” Bissonno
James C. “Boat” Boatwright
Sarah “Coyote” Holt
Nancy “Why Not” Huber
Shane “Jester” O’Donnell
Richard “Handlebar” Ostheimer

2013
Meredith “Ninja” Altland
Phoebe “Slam!” Andujar
Beau “puck” Baker
Dain “Dain” Bray
Elisabeth “LoveNote” Chaplin
Ryan “the Tourist” Choi
Eric “Balls” Gjonnes
Reed “Sunshine” Gjonnes
Thomas “Uncle Tom” Jamrong
John “Papa Smurf” Klebes
Jeremy “Qball” Marble
Janie “Not Yet” Faucette Moore
Randy “Macon Tracks” Moore
Hans “Norm!” Rudi Praller
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Erin “Wired” Saver
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William “Estero” Stephens
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Brian “Speed Bump” Miracle
Kevin Michael “Aqua Man” Hall
Masafumi “Masa” Saito
John “Sycamore” Hildebrand
Julie “Stopwatch” Urbanski
Matthew “Optmist” Urbanski

2014
Nicolas “Lorax” Roman
Bill “momento” Eason
Detlef “Hamburger” Körner
Phil “Soulshine” Violette
Karen “Birdy” Mansfield
Anne “stride” Tully
Cathe “Pounce” Neuberger
Spencer “Mismatch” Marple
Thomas “Rattlebee” Schiegg
Daniel “cloudwalker” Liu
William “Opa” Dewar
William A. “yoyo” Martin
John W. “No Trace” Hahn
Susan “Unbreakable” Hahn
Tim “Oops” Gueterslo
Suzanne “Alien” Goulet

2015
Lia “NomNom” Adair
Jason “Scallywag” Bordash
Josiah “MeHap” Cilladi
Grady “Fun Size” Clawson
Brendan “K-2” Curtin
Sue Dangaard
Ken “Lion King” Dawson
Gerald “Natty” Fauret
Andrew “Crosby” Frei
Patrick Force
Mark “Messed Up” Garrison
Maria “LaLa” Gaylord
Sean “Rest Stop” Gregor
Jay “Stabby McNeckbeard” Gregory
Craig “Restless Wind” Hall
Youshi “Wonderer” Kasai
Barney “Scout” Mann
Patrick “Kramers” Mcllvena
Lucy “Mountain Spice” Parker
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Mark “Mark Trail” Perschel
Patrick Pondl
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Mandy Redpath
Holly “Ridgerunner” Rich
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