AFTER HISTORIC VOLUNTEER EFFORT, CONTINENTAL DIVIDE TRAIL IS FULLY SIGNED

GOLDEN, Co. (Dec. 18, 2018) – The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDT) has long been known as the toughest long-distance trail in the nation. It sits at high elevations along the Continental Divide, traverses deserts and snowfields, and passes through areas so remote that hikers sometimes go an entire day without seeing another soul. But now, thanks to the efforts of volunteers, federal agencies, and non-profit partners like the Continental Divide Trail Coalition (CDTC), there is one less challenge for those wishing to enjoy the CDT: for the first time in its 40-year history, the Continental Divide Trail is fully signed.

The CDT was designated by Congress as a National Scenic Trail in 1978, making this year its 40th anniversary. To celebrate, the CDTC intended to finally “Blaze the CDT” completely and consistently from Mexico to Canada (“blazes” are trail markers). In 2017, the U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, youth conservation corps and volunteer trail adopters signed over 2,000 miles of the 3,100-mile trail. This spring, CDTC recruited volunteers from all over the country to tackle the remaining sections, and by the end of the summer, volunteers had installed more than 1200 signs along hundreds of miles of trail to successfully complete the project.

Heather “Anish” Anderson finished her third thru-hike of the CDT on November 8 when she arrived in Grants, New Mexico. “When I first hiked the CDT in 2006, there were almost no trail markings,” said Anderson. “Constant attention to our maps and the descriptions in our guidebook were necessary. More than that, there was also a lack of trail tread in many areas. We simply followed our compass, animal trails, 4WD tracks, or open ridgelines. We celebrated when we arrived in Colorado and merged with the well-traveled and well-marked Colorado Trail. I cried when we had to depart from it.”

After hiking the CDT again in 2017, Anderson set her sights on a much more extreme goal for 2018: to become the first woman to hike all three trails that make up hiking’s Triple Crown – the Continental Divide, Pacific Crest, and Appalachian Trails – in a single calendar year. After hiking the coastal trails and a section of the CDT in New Mexico, Anderson found herself standing once more at the Canadian border in Glacier National Park, ready to head south on the CDT. By this point, it was mid-August – long after others attempting CDT thru-hikes had begun their journeys, and after Blaze the CDT volunteers had surveyed and marked their sections of the trail.

“If I had been impressed with the markings in 2017, I was blown away by fall of 2018,” said Anderson. “The CDT has gone from a line on a map to a marked trail on the ground in 12 years.”

And while Anderson has earned celebrity status in the small but growing community of thru-hikers with this year’s 8,000-mile stroll, she feels that the CDT’s new signage should excite anyone who likes to walk and enjoy the outdoors – not just those who want to hike from Canada to Mexico.

“It’s an incredible transformation thanks to the incredible work of the CDTC and its dedicated volunteers. This increases the opportunities, not just for thru-hikers, but for other users who want to experience the...
diversity of Divide country. The trail unites these myriad routes into a corridor ripe for anyone to experience.”

To learn more about Blaze the CDT and the Continental Divide Trail, visit continentaldividetrail.org/blaze-the-cdt/.

About the Continental Divide Trail
The CDT is one of the world’s premiere long-distance trails, stretching 3,100 miles from Mexico to Canada along the Continental Divide. Designated by Congress in 1978, the CDT is the highest, most challenging and most remote of the 11 National Scenic Trails. It provides recreational opportunities ranging from hiking to horseback riding to hunting for thousands of visitors each year. While 95% of the CDT is located on public land, approximately 180 miles are still in need of protection.

About the Continental Divide Trail Coalition
The CDTC was founded in 2012 by volunteers and recreationists hoping to provide a unified voice for the Trail. Working hand-in-hand with the U.S. Forest Service and other federal land management agencies, the CDTC is a non-profit organization supporting stewardship of the CDT. The mission of the CDTC is to complete, promote and protect the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, a world-class national resource. For more information, please visit continentaldividetrail.org.

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