

CONTINENTAL DIVIDE TRAIL COALITION

2024 CONGRESSIONAL REPORT



Photo by Mike Fuhrmann



About This Report

As a connector of landscapes, communities, and cultures, the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDT) provides a setting for community members, decision makers, conservationists, outdoor enthusiasts, and everyone connected to the lands and waters of the Divide, to come together to discuss how to steward the vital natural, cultural, and historic resources found across its entirety. With this report, the Continental Divide Trail Coalition hopes to highlight the role of the cooperative stewardship model in the management of the CDT, what we accomplished in 2023, and what we are looking forward to in 2024.

About Hike the Hill

Celebrating its 27th year, Hike the Hill® is a joint effort between American Hiking Society and Partnership for the National Trails System to bring together the trails community to advance shared trail priorities with congressional and federal agency leaders including: trails funding, public lands management and conservation, equitable access, and other top priority issues that sustain trails and improve access to public lands.



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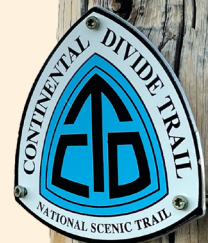
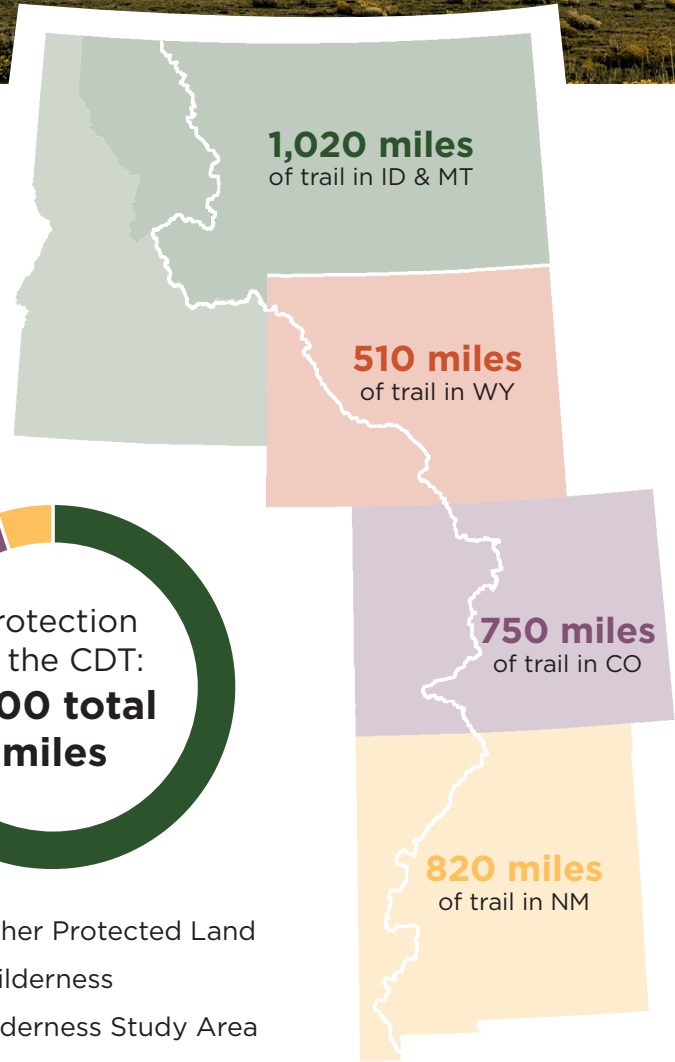


Photo by Ryan Lim



CDT OVERVIEW

The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDT) climbs and descends along the Rocky Mountains from Mexico to Canada, traversing 3,100 miles of the most dramatic and wild lands along the backbone of America. More than just a trail, the Continental Divide is an incredibly biodiverse and unique landscape that connects cultures and communities through the healing properties of the outdoors.



Holistic Benefits of the CDT

-  Community & Connection
-  Sustainable Economic Growth
-  Public Health
-  Environmental Preservation



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



INTRO TO CDTC

Photo by Mike Fuhrmann

Who We Are

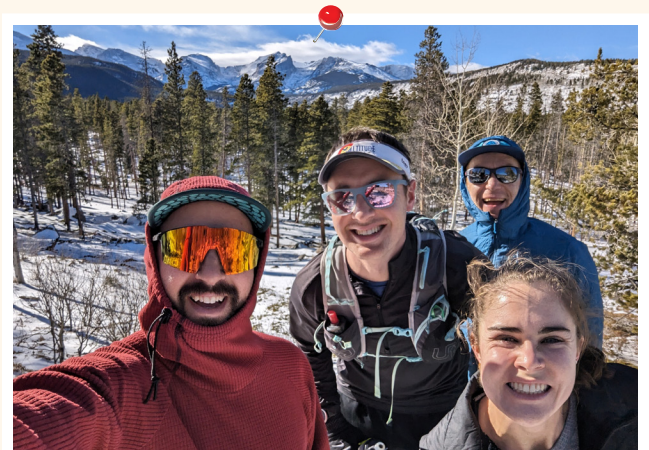
The mission of the Continental Divide Trail Coalition (CDTC) is to complete, promote, and protect the CDT. With a growing trail community, which includes 21 CDTC Gateway Communities and over 3000 active members, we hope to continue to support the protection and connection of this landscape, preserving the way of life for the communities, wildlife, and plants that call the Rocky Mountain West home.

Who We Work With

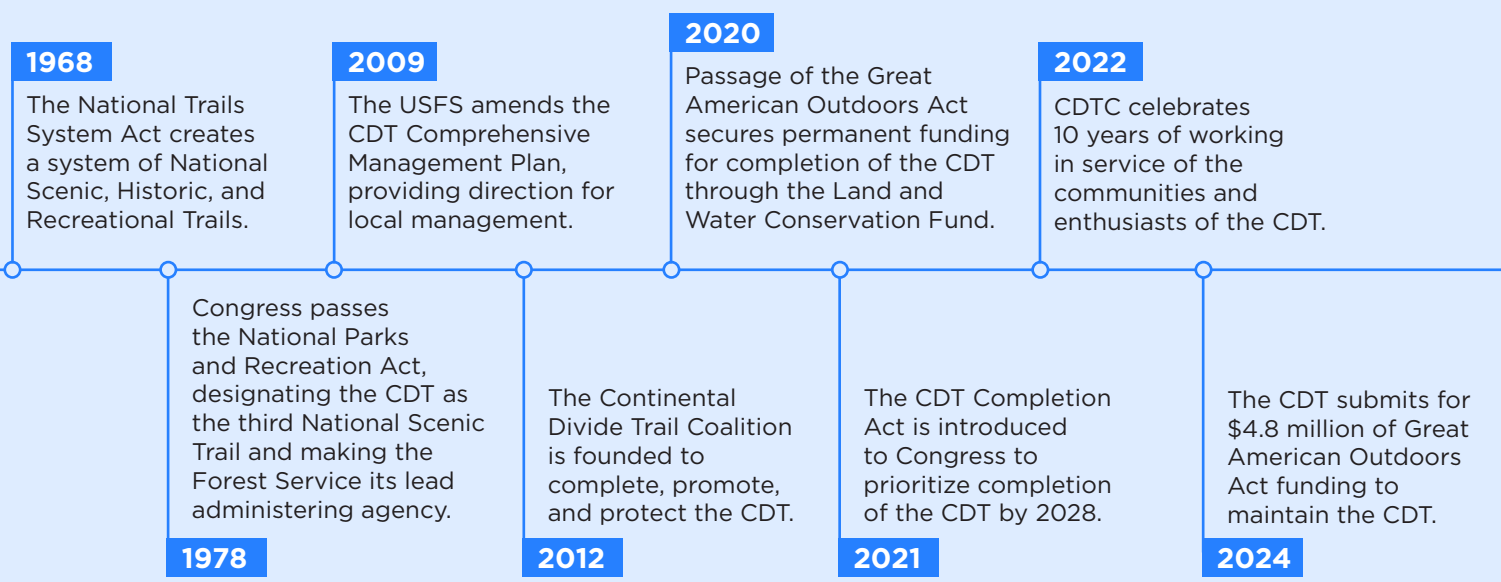
In 2020, CDTC signed an MOU with USFS, BLM, and NPS establishing the Continental Divide Trail Coalition as the lead private-partner in the stewardship of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail. CDTC works in tandem with federal and state agencies, sovereign nations, Gateway Communities, Indigenous communities, local leaders, and volunteers in a cooperative stewardship model to effectively and proactively manage the trail to provide a CDT experience that is open to all, independent of age, experience, or background.

Where We Work

CDTC has two offices in Golden, Colorado and in Helena, Montana, and CDTC staff are spread across the entirety of the trail, from Las Cruces, New Mexico on the south end to Bigfork, Montana on the north end, and in many other communities in between.



History of the CDT



RETURN ON INVESTMENT

2023 ROI

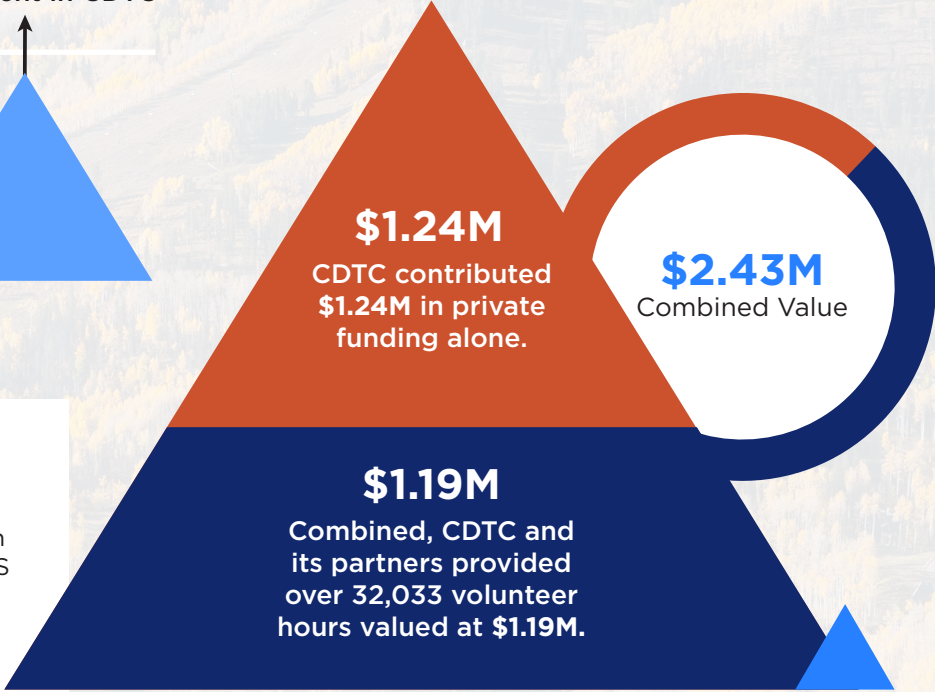
The National Trails System is arguably the most successful model of the private-public partnerships in existence today. In 2023, the CDTC and partners had another record-setting year in their return on investment to the American people.



7 : 1
Match by CDTC

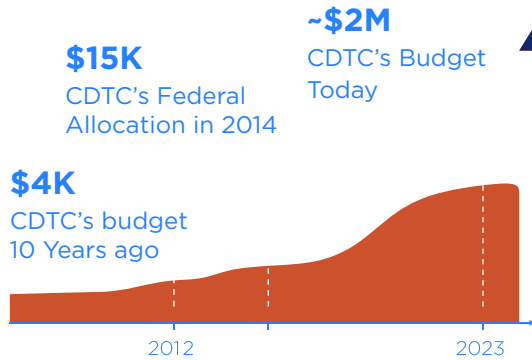
7.5 : 1
Match by Partners & CDTC

1.25 : 1
Match total Federal
Allocation by CDTC &
partners since 2014



Budget Growth

In 11 years, CDTC and partners have grown to match **1.25 to 1 in CASH** the entire USFS allocation to the CDT.



CDTC Match

From the 2023 CDT Allocation to CDTC, over 700 volunteers through CDTC and other partner organizations contributed over 32,033 volunteer hours valued at **\$1.19M** + **1.24M** private dollars (CDTC private funding).

2023
Allocation to CDTC
(\$262K)

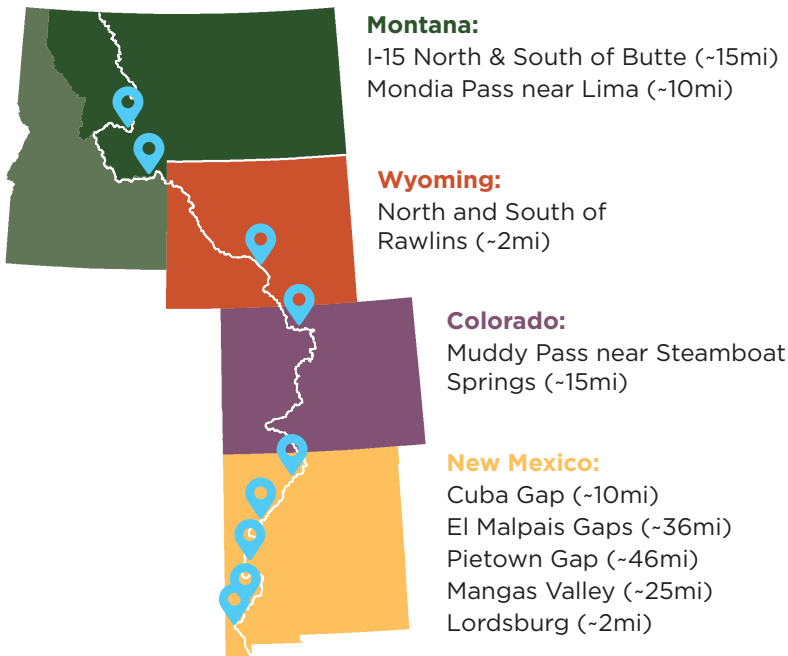
THE PATH TO CDT COMPLETION

Now is the time to complete the CDT. Over the past four decades, 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.

The CDT Completion Act

- 1 Directs the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior to create The Trail Completion Team to prioritize completion of the CDT by the trail's 50th anniversary in 2028. The Team will be made up of USFS and BLM staff, in coordination with the CDT Administrator, to maximize conservation and enjoyment of the Trail corridor.
- 2 Recognizes the value of cooperative stewardship between federal land managers, states, Tribal governments, towns, Indigenous communities, volunteers, and others in building and managing the trail.
- 3 Explicitly states that eminent domain will not be used to complete the CDT.

Major Gaps



Legislative Timelines of CDT Completion

1978

Congress Designates the CDT as a National Scenic Trail

2009

Public Lands Omnibus grants willing-seller authorization to agencies

2020

The Passage of the Great American Outdoors Act secures consistent funding for the Land & Water Conservation Fund

2021

The CDT Completion Act is introduced to the U.S. Senate by Senator Heinrich and Senator Daines and to the U.S. House by Rep. Neguse

2022

The bipartisan CDT Completion Act was introduced to the U.S. Senate by Senator Heinrich and Senator Daines

118th Congress Progress Report

House

March 2023: Intro'd by Rep. Neguse (CO)
Co-sponsors: Rep. Ieger Fernandez (NM), Rep. Stansbury (NM), Rep. Vasquez (NM)

Senate

March 2023: Intro'd by Senator Heinrich (NM) & Senator Daines (MT)
June 2023: Hearing in the Subcommittee on National Parks
Dec 2023: reported favorably out of in the Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee

COMMUNITY-LED STEWARDSHIP

At the center of all of CDTC's work are the community connections anchored on the CDT. CDTC's Adopter Program encourages regular, sustainable monitoring and maintenance by individuals and communities on the Divide, in partnership with federal agencies. Coupled with CDT's Volunteer Projects that take place across the trail every year, the CDT Trail Community provides a model for how community-led stewardship optimizes the values of the CDT Experience and the Divide landscape.

Value of Community-led Stewardship



Elevate Community Priorities



Add Capacity for Land Managers



Provide Pathways to Careers



Foster a Culture of Care on the CDT

2023 Field Operations by the Numbers



1,800
total hours of volunteer stewardship

16,500
feet of trail reconstructed

12,000
feet of trail corridor cleared

48
drains installed



5,000
feet of new trail constructed

95
downed trees removed

22
cairns or structures built

50,000
feet scouted



Trail Adopter Highlights



360
Trail Adopters
19 new in 2023!



1,362
Total miles of trail adopted



44
Miles of Adopted Trail work *in 2023*



1,042
Downed trees cleared from the trail *in 2023*



240
Trail Markers & cairns installed *in 2023*



5,890
Hours of adopters work **valued at 187,300**

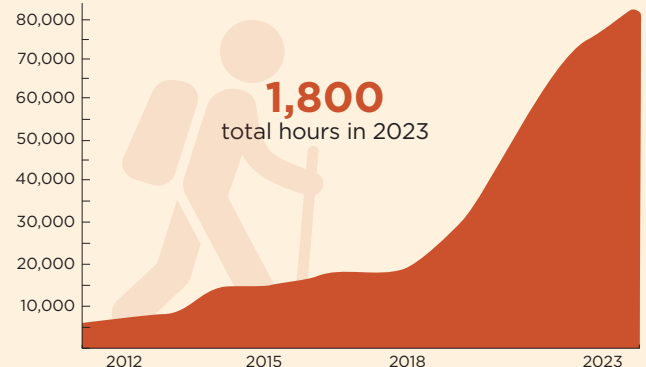
Adopter Trainings in 2023

Butte, Montana

Georgetown, Colorado

Silver City, New Mexico

Total Hours of Community Stewardship Since 2012



CDTC's Small Business Survey

82% believe **protecting, promoting, and enhancing public lands** (national parks, national forests, etc.) is important to the **general well-being of businesses, jobs, and their local economy.**

"How would you categorize your business?"



27%

Outdoor Clothing or Gear Store



17%

Hotel, Motel, or Hostel



19%

Other



13%

Restaurant, Bar, Dispensary, or similar



8%

AirBnB, Inn, Short-term Rental, or Guesthouse



8%

Grocery or Convenience Store



4%

RV Park or Campground



2%

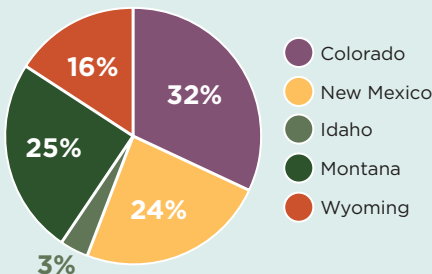
Education-Focused Organization



2%

Outdoor Guide Service

134 respondents from 35 communities!



Small Business Survey 2023

[Learn more](#)

CONNECTING COMMUNITIES, CULTURES, & LANDSCAPES



Big Hole Pass, Idaho

Alongside volunteers, CDTC hosted a 5-day project at Big Hole Pass focusing on tread reconstruction and maintenance.

Salmon, ID

CDTC hosted an Adopter Training, joined by a dozen community members who have adopted portions of the CDT in Idaho.



Yellowstone National Park, WY

CDTC hosted a weeklong volunteer project in Yellowstone National Park focused on improving trail infrastructure and tread.



Steamboat Springs, CO

CDTC hosted a Community Stewardship Event at Fish Creek Falls, Steamboat Springs



Georgetown, CO

Youth from Environmental Learning for Kids joined CDTC for a volunteer event at Herman Gulch to learn more about the CDT, conservation skills, and trail stewardship.



Grant County, NM

CDTC joined members of the community and other partners on the Black Range Recovery Coalition to identify opportunities to restore the CDT in the section of the Black Range devastated by wildfire in 2022.



Grant County, NM

CDTC, FS, and volunteers installed 6 rollovers through the Burros and Pinos Altos range near Silver City for better user access and to address ranchers' concerns with open gates.



Lordsburg, NM

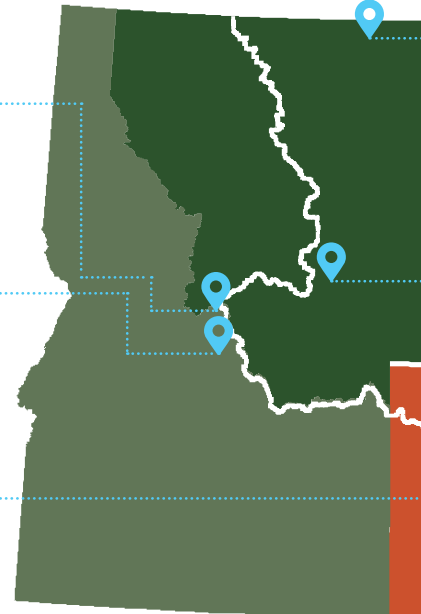
CDTC staff hosted an educational workshop and event with Lordsburg's cohort of Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) members this summer.

Hidalgo County, NM

Hidalgo County was designated the 21st CDT Gateway Community!

Hachita, NM

CDTC, Rep. Vasquez' office, and community members celebrated the recent CDT easement from New Mexico State Lands. The easement between the State Land Office and the Bureau of Land Management provides permanent access and protection for the Trail where it crosses State land through New Mexico.





Blackfeet Reservation

The USFS CDT Program Administrator was joined by CDT Staff in visiting the northernmost portion of the trail, visiting with community members in East Glacier and learning more about CDT visitation in Glacier National Park.



Montana

CDTC hosted small business roundtables in Anaconda, Butte, and Helena attended by over 60 community members to discuss how local businesses benefit from their proximity to the CDT and how CDTC can provide support through the Gateway Community program.



Butte, MT

Gateway Community members in Butte hosted a Community Celebration alongside an Adopter Training with CDT!



Lander/South Pass City, WY

CDTC attended events at the Wyoming Working Together economic development conference, presenting on the impact of the CDT and hearing from community members on the value of the trail in the region.



Rawlins, WY

This fall, Carbon County hosted its annual volunteer event where community members painted blazes marking the trail's route directly through downtown Rawlins.



Salida, CO

CDTC joined community members for a cross country ski outing near the CDT in Colorado to show that the CDT is accessible in winter, too!



Alamosa, CO

CSU student Audrey Moreng partnered with CDTC to learn more about the connection between the CDT and the San Luis Valley, particularly with Hispanic and Latinx communities.



Chama, NM

To celebrate Latino Conservation Week and Pride on the Divide, in July the Gateway Community of Chama hosted a community hike with CDTC.



Cuba, NM

In addition to construction on the gap section near Cuba, CDTC supported the Reclamation of the Nacimiento Mine site, a multi-use recreation area that improves access to the CDT.

Pueblo of Acoma

Dedicated to hearing the voices of Our Pueblos, Tribes, Nations Elders, and their relationship to Mother Earth, CDTC partnered with members of the Pueblo of Acoma to tell the stories of the land that the CDT traverses in a film titled, Connection to the Land.



Pueblo of Acoma

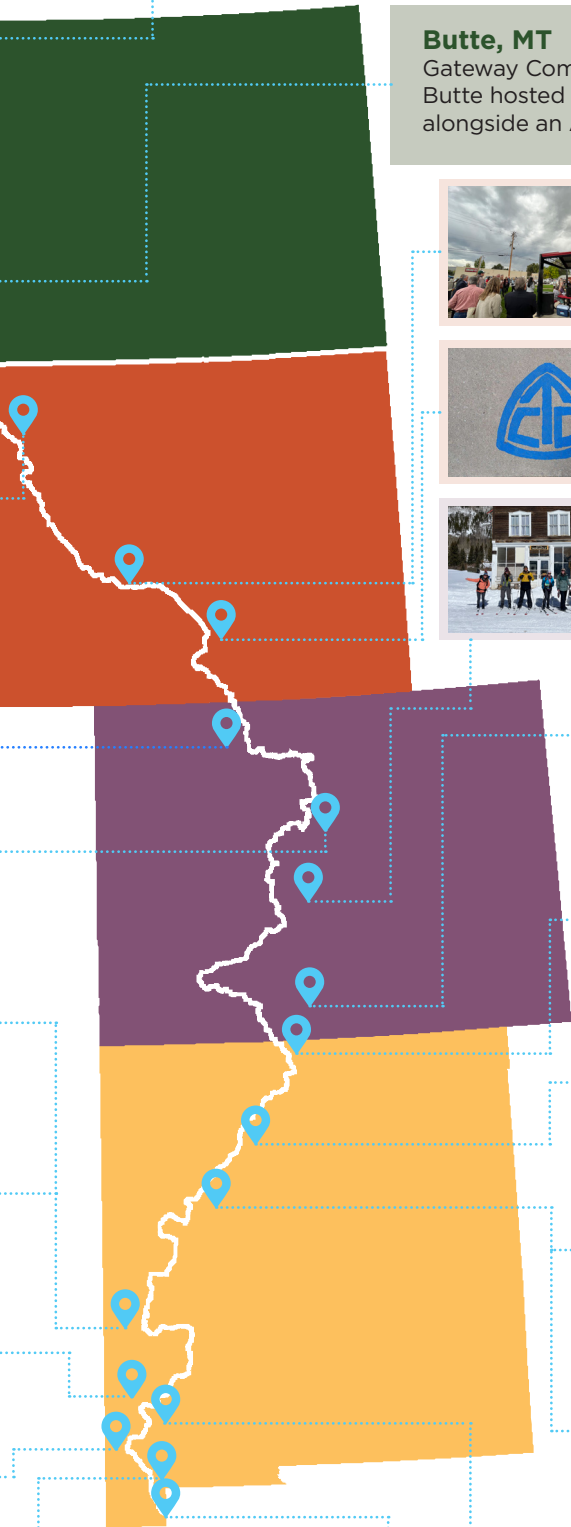
CDTC led youth on guided hikes along the CDT in El Malpais National Monument. Youth are provided with stewardship education, opportunities to learn about the Ancestral significance of the landscape, and a first-time experience on the CDT.

Crazy Cook Monument, NM

Alongside BLM staff, CDTC scouted an area for infrastructure improvement near the southern terminus, including a shade structure.

Silver City, NM

CDTC celebrated with Senator Heinrich and Congressman Vasquez early in the summer in Silver City, New Mexico to recognize the progress on the CDT Completion Act and the introduction of the Greater Gila Wild & Scenic River bill!



TRAIL PRIORITIES

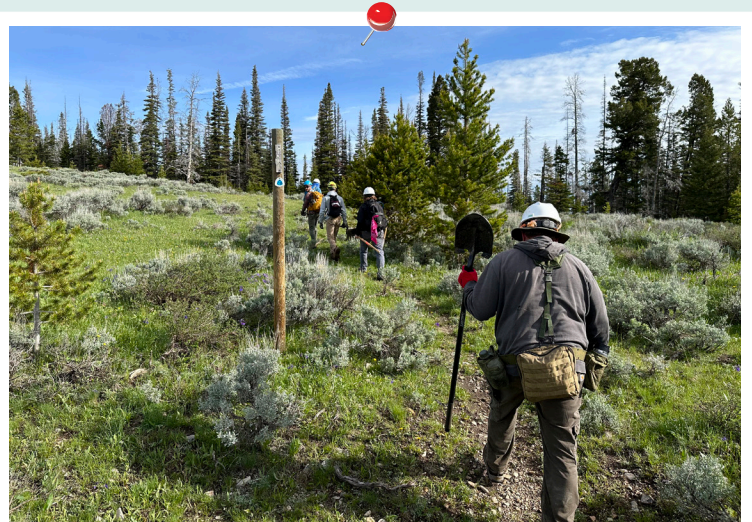
Photo by Guthrie Alexander

Trail Funding & Appropriations

- ✓ **Increased funding** for the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail
- ✓ Passage of FY25 **full year funding** to **protect \$100+ million in trails** and trail-related funding
- ✓ **Dedicated, robust, and increased funding** in FY25 for all trails in the National Trails System for the U.S. Forest Service, NPS, BLM & FWS
- ✓ **Ensure funds from IRA and BIL reach frontline communities**, particularly rural communities in the Rocky Mountain West
- ✓ The CDT program **applied for \$4.8 million in GAOA funding** to address deferred maintenance and infrastructure improvements on the CDT in Region 2, 3, and 4 of the U.S. Forest System

Trail Legislation

- ✓ **Support & Co-sponsor** the CDT Completion Act!



VISIT US ON TRAIL

Our biggest ask of the year... come out and explore the CDT!

2024 Events

Trail Days

April 19-21, 2024
SILVER CITY, NM

National Trails Day

June 1, 2024

Latino Conservation Week

July 14 - 20, 2023

Pride on the Divide

Summer 2024

National Public Lands Day

September 28, 2024

CDT Birthday

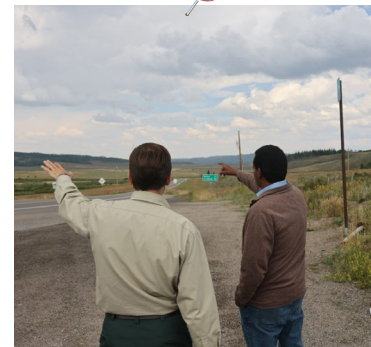
November 10, 2024

Gateway Community Summit

November 2024



Rep. Vasquez & Senator Heinrich in Silver City, NM



Rep. Neguse visiting the Muddy Pass gap



New Mexico Roundhouse Celebrating the CDT Easement



Senator Bennet at the Camp Hale - Continental Divide National Monument Designation



Chair Brenda Mallory at the CDTC Golden Office



Silver City event for the CDT Completion Act



Explore the CDT with Us!

L. Fisher

Trail Policy Program Manager
LFisher@continentaldividetrail.org
406-272-6179

Teresa Martinez

Executive Director
TMartinez@continentaldividetrail.org
303-996-2759



continentaldividetrail.org



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