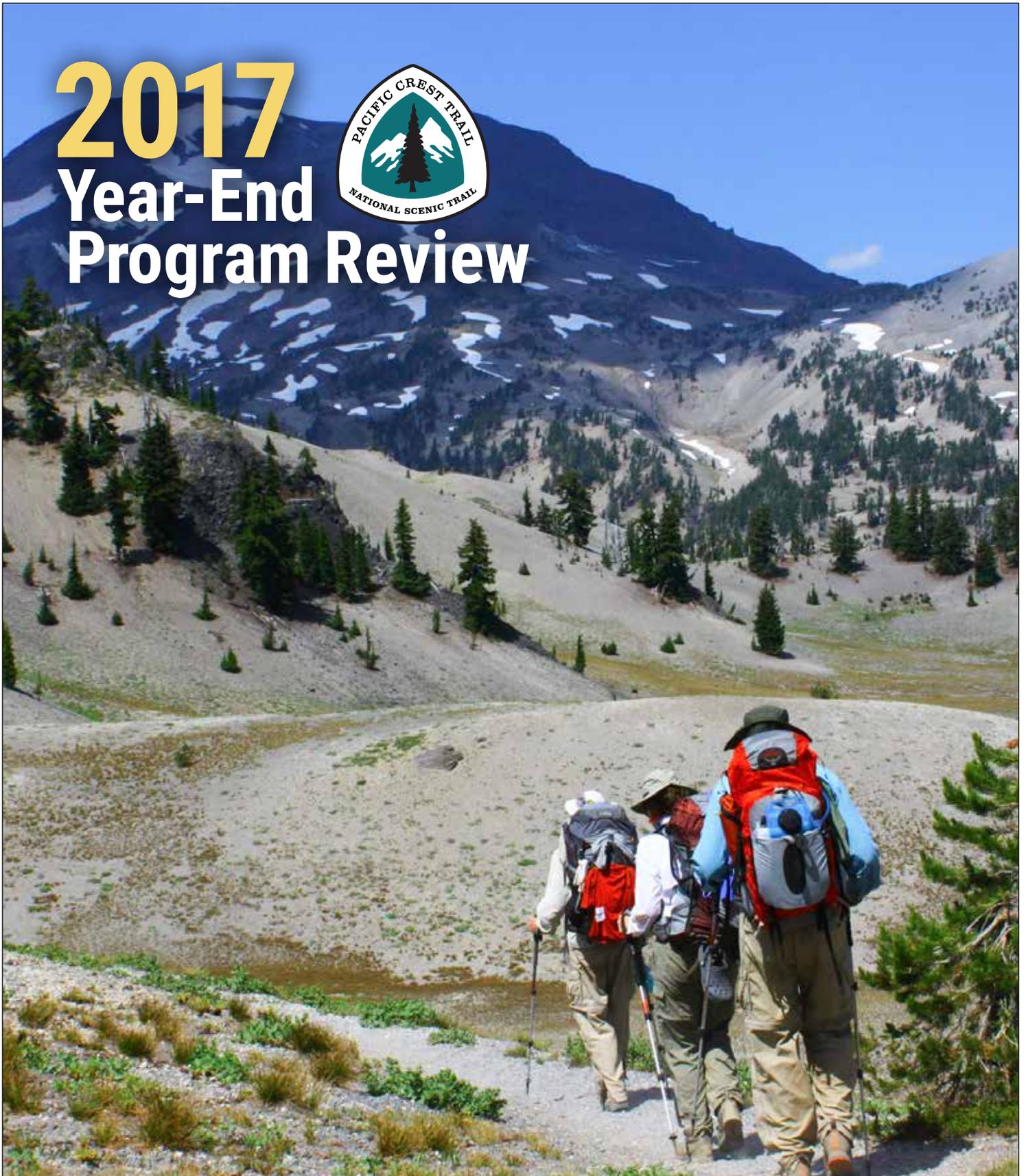


# 2017 Year-End Program Review







Along the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (PCT), 2017 was another great year of accomplishments for the Pacific Crest Trail Association (PCTA) and its partners.

Accomplishments focused on:

- Uplifting and empowering employees and volunteers through a respectful, safe working environment;
- Being good neighbors and providing excellent customer service;
- Promoting shared stewardship by increasing partnerships and volunteerism;
- Improving the condition of forests and grasslands; and
- Enhancing recreation opportunities, improving access, and sustaining infrastructure.

# 1 Uplifting and Empowering Employees and Volunteers Through a Respectful, Safe Working Environment



*Safety is the highest priority for PCTA staff, volunteers, and partners. PCTA's training program, Trail Skills College, ensures volunteers build the skills necessary to be safe, successful, and efficient trail stewards. Prior to on-trail activity, volunteers submit trailhead communication plans to local agency units, conduct tailgate safety sessions to review job hazard analyses and an emergency action plan. They carry first aid kits with injury instructions and the required injury report forms.*

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 network of agency partners and volunteers.

The PCTA's professional Trail Operations staff—including a Trail Operations Director, Associate Director of Trail Operations, five Regional Representatives, and one and a half Volunteer Programs staff—not only oversees protection, management, and maintenance of the PCT but spends a significant amount of time maintaining and building partnerships that strengthen resources and a skilled volunteer base for the trail.

While the PCTA works with multiple agency partners in the management of the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail, the Forest Service is the lead administering agency for the PCT which the PCTA works with most closely on a day-to-day basis at all levels. Whether supporting the work of the PCT Program Manager at the Pacific Southwest Regional Office or working alongside District Recreation staff to efficiently manage the PCT at the project level, mutual respect and collaboration are evident in work accomplished.

Through professional staff and a dedicated volunteer base, the PCTA has built long-term working partnerships with agency staff who are committed to protecting, preserving, and promoting the PCT. Federal public lands managers are challenged with a wide array of management issues with a limited workforce. Organizations such as the PCTA stand ready and willing to support the unique work of



*“(Volunteer with PCTA) was a super valuable experience, and I learned a great deal of new knowledge and skills. I loved the work so much that I’ve decided to apply to join an ACE [American Conservation Experience] crew for a three-month term.”*

**– Zoie Meyers**

managing a national scenic trail. One way the PCTA does this is by effectively managing volunteers to do safe and quality work.

Each year, thousands of volunteers contribute to the protection, preservation and promotion of the PCT. Much work is accomplished on remote, rugged trail. Accordingly, safety is the highest priority for the PCTA staff, volunteers and partners.

## Trail Skills College

The PCTA’s training program, Trail Skills College, ensures volunteers build the skills necessary to be safe, successful and efficient trail stewards. The Trail Skills College program was started with a grant from REI in collaboration with nonprofit and agency partners. It uses a modular course curriculum taught at multiple events along the PCT.

The 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 PCT serves as the classroom for the courses, and topics range from brushing and scouting to tread reconstruction and leading crews. 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.

### 2017 PCTA Sponsored Trail Skills College Trainings

Number of chain and crosscut saw training events hosted	17
Number of volunteers attending chain or crosscut saw training	182
Number of other trail skills training hosted	22
Number of volunteers attending other trail skills training	708

In partnership with the Forest Service, the PCTA has developed safety protocols to ensure volunteers are operating to the safest extent possible. Before on-trail activity, volunteers submit trailhead communication plans to local agency units, ensuring partners can communicate with crews in the field and are prepared for incidents. Volunteer trail maintainers also conduct tailgate safety sessions to review job hazard analyses and an emergency action plan. Additionally, they carry first aid kits with injury instructions and the required injury report forms.

The PCTA collects feedback from volunteers, and in 2017 continued to find that volunteers found the work environment safe and enjoyable.

*“I’m a new PCTA volunteer, and I didn’t know what to expect, but [PCTA staff and volunteer leaders] were amazing. Their warm hospitality, knowledgeable instruction, patience and guidance really made it an enjoyable and rewarding experience and made me feel like I was a part of the PCT community.”*

**– Vic Rodriguez**



## 2 Being Good Neighbors and Providing Excellent Customer Service

As the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail travels 2,650 miles from the Mexico-California border to the Washington-Canada border, it offers access to America’s outdoors as it connects some of the most scenic and remote lands in the Western United States. The PCT links diverse landscapes from the Mojave Desert to the rugged peaks in California’s Sierra Nevada Range to the volcanic peaks of the Cascade Range.

The PCT is often called “America’s Wilderness Trail” and crosses 48 Congressionally-designated wilderness areas. Recreationists from around the world find a unique connection with nature and diverse ecosystems along the PCT as it passes through 25 National 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.

### Providing PCT Information to the Public

In addition to its restoration and protection efforts, the PCTA serves as the primary customer service representative for PCT information, connecting recreationists from around the world with one of America’s iconic recreation opportunities. The PCTA employs a full-time Trail Information Manager and a part-time Trail Permit and Information Assistant, who work with volunteers to act as public resources for PCT information.

#### 2017 Communication Services to the Public and Trail Users

Number of emails responded to	5,397
Number of phone calls responded to	3,472
Number of social media requests responded to	396
Number of PCT brochures distributed	12,279
Number of issues of the PCT Communicator distributed	55,000
Number of wilderness permits issued for PCT travel in excess of 500 miles	6,109
Number of visits to PCTA’s website	2,083,211

The PCTA’s extremely active customer service program provides timely direct assistance to tens of thousands of people a year via phone, email, social media and in person. The PCTA assists our land management partners by working across boundaries and providing a single office for trail users to contact for trailwide customer service inquiries. To do this requires collaborating on messaging, priorities and best practices with agency partners up and down the PCT.

Another vital customer service role filled by the PCTA is assisting the Forest Service and National Park Service in issuing interagency permits for trips more than 500 miles and providing information about permitting for all recreation users. 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.

There are a number of sources for PCT information overseen by the PCTA, including a comprehensive website, a 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 other online forums.

In 2017, the PCTA's website received 2,083,211 visits from people all over the country and the world looking to gain additional information about the PCT. While much of this information is focused on trip planning, current trail conditions and trail information, the PCTA provides a tremendous amount of *Leave No Trace* education for trail users. This information is aimed at helping people travel responsibly and lightly on the land, thereby reducing their impacts on the trail and protecting it for future PCT travelers.

The PCTA also provides trail conditions updates which include trail closures and other relevant user information via a toll-free phone line and website. The association also organizes and participates in a significant number of outreach events every year.

## Reducing Visitor Use Impacts Through Research

The popularity of the PCT continued to increase in 2017. The PCTA and agency partners are pleased to know more people have positive experiences on the trail. But with increased visitor use comes increased impacts. The PCTA works diligently with agency partners to better understand numbers of PCT users and their travel patterns. We take appropriate responses to minimize physical and social impacts to ensure that the PCT continues to provide scenic and wild experiences.

In 2017, the PCTA supported the Forest Service, National Park Service and Bureau of Land Management in two crucial ongoing research efforts. The first, led by Dr. Jeff Marion from Virginia Tech, is studying campsite impacts along the PCT in two high use areas—the first 100 miles of the PCT from the Southern Terminus and a section of the PCT that is co-aligned with the John Muir Trail. Often, campsites are too close to water and do not follow local wilderness regulations or Leave No Trace principles. These campsites usually negatively affect the resources along the PCT and detract from the remote experience the PCT is intended to provide. Dr. Marion's work will help inform future agency management decisions aimed at reducing physical impacts as a result of poorly selected campsite locations from PCT hikers.

The second research project led by Dr. Jeremy Wimpey from Applied Trails Research is analyzing travel patterns on the section of PCT that is co-aligned with the John Muir Trail. This approximate 220-mile section of trail receives a tremendous amount of use. Dr. Wimpey's research will show how many people are on the PCT and when, providing the PCTA and land managers with data to develop better strategies to reduce impacts and manage use through a refined permit system.

## Customer Service During Wildfire Emergencies



During 2017's exceptional fire season, the PCTA's role in providing customer service and trail information grew to levels never seen before. With 10 fires closing up to 300 miles of trail and affecting thousands of trail users, the PCTA published a continuous stream of timely updates with maps. The PCTA is the primary partner for distributing agency closure information both online and on the trail.

Important visitor use data was also collected through the PCT Crest Runners and Trailhead Host programs. This information helps inform changes with the interagency PCT long-distance permit which the PCTA administers. Long-distance permits are issued for people intending to travel 500 miles or more contiguously on the PCT. The PCTA works with the Forest Service to respond to changing conditions and numbers of people on the PCT, to create a permit system that helps to maintain the desired conditions. In 2017, the 50-person per-day limit for people starting at the Mexican border/Southern Terminus was kept in place to spread users along the trail. New for 2017 was a limit on the number of section-hike permits issued for trips starting at a trailhead in the Southern Sierra Nevada along the John Muir Trail section.

## PCT Crest Runners and Trailhead Host

The PCTA partnered with the Cleveland National Forest Descanso District to host two Crest Runners for the third consecutive season. The Crest Runners traveled the PCT from March to May, peak use season. They function similar to wilderness rangers—making public contact, providing trail and Leave No Trace information and performing light trail maintenance along the first 100 miles of the PCT.

The Crest Runners monitored recreation use patterns and recorded resource concerns and impacts. From information collected, key impacts were identified for long-term monitoring: campsite inventories, water cache/fire ring data and measurable impacts to riparian and other sensitive areas. Through conversations with long-distance hikers and equestrians, the Crest Runners collected valuable information on use patterns and permit utilization and abuse. The information and data collected by Crest Runners is helpful



*PCT Crest Runners check permits and discuss Leave No Trace practices with hikers near Fred Canyon in San Bernardino National Forest, California. The PCTA partnered with the Cleveland National Forest Descanso District to host two Crest Runners for the third consecutive season. The Crest Runners traveled the first 100 miles on the PCT from March to May, peak use season. In addition to public education, the Crest Runners monitored recreation use patterns and recorded resource concerns and impacts.*

in evaluating the long-distance PCT permit and informing future management decisions to protect the PCT and resources.

In addition to the Crest Runners, the PCTA and the Cleveland National Forest also collaborated on a volunteer trailhead host who was stationed at the Southern Terminus from April until June. The trailhead host provided an additional opportunity to make contact with PCT long-distance hikers and collect user data. The trailhead host documented contact with 1,226 hikers. This information will help the PCTA and agency partners better understand how the long-distance permit system affects user-related impacts and inform future management decisions.

### 3 Promoting Shared Stewardship by Increasing Partnerships And Volunteerism

The PCTA 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 engaged, diverse and resilient partnerships. Strengthening and expanding these partnerships is crucial for a sustainable future. Every year the PCTA brings together partners and volunteers with shared values and 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-



*Following the devastating Eagle Creek Fire in the Columbia River Gorge, the PCTA joined together with Trailkeepers of Oregon, Friends of the Gorge, Washington Trails Association, and the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area to engage thousands of community members in trail maintenance projects, trainings, and community forums. PCTA's Portland, Oregon-based Mount Hood Chapter hosted 18 Gorge Trails Recovery Team events, resulting in 1,327 hours of service in the Gorge.*



supervisory, production workers. According to this value, in 2017 the PCT volunteer community, including non-trail maintenance activities, contributed 96,552 service hours, an in-kind value of \$2.2 million.

In 2017, 2,116 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, reconstructed trail tread and built new trail tread.

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 age groups 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.

### 2017 Trail Accomplishments

Number of volunteer hours on trail maintenance/reconstruction	91,366
Miles of trail maintained	1,781
Miles of trail reconstructed/constructed	25
Square feet of log & stone cribbing constructed	8,619
Feet of turnpike/puncheon constructed	129

The PCTA also works with numerous conservation and volunteer-minded nonprofits and community groups along the trail to ensure the PCT is maintained, protected, and enjoyed. Many of the nonprofit and community organizations the PCTA works with provide local volunteer trail maintenance opportunities, group hikes and youth education.

Among the outstanding work accomplished in 2017, the following stood out:

- ♦ **Restoring trails in Glacier Peak Wilderness:** Volunteers from PCTA's Seattle, Washington-based North 350 Blades chapter spent three weeks clearing fallen logs, thick brush and restoring tread along 16.3 miles of PCT in Glacier Peak Wilderness. This was the first time some wilderness trails received maintenance since the great flood of October 2003. Trail work accomplished in Glacier Peak Wilderness this year would not have been possible without the support of Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, Washington Trails Association and the Backcountry Horsemen of Washington.
- ♦ **Forming the Gorge Trails Recovery Team:** Following the devastating Eagle Creek Fire in the Columbia River Gorge, the PCTA joined together with Trailkeepers of Oregon, Friends of the Gorge, Washington Trails Association and the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area to engage thousands of community members in trail maintenance projects, trainings, and community forums. The PCTA's Portland, Oregon-based Mount Hood Chapter hosted 18 Gorge Trails Recovery Team events, resulting in 1,327 hours of service in the Gorge.



*The PCTA and its agency partners—USFS, BLM, NPS and California State Parks—understand that taking care of a 2,650-mile trail requires engaged, diverse, and resilient partnerships. Strengthening and expanding these partnerships is critical for a sustainable future. Every year the PCTA brings together partners and volunteers with shared values, and serves as a liaison between people and our public lands.*



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## 4 Improving the Condition of Forests And Grasslands

A prominent theme throughout the PCTA's work is ensuring a quality recreational experience for PCT users. It's estimated that more than a million people experience the PCT each year, from casual day users to weekend users to thru-hikers and horseback riders. In addition to the impacts from hikers and equestrians, the PCT is subjected to floods, fire, deep snowpack and torrential rain events that cause erosion, make the trail unsafe and impassable and cause ecological damage. Every year, the PCTA coordinates tens of thousands of volunteer hours dedicated to the maintenance and restoration of the PCT to meet national quality standards. The goal of these efforts is to create an excellent wilderness recreation experience that allows Americans to connect with the outdoors.

Work to sustain and improve conditions on the PCT goes beyond just digging in the dirt.

### Trail Towns Program

The PCTA engages a diverse audience of volunteers, donors and partners to support the construction, maintenance, promotion and protection of the PCT. These partners include municipalities, state and federal government agencies, businesses, non-profit organizations and private citizens. In 2017, the PCTA began development of a trail town program to build stronger partnerships with towns and communities along the PCT. The towns and communities along the PCT corridor are a vital part of the user's experience, and many of these towns act as good friends and neighbors to the trail. With an \$887 billion outdoor recreation economy and thousands of hikers and equestrians using the PCT each year, local businesses, outfitters, restaurants and hotels see the PCT as an essential asset to their local economies.

The goals of the PCTA's trail town program are to:

- engage communities with the PCTA's mission
- enhance the PCT experience for users
- support the long-term economic health of communities along the PCT

In 2017, the PCTA partnered with the City of Mount Shasta in Siskiyou County, California, to start building this program by using Mount Shasta as a pilot. An advisory committee of local businesses, elected officials, non-profits, the chamber of commerce and community members was established to work with the PCTA to implement this pilot program.

### Land Protection

As part of the PCTA's mission, the association works with landowners, public agencies, conservation organizations and local communities to protect land for the PCT through acquisitions of fee title lands and conservation easements. The PCTA's land protection work is focused on identifying high-priority tracts for permanent protection through a PCT Lands Inventory. The land inventory enables the PCTA and agency partners to identify and prioritize properties that are at risk. Purchasing these parcels over time creates a cohesive and continuous PCT experience. Furthermore, filling these gaps reduces the cost and improves management of the PCT by eliminating miles of public/private boundaries.

In 2017, after years of work and significant support from private donors, the PCTA closed a \$1.6 million acquisition on the PCT, buying 402 acres from a private seller. This once-imperiled property provides the only feasible trail corridor for the PCT through Stevens Pass, Washington. With this acquisition, the trail is now available for perpetual public use.

The Stevens Pass trailhead, 78 miles east of Seattle, is a crucial PCT access point for millions of people in the greater Seattle region, including day hikers, weekend backpackers, horseback riders, snowshoers, backcountry skiers and birdwatchers. Its mixed conifer forests and alpine environs host an abundance of wildflowers, birds and other species, and nearby streams and rivers are spawning waters for endangered chinook, sockeye and steelhead.

In early 2015, the property's owner, who had been seeking to sell the land, stated an intention to place a fence across the PCT and prohibit public access. A trail closure and the possibility of development would have been disastrous for the iconic PCT experience—and would have closed vital access from Stevens Pass to hundreds of thousands of acres of wilderness enjoyed by visitors from the Pacific Northwest and beyond.

In partnership with The Conservation Fund and private donors, the PCTA was able to respond to this threat to the PCT and public access. The PCTA will hold the property in trust until funds from the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) are available to transfer it to the Forest Service to become part of the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest.



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## Trail Protection

As the government's primary partner in the management of the PCT, the PCTA tracks and favorably influences a large percentage of the planning processes that affect the trail.

In 2011, the Plumas National Forest released the proposed action for the "Bucks Project." The primary purpose of the project was to improve forest health and reduce the potential for future catastrophic fire. Much of the project area overlaid a decades-old tree plantation that was overly dense and choked with small and unhealthy trees; years of fire suppression contributed to the area's condition. Additionally, the project area surrounded Bucks Lake, a popular tourist destination in Plumas County, California. Tourists from across the state come every year to stay, hike, fish, boat, swim and enjoy the lake and surrounding areas. A catastrophic fire in this area would not only decimate the public lands, but also the local communities and their economies.

Through the public process, the PCTA provided input to the District regarding the project. The PCTA supports the land managing agencies applying vegetation management projects along the PCT to improve overall forest health and reduce the potential for catastrophic wildfire. A landscape devastated by catastrophic wildfire is not the trail experience the PCTA wants to provide for users, nor is a landscape that is unnaturally dense with unhealthy trees.

The PCTA worked with the District to meet the purpose and need for the project while minimizing the short-term impacts to the PCT and the user experience. The PCTA supported many crucial project design features that protect the PCT: hand felling of trees near the trail, low cutting stumps along the Trail, and minimizing skid trail/crossings of the PCT to reduce visual impacts and damage to the trail tread.

In fall 2017, the unit adjacent to the PCT was treated. The project design features helped reduce the short-term impacts to the PCT while providing the much-needed thinning to improve forest health and reduce the potential for catastrophic wildfire. This project provides an excellent example of the relationship between the protection of recreation resources and the ecosystems they traverse.

## 5 Enhancing Recreation Opportunities, Improving Access, and Sustaining Infrastructure

As recreation comprises an ever-larger portion of the overall use of public lands, people expect and deserve excellent access. Trails in good repair are an essential facility. Trails that are overgrown, poorly signed and eroded do not meet to expectations and contribute to outsized visitor impacts. Land managers can not provide good customer service without addressing the enormous backlog of deferred trail maintenance on public lands.

The PCTA addresses deferred maintenance on the PCT through two significant efforts: a section adopter program, and a corps crew program.

The section adopter program matches miles of the PCT with community-based volunteer groups for completion of annual maintenance tasks such as log out and drain clearing. Every year, the PCTA trains hundreds of volunteers in yearly maintenance and provides the tools and safety gear necessary for



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them to go out and take care of a segment of trail. The PCTA believes regular, ongoing care is the only way to prevent significant trail deterioration that eventually will require more costly, time-consuming and significant reconstruction efforts. The PCTA is putting more and more resources into recruiting section adopters with the goal of eliminating the backlog of deferred maintenance.

Meanwhile, the PCTA works with corps crews and volunteers to address the existing backlog of trail maintenance and reconstruction. There are miles of trail that are deeply rutted, badly overgrown, or where the failed tread needs significant reconstruction to return it to specifications. The PCTA works with agency partners and local volunteer leaders to identify and prioritize the worst areas, then sets up projects that are a week long or longer under the supervision of highly skilled technical advisors hired by the PCTA. These crews build retaining walls and turnpikes, re-bench tread, and build new structures and trail tread.

In 2017, the PCTA dedicated 81 weeks of corps crew time to these types of major projects. The following projects highlight the work of this program:

### **California: San Bernardino National Forest**

The San Bernardino National Forest, situated in the heart of the Inland Empire of Southern California, has been ravaged by wildfires the last several years. The Mountain Fire burned and closed 15 miles of the PCT in 2013. Since then, each year, the PCTA, Forest Service and corps crew partners have worked to evaluate, reconstruct and open the PCT as quickly and safely as possible in a three-phase approach.

Working with the Forest Service in 2017, the PCTA fielded an American Conservation Experience crew to work for 21 weeks performing the much-needed restoration, reconstruction and rehabilitation work to this devastated area. In November, the San Bernardino National Forest was able to open Phase 2, making an additional two miles of the PCT and a key side trail accessible for public use.



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## California: Tahoe National Forest

Since 2011, the PCTA and Tahoe National Forest's Yuba River Ranger District have been conducting an Optimal Location Review (OLR) and relocation on a section of the PCT. For an Optimal Location Review, the Forest Service, the 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. This project was initiated to improve the trail experience by providing access to alpine lakes and a more remote and scenic experience for PCT users.

After the Forest completed the necessary Environmental Analysis work, PCTA volunteers working with American Conservation Experience corps crews broke ground on the project in 2014. Each season, about one-half mile of new trail was constructed across steep, rocky, root-filled terrain. It was necessary to move large rocks and cut trees out of the PCT, as well as build structures to stabilize the trail tread.

In 2017, PCTA had more people volunteer for the project and the Forest trail crew contributed an increased amount of time than in previous years. The Sierra Buttes Trail Stewardship as well as PCTA volunteers working with American Conservation Experience corps crews built a section of trail across Sierra County Land Trust land. PCTA's Trail Crew Technical Advisors helped coordinate the work, oversaw large and technical projects and ensured the new PCT was being built to standard. With the additional support, approximately a full mile of trail was constructed in 2017, completing the south section of the realignment project. With this realigned section of trail, users will have a substantially improved experience on the PCT.

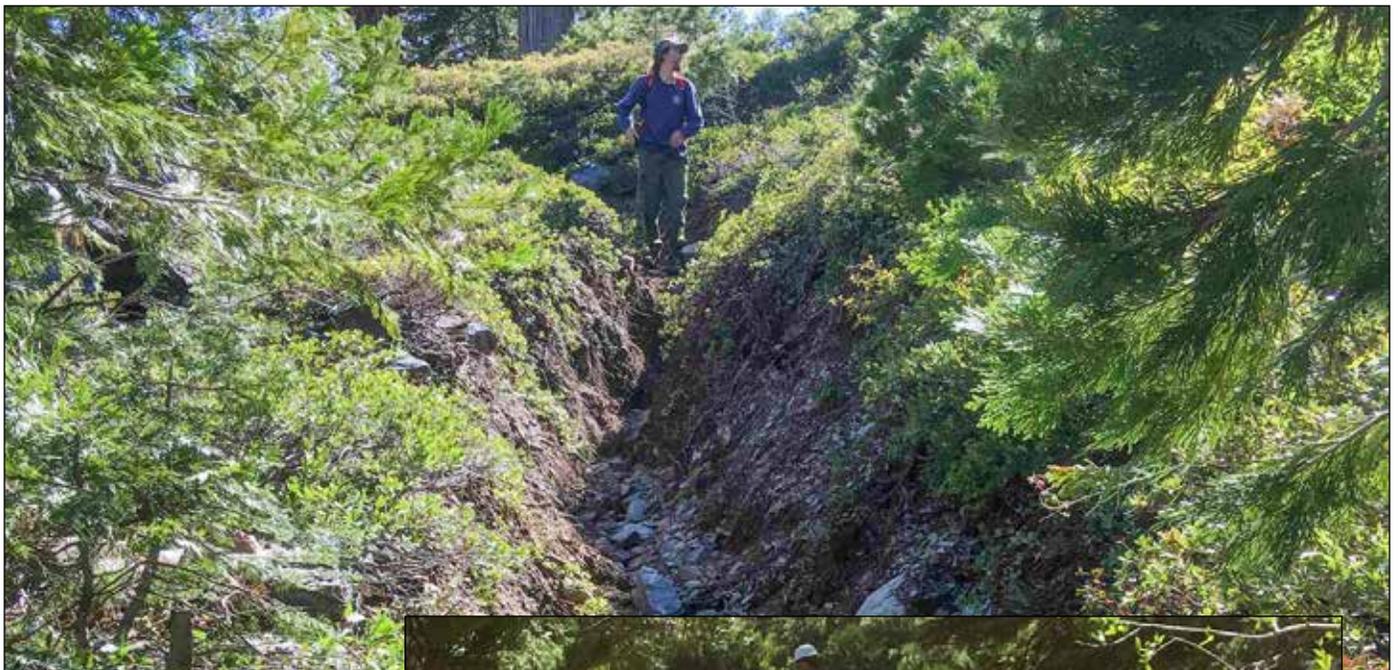


*Since 2011, the PCTA and Tahoe National Forest Yuba River Ranger District has been working to evaluate and re-route seven miles of the PCT. The new alignment offers a superior experience for hikers and horseback riders, offering an improved trail experience by providing access to alpine lakes and a more remote and scenic experience. In 2017, 3.8 miles of new trail was opened to the public.*

## California: Lassen National Forest

On the Lassen National Forest's Almanor Ranger District, a part of the "Poison Springs" drainage had shifted out of its channel and was running down the PCT. The result of neglected routine maintenance, this caused significant erosion and scoured material out of the trail tread. During the last two winters, the PCT had become a deep trench and had developed a steep five-foot dropoff, leaving it no longer safe or easily negotiated by equestrians.

Crews spent 808 hours to accomplish the tremendous project—building retaining walls, check steps, hardening the Trail and addressing the source of erosion. The work was physically demanding; it required crews to locate nearby native rock for building materials, use grip hoists to safely transport these materials and perform skilled dry masonry work. Because of this effort, the PCT is up to trail standards, but most importantly it is now safely passable for hikers and horseback riders.



*On the Lassen National Forest Almanor Ranger District, a drainage had shifted out of its channel causing significant erosion and scouring material out of the trail leaving the PCT no longer safe with a deep trench with a steep five-foot drop-off. In 2017, American Conservation Experience corps crews spent 808 hours reconstructing the PCT in this area. Thanks to this effort, the PCT is up to trail standards, but most importantly it is now safely passable for hikers and horseback riders.*





*The Willamette National Forest, PCTA, and the Northwest Youth Corps partnered to construct the first of several new trail alignments in the Mount Jefferson area, improving the condition of the landscape. This project was made possible through private donations and is an excellent example of collaborative work with the Forest Service to restore and enhance public lands. PCT reconstruction projects are crucial in reestablishing the ecological patterns and processes that facilitate terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems sustainability, resilience and health.*

## **Oregon: Mt. Jefferson Wilderness**

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 native vegetation and wildlife communities around the trail are affected. Therefore, it's up to the PCTA and agency partners to ensure trails are designed to lie lightly on the land and to drain correctly. In the beautiful subalpine meadows of Oregon's Mount Jefferson Wilderness, several small pieces of the trail have suffered worsening erosion for years, having become deep gullies of rocks and roots. These segments of the PCT catch water from spring snowmelt, and sediment makes its way to nearby streams and lakes.

The PCTA and the Willamette National Forest agreed several years ago that these sections, totaling about three miles, could not be fixed with a band-aid approach but needed realignment because the current alignment was unsustainable. Until recently, the project had not moved forward due to lack of funding for the required NEPA compliance.

Thanks to a PCTA donor's gift, the majority of the NEPA cost was covered in 2016. The Forest Service contributed a significant amount to study four separate areas where the PCT needs realignment. An Optimal Location Review, looking at the overall trail location across 40 miles, was completed. In 2017, through private donations, PCTA funded four weeks of staff and corps crew time resulting in the construction of the first mile of new trail alignment. With funding from private donors and grants, work on this relocation will continue in 2018. This project is an excellent example of collaborative work with the Forest Service to restore and enhance public lands. PCT reconstruction projects are crucial in reestablishing the ecological patterns and processes that facilitate terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems sustainability, resilience and health.

# 2017 Accomplishments Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail

## Connect People to the Outdoors Through Volunteer Stewardship

### Provide volunteer support to organize and execute projects

PCTA staff hours spent on volunteer programs .....	13,306
New trainings posted online .....	17
New volunteer projects posted online.....	139
Volunteer project email announcements sent.....	55
Volunteer brochures distributed .....	1,000
New volunteers .....	703
Returning volunteers .....	1,413
Tool caches.....	37
Inventory of tools and equipment.....	<i>Separate report submitted</i>
Weeks JHA is posted online .....	52
High school programs contacted .....	2
University programs contacted.....	7

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

Volunteer hours for financial match.....	<i>Separate report submitted</i>
Volunteer hours for trail maintenance activities .....	91,366
Volunteer hours for land protection activities .....	307
Volunteer hours for administrative activities.....	1,462
Volunteer hours for governance and committee activities.....	1,693
Volunteer hours for communications and publications.....	343





Volunteers reflecting age, gender, and ethnicity:

Age	
Under 18	38
18-54	510
55+	484
Unknown	1,038
Declined to Answer	47
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,117</b>

Ethnicity	
White (non-Hispanic)	881
Black (non-Hispanic)	5
Hispanic	51
Native American/ Alaskan Native	6
Asian/Pacific Islander	34
Unknown	1,022
Declined to Answer	118
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,117</b>

Gender	
Male	778
Female	478
Unknown	861
Declined to Answer	--
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,117</b>

PCTA-affiliated youth corps volunteer hours .....	19,208
PCTA-affiliated high school volunteer hours .....	2,064
Miles of trail maintained .....	1,781
Miles reconstructed/constructed.....	25
Trailhead kiosks constructed.....	1
Square feet of log cribbing constructed.....	518
Square feet of stone cribbing constructed .....	8,101
Bridges constructed (greater than 20' long, 5' off the deck) .....	2
Feet of turnpike/puncheon constructed .....	129



**Sponsor volunteer training opportunities**

PCTA staff hours spent on trainings .....	1,830
Volunteers attending Basic or Wilderness First Aid .....	42
Basic or Wilderness First Aid trainings hosted.....	4
Volunteers attending crosscut and/or chain saw training.....	182
Crosscut and/or chain saw trainings hosted.....	17
Number of volunteers attending other trail skills training .....	708
Other trail skills trainings hosted.....	22

**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	179	90	63	332
Bureau of Land Management	6	1	6	13
National Park Service	6	7	4	17
Other	4	2	–	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>368</b>

**Provide Trail and Land Management Support**

PCTA staff hours spent on trail planning and protection.....	1,526
PCTA staff hours spent providing technical assistance .....	1,035

**Increase Access to and Protection of the Natural, Cultural, and Scenic Qualities of the PCT by Conserving Open Space through Land Acquisition**

Number of PCTA staff hours spent on coordinating land acquisition projects .....	2,819
Number of acres acquired .....	916

## Benefits to the Public & Trail Communities

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

Emails responded to.....	5,397
Phone calls responded to .....	3,472
Social media requests responded to.....	396
Media requests responded to.....	48

### Provide trail condition information

Updates to the toll-free telephone line .....	4
Calls made to the toll-free telephone line .....	2,049

### Publish a periodic magazine

Copies of the PCT Communicator distributed.....	55,000
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### Maintain a website

Website visits .....	2,083,211
Updates to the Trail Conditions pages.....	47

### Promote PCT at events

Conferences and outreach events attended.....	69
PCTA staff hours spent planning or participating in events.....	826
PCTA volunteer hours spent planning or participating in events .....	567

### Issue long distance permits

Wilderness permits issued for travel in excess of 500 miles .....	6,109
Mt. Whitney climbing permits issued.....	1,660

### Distribute PCT brochures

Map brochures distributed.....	12,279
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# 2017 Volunteer & Corps Crew Hours



## Maintenance Program Hours

### Southern California Region

American Conservation Experience .....	8,548
AmeriCorps NCCC .....	3,648
Environmental Charter School .....	961
PCTA Trail Gorillas .....	12,807
Miscellaneous Region Projects .....	1,850

### Southern Sierra Region

PCTA Can Do Crew .....	1,935
Miscellaneous Region Projects .....	1,252

### Northern Sierra Region

American Conservation Experience .....	3,807
PCTA Carsonora Trail Crew .....	651
PCTA Pounder's Promise .....	3,031
Sierra Buttes Trail Stewardship .....	754
PCTA Tahoe Area Volunteers .....	48
PCTA Will Work for Krumm's Trail Crew .....	448
Tahoe Rim Trail Association .....	427
Miscellaneous Region Projects .....	2,716

### Big Bend Region

American Conservation Experience .....	742
Ashland Woodland & Trails Association .....	220
Backcountry Horsemen of California: Top of State .....	1,603
PCTA NorCal Trail Crew .....	759
PCTA Southern Oregon Rockers .....	904
Miscellaneous Region Projects .....	1,711

### Columbia Cascades Region

PCTA Mid-Oregon Volunteers .....	7,519
PCTA Mt. Hood Chapter .....	17,521
PCTA Skyline/Sasquatch Crews .....	2,737
Miscellaneous Region Projects .....	1,435

### North Cascades Region

Backcountry Horsemen of Washington .....	208
PCTA North 350 Blades .....	7,669
PCTA White Pass Chapter .....	1,939
Pacific Northwest Trail Association .....	280
Washington Trails Association .....	3,368
Miscellaneous Region Projects .....	318

**Trailwide Miscellaneous .....** 91

**Total PCT Maintenance Program Hours.....** 91,366

## Non-Maintenance Programs Hours

Administrative .....	1,462
Advocacy .....	447
Governance .....	1,693
Land Protection .....	307
Outreach .....	910
Trail Protection .....	70
Visitor Use Management .....	298

**Total Non-Maintenance Programs Hours.....** 5,186

**Total Service Hours.....** 96,552

