

ANNUAL REPORT

2017



Photo of Paradise Park, OR by James Parsons



**Pacific Crest Trail
Association**



The signing of the National Trails System Act on October 2, 1968

The simplest pleasures—and healthful exercise—of walking in an outdoor setting have been almost impossible for the millions of Americans who live in the cities.

Our history of wise management of America's national forests has assisted us in designating the initial elements of the National Trails System. Two National Scenic Trails, one in the East and one in the West, are being set aside as the first components of the Trails System: the Appalachian Trail and the Pacific Crest Trail.

Lyndon Baines Johnson
October 2, 1968



Celebrating 50 years as a National Scenic Trail

Photo of Helen Lake, CA by Martin Gatrost

To Our Members and Supporters

As we reflect on 2017, we can't help but look at our association's accomplishments and put them in the context of the past and the future. That's because we're celebrating not only the last year, but the last 50 years. At the PCTA, we're reflecting on the past and thinking about what we need to accomplish going forward.

2018 is the 50th anniversary of the National Trails System Act, the landmark legislation that created the National Trails System and designated the Pacific Crest and Appalachian trails as the first two National Scenic Trails. We've come a long way since Oct. 2, 1968, when President Lyndon B. Johnson signed this law and forever changed how the nation views trails. Today there are 11 National Scenic Trails, 19 National Historic Trails and over a thousand National Recreation Trails.

It should not be lost during this anniversary celebration that Congress worked together for years to get this seminal law to the finish line. It did this with near-unanimous support from both major political parties, despite seemingly constant national tumult that included political assassinations, cultural unrest and the Vietnam War. In spite of it all, our elected representatives still had the ability and stamina to look ahead. We should, too.

The 50th anniversary is cause for celebration, no doubt. But it's also cause for looking to the next 50 years and what we can do together to make the PCT and the National Trails System the best it can be. How future generations will access public lands depends on all of us and what we do today to protect what we have—and build upon it. In that spirit, we're happy to bring you this report about the PCTA's recent accomplishments.

In 2017, 2,116 PCTA volunteers contributed 96,657 hours to the trail, an in-kind value of more than \$2.4 million. Your private donations also totaled \$2.3 million, a staggering sum. Your efforts, both in time and money, are evident in the PCTA's on-the-ground successes. For all that, we can't thank you enough.

Our membership is now over 13,000. Together we continue the push for protecting land along the trail. In 2017, we secured \$4.5 million in federal funding for the first of three phases to purchase 10,600 acres of the Trinity Divide in Northern California through the Land and Water Conservation Fund. This ongoing project will protect 17 miles of the PCT in the Shasta-Trinity and Klamath national forests. We also purchased 402 acres at Stevens Pass, Washington, protecting a key access point for the trail and eliminating the potential for vacation home construction along the PCT. This once-imperiled property provides the only feasible trail corridor for the PCT through this area, and it's now available for perpetual public use.

Also in 2017, we saw massive wildfires cross the PCT in the Pacific Northwest. Nearly 300 miles of the trail were closed by these fires in Oregon and Washington and we're still not sure what the situation will be after the winter thaw. As one response, PCTA crews have teamed with other concerned and dedicated volunteers from the Washington Trails Association, Friends of the Columbia Gorge and Trailkeepers of Oregon to form the Gorge Trails Recovery Team. We are working together to make sure public access to many Gorge trails, including the PCT, are safe and accessible.

We could go on. Our volunteers are out in force taking care of the trail. Our agency partners are working hard to ensure that the PCT is well considered during government planning efforts. And our many partnerships with groups and individuals ensure that the PCT will continue for the next 50 years. You are protecting recreational experiences for future generations.

Many thanks.

Liz Bergeron
Executive Director and CEO

John Crawford
Chair, PCTA Board of Directors



Pacific Crest Trail Association

2017 “The Year of Fire and Ice”

96,657 volunteer hours
\$2.4 million in-kind value of volunteer hours

\$2.3 million received in private funding

13,000 members from **50** states and **45** countries

2,116 volunteers gave their time for the PCT
1,781 trail miles maintained

1,556 acres permanently protected along the PCT

9,313 inquiries from the public responded to
2,083,211 website visits
55,000 PCT Communicator magazines distributed

6,069 permits issued on behalf of federal agencies

In a year of record snow and wildfires, your support made all the difference.

Photo of the Sierra Nevada in 2017 by Danielle O'Farrell

2017 was called by Pacific Crest Trail users “The Year of Fire and Ice.” High snow levels and swollen streams made for treacherous hiking in the Sierra Nevada. Those who made it through were faced with many wildfires that thickened the air and closed sections of the trail. In spite of these challenges, hundreds of hikers persevered to complete the PCT.

That same perseverance was evident in your support for the trail throughout the year. Your memberships, donations, and volunteer hours made 2017

a successful year, and we're grateful for your passion and commitment.

Aristotle once said nature abhors a vacuum. Our volunteers who maintain the trail created a vacuum in 2017 by repairing and clearing more than 1,700 miles of the trail—and every year, nature fills it again. Our work is literally neverending.

While we may not be able to influence nature, we can influence people. As use of the PCT continues to grow, parts of the trail have taken a beating, which is why *Leave No Trace*

education has become one of our highest priorities. For the second season we now have a trailhead host at the southern terminus who talks with trail users before they start. And our Crest Runner program puts feet on the ground in the first hundred miles of the trail to check permits and ensure trail users are aware of critical issues like human waste disposal and fire safety.

It comes as a surprise to many that roughly 10% of the PCT crosses land—and views—that are not permanently protected.

Our land protection efforts are tackling this challenge, and 2017 was a successful year for the program. With your support, we acquired property at Stevens Pass, Washington that is an access point to the PCT and a gateway to wilderness for millions in the Seattle region. We are also working to protect 17 miles of the trail in Northern California's Shasta-Trinity and Klamath national forests.

We often struggle with words to describe the value of wilderness—and how vital it is to protect the invaluable

thread of a trail that stitches it together between Mexico and Canada. But while words are never adequate, actions speak volumes—and your actions on behalf of the Pacific Crest Trail will resonate far into the future.

This report describes some of your accomplishments with highlights from throughout the year and stories from a few trail users who inspire us and mirror our passion.

Thank you for all you do on behalf of the trail. We remember your efforts with every footstep along the PCT.

The **Pacific Crest Trail Association** is the primary nonprofit steward of the Pacific Crest Trail, a 2,650-mile path between Mexico and Canada.

Traversing the mountain crests of California, Oregon and Washington, the PCT crosses **48 federal wilderness areas, six national parks, 25 national forests and five national monuments**, and winds through some of our nation's most breathtaking scenery.

It provides countless souls from all over the world a place of refuge. As PCTA supporters, you protect, preserve and promote this national treasure for the experience of all who use it. The PCT belongs to all of us. This is your public land. You are its protectors.

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Napa, CA

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Financials

UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS:	2017	2016
Revenue And Support		
Private Sources	* \$3,038,752	\$3,082,917
Government Grants	964,602	955,740
TOTAL Revenue And Support	4,003,354	4,038,657
Expenses		
Trail Operations	\$1,312,413	\$1,329,828
Land Protection	422,960	404,129
Public Info & Education	822,271	687,757
Fundraising	691,516	618,531
Management & General	398,503	311,963
TOTAL Expenses	3,647,663	3,352,208
CHANGE in Unrestricted Net Assets	355,691	686,449

TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED NET ASSETS:		
Individual Contributions	\$ 667,074	1,095,066
Investment Income (Loss)	188,220	89,360
Net Assets Released from Restriction	(979,102)	(1,097,198)
CHANGE in Temporarily Restricted Net Assets	(123,808)	87,228

PERMANENTLY RESTRICTED ASSETS:		
Individual Contributions	\$ 9,698	\$ 11,798
TOTAL Change in Net Assets	241,581	785,475
NET ASSETS, Beginning of Year	3,133,583	2,348,108
NET ASSETS, End of Year	3,375,164	3,133,583

PCTA goes through a financial audit every year. We are subject to a more in-depth audit because of the level of federal funding we receive. The 2017 financial statements were audited by Gilbert Associates, Inc. of Sacramento, CA. In the opinion of the auditor, the PCTA's 2017 financial statements present fairly the financial position of the PCTA in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. For more information or copies of the 2017 audited financials, visit www.pcta.org/financials

* Includes memberships, donations, other revenue, and in-kind donations.

Your support makes so many PCT experiences possible.

The trail gives so much. We think about it when we're at home or work, and we feel it when we're out there, climbing up a hill or taking in the view. We go, have grand times and build upon our lives. And your support makes it all possible.

You are trail lovers—stewards, caretakers, donors, members, hikers, horseback riders, agency partners. You help us maintain, advocate for and protect the trail for future generations. And we tell your stories because they matter.

We looked back to find a few great stories from 2017. Stories like this inspire us all.

We share them here with the hope of inspiring others. We build our community one voice at a time. From these humble and personal experiences, we can see why we do what we do. We hope the story is neverending.



The Path to Stewardship

During his 2010, thru-hike, Loren “Yurtman” Schmidt heard a chainsaw near Butt Mountain in Northern California. Two guys in their 70s were cutting logs blocking the trail.

“While I watched, I contemplated the indulgent futility of my hike,” he wrote. “What good was I really doing for anyone other than myself? These two were doing something real and useful. Hundreds would benefit from their work.”

He made a resolution to do more trail work. An email announcing the beginning of a trail stewardship program, the North 350 Blades, was the kicker. He and his thru-hiking partner signed up. They attended a Trail Skills College event and became certified to use crosscut and chain saws. Today, Loren leads his own crews.

“Camping in a magical place for a week, working hard and eating and sleeping well with a small group of dedicated trail ‘nuts’ is as good as it gets,” he wrote.

Loren and other volunteers go at it with cunning, confidence and an unparalleled work ethic. He says the trail is in his blood.

“Hiking the trail offers the rewarding experience of meeting fellow hikers from all over this country and the world,” he wrote. “The camaraderie that is forged in those encounters is similar to the tribal code of Bedouin communities, where no one is a stranger and there is a willingness to help everyone in need.

“There is a common desire to pay back the trail for its many gifts. However, I get the bigger payback myself each time I pass the clean end of a log I cut or walk over the rock tread we built up in a washed-out gully or get a heartfelt thank-you from a hiker. I know that my work is paying dividends to folks I’ll never meet.”



Once More, With Feeling

At age 22, Gillian Larson set out on her second solo horseback thru-ride of the PCT, just two years after her first. “All I knew was that I had to do it, not only for my own sake but also for my horses and for any other riders who dreamed of making the journey,” she wrote for the PCT Communicator.

She described her first trip in 2014 as an “amazing but often perilous adventure.” The difficulties were made worse by the lack of information for horseback riders. But she was convinced she could do better for herself, her mare, Shyla, and her packhorse, Takoda. “I thought I had it all figured out, but the PCT had other things in store for me,” she wrote.

The horses wore through shoes quickly. She underestimated how much food they would need. Snow was deep and difficult to navigate. She tried to skip north to avoid it but discovered that the further north she went, the lower the snowline.

“The reality of what I was attempting hit hard,” she wrote. “That was also the moment when I realized that what works for hikers—going straight north on the trail from Campo to Manning Park—was not going to work for me and my horses.”

She described herself as “overwhelmed and out of my depth.” Yet friends and family met her with food and water. Complete strangers reached out to help. They transported an injured horse, provided meals and opened their homes and their pastures. Seasoned packers gave tips on travel and gear. Eventually she found ways “to defend against the punches” the PCT was throwing.

“In the end, perhaps the most powerful lesson the trail has offered is one about the human heart, the incredible kindness of people without whom I could not have made the journey at all,” Gillian wrote. “It has been the journey of a lifetime—not just once, but twice—and will live with me forever.”

Trail Stories



An Introduction to the Outdoor Life

Most of the 11 members of the Gold 4 Team from AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps had never seen a mountain except on their phones or through the car window. From a project gutting flood-damaged homes in Louisiana, they came to the PCT to work with Connor Swift, then a PCTA Technical Advisor and now our newest regional representative.

“It’s safe to say he is incredible. This guy has all the passion that we came to learn about and the excitement that not many – however old he is – have at his age,” wrote Ben Echt and Roger Sweet for the PCTA blog. “Plus, on a personal note, his beard is our Guru.”

During their first couple of days at Whitewater Preserve in Southern California, it rained and temperatures dropped to 35 degrees at night. But the crew “rallied the forces like a Lord of the Rings movie and trudged to our own personal Mordor,” Ben and Roger wrote. “It was so much fun! We used our tools to craft the trails that so many people take solace in.”

They learned that maintaining trails is about protecting the natural landscapes while still providing an opportunity for people to enjoy them. And they quickly realized that they were maintaining a path that people will continue to use for decades.

“We’ve come to learn that trail work is the best way for us to protect the resource for future generations,” they wrote. “Therein lies the true beauty of it: you see, we create and maintain trails for you to traverse...but it’s to protect the landscapes through which they pass. Preservation. That’s the real prize.”

AmeriCorps NCCC is a national service program with a mission to strengthen communities and develop leaders through direct, team-based national and community service.



Hiking Alone as a Woman

Hiking on the PCT was one of Linda Rose’s longtime goals. She planned to hike about 500 miles in Oregon and Washington as a way to gain a new perspective on life after 25 years as a Microsoft partner.

“Going solo was important for me as I wanted the time to reflect on the past and to think about my new life and plans for the future,” she wrote for the PCTA blog.

She was intrigued by reactions and questions: Many wondered if she was afraid. She wasn’t. Some wondered what she would do if something happened to her? The same thing a guy would do. Others asked if her husband was going to let her do this?

“Yes, because he knows that (even women) are versant in setting up a tent, purifying water, reading a map, starting a campfire, crossing rivers and scaling the side of mountains. Most importantly, my husband has always been supportive of my goals and this one is no different.”

And her favorite question: I thought just young people did that?

“Once I got my trail legs, my daily mileage increased from 10 miles to up to 22 miles per day. My past excuses about weight gain were no longer valid. My legs became so much stronger and my waistline shrank before my eyes. Who wouldn’t want that in their mid- 50’s or at any age? Guys have the same aches and pains, lose weight, shrink their waistline and grow muscles, too.”

Linda’s experience made it seem strange to differentiate women from men on the trail. “We are all capable of anything and everything, so don’t let that fact you are a ‘woman’ stop you from any dream or quest in business or in life. There will always be excuses or reasons why you shouldn’t do something so go out there, strap on the tools you need for success and conquer that mountain! Solo if you must!”

Trail Stories

Thanks to Our Supporters

Thank you to all the extraordinary trail enthusiasts who contributed \$1,000 or more in 2017. These dedicated individuals, foundations and companies not only set the pace for others who wish to support our work, but they play a crucial role in helping to protect, preserve, and promote the Pacific Crest Trail.

Trail Blazers: \$10,000+

Anonymous (3)
Daniel P. Collins
David H. Corry
John and Julie Crawford
Denise Gilbert
Janet “Rock-Kicker” Grossman
Ben Hammett
David and Robin Hanna
Robert Johnson
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In Honor of Mihajlo Labalo and
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Hiker Medals
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The Trek
Uphill Designs

LEGACY SOCIETY

Many thanks to our Legacy Society members who have notified PCTA that they have included our organization in their estate plans. You are ensuring the future of the trail!

Anonymous (18)
David and Joan Allen
Patty A. Andersen
William Ballenger
Jane and Jay Baxter
Stace E. Beaulieu
Chris and Jason Benz
Liz Bergeron and Lori Harmon
Brian C. Booth
Julia Cordero
John and Julie Crawford
Mike and Tina Dawson
Cecil L. Dobbins
Jim and Polly Dodds
Laraine Downer
Robert Francisco (go-BIG, 2006)
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Passing Rae Lakes, CA
Photo by Jennifer Johnson



The mission of the Pacific Crest Trail Association is to protect, preserve and promote the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail as a world-class experience for hikers and equestrians, and for all the values provided by wild and scenic lands.



**Pacific Crest Trail
Association**

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