



# Pacific Crest Trail Association's 2015 Year-End Program Review







Along the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (PCT), 2015 was another great year of accomplishments for the Pacific Crest Trail Association (PCTA) and its partners.

Accomplishments focused on:

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

## 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.

Using money from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) in FY2015, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) purchased seven tracts totaling 1,122 acres to protect the PCT and its viewshed.

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

In 2015, PCTA hired its first Land Protection Director to oversee the expansion of a program dedicated to protecting the landscape and trail miles that are still held by private landowners. There are 1,500 parcels that include or are adjacent to the Trail that the PCTA, the USFS and the BLM have identified as crucial to preserving both the Trail and the high-standard experience people have come to expect while using it.

In Washington, the USFS acquired 908 acres from the Trust for Public Land to permanently protect the PCT corridor on the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie and Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forests. The Trust for Public Land has been working with the USFS and PCTA for more than a decade to help consolidate the checkerboard parcels owned by Plum Creek Timber Co. along the PCT. This public/private landownership checkerboard pattern was part of the western land grant by Congress to the Great Northern and Northern Pacific railroads in 1862. Since 2001, approximately 9,000 acres have been acquired within this checkerboard to protect the PCT corridor. This ongoing effort to consolidate public ownership has connected fragmented forest while providing safe migration corridors for



**Land acquisition along the PCT is vitally important to conserving large landscapes and sustaining the natural recreation experience on the Trail. In 2015, PCTA hired its first Land Protection Director to oversee the expansion of a program dedicated to protecting the landscape. There are 1,500 parcels that include or are adjacent to the Trail that the PCTA, USFS and BLM have identified as crucial to preserving both the Trail and the high-standard experience people have come to expect while using it.**

wildlife, increasing public access to National Forest System lands and permanently protecting the experience and scenery for PCT hikers.

In Southern Oregon, PCTA continued to work with the Pacific Forest Trust and the BLM's Medford District on a couple of land acquisition projects. The BLM is in the process of appraising two properties totaling 380 acres for acquisition in early 2016.

In Northern California, a timber company has indicated a willingness to sell approximately 10,500 acres affecting 15 miles of the PCT. The PCT follows a narrow, 10-foot-wide right of way across these private lands. Such trail easements are difficult for landowners when they are planning extraction operations because arrangements need to be made to keep the Trail open. Timber harvesting operations can be hazardous to trail users and potentially increase the resources needed to maintain the Trail where equipment or fallen trees may damage portions of the trail tread. In partnership with the USFS and the Trust for Public Land, PCTA is working to ensure that this acquisition opportunity, through a very popular recreation area along the PCT, is not lost.

In Southern California, the Mojave Desert Land Trust successfully completed the transfer of 224 acres to the BLM protecting viewshed for more than one mile of PCT through the San Geronio Wilderness area.

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

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

A partnership is characterized by mutual cooperation and responsibility for the achievement of a specified goal. The goal of the PCTA is to preserve, protect, 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 2015, the PCTA renewed its Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with their primary agency partners the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), 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 major partner in the operation of the Trail.

PCTA's professional Trail Operations staff – including a Trail Operations Director, Land Protection Director, Trail Operations Manager, five Regional Representatives, and 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 2015, PCTA staff conducted 472 meetings with agency partners just to plan fieldwork; these collaborative relationships produced outstanding on-the-ground results and contributed to the long-term sustainability of the PCT.

In 2015, these non-profit partners contributed significant volunteer time to restoring the PCT:

- Pacific Northwest Trail Association: 514 hours
- Tahoe Rim Trail Association: 1,152 hours
- Washington Trails Association: 3,786 hours

One of PCTA's long-term strategic partners has been the Tahoe Rim Trail Association (TRTA). The 165-mile Tahoe Rim Trail travels the ridges that bound the iconic Lake Tahoe Basin; and for more than 15 years, TRTA has taken the lead on maintenance of a 50-mile section of the PCT that is shared with the TRT. The TRTA and its volunteers perform annual maintenance on this section of the PCT, clearing downed trees, cutting back brush, and performing tread maintenance. In 2015, the TRTA not only increased the number of volunteer hours on the PCT by 726 hours, an increase of 170% from the previous year, but they also began performing multi-day backcountry work and heavy tread maintenance. This type of work is much needed on this remote, granite section of the PCT in Desolation Wilderness. PCTA's partnership with the TRTA continues to grow.

While the PCT community celebrates long-term partners like TRTA, new partnerships are constantly being developed and nurtured. One new partner in 2015 was Riverside County Regional Park and Open-Space District (Riv Co Parks). Riv Co Parks is the Riverside County, Calif., recreation branch whose mission is to acquire, protect, develop, manage and interpret for the inspiration, use, and enjoyment of all people, a well-balanced system of areas of outstanding scenic, recreational and historic importance. In 2015, the Forest Service and PCTA partnered with Riv Co Parks on the annual Southern California Trail Skills College. This was an opportunity for both PCTA and Riv Co Parks volunteers and staff to receive



**PCTA partners with the Tahoe Rim Trail Association to accomplish maintenance on a 50-mile section of the Trail that is shared with the TRT. In 2015, TRTA volunteers contributed 1,152 hours performing annual maintenance on this section of the PCT, clearing downed trees, cutting back brush, and performing tread maintenance.**



**Aside from trail maintenance and construction skills, youth corps and other youth program participants on the PCT learn about conserving America's great outdoors, leadership, teamwork and job safety. In 2015, 24 percent of the PCT's 91,458 trail maintenance volunteer hours were accomplished by youth corps and other youth programs including American Conservation Experience (ACE).**

trail skills training and perform much needed restoration work on public lands. Riv Co Parks provided meals, camping, work locations and onsite help while PCTA provided instructors, tools, protective equipment, registration and logistics. This event was a great example of leveraging strategic partnerships for sustainable recreation on public lands.

In 2015, 24 percent of the PCT's 91,458 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 youth citizens 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 18-25 year olds who are considering land management as a career path or potential 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. Members are afforded opportunities to learn and train under the guidance of professional mentors within ACE, while gaining invaluable career perspectives working alongside the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management and many other public land stewards. In 2015, two ACE crews spent more than 10,000 hours working on the PCT on four BLM districts and eight National Forests.
- **AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC):** AmeriCorps 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, AmeriCorps 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. In partnership with non-profits, federal and local governments, national and state parks, members complete service projects throughout their specified region. In 2015, corps members in the Pacific region contributed more than 2,200 service hours on the PCT in San Bernardino National Forest and California's Silverwood Lake State Recreation Area.

**The Environmental Charter Schools are award-winning, free public schools in southern Los Angeles that educate and prepare students for four-year colleges using the environment as a lens for real-life learning. Since 2007, ECS students have volunteered on the PCT during weekend service projects. In 2015, ECHS students contributed more than 650 volunteer hours on the PCT on the Angeles National Forest and BLM lands performing annual trail maintenance.**



- **Environmental Charter Schools:** The Environmental Charter High School and Middle School are award-winning, free public schools in southern Los Angeles that educate and prepare students for four-year colleges using the environment as a lens for real-life learning. Each year, students strengthen their understanding and application of environmental practices through sustainability-minded coursework, service learning, internships and capstone projects related to social or environmental issues. Since 2007, ECS students have volunteered on the PCT during weekend service projects. In 2015, ECHS students contributed more than 650 volunteer hours on the PCT on the Angeles National Forest and BLM lands performing annual maintenance by cutting back brush and widening trail tread. In 2015, students expanded their service beyond just working on the physical trail tread by branching into advocacy. Four students and their principal joined PCTA staff and volunteers in Washington D.C., meeting with elected officials and land managers to advocate on behalf of the PCT. 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., in order 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 2015, a volunteer crew leader from PCTA's Mount Hood Chapter led 12 youths in four days of work on the PCT. The crew performed brushing, tread repair, and drainage maintenance on the Trail, including widening a 600-foot section of severely narrowed trail. During the four days, FYS youth contributed more than 350 service hours.
- **Urban Youth:** Since 2014, PCTA has partnered with New Currents, Outdoors in Portland, Ore., to get urban youth ages 12-17 involved in environmental education, hiking, camping and recreating on public lands. In 2015, 18 youth from Vancouver contributed more than 300 hours removing invasive weeds and improving drainage features on the PCT in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area.

## Expanding Access to the Great Outdoors

The PCT spans 2,650 miles from Mexico to Canada through California, Oregon, and Washington. It offers access to America's outdoors as it connects diverse landscapes, offering a gateway to recreational adventure as it reveals the beauty of the desert, unfolds the glaciated expanses of the Sierra Nevada, travels deep forests, and provides commanding vistas of volcanic peaks in the Cascade Range. The Trail symbolizes everything there is to love—and protect—in the Western United States.

Hikers and equestrians from around the world find a unique connection with nature and diverse ecosystems along the PCT as it passes through 48 Congressionally-designated wilderness areas, 25 National Forest units, seven Bureau of Land Management field offices, six National Parks, five California State Park units, four National Monuments and more than 1,500 private properties.

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

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



**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.**

preservation of the PCT. Timely trail information is also available through PCTA's strong social media presence on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. PCTA maintains a toll-free telephone line and a trail conditions web page that include trail closure and other important user information.

The PCTA plays another key role in expanding access to the great outdoors by assisting the U.S. Forest Service in issuing permits to and coordinating permit information for trail users traveling more than 500 miles. Each summer, PCTA coordinates land use regulations and emergency response information. From fire closures to landslides, the PCTA works hard to rapidly collect and share crucial information. PCTA's touch is also seen in numerous map projects, books, newspaper and magazine articles every year. The association also organizes and participates in a large number of PCT presentations every year.

### 2015 Communication Services to the Public and Trail Users

Number of emails responded to	3,597
Number of phone calls responded to	2,100
Number of social media requests responded to	387
Number of PCT brochures distributed	12,326
Number of issues of the PCT Communicator distributed	46,000
Number of wilderness permits issued for PCT travel in excess of 500 miles	4,462
Number of visits to PCTA's website	2,923,891

## Sustaining and Enhancing Outdoor Recreation Opportunities

A prominent theme throughout PCTA's work is ensuring a quality recreational experience for PCT users. Each year hundreds of thousands or more than a million 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 volunteers dedicated to the maintenance and restoration of the PCT to meet national quality standards. The goal of these efforts is to create a superlative wilderness recreation experience that allows Americans to connect with the outdoors.

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

As the government's major partner in the management of the PCT, PCTA tracks and favorably influences a large percentage of planning that affects the Trail. A current example of PCTA's work is with the three "early adopter" National Forests in the Sierra Nevada currently undertaking revisions of their forest management plans. Partly because of PCTA's advocacy, 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. But 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.



**In Northern California's Eldorado National Forest, an Optimal Location Review was completed in 2015 to identify a new location for the PCT. The Trail is being moved to minimize the exposure of trail users to the sights and sounds of the highway. The new alignment provides views of Lake Tahoe, providing trail users with a significantly enhanced trail experience that reduces the impacts of surrounding development.**

Without a PCT management corridor, providing for seamless management of the Trail across dozens of agency boundaries has been extremely difficult. Each time there's a new threat to the Trail, such as a proposed new development, resource extraction or incompatible use, 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.

Along the PCT, one way to enhance outdoor recreation is by relocating the Trail. Through a process called an Optimal Location Review (OLR), the Forest Service, PCTA and other PCT partners, work to determine whether the PCT is in the best location or whether another alignment would offer a superior experience for hikers and horseback riders.

In 2015, after many years of work an OLR was completed by the Eldorado National Forest and suggests a new optimal location for the PCT near Echo Summit in Northern California. Echo Summit is one of the iconic gateways in to the Lake Tahoe Basin. About three million people visit Lake Tahoe every year, many of whom travel Highway 50 to the Basin. Because of the Trail's current



**Use on the PCT increased significantly in 2015. The USFS and PCTA are thrilled to see more people taking advantage of this outstanding recreation opportunity and having life-changing experiences on the PCT. However, with increased visitor use comes increased recreation impacts. One approach to providing visitor education is through the “Crest Runner” program. In 2015, the USFS hired two “Crest Runners” to have contact with and educate PCT users and to monitor impacted sites along the Trail.**

location, the recreational experience and user safety is heavily influenced as the Trail travels parallel and close to the highway for three-quarters of a mile. Also, the trailhead does not provide adequate parking or access for PCT users and, importantly, equestrian users with horse trailers cannot access the area. Due to these challenges, the Eldorado National Forest and PCTA agreed that this section of trail warranted an Optimal Location Review.

Several years into the OLR process, a new potential trail alignment for the PCT was discovered and proved to be the best location for the Trail. This alignment will minimize the exposure of trail users to the sights and sounds of the highway by moving the Trail further away from the highway and behind a ridge that will shield users. The new alignment also provides views of Lake Tahoe, providing PCT users with a significantly enhanced trail experience that reduces the impacts of surrounding development. This high quality trail experience is what PCT users have come to desire and expect.

In 2015 the number of PCT users increased. The USFS and 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 are 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 2015, 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. PCTA and the USFS are also 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 2015, the Cleveland National Forest hired two “Crest Runners” to have contact with and educate PCT users. “Crest Runners” had duties 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.

PCT partners are also engaging outside assistance to learn how to manage for increased use. PCTA, NPS, and USFS staff from the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit and Eldorado National Forest participated in a week-long “Visitor Use Management and Impacts Training” led by renowned Recreation Ecologist Jeff Marion. The training helped attendees determine effective measures for reducing and managing visitor impacts.



**A large part of sustaining and enhancing outdoor recreation includes managing for visitor user. In 2015, USFS and PCTA jointly sponsored a workshop on visitor use management and impacts training taught by Recreation Ecologist Jeff Marion. PCTA, NPS, and USFS staff from the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit and Eldorado National Forest participated in the week-long training.**

Additionally, PCTA and 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 PCTA and the agencies.

These efforts are needed as the popularity of the PCT has been increasing for years. In 2015, PCTA was especially focused on this in light of the December 2014 release of the movie *Wild* based on Cheryl Strayed's bestselling book. The book and movie helped launch the PCT into popular consciousness in 2015.

## Engaging Americans as Citizen Stewards on Public Lands

The PCTA and its agency partners — USFS, BLM, NPS and California State Parks — understand that taking care of a 2,650-mile trail requires a resilient, diverse and engaged 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 PCT 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 interactions with the environment. Every year the PCTA serves as a liaison between people and the great outdoors.

Volunteers provide dedication, energy and assistance, allowing organizations to function and even thrive in a way that would not be possible without them. Each year the 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 2015 the PCT volunteer community, including non-trail maintenance activities, contributed 96,481 service hours, an in-kind value of \$2.23 million.

**“Volunteering for trail maintenance just made me feel happy. It made me feel like I accomplished something and when hikers told me I was doing a good job, it made me smile and feel like my accomplishments were appreciated.”**

**~ David MacFarland**

In 2015, 1,825 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. Their work included cutting back overgrown vegetation, repairing bridges, clearing fallen logs, constructing rock retaining walls, reconstructing trail tread, and building new trail tread. Alongside PCTA staff, crew leaders, non-profit and agency partners, PCT volunteers accomplished:

- 1,482 miles of trail maintained
- 24 miles of trail reconstructed
- 1,074 square feet of cribbing constructed
- 277 feet of turnpike/puncheon constructed



**PCTA and its partners engage volunteers as citizen stewards to help keep the PCT safe and passable for hikers and horseback riders. In 2015, 1,825 citizen stewards and corps crew members contributed 96,481 service hours, an in-kind value of \$2.23 million.**

The bedrock of the PCTA's volunteer program includes 13 community-based volunteer groups dispersed along the Trail. Major metropolitan areas source these groups with a solid foundation of committed volunteers and trail maintenance novices. PCTA volunteers range in age and come from diverse backgrounds. As a result, they contribute to the cultural transformation of communities by bridging the gap between the great outdoors and those that are disconnected. Among the outstanding work accomplished by PCTA community-based volunteer groups, the following stood out in 2015:

- **Mount Hood Chapter:** Mount Hood National Forest Supervisor Lisa Northrop presented the chapter with the 2014 U.S. Forest Service Volunteers & Service Leadership Award for the extensive training programs the chapter offers local volunteers, their willingness to work on trails year-round, the corporate partnerships they've developed, and increased volunteer hours.

**“(Volunteer crew leader) Don Line and the Trail Gorillas know what they are doing and anyone who wants to volunteer will do so with ease and without feeling like an outsider.”**

**~ Robert Tatian**

**Trail Skills College is PCTA's volunteer training program. In addition to courses on trail maintenance, the program offers saw training and certification courses so volunteers can learn how to work safely while clearing fallen logs from the Trail. PCTA's saw program serves as a model for other organizations, as it is one of the first in the country to allow volunteer instructors to train and certify other PCTA volunteers.**



- **Southern Oregon Rockers:** A local photographer formed a new volunteer chapter to maintain eight miles of the Pacific Crest Trail on Mount Ashland. In its first year, the group contributed 467 volunteer hours to the PCT.
- **Pounder's Promise:** Since its founding in 2013, this rural Northern California group has continued its rapid growth, doubling the number of volunteer hours accrued between 2014 and 2015 to 3,376. One memorable project from the 2015 season included removing 368 logs from a six-mile section of PCT in Lassen Volcanic National Park.

PCTA's training program, the Trail Skills College helps volunteers build their skills and be successful in their trail work by providing education and training in safe trail construction and restoration. The Trail Skills College program was started with a grant from REI in collaboration with non-profit and agency partners. Using modular courses taught at multiple events along the Trail, volunteers, PCTA staff, nonprofit partners and agency staff serve as instructors to new and returning volunteers eager to increase their trail-maintenance knowledge and skills. Using the Trail as the classroom, courses cover topics ranging from brushing and scouting to tread re-construction and crew leadership. The Trail Skills College also offers saw training and certification courses conducted by volunteer saw instructors. This unique program is one of the first in the country authorized by the Forest Service and has served as a model for other trail organizations.

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.

### **2015 PCTA Sponsored Trail Skills College Trainings**

Number of chain and crosscut saw training events hosted	13
Number of volunteers attending chain or crosscut saw training	117
Number of basic or wilderness first aid trainings hosted	7
Number of volunteers attending basic or wilderness first aid	52
Number of other trail skills training hosted	17
Number of volunteers attending other trail skills training	611

## Restoring, Sustaining, and Enhancing the Nation's Public Lands

PCTA's work fosters healthy ecosystems and their restoration in many ways. Because the PCT corridor is 2,650 miles long, the restoration activities necessarily embody an all-lands approach, working across jurisdictions, and treating forested landscapes as an integrated whole. Trail maintenance is itself ecosystem restoration, protecting watersheds large and small by heading off trail erosion. But beyond that, the PCTA works to restore the landscapes through which the Trail travels.

The purpose of trails, such as the PCT, is to take users into landscapes so they can appreciate them in their natural state. But when trails interrupt the landscape's hydrological patterns, the vegetation and wildlife communities below the trail are affected by changing the amount of water they receive. Therefore, it's up to the land managing agencies and the PCTA to ensure trails are designed to lie lightly on the land and to drain properly. PCT trail crews maintained 1,482 miles of trail in 2015, and reconstructed 24 miles of tread.

One of the landscapes that has been particularly challenging is Glacier Peak Wilderness in Washington State. Because of a road washout in 2003, this section of the PCT was inaccessible for 11 years. In 2015, after a massive road reconstruction project, volunteers were finally able to access the Suiattle River Trail and clear nearly seven miles of overgrown side trail leading to the PCT. A



**Volunteers worked to restore nearly seven miles of overgrown trail leading to the PCT in Washington's popular Glacier Peak Wilderness in 2015. Because of a road washout in 2003, this section of the PCT was inaccessible for 11 years. Crews removed a decade's worth of fallen logs.**

week-long PCTA crew led the charge by cutting a decade's worth of fallen logs to the south, while Washington Trails Association volunteers worked their way to the north. This collaboration included a youth crew from the Seattle area and was well supported by packers from Backcountry Horsemen of Washington. Although the removal of nearly 200 logs was the primary goal, these crews also performed much-needed brushing and improved drainage structures. Putting a stop to the resource damage, as soon as possible, is as important as clearing tread. By season's end, the northern half of Glacier Peak Wilderness was accessible to hiker and equestrian users.

The PCT traverses a geologically dynamic landscape. Unstable volcanic soils and voluminous annual precipitation mean constant erosion on the PCT. Where erosion has gone too far to respond to regular maintenance, PCTA coordinates and conducts extended backcountry projects, often highly technical in nature.

PCT reconstruction projects are critical in re-establishing the ecological patterns and processes that facilitate terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems sustainability, resilience, and health.

In many instances, the goal of a PCTA maintenance project is to both repair the PCT trail tread and to improve and restore the surrounding environment through which the Trail passes. The focus of some projects is to reduce the erosion and sedimentation the Trail contributes to local watersheds.

In 2014 the Happy Camp Complex of wildfires burned more than 100,000 acres on the Klamath National Forest. Some of the most intense fire activity was on public land in the Grider Creek drainage, a tributary of the Klamath River. The PCT follows the Grider Creek drainage as the Trail descends out of the Marble Mountains to cross the Klamath River at Seiad Valley, Calif. The section of the PCT saw significant fire damage and erosion. Working with the Forest Service in 2015, the PCTA fielded an American Conservation Experience crew to perform much needed restoration work in this fragile fire-damaged ecosystem. The crew spent nearly three weeks redigging tread, repairing crucial drainages and building retaining walls to limit further damage to the Trail and erosion run off into the Grider Creek drainage.

Another example of restoring public lands after a wildfire has been ongoing for several years in Northern California's Lassen area. A lightning strike in Lassen Volcanic National Park ignited a fire near Reading Peak in 2012. Because of dry conditions and high winds, the fire spread quickly and crossed onto the Lassen National Forest. The fire burned 28,000 acres. In the southern part of the Hat Creek Ranger District the fire burned extremely hot across the PCT, killing virtually all of the vegetation and scorching the surrounding landscape.

Without the vegetative root systems intact, the soils became unstable on the hillside where the PCT is aligned. The winters of 2012 and 2013 resulted in an enormous amount of erosion from the trail tread. In places the trail tread became entrenched up to 14 inches deep. In 2014, PCTA volunteers started efforts to repair the trail tread but couldn't accomplish all the vital restoration work needed. In 2015, an American Conservation Experience crew and PCTA volunteers completed a week-long project to continue repairing this section of the PCT. The corps crew and PCTA volunteers utilized materials to check and fill in the Trail's severely eroded tread, and installed new drainages to protect against future erosion.



**PCTA fielded a corps crew to perform much needed restoration work on the Klamath National Forest in a fire-damaged ecosystem. The crew spent nearly three weeks redigging tread, repairing crucial drainages and building retaining walls to limit further damage to the PCT and erosion run off into the Grider Creek drainage.**

# 2015 Accomplishments

## Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail

### Volunteer Stewardship Programs & Training

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

Number of PCTA staff hours spent on volunteer programs .....	10,470
Number of new trainings posted online.....	19
Number of new volunteer projects posted online.....	104
Number of volunteer project email announcements sent .....	31
Number of new volunteers .....	758
Number of returning volunteers.....	1,067
Number of tools caches .....	38
Inventory of tools and equipment .....	Separate report submitted
Number of weeks JHA is posted online .....	52
Number of high school programs contacted .....	10
Number of university programs contacted.....	15

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

Number of volunteers hours for financial match.....	66,940
Number of volunteers hours for trail maintenance activities .....	91,458
Number of volunteers hours for administrative activities .....	927
Number of volunteers hours for governance and committee activities.....	1,656
Number of volunteers hours for communications and publications.....	479
Number of volunteers reflecting age, gender, and ethnicity:	

	Male	Female	Total
Under 18	79	49	<b>128</b>
18-54	676	532	<b>1,208</b>
55+	964	277	<b>1,241</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,719</b>	<b>858</b>	<b>2,577</b>
White (non-Hispanic)	1,554	777	<b>2,331</b>
Black (non-Hispanic)	25	4	<b>29</b>
Hispanic	37	26	<b>63</b>
Native American/ Alaskan Native	1	0	<b>1</b>
Asian/Pacific Islander	20	18	<b>131</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,637</b>	<b>825</b>	<b>2,462</b>

Number of PCTA-affiliated youth corps volunteer hours.....	15,365
Number of PCTA-affiliated youth volunteer volunteer hours .....	22,231
Number of miles of trail maintained .....	1,482
Number of miles reconstructed/constructed .....	24
Number of trailhead kiosks constructed .....	1
Number of square feet of log cribbing constructed .....	78
Number of square feet of stone cribbing constructed.....	996
Number of bridges constructed (greater than 20' long, 5' off the deck) .....	3
Number of feet of turnpike/puncheon constructed .....	277



**Sponsor volunteer training opportunities**

- Number of PCTA staff hours spent on trainings.....1,649
- Number volunteers attending Basic or Wilderness First Aid .....52
- Number of Basic or Wilderness First Aid trainings hosted .....7
- Number of volunteers attending crosscut and/or chain saw training .....117
- Number of crosscut and/or chain saw trainings hosted .....13
- Number volunteers attending other trail skills training.....611
- Number of other trail skills trainings hosted.....17

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

Number of agency partner meetings to coordinate field program of work:

	Local	Unit	Regional/ Trailwide	Total
U.S. Forest Service	211	95	86	<b>392</b>
Bureau of Land Management	15	12	28	<b>55</b>
National Park Service	14	4	1	<b>19</b>
Other	6	0	0	<b>6</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>472</b>

**Trail and Land Management Support**

- Number of PCTA staff hours spent on trail planning and protection .....3,811
- Number of PCTA staff hours spent providing technical assistance .....1,104

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

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

Number of emails responded to.....	3,597
Number of phone calls responded to.....	2,100
Number of social media requests responded to.....	387
Number of media requests responded to.....	123

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

Number of updates to the toll-free telephone line.....	32
Number of calls made to the toll-free telephone line.....	870

### **Publish a periodic magazine**

Number of copies of the PCT Communicator distributed .....	46,000
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### **Maintain a website**

Number of website visits .....	2,923,891
Number of updates to the Trail Conditions pages.....	70

### **Promote PCT at events**

Number of conferences and outreach events attended .....	46
Number of PCTA staff hours spent planning or participating in events.....	632
Number of PCTA volunteer hours spent planning or participating in events.....	692

### **Issue long distance permits**

Number of wilderness permits issued for travel in excess of 500 miles .....	4,462
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### **Distribute PCT brochures**

Number of map brochures distributed.....	12,326
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# Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail 2015 Volunteer & Corps Crew Hours

## Southern California Region

American Conservation Experience .....	5,896
AmeriCorps NCCC.....	2,282
Environmental Charter Schools .....	666
PCTA Trail Gorillas.....	12,255
Miscellaneous Region Projects.....	2,123

## Southern Sierra Region

PCTA Can Do Crew.....	2,841
Miscellaneous Region Projects.....	2,244

## Northern Sierra Region

American Conservation Experience .....	4,729
PCTA Carsonora Trail Crew .....	1,210
PCTA Pounder's Promise.....	3,376
PCTA Tahoe Area Volunteers .....	509
PCTA Will Work for Krumm's Trail Crew .....	697
Tahoe Rim Trail Association.....	1,152
Miscellaneous Region Projects.....	2,176

## Big Bend Region

American Conservation Experience .....	2,458
Ashland Woodlands & Trails Association.....	217
Backcountry Horsemen of Calif. - Top of State....	1,706
PCTA Lyon's Pride Trail Crew .....	3,251
PCTA NorCal Trail Crew .....	634
PCTA Southern Oregon Rockers.....	467
Miscellaneous Region Projects.....	1,069

## Columbia Cascades Region

PCTA Mid-Oregon Volunteers .....	6,974
PCTA Mt. Hood Chapter .....	15,556
PCTA Skyline/Sasquatch Crews.....	3,103
Miscellaneous Region Projects.....	686

## North Cascades Region

Back Country Horsemen of Washington.....	324
Pacific Northwest Trail Association .....	514
PCTA North 350 Blades.....	4,894
PCTA White Pass Chapter .....	1,136
Washington Trails Association .....	3,786
Miscellaneous Trailwide .....	106
<b>Total PCT Trail Program Hours .....</b>	<b>91,458</b>

**In 2015, volunteers contributed 5,023 service hours to non-trail maintenance activities including PCTA governance, outreach events, public education, land protection, and advocacy work.**





# Our Partners



- Adventure 16, Calif.  
ALDHA-West, National  
Alta Land People, Calif.  
American Conservation Experience, National  
American Hiking Society, National  
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.  
Boreas, National  
Boy Scouts of America, National  
California Alpine Club, Calif.  
Cedar House Sport Hotel, Calif.  
Coyote Camp Fireline Chow, National  
Environmental Charter Schools, Calif.  
Equestrian Trails, Inc, Calif.  
Esbit, National  
Granite Gear, National  
Gregory, National  
High Cascade Forest Volunteers, Ore.  
High Sierra Volunteer Trail Crew, Calif.  
ICF International, National  
Inviting Light Photography, Calif.  
Juniper Ridge, National  
Kern Recreational Landowners Association, Calif.  
Keyes, Fox, & Weidman LLP, Calif.  
Leave No Trace, National  
LED Lenser, National  
Leki, National  
Mom's Pie House, Calif.  
Mountain Khakis, National  
National Civilian Community Corps AmeriCorps,  
National  
National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance, National  
New Currents, Outdoors, Ore.  
New Seasons Market , Ore.  
Oregon Equestrian Trails, Ore.  
Osprey Packs, Inc., National  
Outdoor Viewfinder, National  
Pacific Forest Trust, Calif./Ore.  
Pacific Northwest Trail Association, Wash.  
Partnership for the National Trails System, National  
Platypus, National  
REI, National  
Royal Robbins, National  
Salazon Chocolate, National  
San Diego Ultra Running Friends, Calif.  
Sierra Health Foundation, Calif.  
Siskiyou Mountain Club, Ore.  
Tahoe Rim Trail Association, Calif.  
Tahoe Truckee Community Foundation, Calif.  
The North Face, National  
Trailkeepers of Oregon, Ore.  
Trust for Public Land, National  
Ultralight Adventure Equipment, National  
Ursack, National  
Washington State Dept. of Natural Resources, Wash.  
Washington Trails Association, Wash.  
White Pass Ski Area, Wash.  
Well.org, National  
Woolrich, National



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ASSOCIATION

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