



### The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDT)

was designated as a part of the National Trail System by Congress in 1978, to conserve and create better access to the natural, scenic, historical, and cultural resources along the Continental Divide. The trail spans 3,100 miles, traversing New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming, Idaho, and Montana, but more than just a trail, the CDT is a connector of communities, cultures, and landscapes.

Over the past four decades, since the trail's creation, federal agencies, nonprofit partners, volunteers, and other members of the trail community have diligently worked to complete the CDT. Currently, there are more than 160 miles of the CDT where those seeking a continuous footpath are diverted onto busy roadways and highways, making for a journey that is not only less safe, but not aligned with the characteristics for which the trail was designated. Of the miles of trail that do exist on trails across public lands, there are 600 miles of trail that need to be relocated to a more optimal location to retain the nature and purposes for which the trail was created, mainly, a nonmotorized, primitive route with scenic ridgeline views along the Divide.

## H.R. 5118

# CONTINENTAL DIVIDE TRAIL COMPLETION ACT

The CDT Completion Act directs the Secretary of Agriculture to prioritize completion of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail in time for the CDT's 50th anniversary in 2028, by acquiring land to eliminate gaps between sections of the Trail and relocating existing portions of the Trail where necessary to maximize conservation and enjoyment of the Trail corridor. The CDT Completion Act has three main directives:

Directs the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior to **create The Acquisition Team**, tasked with completing the CDT within one year. The team will be made up of USFS and BLM staff, working in coordination with the CDT Administrator. It is the responsibility of the Team to conduct optimal location reviews of the CDT, identify priority parcels for acquisition, and working with willing sellers to acquire land, using funds from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).

**Recognizes the value of the public-private partnerships** between federal land managers and volunteers in building and maintaining the trail. The Act directs USFS and BLM to maintain and develop these close partnerships, in complement with the USFS model of Shared Stewardship. It also directs the Continental Divide Trail Coalition, a private nonprofit, to report annually to Congress on the progress of completion.

Explicitly states that **eminent domain will not be used** for acquisitions to complete the CDT. Completion is a collaborative effort with local stakeholders and should embrace the spirit of community-led stewardship on which the National Trails System is founded.

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