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Pacific Crest Trail
Association

TABLING
GUIDEBOOK



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TABLING GUIDEBOOK

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**Pacific Crest Trail
Association**

Welcome to the PCTA's Tabling Program!



Thank you for helping protect, preserve and promote the Pacific Crest Trail.

The PCTA is made up of our members, volunteers and partners—an eclectic band of trail enthusiasts from across the country and the world. You represent the PCTA in your community, whether it's while you're out working on the trail, wearing volunteer gear to the grocery store, or talking about the Pacific Crest Trail with friends. The purpose of the PCTA's tabling program is to provide you with **training, resources, and support** so that you can welcome more people to the PCTA.

With these tools, you'll be able to attend tabling opportunities—fairs and festivals, speaking engagements or other events near the PCT—where you'll get to talk with others about the PCT and the PCTA's programs. You'll have access to a kit of professional display materials and handouts you can use to raise awareness about the PCTA, volunteer opportunities and membership.

Through awareness, **we can build a stronger community to protect, preserve, and promote the Pacific Crest Trail.**

Guidebook & Training

This guidebook will serve as a reference to help you represent the PCTA at a tabling opportunity. You'll find background information about the PCTA, information on your role, the support you'll receive, systems you'll use, and guidance on how to communicate the PCTA's mission to the public.

All volunteers interested in participating in the tabling program are required to read this guidebook and participate in a training. The training is offered online, and occasionally in person. A recorded training will always be available on our website.



About PCTA

The PCTA Mission

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**

Vision Statement

PCTA has a vision for the future of the Pacific Crest Trail and a vision for the future of our organization. Our vision includes:

- ***The entire PCT corridor is permanently protected, well maintained and effectively managed. The trail is world renowned for offering a rare opportunity to travel through exceptionally scenic, remote, primitive landscapes.***
- ***The PCTA, widely recognized as the trail's champion and steward, achieves its work through the strength of its partnerships, staff, volunteers, and the rest of the PCT community.***

Fast Facts about the PCTA:

- The PCTA is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization singularly focused on preserving, protecting and promoting the PCT.
- Our home office is in Sacramento, California, and our staff of 26 works there and in satellite offices along the trail in California, Oregon and Washington. PCTA has an annual operating budget of around \$4 million.
- Volunteers formed the Pacific Crest Trail Association in 1977 to protect, preserve and promote the trail for future generations.
- Today the association has more than 13,500 members, 2,000 annual volunteers, and our support continues to grow.
- The PCTA works closely with the U.S. Forest Service, which is the federal agency that has overall responsibility for managing the Pacific Crest Trail.



Our Work

Volunteer Programs

Each year, thousands of individuals volunteer their passion for the trail by supporting PCTA. Volunteers support all of PCTA's programs, including advocacy, outreach, trail maintenance, publications, land protection and more. Most PCTA volunteers spend their time physically maintaining the trail, keeping it safe and passable for hikers and horseback riders.

Trail and Land Management

The PCTA actively responds to proposals that could impact the trail, trail corridor, and viewshed, including development and encroachment. We work with our partners to improve trail signage, assist with resource management, and many other issues. The PCTA is an active leader using an inclusive approach to management, conservation, and restoration.

Land Protection

Nearly 10% of the PCT still passes through private property. The PCTA works with landowners, public agencies, conservation organizations, and local communities to protect the trail for future generations.

Advocacy

The PCTA builds relationships with officials at the local, state and federal levels to advocate for full protection, preservation and funding for the PCT.

Trail Information

The PCTA serves as the primary clearing house for PCT information. We field thousands of phone calls and emails about the PCT and maintain a robust website with up-to-date information. We also have a blog, electronic newsletters and a quarterly magazine that provide information encouraging the safe use, enjoyment, protection, and preservation of the PCT.



PCTA staff in 2018 on the PCT at the Bridge of the Gods, Cascade Locks, OR.

Tabling Program Overview

The PCTA's Tabling Program strives to build up the Pacific Crest Trail community through awareness of the PCT and the association at public events.

What are tabling events?

Tabling events are planned outings where volunteers and organizers interact and engage with the public about a specific cause, in this case, the Pacific Crest Trail.

Volunteers set up a table and greet event attendees. Tables are filled with PCT information and graphics to pull people in and give them more information about the PCT, what the PCTA does and how we advocate for the trail.

What kind of events does the PCTA attend?

Some events that we've done in the past include the annual PCT Days in Cascade Locks, Oregon and events with partners like the Back Country Horsemen of America and the American Long Distance Hiking Association.

As tabling volunteers, you'll raise awareness about the PCT and our programs. Events can range in size from a single table at a local library or REI store to large events with multiple organizations.

This guidebook is a resource full of everything you need to volunteer at an event with the PCTA.



*Through awareness, we can build a stronger community to **protect, preserve, and promote** the Pacific Crest Trail.*

Tips for Effective and Engaging Tabling

To represent the PCTA effectively, it's important that you are a good listener and knowledgeable speaker. Below are some steps for successfully engaging the public, introducing the PCTA, and ensuring that you're sharing great information that will encourage the public to support the PCTA!

Introduce the Pacific Crest Trail

As people approach the table, don't wait for them to ask you a question. Begin the conversation by asking **"Do you know about the PCT?"**, **"Do you like the outdoors?"** or something similar. Depending on their response, you can offer some information about the trail.

"The Pacific Crest Trail is a national scenic trail that goes from Mexico to Canada. It's 2,650 miles long and travels along the spine of the Sierra Nevada and Cascade mountain ranges across some of the most pristine, wild and remote landscapes in the U.S.! Some people attempt to hike or ride their horse in one long trip, but many more enjoy it on a day or weekend trip."

Introduce the PCTA

Many people will be familiar with the Pacific Crest Trail, but not know about the PCTA. It's important for volunteers to introduce the Association in a concise way. Here's an example:

"The PCTA is dedicated to preserving the entire length of the trail. Our mission is to protect, preserve and promote the Pacific Crest Trail. Volunteers are key to the PCTA's success- we work year-round to keep all 2,650 miles of the PCT open! The PCTA works closely with the Forest Service and many other partners to permanently protect the trail and it's surrounding landscape for future generations. The PCTA coordinates annual trail maintenance, provides trail user information, issues trail permits, and advocates for the trail with lawmakers."



Ask Discovery Questions

One of the best ways to engage the public is by asking them questions instead of offering information or talking points. Plus, you'll figure out how best to engage them in the PCTA's work. You can ask:

- What do you like to do on trails? (Do you hike, backpack, ride horses, trail run, look for birds or wildflowers, or volunteer on trails? Do you enjoy trails with your family?)
- What do you enjoy about the PCT?
- Have you ever tried trail maintenance?
- Are you a member of the PCTA?

Continue the Conversation

The public may be curious about you, too!

Share...

- Your personal experience with the PCT and why you volunteer and support the PCTA
- Information about your local community-based volunteer group(s) including opportunities to get involved
- Where you can access and enjoy the PCT from your current location or recommended trips

Tips for Effective and Engaging Tabling

Encourage Future Engagement

Quickly move on to suggest ways they can get involved with the PCTA. (**Tip:** this is a great way to wrap-up conversation with people.) Depending on their interests, you can...

- Show them how to sign-up to receive PCTA emails.
- Hand them a brochure about volunteering or flyer about upcoming volunteer projects.
- Hand them a membership envelope, and show them how to fill it out or how they can find out more.



About PCTA Membership

The PCTA's work would not be possible without members. You can become a member of the PCTA by making an annual donation of \$35 or more or a monthly gift. Membership benefits include:

- The knowledge that your membership helps to protect and preserve the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail for future generations
- *The PCT Communicator*, PCTA's full-color, members-only magazine
- A one-year subscription to *Backpacker Magazine*
- A Pacific Crest Trail decal
- Invitations to participate in trail classes and volunteer trail projects

Note: Unless stated otherwise by PCTA staff, volunteers will not collect donations at tabling opportunities. If someone is interested in joining as a member or renewing their membership, suggest that they take a membership envelope or visit pcta.org/donate.

Common Questions

You're not expected to know everything about the PCT or PCTA. Your Regional Representative's business card will be available at the table and the public is encouraged to reach out to them with questions. But, here are answers to some common questions and instructions for what to do when you don't know the answer.

Where can I get maps for the Pacific Crest Trail?

Visit the maps page at pcta.org. From there, you might end up in our Pacific Crest Trail store.

Are dogs allowed on the trail?

Dogs are allowed on much, but not all of the PCT. Generally, they need to be on leash. There are different rules for different places (national parks, wilderness areas, state parks, etc). The regulations affecting you and your dog vary depending on the agency that manages the stretch of trail you're on. Visit our website for a list of locations dogs aren't allowed.

Do I need a permit to hike the trail?

Permits are required for overnight travel in all wilderness areas, national parks, California state parks and other restricted areas along the trail. You can obtain a permit from the agency on which your PCT trip originates. The PCTA issues long-distance permits for people that are heading out on trips of 500 miles or more. Complete information is available at pcta.org.

How many people thru-hike the PCT each year?

Hundreds of people report completing a thru-hike each year. We publish numbers on our website based on a Trail Completion Form, where hikers can share their story. But, thru-hikers are a small percentage of the trail's total users. There are probably hundreds of thousands of people who use the PCT each year!

Can you organize a volunteer project for a group (corporate, Boy Scout, etc.?)

Your group is always encouraged to join projects that are already scheduled. In some cases, we may be able to plan a special opportunity, but this takes a lot of coordination. Please reach out to [Regional Representative] or [Volunteer Chapter Chair] to find out more.

When you don't know the answer

- **Refer people to pcta.org** – a useful tool for all things PCT from up-to-date trail closures to financial information about the PCTA.
- Suggest appropriate PCTA staff to follow up with (all email and phone numbers are also listed on our website).
- **If you think PCTA should follow-up with someone you met, be sure to write down their name, email address and subject of interest on the tabling report form.**
- If someone wants to talk about a complicated or controversial issue such as mountain bike or OHV trespass, please refer them to your Regional Representative.
- **If you receive a request from the media** or are asked to make a statement on behalf of the PCTA, let them know you are not an official spokesperson of the PCTA and direct inquiries to your Regional Representative.

Tabling Program Roles

Volunteer Roles

Outreach Coordinator

Outreach Coordinators help to make tabling events happen. Their duties include evaluating tabling opportunities, communicating with PCTA staff and Tabling Volunteers, planning and preparing for the tabling opportunity, reporting results, and managing a tabling kit. They report to the Volunteer Programs Outreach Associate, and stay in contact with their Regional Representative, and are encouraged to coordinate several events in their region each year.

Tabling Volunteer

Tabling Volunteers represent the PCTA at tabling opportunities. They are friendly, knowledgeable, and enthusiastic about the PCTA and the PCTA's mission. They work with Outreach Coordinators and the Volunteer Programs Outreach Associate. Tabling volunteers will be paired with an experienced volunteer during their first tabling shift. They are encouraged to attend at least two tabling opportunities per year.

Reminders

It's your responsibility as a volunteer to get between events and home. If you have questions about mileage reimbursement, please email the VPOA.

Please don't bring any pets. They may become a hazard depending on the event and while your pet may be adorable and well-behaved, not everyone is comfortable around pets.

PCTA Staff Roles

Volunteer Programs Outreach Associate

PCTA's Volunteer Programs Outreach Associate or VPOA, works from the Sacramento office to recruit and engage volunteers, and facilitate the Tabling Program. They will be the first point of contact for Outreach Coordinators and Tabling Volunteers, as they oversee volunteer trainings, help keep tabling supplies stocked, and work with the Outreach Coordinator and Regional Representatives on recruiting and staffing tabling opportunities.

Regional Representative

PCTA's six Regional Representatives each oversee about 500 miles of trail and coordinate maintenance, management, and protection of their regions. They will work with the VPOA, Outreach Coordinators, and Tabling Volunteers to identify local opportunities and be informed about all tabling activities in their region.

Volunteer Programs Coordinator

PCTA's Volunteers Program Coordinator oversees trail-wide volunteer programs. They will help keep track of volunteer hours and activities and ensure volunteers are following procedures. They will also advise on volunteer trainings and support the tabling program as needed.



Outreach Coordinator

Outreach Coordinators help make tabling events happen!

Evaluate Tabling Opportunities

Outreach Coordinators are on the lookout for tabling opportunities in their region. PCTA's Regional Representatives and VPOA also communicate opportunities to Outreach Coordinators. Collectively, they work together **to find opportunities that leverage PCTA resources and the time and energy of volunteers.**

If PCTA has attended the event before, carefully consider the feedback of staff or volunteers.

What makes an event a good fit?

- *Is this opportunity hosted by a current partner (Forest Service, REI, etc.) or will many current partners be there?*
- *Is this opportunity related to trails or very likely to draw trail-enthusiasts?*
- *Is this opportunity likely to attract a new audience that we can welcome to PCTA?*
- *Is the timing and location convenient for volunteers?*
- *Is the opportunity more than one month away so there's time to plan and recruit volunteers?*
- *Is it free to attend?*
- *Are there any other compelling reasons to attend?*

If you answered "yes" to many of these questions, it would likely be a good opportunity for PCTA. If not, consider why PCTA should have a presence. Seek advice from the VPOA.

Communicate with PCTA Staff

When a good tabling opportunity is found, please email the VPOA and Regional Representative and include:

Details

- Name, date, time of opportunity
- Link to the event website/invitation, if available

Recruitment plan

- How many Tabling Volunteers will you need?
- Will the Outreach Coordinator recruit these volunteers or will you need assistance from PCTA staff?

Any additional needs

- Is there a fee?
- Is there an activity you'll need supplies for?
- Anything special PCTA should know about (i.e. a presentation, partnership opportunity, etc.)?
- Should PCTA promote this event?

Note: Outreach Coordinators should include the VPOA and their Regional Representative on all communications regarding events and Tabling Volunteers.



Recruit Tabling Volunteers

Define volunteer roles

- If the event is longer than 3 hours, divide volunteer roles into shifts. Estimate how many volunteers you'll need for each shift. PCTA recommends at least 2 volunteers per shift for all opportunities.
- Note any special roles you'll need from volunteers (e.g. set-up, tear-down, cross-cut saw demonstrator, speaker)

Note: If an Outreach Coordinator is not handling recruitment, please skip the following step.

Promote the opportunity

- Send an email to let potential volunteers know the date, time, location, and volunteer needs for the event. Send a link to the event if available.
- If, after the first week of recruitment, you still need volunteers, reach out to the VPOA for assistance.

Communicate with Tabling Volunteers

Outreach Coordinators are the main point of contact for Tabling Volunteers.

- Respond to volunteers in a timely manner to confirm their shifts and any questions they have.
- If there are new volunteers that want to participate, encourage them to attend a tabling training. Make sure they're paired with an experienced Tabling Volunteer at their first event.
- Check-in with Tabling Volunteers one week before the event to confirm their participation. Re-send any logistics or location details.

Prepare for an Event

Outreach Coordinators take all necessary steps to prepare for the tabling event, including:

- Fill out all necessary paperwork and correspond with event organizer(s) about expected attendance, arrival time and tear-down logistics. When possible, cc the VPOA.
- Gather kit materials and work with VPOA to collect anything else you may need from PCTA.
- If **Tabling Volunteers** will be handling set-up and tear-down, coordinate how they will collect and return the tabling kit.

Report Event Results

After each event, Outreach Coordinators will submit a project report. Paper versions of the report form will be available in the kit so that volunteers can help collect information during the tabling opportunity. Report forms include:

- Names and hours of volunteers
- Approximate number of people engaged
- Approximate number of current members engaged
- Number of volunteer brochures distributed
- Number of membership brochure distributed
- Email sign-up form
- Feedback from the event and people PCTA should follow-up with
- Photos (optional)

Tabling Volunteer

Tabling Volunteers represent the PCTA at tabling opportunities!

Before the Event

- Communicate with the Outreach Coordinator or VPOA about availability, desired tabling shift, and any requests they have for you.
- Reach out with any questions about the tabling opportunity.
- If you need to cancel, call the Outreach Coordinator, or Regional Representative as soon as possible.

Note: After each event, the Outreach Coordinator will use a report form to send PCTA your volunteer hours, results and feedback about the event. Tabling Volunteers are welcome to submit **any feedback** about a tabling opportunity via email to the VPOA.

At the Event

- Arrive on time and volunteer for the duration of your shift.
- Wear PCTA gear and nametag (provided).
- Ensure all items on the kit "check-list" are presented on the table. Become familiar with all of the items at the table.
- Notify Outreach Coordinator of any missing materials or materials that are running low.
- **Engage people in conversation using the tips and messaging on the following pages of this guidebook and your training.**
- Do not co-represent or promote other organizations or businesses unless you have permission from PCTA staff.
- Note name and email address and a brief comment about anyone that PCTA should follow-up with on the report form.



Tabling Kits

What volunteers bring to the tabling opportunity will depend on the size, audience, and purpose of the event. Here is a general list for what to bring to an event.

All Tabling Opportunities

- 6' or 8' table
- PCTA-branded table cloth
- Chairs
- PCTA branded banner
- PCT map display
- Portable storage bins & hand-truck
- Email sign-up sheet
- Volunteer nametags
- PCTA stickers
- PCT stickers
- *PCT Communicator* magazines
- Brochure displays
- PCT map brochures
- National Trails System maps
- Membership envelopes
- Volunteer brochures
- Upcoming vol. projects announcement
- Reg. Rep and volunteer business cards
- Pens/tape/scissors/stapler/etc.
- Tabling guidebook
- Paper copy of report form

Some Tabling Opportunities

- Tablet to collect email sign-ups
- PCTA canopy and canopy weights
- Items for interactive activity
- Local trails brochure or map, if avail.
- PCTA props for display (tools, hardhat)

Items kept in Volunteer Cache

- Storage bins with **all** extra materials

Tip:

Use this page as a "check-list" when setting up for events. It's helpful to remember what items should be on the tables and booths.

Managing the Tabling Kit:

The Outreach Coordinator will work closely with the VPOA to keep tabling kit materials organized and stocked. PCTA recommends keeping materials in a shared tool cache so that materials are accessible.

- Annually, the VPOA will work with the Outreach Coordinator to make sure the cache is stocked with stickers, maps, and brochures.
- Quarterly, the VPOA will work with the Outreach Coordinator to stock the cache with current Communicator Magazine and fresh flyers or handouts.
- Before each event, Outreach Coordinators will pack the materials for the event in transportable storage containers. Note the number of brochures you're bringing.
- After each event, Outreach Coordinators will return unused materials to the cache, note how many brochures are left and any materials running low.
- Outreach Coordinators can request more supplies for kits by contacting the VPOA.

Additional Resources

We're constantly updating materials for PCTA's tabling program. More materials are available for events:

- *PCTA history handout*
- *PCT info-graphic*
- *PCTA annual report*
- *Statement of the trail experience*
- *Information on community-based volunteer groups*
- *5-Minute script for a PCTA presentation*
- *Instructions for using tablets for Square or email sign-ups*
- *Instructions for interactive booth activities*



Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities

As a volunteer, you have the right to:

- Have your time used effectively
- Do meaningful and satisfying work
- Work in safe and healthy conditions
- Receive quality feedback on your work
- Receive recognition for your contribution

As a volunteer, it's your responsibility to:

- Acknowledge the decisions made by the PCTA
- Perform the work assigned to the best of your ability
- Follow PCTA policies and procedures
- Meet the time commitments
- Notify PCTA if you wish to terminate your volunteer relationship
- Be reliable and punctual

