



CONTINENTAL DIVIDE
TRAIL COALITION

MARCH 2021

2021 CONGRESSIONAL REPORT



The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail

climbs and descends along the Rocky Mountains from Canada to Mexico, traversing 3,100 miles of the most dramatic and wild backcountry along the backbone of America. More than just a trail, the Continental Divide is a landscape that connects cultures and communities through the healing properties of the outdoors.



History of the CDT

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.

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.

2020

CDTC signs an Interagency Memorandum of Understanding with the USFS, BLM, and NPS, establishing CDTC as the lead partner organization the CDT.



2020 Accomplishments

- Passage of the Great American Outdoors Act to fully fund LWCF and address the maintenance backlog
- Designation of two new CDTC Gateway Communities in Montana and Colorado
- Adopters maintained 390 miles
- Work in 5 states on 12 different projects
- Convened working groups to address major trail gaps, including the Mangas Valley, from Pie Town to Grants, and Cuba in New Mexico, as well as Muddy Pass in Colorado
- Field Programs worked on projects and held CDTC adopter training all along the trail

820 miles of trail in NM

750 miles in CO

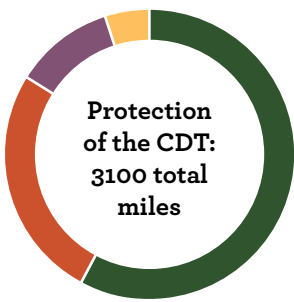
510 miles in WY

1020 miles in ID and MT



THE FUTURE OF THE CDT: 30x30

The Divide exists as the confluence of pristine wilderness, home to a diversity of wildlife and ecosystems, and the watershed for over 180 million people. In order to achieve the protection of 30% of the planet’s lands and waters by 2030, the Continental Divide Trail must be recognized more than just a trail — it is a central feature of the nation’s most important landscape.



- 58% Other Protected Land
- 26% Wilderness
- 11% Wilderness Study Area
- 5% Unprotected

Completion and Adaptive Stewardship

Optimize CDTC’s cooperative management structure alongside agencies and communities to implement a strategic plan that takes into account the dynamic nature of public lands stemming from the climate crisis and the changing needs of user engagement.

Justice, Equity, and Accessibility in the CDT Experience

Advocate for protections for lands and waters that address the systematic disparity for underrepresented populations and urgently strive to uphold the tenets of environmental justice for a more enjoyable CDT Experience for all, now and for future generations.

Gateway Communities and Partner Engagement

Collaborate with a diverse range of stakeholders to promote and maximize the enjoyment of the CDT to showcase the benefits of the trail for public health, economic vitality, and environmental sustainability for communities and users all along the Divide.

2021 CONGRESSIONAL ASKS

1

Appropriation of \$1.8 million to the CDT

2

Funding Capital Improvement and Maintenance, Trails budget at \$29.35M, including, \$11.5M for National Scenic and Historic Trails

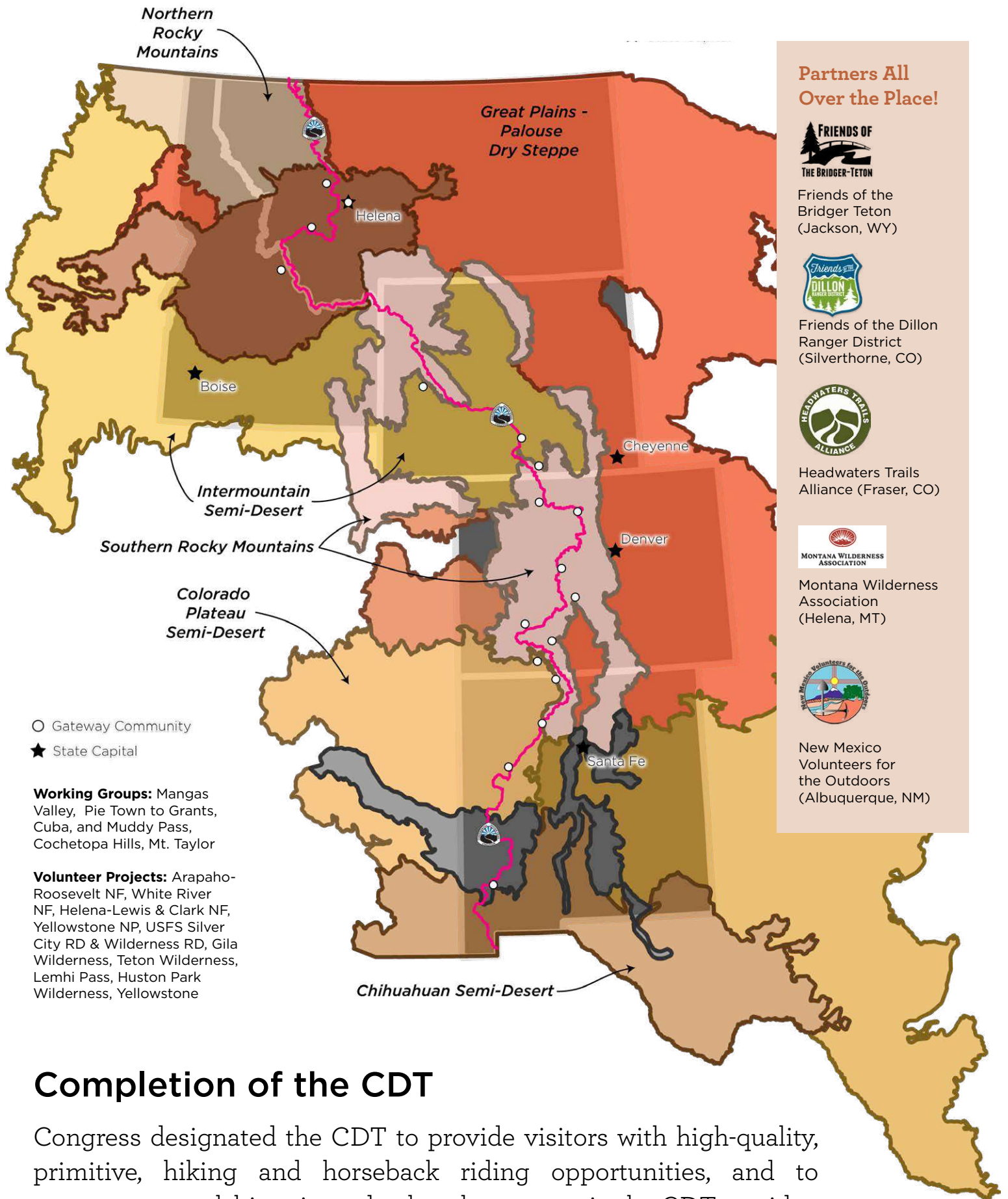
3

\$56.8M to fund Recreation, Heritage, & Wilderness

4

Trails Line Item in the BLM Budget, including at least \$10.5M for Trails, with robust funding for BLM Trails





Completion of the CDT

Congress designated the CDT to provide visitors with high-quality, primitive, hiking and horseback riding opportunities, and to conserve natural, historic, and cultural resources in the CDT corridor. Unfortunately, the CDT remains incomplete, resulting in many segments of the CDT not providing this experience for travelers.

Adopters Program

There are currently 263 adopters in the CDT, who maintain a total of 1338 miles of the CDT.

\$53,216.8

in adopter volunteer labor value

20.7

Miles maintained

45

Signage

4

new partner organizations, many more individuals

Trail Adopter Trainings:

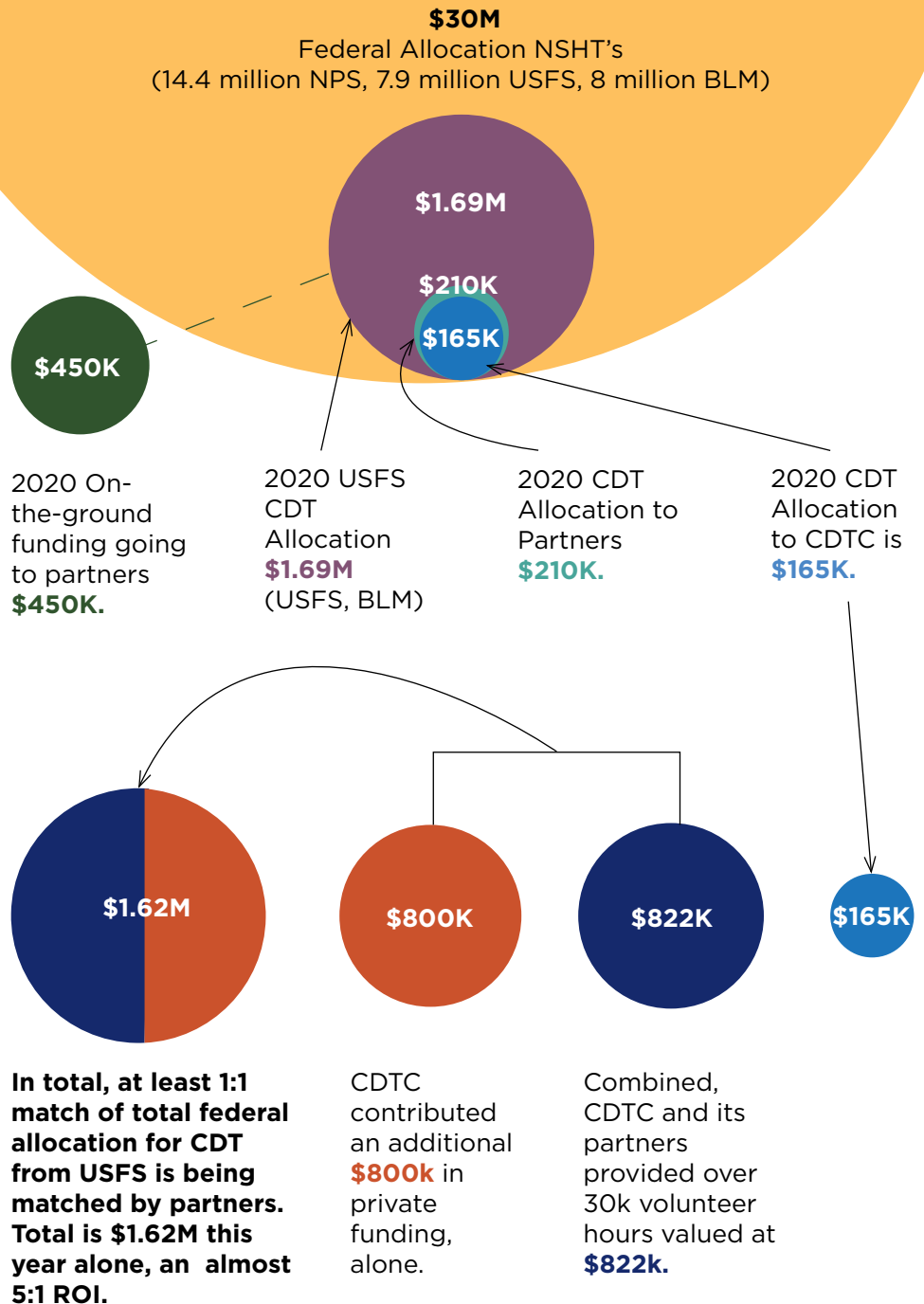
2020: Silver City, NM; Togowtee Pass, WY; Battle Pass, WY; Fraser, ID

2021: CO, Pagosa Springs; Anaconda, MT; Pinedale, WY; Salmon, ID

Highest Point:
14,270' at Grays Peak in White River National Forest, CO



2020 RETURN ON INVESTMENT



In total, at least 1:1 match of total federal allocation for CDT from USFS is being matched by partners. However, in actual funding provided to partners is 4.5 to 1, ROI, and for CDTC only that value is (total combined contributions of CDTC 1.187Million to \$165k) 7 to 1- during covid where our numbers were down by 25%.



Gabe Etengoff

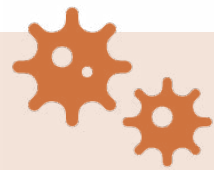
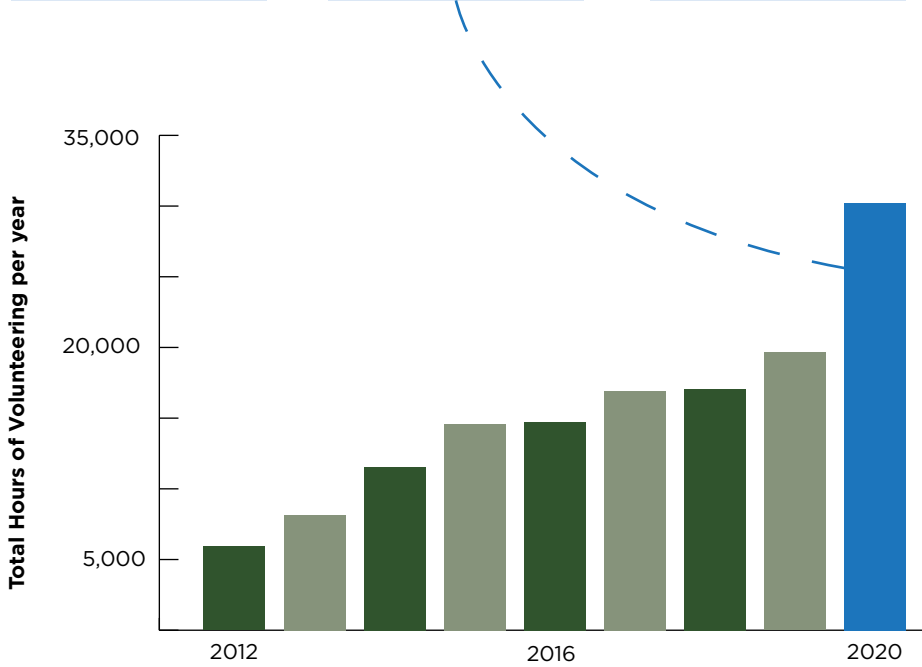
2020 VOLUNTEER ACCOMPLISHMENTS

For the first time, CDTC had 2 seasonal staff leading projects and training. With this support, CDTC and our partners had a record-setting year of volunteering on projects along the trail!


\$822,218
 value of labor


30,229
 hours


501
 volunteers



Stability in the Pandemic

Our Development Program remained robust during 2020, even with the new challenges of COVID-19.



New Members in 2020: 1378. Total at end of 2020: 2525 in 50 states



Most Successful End of Year Campaign to Date, with 1032 individual donations

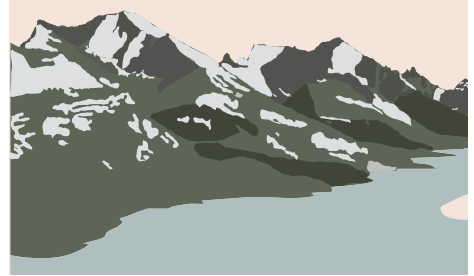


CDTC's Donors, Members and Corporate Sponsors contributed 34% of the organization's total income and exceeded Annual Budget goals by \$2,000.



CDTC Foundation and Grant program set record growth of 149%, 43% of CDTC total income.

Lowest Point:
4,200' along Waterton Lake
in Glacier National Park, MT



A MODEL OF SHARED STEWARDSHIP

The completion of the CDT is central to CDTC’s mission, but the work doesn’t stop at completion. The management of the CDT is a constant effort, done in collaboration with agency and community partners. Addressing the backlog of maintenance needs with these partners all along the Divide is vital to the nature and purposes of the CDT experience.

10 Year Trail Challenge

The Challenge began in 2017, intending to manage 159,000 trails in the U.S.

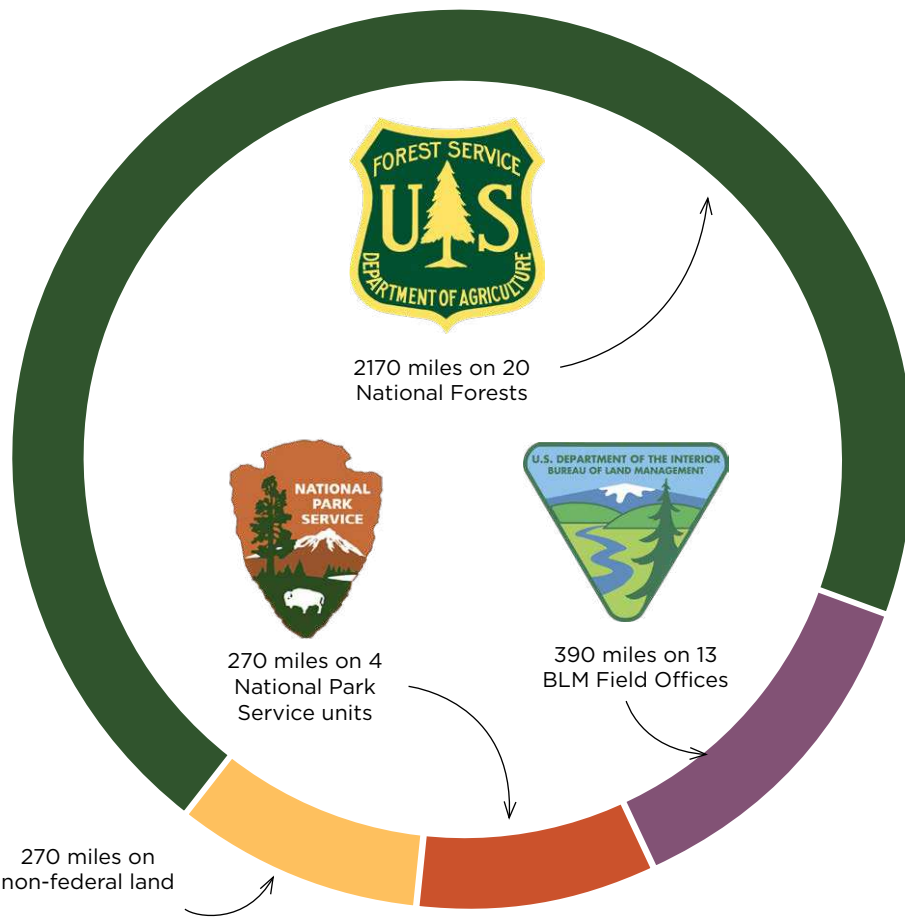
PHASE 1: Action, Commit, Innovate, Communicate

Forest Service 15 priority areas for increased trails: CDT is the ONLY National Scenic Trails that is a priority

PHASE 2: Organize, Focus, Move, Share

The passage of the Great American Outdoor Act can help to build a new shared stewardship system for National Historic & Scenic Trails. CDTC can model a new approach to Shared Stewardship with GAOA Funds to:

- Address the maintenance backlog
- Formulate a trail wide GAOA appropriation for the CDT
- Promote Regional Youth Corps to work on the CDT
- Hire a Temporary Technical Advisor, shared with USFS, to be on the ground, manage project support, collaborate to build partnership support, and serves as an agency point person



2021 CONGRESSIONAL ASKS

1

Appropriate GAOA funds to strengthen CDTC partnerships and get boots on the ground to support the work

2

Direct LWCF funding to key CDT projects to improve connectivity and wildlife corridors

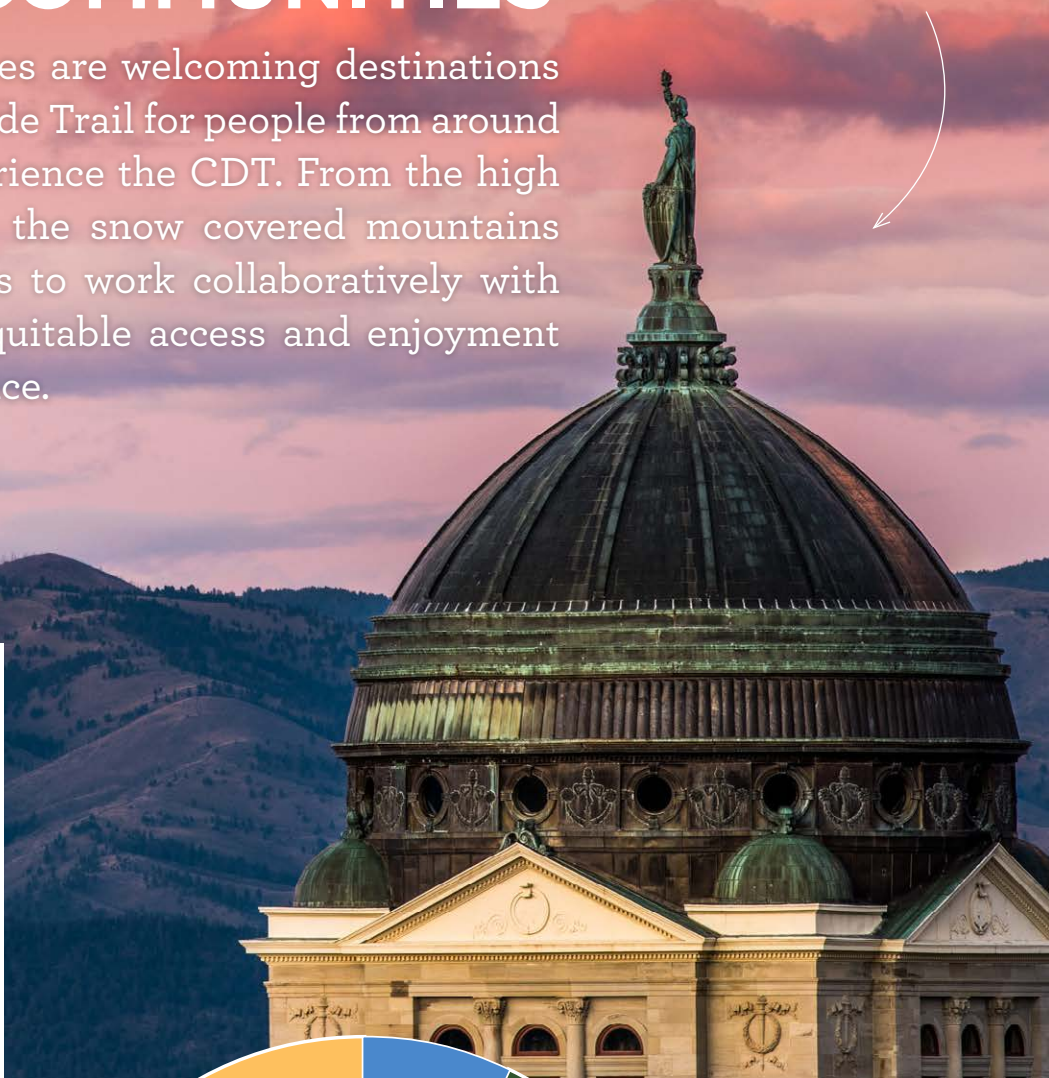
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Direct National Parks and Public Lands Legacy funds to improve facilities to support work on the ground for partners and volunteers

TWO NEW GATEWAY COMMUNITIES

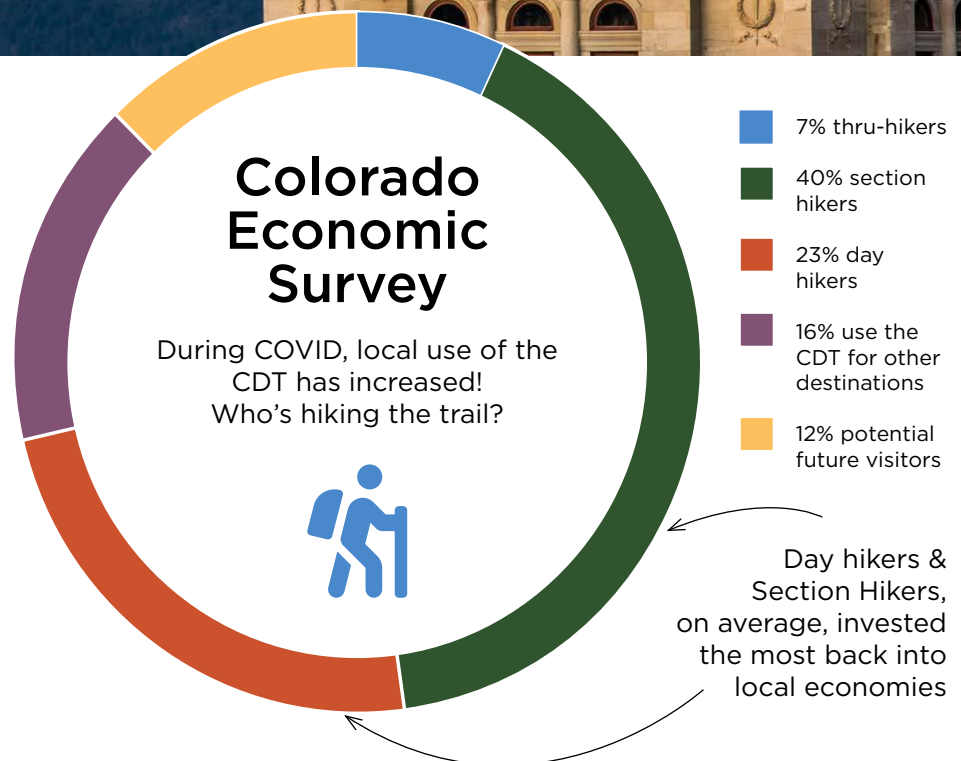
Helena, MT is the first state capitol to become a Gateway Community of a National Trail!

CDT Gateway Communities are welcoming destinations along the Continental Divide Trail for people from around the world looking to experience the CDT. From the high desert of New Mexico to the snow covered mountains of Montana, CDTC strives to work collaboratively with communities to ensure equitable access and enjoyment for all in the CDT experience.



Gateway Communities

| Community | Population |
|--------------------------|------------|
| Silver City, NM | 9,386 |
| Grants, NM | 8,968 |
| Cuba, NM | 755 |
| Chama, NM | 995 |
| Pagosa Springs, CO | 2,147 |
| South Fork, CO | 349 |
| Lake City, CO | 391 |
| Salida, CO | 6,373 |
| Leadville/Twin Lakes, CO | 10,586 |
| Grand Lake, CO | 516 |
| Steamboat Springs, CO | 13,764 |
| Encampment/Riverside, WY | 462 |
| Rawlins, WY | 8,122 |
| Pinedale, WY | 1,788 |
| Lemhi County, ID | 8,027 |
| Anaconda, MT | 7,632 |
| Helena, MT | 33,124 |
| Lincoln MT | 898 |



Business Member Program

Through the Business Member program, CDTC partners with businesses along the trail, in Gateway Communities, and across the country to protect and promote the CDT. In 2020, our Business Membership grew from 12 to 31 members, demonstrating that more and more, business owners see immense value in supporting and protecting the CDT.

- Added 10 New Members, total of 31 members now
- 4 of the 5 states represented, and multiple national businesses

Education

One way in which we maintained our missions during the pandemic was with the development of educational materials.

- Connected with over 50 educators along the CDT
- Developed 3 lesson plans as part of a CDT curriculum

Trail Days 2021

2020 saw our annual celebration of the CDT, usually held in Silver City, NM, pivot to online with resounding success. During the month of events, we had over 50,000 individuals attend. Building on that success, our 2021 online programming will include:



- Xicana youth climate activist Esperanza Soledad Garcia
- Wildlife experts discussing megafauna on the CDT
- A diverse panel of long-distance hikers and equestrians with a Q&A
- A film premiere delving into the impact of climate change on the CDT
- "Far and Wide": a celebratory concert performed by local and national artists

Join in from April 22nd to May 20th!
continentaldividetrail.org/traildays

Lake City, CO,
is our second
smallest Gateway
Community, with
just 391 residents!



2021 ASKS FOR CONGRESS

1



Support outdoor recreation industry and local businesses by passing the CORE Act

2

Create jobs and increase access to the outdoors by passing Transit to Trails

3

Create opportunities in the outdoors for underserved communities with the Outdoor F.U.T.U.R.E Initiative



4

Protect communities on the frontlines of climate change by passing the 21st Century Climate Corps bill



2021 CONGRESSIONAL ASKS



How To Get Us to 30 x 30

Completion and Adaptive Stewardship

- Refine GAOA Process to Address the Backlog of Maintenance Needs
- Direct GAOA Funds for a CDT Appropriation to Engage Youth Corps and Hire a Technical Advisor to increase Partner Collaboration
- Support the National Scenic Trails Parity Act

Justice, Equity, and Accessibility in the CDT Experience

- Support the Outdoor F.U.T.U.R.E. Initiative
- Support the Transit to Trails Act
- Support the Outdoor For All Act
- Strengthen relationships with Indigenous communities
- Bolster the stories of Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and other communities of color in the outdoors

Gateway Engagement and Community Partnerships

- Pass the CORE Act
- Invest in wildfire response and conservation efforts through the 21st Century Climate Corps Act



“

Born and raised in Colorado’s great outdoors, conservation is a part of us and is central to our business. If our public lands aren’t protected, there’s a risk we lose the truly special places, the places that make Colorado home. For us, making sure that our shared public lands, the trails, alpine meadows, rivers, mountains, forests — all of it — are protected for future generations of Coloradans is the driving passion behind our business.”

— Kevin & Patrick Webber
Fourpoints Bar, Denver, CO



CDTC THANKS OUR BUSINESS SUPPORTERS

“ This is a historic moment for people in New Mexico and throughout the West who will see their voice and perspective represented in the Cabinet, perhaps for the very first time for many. In her time serving the people of New Mexico, Congresswomen Haaland has proven herself as a dependable listener and pragmatic leader to many constituents and towns that depend on robust environmental protections. **The vitality of many communities in the West depend on public lands to not only provide clean water to drink, air to breathe, and food to eat, but also to provide an opportunity for the outdoor recreation industry and tourism that are pivotal for rural economies.**”

— Martyn Pearson, Gila Hike and Bike, Silver City, NM

“ Since 2014, when Silver City partnered with the Continental Divide Trail Coalition and became the first CDT Gateway Community, **local businesses have seen the benefits of promoting their connection to green spaces** — increased traffic in their restaurants, gear outfitters, hotels, and local shops...The growing popularity of these areas demonstrates that investment in trails and green spaces is an important investment in the economies of rural communities.”

— Shelby Hallmark, Silver City, NM

Above left: Aldo Leopold Charter School; Opposite: Matt Berger



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(Next meeting here?)



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