CDTC SPOTLIGHTS THE DIVERSE FACES OF THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE

GOLDEN, Colo. (July 11, 2019) – This summer, the Continental Divide Trail Coalition (CDTC) will partner with recreation, conservation, and community organizations and the diverse communities along the Continental Divide to invite people to connect with their public lands through a series of events and storytelling: Faces of the Continental Divide: Sharing Stories, Connecting Communities.

Beginning on July 13, at the start of Latino Conservation Week, and ending on National Public Lands Day on September 28, Faces of the Continental Divide will highlight the diverse communities along the Continental Divide engaged in outdoor recreation and conservation and celebrate their relationships with public lands.

“Too often we only see one image of who participates in outdoor recreation,” said Teresa Martinez, Executive Director of the Continental Divide Trail Coalition. “That image simply doesn’t reflect the diverse communities who value the landscapes of the Rocky Mountain West. It’s time to share a more complete picture of who cares for and loves our natural places.”

Throughout the summer, the CDTC will engage with local groups along the length of the Continental Divide from New Mexico to Montana to underscore the importance of providing access to the outdoors for all people. Joining forces with organizations already working to change the face of public lands, such as Denver Environmental Learning for Kids (ELK), Big City Mountaineers, Hispanic Access Foundation, and Latino Outdoors, CDTC aims to inspire new people to explore the Continental Divide, as well as to amplify the often untold stories of communities who value and steward its lands. From day hikes and overnight backpacking trips to an outdoor poetry workshop, Faces of the Continental Divide events are as varied as the landscapes they span.

Many Faces of the Continental Divide events are open to the public and free of charge. CDTC is offering resources to help plan and publicize events for groups interested in organizing an event, and financial assistance to support transportation and meals is made possible with support from the Hydro Flask Parks for All Charitable Giving Program and REI Co-op. Gear loans are also available thanks to in-kind donations from Osprey.

As part of these efforts, the Continental Divide Trail Coalition will also spend the summer collecting and sharing stories of participants’ connections to the landscapes of the Rocky Mountain West. The stories will be catalogued and showcased on the CDTC’s website and communications and will provide a more comprehensive perception of how people in the Rocky Mountain West connect to landscapes, the Trail, and conservation as a whole.

In Las Cruces, N.M., the Nuestra Tierra Conservation Project, Friends of the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks, Latino Outdoors, and Hispanic Access Foundation will team up to raft the Rio Bravo as part of this effort.
“The history of the Rio Bravo in southern New Mexico is deeply tied to our cultural and traditional uses of the river, from Indigenous to Mexican American communities today. Floating the Rio Bravo allows us to explore that culture, history, and tradition, and to encourage new stewards of our water and natural resources here in the Chihuahuan Desert,” said Gabe Vasquez, founder of the Nuestra Tierra Conservation Project.

By encouraging communities to connect with their own story of conservation, Faces of the Continental Divide will show that although some communities are absent from the current narrative, they are conservationists nonetheless.

“Outdoor recreation and conservation have typically been white-dominated spaces in spite of the changing face of America. But the reality is that it will take urban and underserved communities and people of color to lead this fight into the future if we want to protect the land, water, and natural resources that we all collectively use and cherish,” Vasquez said.

Faces of the Continental Divide was made possible by a grant award from Hydro Flask’s Parks for All program and donations from REI Co-Op. Events will take place from July 13 to September 28, 2019. View a map of events, sign up to host your own event, or tell your story at continentaldividetrail.org/faces.

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 150 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 partner 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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