

PCT Reassurance Markers

PCTA volunteer leaders should carry reassurance markers and appropriate fasteners when they scout and lead trail maintenance projects. The replacement of these markers is as important as a safe tread for hiker and equestrian users.

Reassurance markers are the small wood, plastic, or metal signs that are placed along the trail to reassure hikers and equestrians that they are on the PCT. They are sometimes referred to as 3½" triangle logos. (These are not to be confused with blue or white plain diamonds). Specifically, they should be used to help people figure out where the PCT goes when standing at a trail junction or some other confusing location. If you are standing at a trail junction (or confusing spot), you should be able to clearly see a reassurance marker just a little ways down the PCT in either direction.

Please do not over-use these markers--they are not for "blazing" the trail. They are only for junctions or other confusing areas.

"The purpose of the 3½" marker is to identify the trail to the person on the trail or approaching from the side trail. It is to be used only on the Pacific Crest Trail at common access junctions; at intersections with other trails; and where needed as a reassurance sign if other land use activities or game trails make the trail location uncertain to the traveler. The 3½" marker is not intended to be used as a trail blazer. The 3½" metal or plastic marker is preferred; however, in areas subject to vandalism, the brand (of identical dimensions) may be more practical. Use of the 3½" marker shall be held to the minimum necessary to meet the purpose." - Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail-Comprehensive Plan, 1982, pg. 17.

The marker is placed 7' high on a tree to discourage souvenir collectors. Best practice is to have two people; one person installing the reassurance marker and the other person at the trail junction (or confusing spot) providing guidance as to the optimal location and orientation of the reassurance marker. You may need to install a post if there is no tree in an adequate location. In spots where the confusion lasts for a fair distance (e.g., when the PCT coincides with a dirt road for a few hundred feet), you can arrange markers so that when the person gets to one marker, they will be able to see another marker, until the PCT tread resumes.

In non-Wilderness, reassurance markers are full color and made of plastic or metal and should be attached using galvanized nails. In Wilderness, they are the official PCT logo branded onto a 5½" x 5½" oak sign stock and should be attached using large galvanized nails, bolts, or screws. Make sure the fasteners are of a length that allows a loose fit to accommodate tree growth.

Both non-Wilderness and Wilderness reassurance markers are available in PCTA caches. Please contact your chapter's leader or your regional representative if you don't have access to a cache.