



# Pacific Crest Trail Association's 2016 Year-End Program Review







Along the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (PCT), 2016 was another great year of accomplishments for the Pacific Crest Trail Association (PCTA) and its partners.

Accomplishments focused on:

- Engaging Americans as citizen stewards on public lands.
- Enhancing strategic partnerships as the cornerstone for sustainable recreation.
- Expanding access to the great outdoors.
- Sustaining and enhancing outdoor recreation opportunities.
- Restoring, sustaining, and enhancing the nation's forests.
- Conserving open space and large landscapes.



**The foundation of PCTA's volunteer programs includes 12 community-based volunteer groups dispersed along the Trail. These groups tend to designated stretches of the PCT by working with PCTA staff and local agency partners in all trail maintenance efforts. Major metropolitan areas provide a solid foundation of committed volunteers and novices for these groups, and each season they are joined by volunteers from across the country and around the world.**

## **Engaging Americans as Citizen Stewards on Public Lands**

The Pacific Crest Trail Association and its agency partners — U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service and California State Parks — understand that taking care of a 2,650-mile trail requires an engaged, diverse, and resilient volunteer network. In a world with a growing disconnect to nature, it is more important than ever to foster the relationship between our environment and people through citizen stewardship. The PCTA's mission to protect, preserve and promote the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail will hold no importance if people no longer value their relationship with public lands. Likewise, there is an incredible amount of self-discovery and knowledge to be extracted through hands-on interaction with the environment. Every year, the PCTA serves as a liaison between people and our public lands.

Volunteers provide dedication, energy, and assistance, allowing organizations to thrive in a way that would not be possible without them. Each year the United States' Corporation for National and Community Service sets a dollar value on volunteer time. This number is based on the average hourly earnings of non-supervisory, production workers. According to this value, in 2016 the PCT volunteer community, including non-trail maintenance activities, contributed 104,269 service hours, an in-kind value of \$2.46 million.

In 2016, 2,081 citizen stewards and corps crew members performed the hard, physical labor of annual maintenance and restoration of the PCT, giving others the opportunity to enjoy the beauty of the wilderness while traveling on a safe, passable trail. Stewards cut back overgrown vegetation, cleared fallen logs, constructed rock retaining walls, and reconstructed and built new trail tread. Alongside PCTA staff members, crew leaders, non-profit and agency partners, PCT volunteers accomplished:

- 1,997 miles of trail maintained
- 40 miles of trail reconstructed and constructed
- 8,027 square feet of cribbing constructed
- 312 feet of turnpike/puncheon constructed

The bedrock of the PCTA's volunteer program includes 12 community-based volunteer groups dispersed along the Trail. Major metropolitan areas source these groups with a solid foundation of committed volunteers, as well as trail maintenance novices. PCTA volunteers come from all walks of life, all ages, and a diverse collection of backgrounds. As a result, they contribute to the cultural transformation of these communities by bridging the gap between the great outdoors and those who are disconnected. Among the outstanding work accomplished by the PCTA's community-based volunteer groups, the following stood out in 2016:

- **Trail Gorillas:** the PCTA's Southern California Trail Gorillas partnered with the Angeles National Forest's Santa Clara/Mojave Rivers Ranger District to restore seven miles of the PCT that burned in the 2013 Powerhouse Fire. A USFS trail-building machine cleared the rough cut of the Trail, while volunteers followed behind to outlope the tread and build drainage features. Volunteers contributed 3,830 hours of service to the Powerhouse Fire restoration.
- **Southern Oregon Rockers:** The newest PCTA volunteer chapter continued its steady growth since its founding in 2014. In 2016 the Rogue Valley, Oregon-based chapter contributed 695 volunteer hours to the PCT. The group annually maintains eight miles of the PCT on Mount Ashland.
- **Mount Hood Chapter:** Volunteers in the Portland, Oregon, area cleared more than 3,200 fallen logs from their 217 adopted trail miles. The Mount Hood Chapter is one of the largest and most active of PCTA's community-based groups, contributing 16,673 hours in 2016.



**PCTA's Trail Skills College trains volunteers to be safe and efficient trail stewards. Courses are taught by PCTA staff, volunteers, nonprofit partners and agency staff. In 2016, volunteers dedicated 10,138 hours to trail skills training. Volunteers at the North Cascades Trail Skills College learned how to reconstruct a section of severely damaged trail.**

PCTA's training program, the Trail Skills College, helps volunteers build their skills and be safe, successful and efficient trail stewards. The Trail Skills College program started with a grant from REI in collaboration with nonprofit and agency partners. It uses modular courses taught at multiple events along the Trail. PCTA staff, nonprofit partners, agency staff, and most notably, volunteers, serve as instructors to new and returning volunteers eager to increase their trail-maintenance knowledge and skills. The Trail serves as the classroom for the courses, and topics range from brushing and scouting to tread reconstruction and crew leadership. The Trail Skills College also offers saw training and certification courses conducted completely by volunteer saw instructors. This unique program is one of the first in the country authorized by the USFS and has served as a national model for other trail organizations.

**"I loved the trail as a thru-hiker, but now I see it with new eyes, and feel like I experience it with a new sense of pride and stewardship."**

*– Liz Donovan*

By training volunteers with the valuable skills needed to help protect and maintain recreation trails, they become the stewards and leaders, in turn giving countless hours to maintain the PCT and other trails across America's public lands.

### **2016 PCTA Sponsored Trail Skills College Trainings**

Number of chain and crosscut saw training events hosted	16
Number of volunteers attending chain or crosscut saw training	177
Number of basic or wilderness first aid trainings hosted	4
Number of volunteers attending basic or wilderness first aid	43
Number of other trail skills training hosted	13
Number of volunteers attending other trail skills training	479

## **Enhancing Strategic Partnerships as the Cornerstone for Sustainable Recreation**

Partnerships and volunteers are the mainstays of this 2,650-mile National Scenic Trail.

A partnership is characterized by cooperation and responsibility for the achievement of a specified goal. The purpose of the PCTA is to protect, preserve, and promote the 2,650-mile PCT as a significant international treasure. How is this monumental work accomplished by a small non-profit? It is accomplished through an extensive network of more than 75 key partners including federal, state, county, and local agencies, conservation and volunteer-minded nonprofits, businesses and retailers, and schools and universities. This large, diverse group has come together with the same collective view: to protect, preserve, and promote the PCT.

The key to any successful partnership is the ability to work together as a team. In 2016, the PCTA renewed its Memorandum of Understanding with their primary agency partners the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service and California State Parks. The purpose of the MOU is to facilitate the management of the Trail, coordinate the development and

distribution of public educational information, encourage volunteer involvement and recognize the PCTA as the government's primary partner in the operation of the Trail.

PCTA's professional Trail Operations staff – including a Trail Operations Director, Land Protection Director, Associate Director of Trail Operations, five Regional Representatives, and a Volunteer Programs Assistant – not only oversees protection, management and maintenance of the PCT but spends a significant amount of time maintaining and building partnerships that strengthen resources for the Trail. In 2016, PCTA conducted 402 meetings with agency partners to plan fieldwork; these collaborative relationships produced outstanding on-the-ground results and contributed to the long-term sustainability of the PCT.

In 2016, these non-profit partners contributed significant volunteer time to restoring the PCT:

- Pacific Northwest Trail Association: 406 hours
- Tahoe Rim Trail Association: 1,020 hours
- Washington Trails Association: 2,594 hours

The PCTA plays a significant role in coordinating the work of federal, state, and non-profit partners to ensure that the crucial access to sustainable recreation opportunities provided by the PCT is protected and maintained. The PCTA leads, coordinates, supports, and sponsors thousands of volunteers and tens of thousands of volunteer hours to maintain the PCT. Volunteers cut out trees that have fallen across and blocked the Trail and cut back brush to keep the Trail corridor open and safe. Volunteer crew leaders direct crews to tackle needed maintenance and reconstruction efforts on the trail tread. These efforts ensure that the PCT provides access to the lands the Trail travels through.

Tahoe National Forest's Truckee Ranger District partnered with the PCTA to host a group of more than 100 REI employee volunteers on a project to repair a deeply trenched section of the PCT where the Trail was diverting water and causing significant erosion. Hikers and horseback riders were often



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unable to travel through this area without spreading out and off of the trail tread. This led to a trampling of a fragile alpine meadow, which led to more erosion and resource damage. Under the guidance of PCTA and the Tahoe National Forest, the REI volunteers moved tons of locally quarried granite to fill in a rock causeway. The causeway raised the trail tread and will keep the PCT dry. This, in turn, will allow hikers and equestrians to stay on the Trail, where they should be, eliminating further damage to the surrounding lands. PCT users now have access to a more naturally appearing landscape as the meadow and surrounding vegetation restores itself. This is the type of experience the PCT is intended to provide—access to beautiful and unimpaired landscapes.



In 2016, the PCTA began working with Washington’s North Cascades National Park. The strategic partnership started with the development of a formal Volunteer Service Agreement early in the year. This agreement not only provided the foundation for the partnership, but it also set the stage for PCTA volunteers to work in the Park on two projects and for volunteer stewards to monitor and perform basic trail maintenance regularly. In cooperation with the Park, the PCTA volunteers fabricated and installed new white oak signs along the 17 miles of the PCT where it passes through wilderness, all the while conducting basic trail maintenance as they traveled along the Trail.

**PCTA and its partners engage volunteers as citizen stewards to help keep the PCT safe and passable for users. In 2016, 2,081 citizen stewards and corps crew members contributed 104,269 service hours, an in-kind value of \$2.46 million. Near Washington’s North Cascades National Park, volunteers replaced signs to help hikers and equestrians find the Trail.**

Some say mules built the West. They definitely built the PCT. Leveraging strategic partnerships with packers, stock support, and equestrian volunteers is integral to the successful maintenance and restoration of the PCT. In Washington, a small creek crossing near White Pass in the William O. Douglas Wilderness had been making travel for stock users on the PCT particularly challenging. Local stock users and Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest identified the needed repair but with limited agency staff to remedy the situation, help from partners was required. In addition to the Back Country Horsemen of Washington and their mules, PCTA staff and PCTA White Pass Chapter volunteers worked with the USFS to fell and move trees and harvest and haul boulders, large rock, gravel and sandy loam more than a half-mile to the project site. At the work site, the material was carefully installed; each layer placed and packed in to ensure stability. Sustainable construction is





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crucial in Northern Washington, where the Trail sees heavy snowfall in the winter, runoff in spring and regular equestrian traffic in the summer. The collaborative spirit amongst the partners epitomizes the spirit of the partnership along the entire PCT.

In 2016, 21 percent of the PCT's 98,721 trail maintenance volunteer hours were accomplished by leveraging partnerships, youth corps, and other youth programs. This work not only restored the PCT but connected young people to nature, developed future citizen stewards and built professional job skills. Aside from the actual trail maintenance skills developed on a trail crew, these youths also learned about conserving America's great outdoors, leadership, teamwork and job safety. Five key youth partners included:

- **American Conservation Experience (ACE):** ACE's conservation corps program is for 18 to 25-year-olds who are considering land management as a career path or possible course of study. Corps members serve in professionally supervised teams as they explore future outdoor careers, learn practical field skills and develop confidence as emerging leaders in the field of conservation. Two ACE crews spent 13,993 hours working on the Trail.
- **AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC):** NCCC strengthens communities and develops leaders through direct, team-based national and community service. Drawn from the successful models of the Civilian Conservation Corps of the 1930s and the U.S. military, NCCC is built on the belief that civic responsibility is an inherent duty of all citizens and that national service programs work effectively with local communities to address pressing needs. NCCC corps members in the Pacific region contributed 1,585 service hours on the PCT in Southern California.
- **Environmental Charter School (ECS):** The school is an award-winning, free public school in southern Los Angeles that educates and prepares students for four-year colleges using the environment as a lens for real-life learning. Each year, students strengthen their understanding of environmental practices through sustainability-minded coursework, service learning, internships and capstone projects related to social or environmental issues.

In addition to their 731 volunteer hours working on the PCT, four ECS students and their teacher joined PCTA staff members and volunteers in Washington D.C., meeting with elected officials and land managers to advocate on behalf of the Trail. During these meetings, students expressed how volunteering on the PCT instilled a personal appreciation for the environment and wilderness.

- **Forest Youth Success:** Forest Youth Success teaches the fundamentals of land management, ecology, and responsibility to the youth of rural Skamania County, Wash., to develop positive life skills that increase future employability. Crews spend the summer working alongside resource management professionals assisting them in achieving their infrastructure and ecosystem management objectives. In 2016, a volunteer crew leader from PCTA's Mount Hood Chapter led six youths in a two-day project.

**"I wanted to let you know how impressed I was with my volunteer experience. Everyone—both PCTA staff and American Conservation Experience crew—was friendly, supportive, and entirely professional. I felt completely safe while also being challenged to learn and try new skills. The opportunity to build a new section of the PCT was really special—I'm hoping to return to the Sierra Buttes next year to keep working on that same section."**

**– Clare "Bucket" Major**

Much of the work to manage and maintain the PCT is accomplished utilizing partnerships and the PCT land acquisition program is just one example of these partnerships in action. While the federal agencies take the lead role in acquiring lands to protect the PCT permanently, they often look to the PCTA and local, regional land trusts to support and aid in the transactions.

In 2016, the PCTA established formal partnerships with multiple non-profit conservation organizations to accelerate the pace of land acquisition along the PCT. The PCTA provided grants to assist with fee title and conservation easement acquisitions along the PCT by the Anza-Borrego Foundation and the Southern Oregon Land Conservancy. The PCTA entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Trust for Public Land to formalize our partnership to work with the USFS and the Michigan-California Timber Company to acquire 10,600 acres in northern California to protect 17 miles of the PCT that currently cross privately-owned lands on a narrow 10-foot wide easement. This vital land protection work would not be possible without the key strategic partnerships the PCTA and its agency partners foster.

## **Expanding Access to the Great Outdoors**

As the PCT travels 2,650 miles from the Mexican-California border to the Washington-Canadian border, it offers access to America's outdoors as it connects some of the most scenic, remote and wild lands in the Western United States. The Trail connects diverse landscapes from the Mojave Desert to the high rugged peaks in California's Sierra Nevada Range to the major volcanic peaks of the Cascade Range. The PCT, often called "America's Wilderness Trail," crosses through 48 Congressionally-designated wilderness areas. Recreationalists from around the world find a unique connection with nature and diverse ecosystems along the PCT as it passes through 25 National



**The PCT offers easy access to America's great outdoors from major West Coast metropolitan areas, including San Diego, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Sacramento, Portland, and Seattle. The PCTA website provides up-to-date information encouraging the safe use, enjoyment and preservation of the Trail.**

Forest units, seven Bureau of Land Management field offices, six National Parks, five California State Park units, five National Monuments and more than 1,500 private properties.

In addition to its restoration and protection efforts, the PCTA serves as the primary clearinghouse for PCT information, connecting the world with one of America's great wilderness recreation icons. The PCTA employs a full-time Trail Information Specialist and a part-time Trail Permit/Information Assistant to act as public resources for PCT information.

The PCTA oversees a comprehensive website, blog, electronic newsletters and a quarterly magazine that provide up-to-date and historical information encouraging the safe use, enjoyment, protection, and preservation of the PCT. Timely trail information is also available through the PCTA's strong social media presence on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and forums. The PCTA maintains a toll-free telephone line and a trail conditions web page that include trail closure and other relevant user information.

The PCTA plays another vital role in expanding access to the great outdoors by assisting the USFS in issuing permits to and coordinating permit information for trail users traveling more than 500 miles.

**2016 Communication Services to the Public and Trail Users**

Number of emails responded to	4,356
Number of phone calls responded to	2,768
Number of social media requests responded to	473
Number of PCT brochures distributed	15,421
Number of issues of the PCT Communicator distributed	54,000
Number of wilderness permits issued for PCT travel in excess of 500 miles	5,657
Number of visits to PCTA's website	2,086,591

Each summer, the PCTA coordinates land use regulations and emergency response information. From fire closures to landslides, the PCTA works hard to collect and share crucial information rapidly. The PCTA's touch is also seen in numerous map projects, books, newspaper and magazine articles every year. In 2016 the PCTA teamed up with Rizzoli to publish a coffee table book filled with beautiful photos and a history of how the Trail came to be. The association also organizes and participates in a significant number of PCT presentations every year.

## **Sustaining and Enhancing Outdoor Recreation Opportunities**

A prominent theme throughout the PCTA's work is ensuring a quality recreational experience for PCT users. Each year hundreds of thousands of outdoor enthusiasts experience the PCT. Users include the casual day hiker/riders to weekend backpacker/riders to thru-hikers and riders. In addition to the impacts from hikers and equestrians, the Trail is subjected to floods, fire, deep snow pack, and torrential rain events that cause erosion, make the Trail unsafe and impassable and cause ecological damage. Every year, the PCTA coordinates thousands of volunteer hours dedicated to the maintenance and restoration of the PCT. The goal of these efforts is to create an excellent wilderness recreation experience that allows Americans to connect with the outdoors.

However, work to sustain and enhance outdoor recreation opportunities on the PCT goes beyond just digging in the dirt to maintain the Trail.



**A prominent theme throughout the PCTA's work is ensuring a quality recreational experience for PCT users. The PCTA tracks and works to influence planning efforts that affect the Trail. In 2016, the Stanislaus, Eldorado, Tahoe, Plumas and Lassen National Forests' Travel Management Subpart C Over-snow Vehicle (OSV) Use projects were the focus of these efforts.**

As the government's primary partner in the management of the PCT, the PCTA tracks and collaborates on a large percentage of planning that affects the Trail. Landscape-level agency planning processes are crucial to the protection and preservation of iconic public resources such as the PCT. A current example of the PCTA's work is with the three "early adopter" Forests in the Sierra Nevada currently undertaking revisions of their forest management plans under the 2012 USFS planning rule. The three "early adopter" Forests include the Sequoia, Sierra, and Inyo National Forests encompassing 157 miles of PCT. Partly because of the PCTA's advocacy with the planning rule, these drafts include a special management area surrounding the PCT. The establishment of a PCT management area, or protected corridor, is what Congress intended when it designated the PCT with the landmark 1968 National Trails System Act. However, until now, this intention has not been carried out on PCT Forests. The Appalachian Trail, by contrast, has had a management corridor in place for decades.

Without a PCT management corridor, providing for seamless management of the Trail across dozens of agency boundaries has been extremely challenging. Each time there's a new threat to the Trail, such as a proposed new development, resource extraction or incompatible use, the PCTA and its partners have reinvented the wheel to establish protective measures for the Trail. A PCT management area with established standards and guides will provide greater and more consistent protection for the Trail, resulting in an enhanced outdoor recreation opportunity for trail users.

As the "early adopter" plans will set a precedent for the rest of the National Forests up and down the PCT, of particular interest to the PCTA is the requirement within the 2012 planning rule that mandates Forests to manage National Scenic Trails with designated management areas surrounding the trails. The USFS defines "Designated Areas" in the final forest plan rule in section § 219.19 as:

"an area or feature identified and managed to maintain its unique special character or purpose. Some categories of designated areas may be designated only by statute, and some categories may be established administratively in the land management planning process or by other administrative processes of the Federal executive branch. Examples of statutorily designated areas are national heritage areas, national recreational areas, national scenic trails, wild and scenic rivers, wilderness areas, and wilderness study areas."

While the management areas will not preclude additional management activities or other recreational uses within the area, they will require local Forests to consider the PCT when planning and implementing projects that may affect it and the trail user experience. Management direction in the forest plans will be in the form of specific desired conditions, standards and guidelines which will direct management activities and planning processes around the PCT.

In 2016, the Stanislaus, Eldorado, Tahoe, Plumas and Lassen National Forests continued developing their Travel Management Subpart C Over-snow Vehicle (OSV) Use projects. These projects are occurring under the direction of the final Subpart C Travel Management Rule. As the PCT travels through all five of these Forests, the PCTA continues to be actively involved in these planning efforts.

The language found in the 1968 National Trails System Act and the 1982 USFS PCT Comprehensive Plan, explicitly prohibits motorized use on or along the PCT. Additionally, the Plan

specifically addresses the prohibition of snowmobiles in the “areas” adjacent to the PCT. Based on this language, PCTA’s position is that OSV use along or adjacent to the PCT is not in compliance with the management direction in the National Trails System Act or USFS PCT Comprehensive Plan.

The Lassen National Forest was the first forest to release a Final Environmental Impact Statement. The PCTA was heartened that the Proposed Action in the FEIS included an area around the PCT that prohibited OSV use; however, was disappointed that the Draft Record of Decision chose a different alternative that did not prohibit OSV use adjacent to the PCT.

PCTA will continue to work with the USFS on all levels to make sure that the Trail receives the protective management that was intended in the National Trails System Act. The PCT is intended to provide world class scenic, wild and remote experiences year round for those who seek it out.

In the case of the Bureau of Land Management’s planning processes, the BLM adopted a new planning rule in 2016 known as “BLM Planning 2.0.” The new planning rule is an attempt to make the BLM’s Resource Management Planning process more efficient and allow sufficient opportunities for public engagement. The PCTA engaged in the public process of developing the new rule and is satisfied that there will be ample opportunity to work with local BLM Districts along the PCT as Resource Management Plans are revised, such as is the case with BLM’s Western Oregon Management Plan currently under revision. BLM’s Western Oregon Management Plan includes the Medford District, which manages nearly 50 miles of the PCT in Southern Oregon.

## **Restoring, Sustaining, and Enhancing America’s Public Lands**

In 2016, the number of PCT users increased. The USFS and the PCTA are thrilled to see more people taking advantage of this outstanding recreation opportunity and having life-changing experiences on the Trail. However, with increased visitor use comes increased recreation impacts along the Trail. In particular, the proliferation of campsites right next to the Trail or in environmentally sensitive areas is of concern. These impacts can negatively affect the recreation opportunity for other users, as well as sensitive ecosystems along the Trail. Campfire impacts, improper disposal of human waste and water quality issues are top concerns.

The PCTA, in partnership with the USFS, BLM, and NPS, works to address and manage these impacts along the PCT corridor through a multifaceted approach to visitor use management. One important aspect is providing information and education for trail users. In 2016, PCTA increased distribution of Leave No Trace education literature and materials for PCT users. This included increasing the number of articles posted to the PCTA website and on social media sites that encourage users to practice LNT principles, respect the surrounding environment and protect the Trail for other people to enjoy. The PCTA and the USFS also are working with popular smartphone app developers to encourage users to choose appropriate, durable camping locations.

Another important approach to providing visitor education is through the “Crest Runner” program.



In Southern California's San Jacinto Mountains, just above the Coachella Valley and Palm Springs, a 15-mile section of the PCT has been closed to the public because of damage caused by the 2013 Mountain Fire. The American Conservation Experience corps crew worked for 29 weeks performing much-needed work to this devastated area. With phase one of three completed, in late 2016 the San Bernardino National

Forest opened four miles of the PCT and multiple miles of side access trails to the public.

Aside from trail maintenance and construction skills, youth program participants on the PCT learn about conserving America's great outdoors, leadership, teamwork and job safety. In 2016, 21 percent of the PCT's 98,721 trail maintenance volunteer hours were accomplished by youth.



For the second year, the Cleveland National Forest hired two Crest Runners to have contact with and educate PCT users. Crest Runners duties are similar to wilderness rangers— making personal contact with visitors, providing education and monitoring sites along the Trail. In addition to paid staff, PCTA is working with agency partners to develop volunteer trailhead hosts and rangers. These volunteers can provide education to trail users and monitor and report sites that are being significantly impacted.

Additionally, the PCTA and the USFS are working to determine locations along the Trail that may need active campsite management. This management may entail decommissioning and restoring substandard campsites, as well as improving or developing sites in locations that minimize impacts to the surrounding resources and other PCT users. The level of management varies by location, use patterns and the approaches agreed to by the PCTA and the agencies.

During the past few years the San Bernardino National Forest, situated in the heart of the Inland Empire of Southern California, has been ravaged by wildfires: the 2013 Mountain Fire burned and closed 15 miles of the PCT; the 2015 Lake Fire damaged 15.5 miles of the Trail but closed 34 miles of PCT trail tread, and in 2016 both the Pilot and Blue Cut fires burned more than 45 miles.

The 2016 field season in Southern California focused on continuing the extensive rehabilitation and

**The PCTA's Southern California Trail Gorillas partnered with the Angeles National Forest to restore seven miles of the PCT that burned in the 2013 Powerhouse Fire. A USFS trail-building machine cleared the rough cut of the Trail, while volunteers followed behind to outslope the tread and build drainage features. Volunteers contributed 3,830 hours of service to the Powerhouse Fire restoration in 2016.**



reconstruction of the PCT through the Mountain Fire and Lake Fire closures. The Trail through the Mountain Fire traverses an iconic, 15-mile section of the PCT known as the Desert Divide, which was closed to the public because of fire damage to the Trail and the surrounding ecosystem. Working with the USFS, the PCTA fielded an American Conservation Experience crew to work for 29 weeks performing much-needed work to this devastated area. With phase one of three completed on this restoration work, in late 2016 the Forest opened four miles of the PCT and multiple miles of side access trails to the public.

The Lake Fire caused extensive damage to two miles of the PCT in the Mission Creek and Mission Springs drainage in addition to lighter burn damage across 13 miles of the PCT. Again the USFS, the PCTA, and the American Conservation Experience worked together with local volunteers to work for two weeks to fix the extensive damage to this area. As a result, the San Bernardino National Forest was able to open this area to hiking in the fall of 2016.

In Oregon, several sections of PCT near Mount Jefferson have suffered worsening erosion for years, having become deep gullies of rocks and roots. The PCTA and the USFS agreed several years ago that these sections necessitated a realignment because the current alignment was unsustainable. Until recently, PCTA had been unable to move forward because of a lack of resources to pay for required NEPA reviews.

Thanks to a PCTA donor's gift last year, the majority of the NEPA costs were covered. The USFS contributed a significant amount of its money to undertake the study of four separate trail sections near Mount Jefferson where the PCT needs realignment. Put together, the segments of damaged PCT that will be cleared for work through these studies include almost 1.5 miles of trail. As a part of these studies, an Optimal Location Review was completed, which helped to expand the focus of the project from small tread problems to look at the overall location across a 40-mile stretch of PCT, to ensure that the Trail is in the best place before investing in several minor realignments. This review



was positive. If the NEPA studies do not reveal any unexpected complicating factors, PCTA could potentially begin construction on these realignments in summer of 2017. This project is an excellent example of our collaborative work with the USFS to restore and enhance our public lands.

## Conserving Open Space and Large Landscapes

The PCT's land acquisition program helps to permanently conserve open space and large landscapes along a patchwork of land ownership spanning the PCT's entire 2,650 miles.

In 2016, using money from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) purchased seven tracts totaling 2,167 acres to protect the PCT and its viewshed. Additionally, nonprofit partners including the Pacific Crest Trail Association and the Anza-Borrego Foundation used private funding to acquire five tracts totaling 445 acres to protect the PCT and its viewshed.

In Washington, the USFS acquired 1,164 acres from The Nature Conservancy to permanently protect the PCT corridor on the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie and Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forests. The PCT community has been working for more than a decade to help consolidate the checkerboard parcels owned by Plum Creek Timber Co. along the Pacific Crest Trail. Since 2001, more than 10,000 acres have been acquired within this checkerboard to protect the PCT trail corridor. This ongoing effort to consolidate public ownership has helped to connect fragmented forest, provides safe migration corridors for wildlife, increases public access to the National Forest lands and permanently protects the experience and scenery for hikers along the PCT. The USFS also



**In 2016, the PCTA pre-acquired the 245-acre Landers Meadow property in the southern Sierra in Kern County, California. This property protects scenic viewshed and high elevation meadows along the PCT that provide critical habitat for birds, bears, mountain lions, deer, and elk.**



**The USFS acquired 273 acres in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, protecting a mile of the PCT and securing public access to Gillette Lake in Washington. Land acquisition along the PCT is vitally important to conserving large landscapes and sustaining the natural recreation experience on the Trail. There are 1,500 parcels that include or are adjacent to the PCT that have been identified as crucial to preserving both the Trail and the high-standard experience people have come to expect while using it.**

acquired 273 acres in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, protecting a mile of the PCT and securing public access to Gillette Lake, which is a popular destination for Boy Scout troops, families, and PCT thru-hikers from around the world.

In the northern Sierra, the USFS acquired the 406-acre Castle Valley property along the Interstate 80 corridor protecting a quarter-mile of the PCT in a heavily-used section of the Trail. This acquisition contributes to the protection of the South Yuba River watershed, provides critical wildlife habitat, and will allow for the construction of a new trailhead to enhance recreational access to the National Forest System lands.

The Pacific Crest Trail Association pre-acquired two properties on the PCT for the USFS that were listed on the real estate market. The 160-acre Donomore Meadows property in Siskiyou County, California, and the 245-acre Landers Meadow property in the southern Sierra in Kern County, California. Both properties protect scenic viewshed and high elevation meadows along the PCT that provide critical habitat for birds, bears, mountain lions, deer, and elk.

In Southern California, the BLM acquired 160 acres adjacent to the PCT in San Diego County, protecting the viewshed of the Trail, Hauser Creek, and habitat for sensitive species including the Arroyo Toad, Quino Checkerspot Butterfly, and the San Diego Horned Lizard. The USFS purchased two parcels totaling 163 acres in Los Angeles County, eliminating a trespass issue where the current route of the PCT traversed private land without an access easement.

# 2016 Accomplishments

## Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail

### Volunteer Stewardship Programs & Training

#### **Provide volunteer support to organize and execute projects**

PCTA staff hours spent on volunteer programs .....	12,212
New trainings posted online.....	15
New volunteer projects posted online.....	111
Volunteer project email announcements sent.....	47
New volunteers .....	494
Returning volunteers.....	1,587
Tool caches.....	37
Inventory of tools and equipment .....	Separate report submitted
Weeks JHA is posted online .....	52
High school programs contacted .....	4
University programs contacted .....	16

#### **Report on all volunteer and corps crew service hours and accomplishments**

Volunteer hours for financial match.....	74,973
Volunteer hours for trail maintenance activities.....	98,721
Volunteer hours for administrative activities.....	1,354
Volunteer hours for governance and committee activities .....	1,622
Volunteer hours for communications and publications.....	266
Volunteers reflecting age, gender, and ethnicity:	

Age	
Under 18	44
18-54	551
55+	442
Unknown	1,040
Declined to Answer	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,081</b>

Ethnicity	
White (non-Hispanic)	813
Black (non-Hispanic)	4
Hispanic	52
Native American/ Alaskan Native	10
Asian/Pacific Islander	34
Unknown	1,066
Declined to Answer	102
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,081</b>

Gender	
Male	820
Female	498
Unknown	759
Declined to Answer	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,081</b>

PCTA-affiliated youth corps volunteer hours.....	15,578
PCTA-affiliated youth volunteer hours.....	20,728
Miles of trail maintained .....	1,997
Miles reconstructed/constructed.....	40
Trailhead kiosks constructed.....	2
Square feet of log cribbing constructed.....	179
Square feet of stone cribbing constructed .....	7,848
Bridges constructed (greater than 20' long, 5' off the deck) .....	1
Feet of turnpike/puncheon constructed .....	312



**Sponsor volunteer training opportunities**

PCTA staff hours spent on trainings.....1,508  
 Volunteers attending Basic or Wilderness First Aid.....43  
 Basic or Wilderness First Aid trainings hosted .....4  
 Volunteers attending crosscut and/or chain saw training.....177  
 Crosscut and/or chain saw trainings hosted .....16  
 Number volunteers attending other trail skills training.....479  
 Other trail skills trainings hosted.....13

**Coordinate with the PCT Program Manager and agency units**

Agency partner meetings to coordinate field program of work:

	Local	Unit	Regional/ Trailwide	Total
U.S. Forest Service	196	73	68	<b>337</b>
Bureau of Land Management	13	7	13	<b>33</b>
National Park Service	21	5	1	<b>27</b>
Other	2	1	2	<b>5</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>402</b>

**Trail and Land Management Support**

PCTA staff hours spent on trail planning and protection.....4,561  
 PCTA staff hours spent providing technical assistance .....1,154

## **Communication Services to the Public & Trail Users**

### **Respond to inquiries from the public and trail users regarding the PCT**

Emails responded to .....	4,356
Phone calls responded to .....	2,768
Social media requests responded to .....	473
Media requests responded to .....	55

### **Maintain a toll-free PCT telephone line**

Updates to the toll-free telephone line .....	6
Calls made to the toll-free telephone line.....	413

### **Publish a periodic magazine**

Copies of the PCT Communicator distributed.....	54,000
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### **Maintain a website**

Website visits .....	2,086,591
Updates to the Trail Conditions pages .....	59

### **Promote PCT at events**

Conferences and outreach events attended .....	59
PCTA staff hours spent planning or participating in events .....	863
PCTA volunteer hours spent planning or participating in events .....	1,348

### **Issue long distance permits**

Wilderness permits issued for travel in excess of 500 miles .....	5,657
Mt. Whitney climbing permits issued.....	1,197

### **Distribute PCT brochures**

Map brochures distributed .....	15,421
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## Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail 2016 Volunteer & Corps Crew Hours

### **Southern California Region**

American Conservation Experience .....	10,360
AmeriCorps NCCC.....	1,585
Environmental Charter Schools .....	731
PCTA Trail Gorillas.....	13,937
Miscellaneous Region Projects.....	1,912

### **Southern Sierra Region**

PCTA Can Do Crew.....	2,809
High Sierra Volunteer Trail Crew.....	1,154
Miscellaneous Region Projects.....	2,445

### **Northern Sierra Region**

American Conservation Experience .....	3,633
PCTA Carsonora Trail Crew .....	1,286
PCTA Pounder's Promise.....	2,767
PCTA Will Work for Krumm's Trail Crew .....	520
Tahoe Rim Trail Association.....	1,020
Miscellaneous Region Projects.....	2,122

### **Big Bend Region**

Ashland Woodlands & Trails Association.....	112
Backcountry Horsemen of Calif. - Top of State....	1,550
PCTA Lyon's Pride Trail Crew .....	2,759
PCTA NorCal Trail Crew .....	376
PCTA Southern Oregon Rockers.....	695
Miscellaneous Region Projects.....	3,257

### **Columbia Cascades Region**

PCTA Mid-Oregon Volunteers .....	6,764
PCTA Mt. Hood Chapter .....	16,673
PCTA Skyline/Sasquatch Crews .....	4,753
Miscellaneous Region Projects.....	893

### **North Cascades Region**

Back Country Horsemen of Washington.....	1,427
Pacific Northwest Trail Association .....	406
PCTA North 350 Blades.....	7,704
PCTA White Pass Chapter .....	1,111
Washington Trails Association .....	2,594
Miscellaneous Region Projects.....	929
Miscellaneous Trailwide .....	439
<b>Total PCT Trail Program Hours .....</b>	<b>98,721</b>

**In 2016, volunteers contributed 5,548 service hours to non-trail maintenance activities including PCTA governance, outreach events, public education, land protection, and advocacy work.**





# Our Partners



ALDHA-West, National  
Alta Land People, Calif.  
American Conservation Experience, National  
American Hiking Society, National  
Anza-Borrego Foundation, Calif.  
Appalachian Mountain Club, National  
Ashland Woodlands and Trails Association, Ore.  
Backcountry Horsemen of America, National  
Backcountry Horsemen of California, Calif.  
Backcountry Horsemen of Oregon, Ore.  
Backcountry Horsemen of Washington, Wash.  
Backpacker Magazine, National  
Bellevue College, Wash.  
Boy Scouts of America, National  
California Alpine Club, Calif.  
Environmental Charter Schools, Calif.  
Equestrian Trails, Inc, Calif.  
Forest Youth Success, Wash.  
High Cascade Forest Volunteers, Ore.  
High Sierra Volunteer Trail Crew, Calif.  
ICF International, National  
Kern Recreational Landowners Association, Calif.

Leave No Trace, National  
Mojave Desert Land Trust, Calif.  
National Civilian Community Corps AmeriCorps,  
National  
National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance, National  
The Nature Conservancy, International  
Oregon Equestrian Trails, Ore.  
Outward Bound, National  
Pacific Forest Trust, Calif./Ore.  
Pacific Northwest Trail Association, Wash.  
Partnership for the National Trails System, National  
San Diego Ultra Running Friends, Calif.  
Sierra Health Foundation, Calif.  
Siskiyou Mountain Club, Ore.  
Southern Oregon Land Conservancy, Ore.  
Tahoe Rim Trail Association, Calif.  
Tahoe Truckee Community Foundation, Calif.  
Trailkeepers of Oregon, Ore.  
Truckee Donner Land Trust, Calif.  
Trust for Public Land, National  
Washington State Dept. of Natural Resources, Wash.  
Washington Trails Association, Wash.  
White Pass Ski Area, Wash.



1331 Garden Highway  
Sacramento, CA 95833  
916-285-1846 [www.pcta.org](http://www.pcta.org)