CONGRESSIONAL REPORT

CONTINENTAL DIVIDE TRAIL COALITION

FEBRUARY 2018
www.continentaldividetrail.org
The Continental Divide Trail climbs and descends along the Rocky Mountains from Canada to Mexico, traversing 3,100 miles of America's most dramatic and wild backcountry across the Continental Divide, the backbone of America. For more information visit www.continentaldividetrail.org

THE FACTS:

- **1966**: The Continental Divide Trail is Proposed to Congress.
- **1978**: Designated as a National Scenic Trail by the National Parks and Recreation Act, which amended National Trails System Act.
- **2009**: Continental Divide Trail Comprehensive Management Plan is amended.

- **3100** Miles in total
- **2150** Miles across 20 National Forests
- **381** Miles across 13 BLM Field Offices
- **279** Miles across 4 National Park Service Units
- **275** Miles across State and Private Land

VOLUNTEERS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Volunteers, youth crews and other partners have been instrumental in helping to build and maintain the trail:

- **589,639** Volunteer Hours Donated Since 1995
- **$9.7M** Value of Donated Labor
Since 1978, there have been 10–25 attempted thru hikes every year. In 2011, approximately 50 people attempted thru hikes. The number has steadily increased to this year’s documented 220 thru hikers. Success rates have been around 75% in the past. Current success rates are about 35-40%.

The trail is to be managed as non-motorized. Approximately 24% of the trail exists on routes open to motor vehicle use, and should be relocated in the coming years.

730 MILES on MOTORIZED Routes
2350 MILES on NON-MOTORIZED Trail

Approximately 95% of the trail is located within public ownership. Land acquisitions or easements are needed to protect the remaining 5% (172 miles) of the trail corridor.

Once the trail is “complete”, the work is never done. Agency staff, partners and volunteers will continue to work tirelessly to ensure the trail is well-maintained, passable, and re-aligned as necessary in the years to come.

Highest Point:
14,270’ at Grays Peak in Colorado

6 MONTHS The average time it takes to complete a CDT thru-hike.

17 MILES Average pace/day to finish in 6 months.

APRIL When most north bound hikers start from the Mexico border.

JUNE When most southbound hikers start from Glacier National Park.
The Continental Divide Trail Coalition has taken monumental steps towards the Trail’s completion. Serving as the voice for unity in the creation of the Trail, CDTC is uniquely positioned to create and sustain the many public and private partnerships necessary for success.

Since 2012 we have completed:

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<th>Accomplishments</th>
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<tr>
<td>36 miles of new trail</td>
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<td>Signed over 300 miles of CDT</td>
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<td>Installed 5 trailheads</td>
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<td>Coordinated, trained and educated more than 1,000 volunteers</td>
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<td>Donated more than $1.6 million in volunteer labor to the CDNST</td>
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<td>Organized an Adopt-a-Trail program to maintain 500 miles of the Trail</td>
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<td>In 2017, we surveyed 71 local businesses in communities along the Trail</td>
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<tr>
<th>Volunteers worked</th>
<th>New miles of trail built</th>
<th>Events reaching</th>
<th>Members in states</th>
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<tr>
<td>348</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2281</td>
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<tr>
<td>16,942 hours</td>
<td>100’s</td>
<td>2000 people</td>
<td>50 states</td>
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<tr>
<td>valued at $439,984</td>
<td>more maintained</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>new gateway communities</td>
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<td>for a total of 10 local</td>
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<td>communities who benefit</td>
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<tr>
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<td>from the CDT</td>
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The Continental Divide Trail Coalition, in partnership with the American people, respectfully requests Congress appropriate $1.8 million specifically added to the U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service and Bureau of Land Management budgets in fiscal year 2019 to continue our work toward the completion of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail.

Permanently reauthorize and fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). LWCF’s authorization will expire in September 2018, this funding is critical to the completion of the CDT.
Continental Divide Trail Coalition

2018 Volunteer Growth

New Mexico
Five miles of trail reconstruction in the Gila National Forest and 30 miles of new trail construction near the Chama River on the Carson National Forest.

Colorado
CDTC and our National Forest partners will reconstruct 3 miles of the CDT near Herman Gulch in Central Colorado and with the Headwaters Alliance hope to build 2 miles of new Trail in the East Shore Trail Relocation project. We will also work to finalize a new CDT route near Muddy Pass.

Wyoming
CDTC will partner with Yellowstone National Park to continue Trail reconstruction efforts near Shoshone Lake. In addition, we will work with the Bridger Teton National Forest to reconstruct existing CDT near Green River Lakes.

Montana and Idaho
In 2017, CDTC hosted its first volunteer projects in Montana and Idaho and in 2018, will continue to work with various partners to continue completion of the Trail route through Montana and Idaho.

CDTC Volunteer Hours by Program

- **TRAIL ADOPTER PROGRAM (STARTED 2014)**
- **GATEWAY COMMUNITY PROGRAM (STARTED 2013)**
- **VOLUNTEER PROJECTS**
- **TRAIL MANAGEMENT**
- **GIS PROGRAM**
- **ADMINISTRATION**

2013
- Hours: 20,000
- Valued at $183,827

2014
- Hours: 15,000
- Valued at $266,856

2015
- Hours: 10,000
- Valued at $336,568

2016
- Hours: 5,000
- Valued at $440,243

2017
- Hours: 20,000
- Valued at $320,592
The Continental Divide Trail has an amazing team of partners and volunteers that help us develop and protect one of the largest conservation projects in the US. Our partners contribute many volunteer hours and raise additional private funding for trail projects along the CDT.

*Together, the future of the CDT looks bright.*
CDTC conducted a survey of 71 small business owners that shows small business owners see a strong correlation between the success and promotion of the trail and their bottom lines. The survey shows:

- 77% of small business owners say trail users spend money at their business and have had a positive impact on their business.
- 88% say that trail users spend money in their community and have a positive impact on business in general.
- 67% report seeing an increase in trail users coming through their communities.
- 42% report seeing an increase in traffic from trail users in their businesses.
- 39% report an overall increase in business in their community.
- 61% see an increase in awareness of their community as an outdoor recreation hub.

The survey also reveals that small business owners in CDT communities believe protecting their region’s natural assets will enhance local economies.

- 88% say that protecting, promoting and enhancing the Continental Divide Trail is important to the well-being of businesses, jobs and their community’s economy.
- 95% percent say that protecting, promoting and enhancing public lands in general is important to the well-being of businesses, jobs, and their community’s economy.
STONY PASS MINING CLAIMS, COLORADO
These 65 acres of mining claims lie along the Continental Divide in the heart of the San Juan Mountains in Southern Colorado. This acquisition will protect over two miles of the CDT and the co-located Colorado Trail. This area is a primary access point of the CDT/CT in the area. These parcels:

- Lie at the headwaters of the Rio Grande River, and are critical to protecting the watershed.
- Secures 65 acres of wildlife habitat, protects 2 miles of the CDNST viewshed, and protects the watershed for a Wild and Scenic River
- The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation contributed ~$68,500 towards purchase and due diligence
ABOUT THE CDT AND CDTC

In recognition of the unique scenic quality and cultural characteristics of the lands surrounding the Continental Divide, Congress designated the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDT) in 1978 and identified a 100-mile corridor straddling the divide for its placement. The vision for the CDT then and now, is to create a primitive and challenging backcountry trail on or near the Continental Divided to provide people with the opportunity to experience the natural beauty and unique qualities of the area.

The Continental Divide Trail Coalition (CDTC) is recognized by the USFS, BLM, and NPS as the 501(c)(3) national nonprofit partner in the stewardship, management, and protection of the 3,100-mile Continental Divide National Scenic Trail.

GATEWAY COMMUNITIES

Through the CDT Gateway Community Program we have designated ten communities along the CDT including one in every Trail state, with two additional communities ready to be designated in 2018.

TRAIL CONSTRUCTION

The CDNST will be located and constructed to provide the most scenic, diverse and inspiring experience, sensitive to the environment, constructed to a high quality non-motorized standard, and signed. The work varies in difficulty due to location, topography, soils and weather conditions; and determines whether volunteers, youth corps, land manager crews or private contractors perform the work.
TRAIL PLANNING
CDTC works closely with our federal partners to foster communication with the public in an effort to find the most appropriate location for the Trail. Trail planning, which includes environmental assessments, public input and review, field surveys, engineering and trail layout, is the critical first step toward building and completing the Trail. This also includes active engagement in forest planning efforts, BLM resource management planning, and National Park Service planning efforts.

PUBLIC OUTREACH AND EDUCATION
Outreach and education conducted through CDTC’s programs, website and printed materials are critical to successfully build and preserve the Trail for future generations and will result in more knowledgeable and environmentally and socially responsible individuals, as well as the completion and preservation of an American treasure.

TRAIL PROTECTION AND STEWARDSHIP
As the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail is completed, it must be maintained and protected for future generations. To do so, CDTC is mobilizing and training a corps of skilled and knowledgeable volunteers to maintain the Trail to the highest standard.
Thank You for Your Support

For more information or to join our efforts contact us at: info@continentaldividetrail.org
www.continentaldividetrail.org
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