

CONTINENTAL DIVIDE TRAIL COALITION

# CONGRESSIONAL REPORT

FEBRUARY 2020

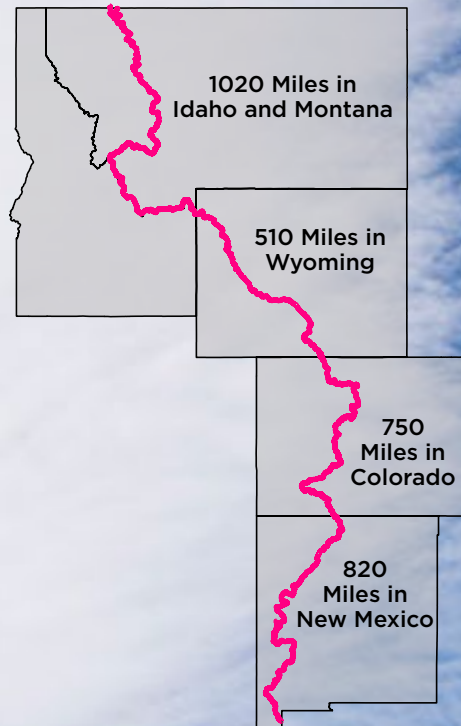




# CONTINENTAL DIVIDE NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL

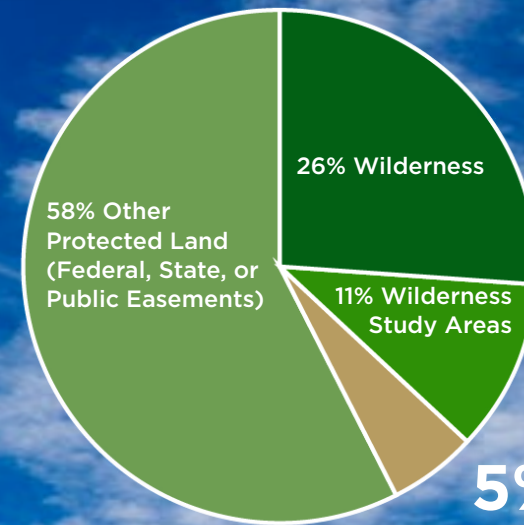
Designated by Congress in 1978, the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail stretches 3,100 miles from Mexico to Canada along the spine of the Rockies. The CDT is the highest, most challenging, and most remote of the 11 National Scenic Trails.

- 1968** The National Trails System Act creates a system of National Scenic, Historic, and Recreational Trails.
- 1978** Congress passes the National Parks and Recreation Act, designating the CDT as the third National Scenic Trail and making the Forest Service its lead administering agency.
- 2009** The USFS amends the CDT Comprehensive Management Plan, providing direction for local management of the Trail.
- 2012** The Continental Divide Trail Coalition is founded to complete, promote, and protect the CDT.
- 2018** USFS, BLM, CDTC, youth corps, and other stewardship organizations partner to "Blaze the CDT," marking the trail in its entirety for the first time in history.



## COMPLETING THE TRAIL

The nature and purposes of the CDT are to provide for high-quality, primitive hiking and horseback riding opportunities and to conserve natural, historic, and cultural resources along the CDT corridor. Unfortunately, because the CDT remains incomplete, many segments of the CDT do not provide this experience for visitors.



**612 miles** of the CDT are still in need of relocation off of roads

**172 miles** of the CDT are still in need of protection as public land

## RECREATION ON THE CDT

More than 100,000 people from around the world visit the CDT each year to hike, ride horseback, hunt, fish, mountain bike, ski, and explore the landscapes of the American West. While the number of thru-hikers on the CDT is growing rapidly, they are still a minute percentage of the people who enjoy the trail.

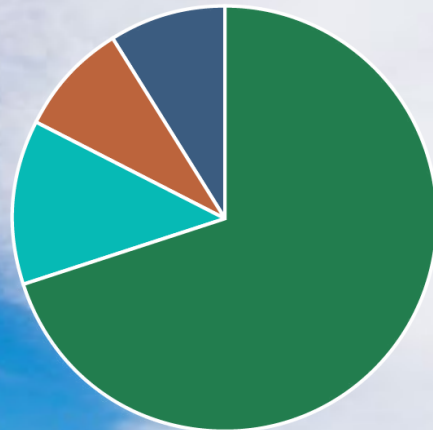
**35%** Average annual increase in thru-hike completions on the CDT since 2013

**<1%** Percentage of CDT visitors who are attempting to thru-hike the trail

**500** Approximate number of 2019 CDT thru-hike attempts

**28,000** Estimated number of 2018 visitor days at one of the CDT's most popular spots - Colorado's Grays Peak

## TRAIL MANAGERS



**3100** total miles

**2170** miles on 20 National Forests

**390** miles on 13 BLM Field Offices

**270** miles on 4 National Park Service Units

**270** miles on non-federal land

# A SOUND INVESTMENT

Since our founding in 2012, CDTC and local partners along the trail have turned \$2.6 million of federal funding into

**302,807** volunteer hours,  
valued at **\$7,277,566**

plus **\$2,158,697**  
of private funding

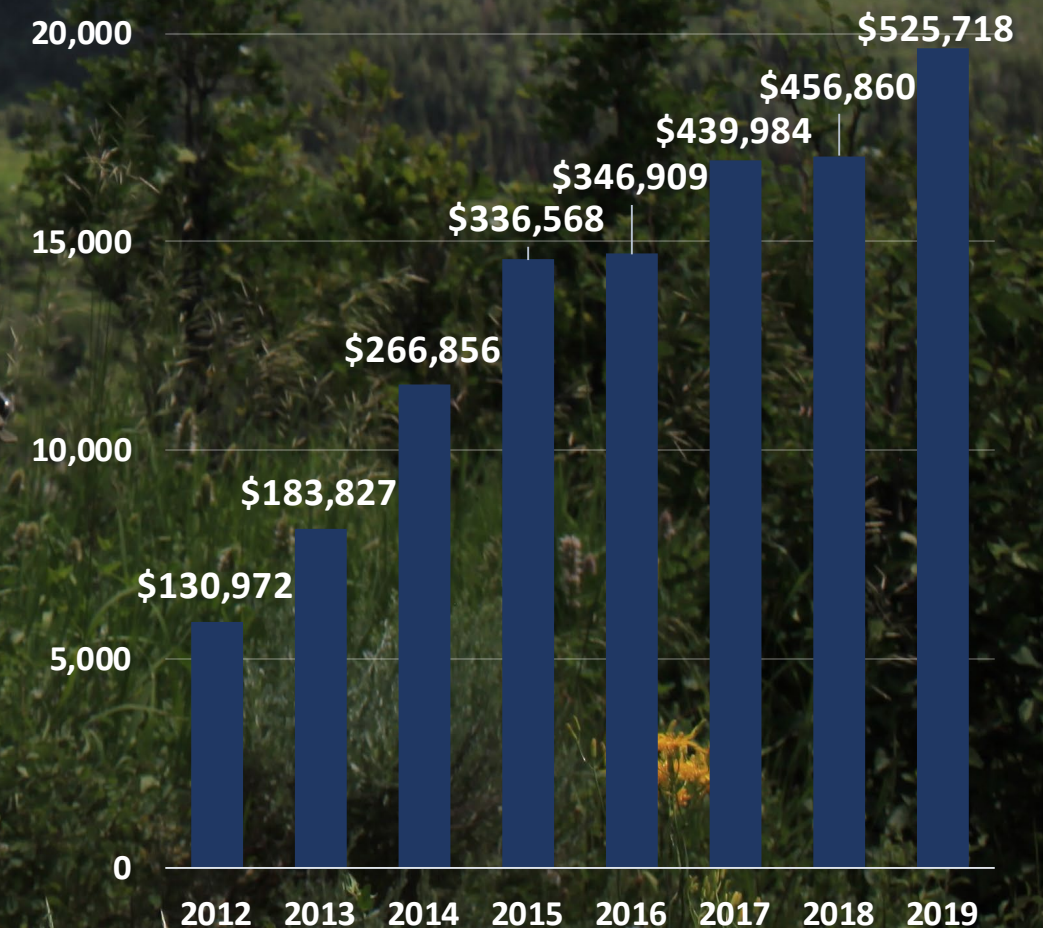
(that's an average return of **263%** on federal funding for the CDT!)

“As small business owners, CDTC Trail Adopters, and fourth-generation Coloradans, we know that here in the Centennial State, **protecting public lands doesn't just make sense for outdoor enthusiasts – it's good business.**”

-Patrick & Kevin Webber  
Co-Founders, Fourpoints Bar  
Denver



Annual CDTC Volunteer Hours and Value



# SUPPORTING LOCAL ECONOMIES

## CDT GATEWAY COMMUNITIES

CDTC designated **2** new Gateway Communities last year, bringing the total to 15.

Anaconda, MT



**86%** of small business owners in trailside communities believe that protecting, promoting, and enhancing the CDT is important to the well-being of their community's economy.

Leadville - Twin Lakes, CO



**88%** of them have seen economic growth in their community since 2014 due to use of the Continental Divide Trail.

“The Gateway Community designation is an easy fit for Anaconda.... **We realized that this was an economic opportunity for the town.** We offer these visitors free WiFi, bicycles to explore the town, and resources directing hikers to places where they can rest and refuel before continuing on their journeys.”

- Adam Vauthier, Executive Director,  
- Anaconda Local Development Corporation



In Silver City, NM, a lack of public land forces the CDT route onto roads for 19 miles. Residents see the trail as vital to the local economy and culture, and have advocated for local CDT completion for almost two decades - but negotiations over a small section of private land have stymied their efforts.

Approximately \$250,000 is needed to acquire necessary easements and construct new trail. Meanwhile, the community has already begun investing in the CDT in hopes it will one day be completed. Residents maintain local CDT sections and organize an annual Trail Days festival, and the town plans to convert its old waterworks building into an outdoor recreation hub for visitors.

## Full funding of LWCF is vital to the completion of the CDT and to communities like Silver City all across the United States.

**“The CDT has really put Silver City on the map.”**

- Rebecca Martin

Visitor Services & Tourism Director

**“The Land and Water Conservation Fund is vital to protecting New Mexico’s public lands and outdoor recreation opportunities, and those places in turn have a huge impact on our local businesses and tourism economy.”**

- Martyn Pearson

Co-Owner, Gila Hike & Bike



Trail construction begins to move the CDT off the highway.



Silver City residents begin to adopt newly built sections of the CDT.



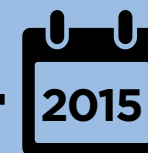
Construction of 27 new miles of trail is completed, but the CDT cannot be opened due to a remaining stretch of private land.



Silver City becomes the first official CDT Gateway Community.



Silver City hosts the first annual CDT Trail Days.



Local students create a mural at the Visitors’ Center celebrating Silver City’s status as the “Gateway to the CDT.”



Grant County forms Trails & Open Space Committee to plan and invest in outdoor recreation.



WNMU accepts an easement intended for construction of a side trail from the CDT into the heart of Silver City.

35 Silver City business owners advocate for permanent full funding of LWCF due to its importance to the CDT.

# 2020 REQUESTS

The Continental Divide Trail Coalition, in partnership with the American people, respectfully requests that Congress:

**01**

Appropriate \$2 million specifically added to the USFS budget for FY2021 to continue work toward completion of the Continental Divide Trail.

**02**

Pass the Land and Water Conservation Fund Permanent Funding Act to ensure that funding can no longer be diverted from our public lands.

**03**

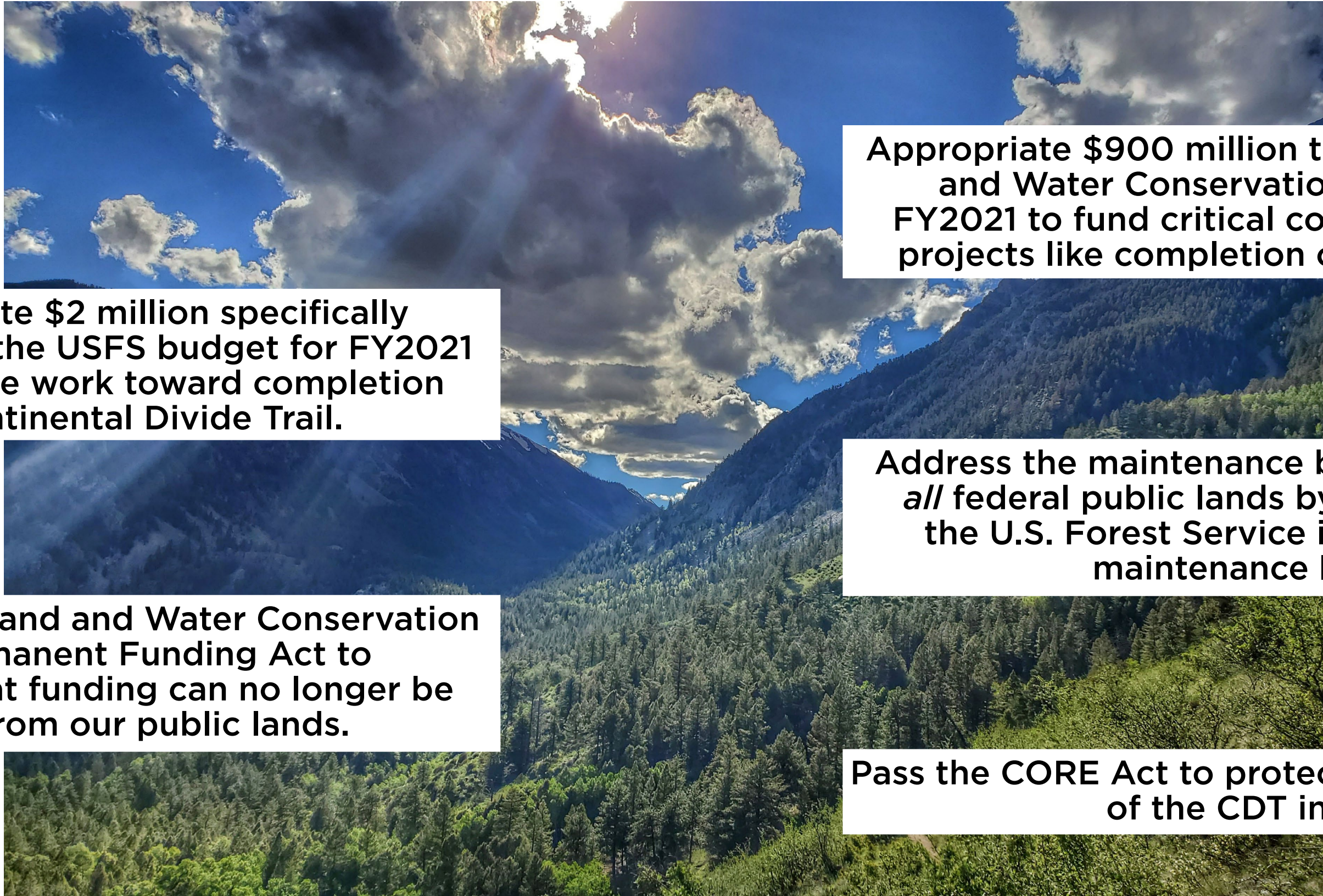
Appropriate \$900 million to the Land and Water Conservation Fund for FY2021 to fund critical conservation projects like completion of the CDT.

**04**

Address the maintenance backlog on *all* federal public lands by including the U.S. Forest Service in deferred maintenance legislation.

**05**

Pass the CORE Act to protect 20 miles of the CDT in Colorado.



thank you for  
your support

