

A Year of Challenge 2020 Annual Report

A smoky sunrise in a burn zone along the PCT in Central Oregon. Photo by Eddie O'Leary. On the cover: The Lionshead wildfire in Oregon. Photo by Antone Moody/InciWeb.

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Times of adversity reveal to us the importance of community resilience.

Thanks to you and the PCT community, we adapted and withstood a year of unprecedented challenges.

The suspension of much of the 2020 PCT season due to the Covid-19 pandemic provided us all a glimpse of what life is like without the PCT. We asked everyone to leave the trail, our volunteer crews could not gather, and trail work was suspended for much of the year.





Liz Bergeron

Rick Thalhammer

The murder of George Floyd sparked a nationwide reckoning over systemic racism, prompting us to reflect, and commit to ensuring the PCT is a place where everyone is welcome. Then, historic wildfires all along the trail led to widespread closures and significant damage. We all realized how important the trail is for our physical and spiritual health—and how those benefits must be accessible to all people.

Despite the challenges, we made progress and maintained over 800 miles of trail, protected 15 acres of land, and moved forward with many initiatives that will enhance the trail experience for all. We owe this success to you. Thank you for your continued support and for all you do for the trail and those who use it.



Ziz Bergern

Liz Bergeron Executive Director and CEO

Kele Thallimmer

Rick Thalhammer Chair, PCTA Board of Directors



The PCT is more important than ever-and so is your support.

Winding 2,650 majestic miles through 25 national forests and six national parks, the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) is one of the most breathtaking hiking trails in the world. Whether for a few miles or for a seasonlong adventure, the PCT is an experience that people remember for their entire lives.

During a time of **climatic and ecological change**, the trail is important as a **protected corridor linking larger protected areas** for preservation of plant and animal species, and is vital to the long-term health of our environment.

The PCT is also an important resource for our **mental**, **physical**, **and spiritual health**. It **connects people young and old to the natural world** and is also a **major economic driver**, contributing to the economic health of communities along the trail in California, Oregon and Washington.

We all need the PCT—which is why we're grateful for your generous support.

How your support made a difference in 2020...

2020 was a year like no other, yet even with the year's many challenges we continued to make **steady progress** in our work for the PCT. Our volunteers and **your support** made this possible:

- We reacted swiftly throughout the year to move forward with our work where possible and ensure the health and safety of the PCT community in accordance with Covid guidance.
- We moved training and engagement of our volunteers online.
- We implemented a **major technology upgrade** for the organization that will benefit the PCT.
- We listened to the community and moved toward greater support of diversity, equity and inclusion on the PCT and in our organization and volunteers.
- We maintained over 800 miles of the PCT after restrictions were loosened in late 2020.



2020 Highlights



Navigating the Covid-19 Pandemic and Wildfires

2020 delivered **two great challenges** to the PCT: the Covid-19 pandemic and record-breaking megafires.

In March of 2020, we **suspended permits** and asked everyone to leave the PCT. **All in-person events and volunteer projects were canceled**, and staff worked remotely while successfully moving to online operations. We offered **training webinars** to keep volunteers engaged.

As the year passed, we kept pace with evolving science and guidelines from the CDC and adjusted our messaging to **gradually return to a near-normal situation** on the trail in 2021.

Meanwhile, in August and September, **devastating** wildfires burned over 10 million acres, and the PCT was not spared, with roughly 90 miles of the trail burned—resulting in major trail closures that continue today.

Sharpening Our Technology Tools

Behind the management of the PCT lie **vast amounts** of data that changes constantly. To provide the **best trail conditions possible** while preserving its wild and scenic experience, the PCTA tracks this data throughout the year.

In 2020 we began the process of transitioning to a **cloud-based database that will transform how we protect and maintain the trail.** Throughout Covid restrictions, much of this work was able to be completed by staff remotely.

The benefits of this upgrade include:

- **Realtime data entry** and reports from partners and volunteers are possible from the trail;
- Increased accounting and Geographic Information System (GIS) integration;
- · An improved, personalized volunteer experience;
- Centralized communications with volunteers, members and agency partners.



A hiker taking in the view from Mount Whitney, CA. Photo by Paul Craft.

Five Years of Land Protection Successes

An alpine lake in the Trinity Divide, Northern California, protected by the PCTA in 2019. Photo by PCTA.

One of the PCTA's most important mission mandates is to ensure that the trail and the viewsheds through which it passes **remain protected and unspoiled**.

PCTA began its land acquisition program in January of 2015. Since then **more than 22,000 acres have been permanently protected.** For the past 20 years, the USDA Forest Service has been tracking acres protected for the PCT, and **more than 50%** of the acres acquired along the PCT during that time occurred in these last 5 years.

In 2020 we protected a further 15 acres of **critical wildlife corridor.** These protected parcels also include five acres of **important watershed lands**.

There is much more to do before the trail is fully protected. We still have thousands of parcels and acres identified in our land protection inventory that **remain vulnerable to development, resource extraction and transportation corridors**.





Improving the PCT Experience

Volunteers from the North 350 Blades PCTA chapter in Washington. Photo by PCTA.

27141 hours of volunteer trail maintenance 5 503miles of the PCT maintained \$802,000 of volunteer hours

2020 Volunteer

Accomplishments

online trail skills training events hosted

Trail Skills Colleges Move Online

In 2020 due to Covid-19, PCTA made the difficult decision to **cancel all in-person Trail Skills College events** for the year.

Instead, PCTA developed **Online Trail Skills College Courses** to increase trail maintenance knowledge and engage new volunteers from a distance.

PCTA staff and volunteers converted the existing Trail Skills College course curriculums into an engaging online platform.

Two 2-hour courses were offered regularly throughout the fall and winter: **Online Intro to Trail Maintenance** and **Online Intro to Trail Scouting**. Other online events were held throughout the year, such as **volunteer award presentations** and **social hours**.

The feedback from our volunteers was entirely positive, as they missed being on the trail together and appreciated the camaraderie offered by the online events.





Crestrunners and Trailhead Hosts

In early 2020, prior to the pandemic, the PCTA partnered with the **Cleveland National Forest**— **Descanso Ranger District** to implement the **Crest Runner** and **Southern Terminus Trailhead Host** programs for the sixth consecutive year.

These programs have been **very effective** at making **in-person visitor contacts** and sharing **safe and responsible use trail information** to reduce impacts from increased use along the PCT.

Our 2020 trailhead hosts had just begun their season when the pandemic struck, but fortunately they were able to return in 2021, and have interacted with many hikers—both at the Southern Terminus at the beginning of the season, and at **Kennedy Meadows South** later in the season.

Improving the PCT Experience

Kennedy Meadows Trail Register and Counters

As use has increased along the PCT, **social and physical impacts have also increased**. The increased use has led to a growing interest in **understanding user travel patterns** by acquiring qualitative and quantitative information about PCT visitors.

Though numbers were down due to the pandemic, 2020 marked the first complete year PCTA collected information from a **new trail register location**.

Kennedy Meadows serves as a significant stop for long-distance hikers, and is a favorite of day hikers and car campers.

Besides being a beloved and well-visited local destination, it also marks the beginning of the **most regulated and closely monitored PCT section** for visitor use management in the Sierra Nevada.



1st Place Overall: "Glacier Peak" by Igor Pankovcin

tst Place Trail Majesty: Lupines by Washington Lake by Laurie Meade

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2nd Place Overall: "At the Top" by Kevin Scott (Kearsarge Pass)

1st Place Flora & Fauna: "Likes Attract" by Larry Bettinger

2021 Photo Contest Winners

3rd Place Overall: "Best. Day. Ever. Seriously." by Ryan Weidert (White Pass, WA)

1st Place Old School: "Lost on the PCT, 1979" by Chris Hosmer

1st Place Equestrian: Killen Creek Falls, WA by Gary Pegg

Board of Directors

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Without Donor Restrictions	2020	2019
Revenue and Support		
Private Sources*	\$ 3,011,600	\$ 3,365,451
Government Grants	\$ 818,215	\$ 993,982
Total Revenue and Support**	\$ 3,829,815	\$ 4,359,433
Expenses		
Trail Operations	\$ 1,197,818	\$ 1,688,961
Land Protection	\$ 305,371	\$ 315,561
Public Information and Education	\$ 858,087	\$ 891,118
Fundraising	\$ 706,644	\$ 736,215
Management and General	\$ 479,222	\$ 478,735
Total Expenses	\$ 3,547,142	\$ 4,110,590
Surplus (Deficit) Without Donor Restrictions	\$ 282,673	\$ 248,843
With Donor Restrictions		
Individual Contributions	\$ 728,024	\$ 829,065
Investment Income (Loss)	\$ 202,200	\$ 250,619
Net Assets Released from Restriction	\$ (738,420)	\$ (538,845)
Surplus (Deficit) With Donor Restrictions**	\$ 191,804	\$ 540,839
Total Surplus (Deficit)	\$ 474,477	\$ 789,682
Net Assets (Beginning of Year)	\$ 4,313,217	\$ 3,523,535
Net Assets (End of Year)	\$ 4,787,694	\$ 4,313,217

Financials

Total Revenue & Support 2020 2019 \$4,021,619** \$4,900,272 Total Expenses 2020 2019 \$3,547,142 \$4,110,590 Total Surplus (Deficit) 2020 2019 \$3,547,142 \$4,110,590 Total Surplus (Deficit) 2020 2019 \$ 474,477 \$ 789,682

*Private Sources include memberships, donations, other revenue, and in-kind donations.

**Total Revenue and Support Amount above is the sum of Total Revenue and Support - Without Donor Restrictions and Surplus (Deficit) With Donor Restrictions.

The 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 2019 financial statements were audited by Gilbert Associates, Inc. of Sacramento, CA. In the opinion of the auditor, the PCTA's 2020 financial statements fairly present the financial position of the PCTA in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. For more information or copies of the 2020 audited financials, visit **www.pcta.org/financials**.

Thank you to all the extraordinary trail enthusiasts who contributed \$1,000 or more in 2020. These dedicated individuals, foundations and companies not only set the pace for others who wish to support our work, but play a crucial role in helping to protect, preserve and promote the Pacific Crest Trail.

TRAIL BLAZERS - \$10,000+

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Background photo: North of Mather Pass, CA. Photo by Michael Windsor.

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Background photo: Entering Oregon near Sheep Camp Spring. Photo by Tom Standley.

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Pacific Crest Trail Association



29,469

volunteer and corps crew service hours

in private contributions

PCTA members

4-million website visits

Teddy bear cholla cactus in Southern California. Photo by Amos Almy.

Mule packers supporting trail work on the PCT in California. Photo by PCTA. 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.

PCTA's Agency Partners



Pacific Crest Trail Association

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