



2021 Year-End Program Review





Pacific Crest Trail Association

2021: A Second Year of Flexibility And Perseverance

In 2021, the Pacific Crest Trail Association (PCTA) and its partners continued to adapt to the **challenges of the pandemic** while focused on **shared stewardship** and **collaborative management** of the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (PCT).

Volunteer trail maintenance remains a source of strength and resilience with **55,167 hours** of volunteer labor this year.

At the same time, **large wildland fires** continue to pose a significant challenge to the public's enjoyment of the PCT.

This year the **963,309 acre Dixie fire** burned approximately **112 miles** of the PCT. Other fires burned lands containing an additional **22 miles** of the Trail.



1 Uplifting and Empowering Our Community Through A Respectful, Safe Working Environment

Dedicated volunteers accomplish the majority of the PCT's annual maintenance. They diligently work to clear downed logs, cut back brush, repair trail tread, and help to keep the PCT open and safe for travelers. As in 2020, these efforts were seriously impacted by the pandemic.

Every year, the PCTA's number one goal in trail maintenance is to keep our volunteers safe and healthy. 2021 was no different. Volunteers' health and well-being remains our number one priority during the pandemic.

This year PCTA continued to collaborate with non-profit and agency partners to refine enhanced safety protocols and policies to manage the risks from COVID-19 and align with federal, state and county regulations. PCTA's community-based volunteer programs worked within these safety protocols, including working in smaller groups and with additional safety equipment.

While many backcountry, pack-in projects and large annual training events were canceled, resulting in less trail maintenance than pre-pandemic years, our concerted safety efforts have resulted in no known cases of COVID-19 connected to the PCTA's volunteer programs throughout the entirety of the pandemic.

PCTA's pandemic safety record, in collaboration with the U.S. Forest Service, is a source of pride for all. Before any on-trail activity, volunteers review the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines regarding underlying conditions and complete the CDC's COVID-19 self-evaluation. They also review and sign the U.S. Forest Service Risk Assessment for COVID-19 specific to volunteers and PCTA's COVID-19 Release of Liability Form. As in years past, volunteers continued to submit trailhead communication plans to local agency units, ensuring agency partners can track on volunteers in the field. PCTA continues to provide volunteers with additional person protective equipment, including sanitizer, handwashing stations, and face masks. Volunteers carry first aid kits with injury instructions and related injury report forms.

The PCTA regularly collects feedback from volunteers. In 2021, volunteers reported that the work environment was safe and enjoyable. Volunteers gave favorable feedback when asked if COVID-19 protocols and procedures were clear; if COVID-19 safety protocols were followed; and if they received ample training and safety information from the trail crew leader to feel prepared for their role.



In 2021, PCTA continued to collaborate with non-profit and agency partners to refine enhanced safety protocols and policies to account for COVID-19. Volunteers and staff worked within these safety protocols resulting in no known cases of COVID-19 on PCTA's volunteer projects. Photo by Danny Hall.



2021 Trail Accomplishments

55,167

hours of volunteer
trail maintenance
or reconstruction

1,170

miles of trail
maintained

8.4

miles of trail
reconstructed or
constructed

2,277

square feet of log
and stone cribbing
constructed

137

feet of turnpike
or puncheon
constructed

2021 Communication Services to the Public and Trail Users

Number of emails responded to	3,990
Number of phone calls responded to	2,269
Number of social media requests responded to	138
Number of media requests responded to	6
Number of PCT brochures distributed	5,630
Number of issues of the <i>PCT Communicator</i> magazine distributed	40,000
Number of wilderness permits issued for PCT travel in excess of 500 miles	7,216
Number of visits to PCTA's website	1,664,972

2021 Partner Hours Contributions

7,727

American Conservation
Experience

3,997

Northwest Youth Corps

1,537

Student Conservation
Association

3,970

Tahoe Rim Trail
Association

1,925

Washington
Conservation Corps

3,052

Washington Trails
Association



A Commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

PCTA believes that everyone deserves the opportunity to enjoy time outdoors. When people have meaningful experiences outdoors, their quality of life, health, and social well-being improve. We believe that everyone should have access to the PCT and feel welcomed in our trail community. PCTA acknowledges systemic racism and other social injustices and their impact on the PCT community. We have begun the journey of evaluating and understanding what we can do to change the systems within our organization and address these injustices. We welcome diversity and aim to be an accessible and inclusive community that honors and respects the various ways people connect with the PCT.

The PCTA's mission is focused on ensuring the PCT remains open and accessible to all people now and in the future. Centering our work in the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion improve our ability to meet this mission and strengthen the PCTA's work. We wholeheartedly invite everyone to enjoy the PCT and engage in the work of the PCTA. We are stronger when we work together.

PCTA's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) commitment is an ongoing journey as we work to transform our internal culture and external programs to best support the PCT, its users and our mission. To promote organizational growth and the fair treatment of people of all races, the PCTA:

- Hired the **Center for Diversity and the Environment** to work with us on organizational change through conducting trainings for staff and Board of Directors, exploring and articulating the organization's history and current state with a racial equity lens and working with stakeholder input to identify our desired organizational future. This work set a foundation for the association's continued DEI journey and action planning.
- Published a **DEI commitment** on our website that speaks to our organizational values and vision for greater DEI on the PCT and in the PCTA: <https://www.pcta.org/about-us/dei/>
- Staff and Board of Directors completed **five days of training** designed to establish a foundation for deep learning, honest exploration, and open dialogue. PCTA's staff and Board began to develop **a shared understanding of equity, diversity and inclusion in our lives, our relationships and our work**, and explored the many dimensions of diversity in our personal and professional interactions.
- Co-sponsored of the **Bridge Project**, an **equitable hiring pathway for the environmental sector** focused on people of color and underrepresented communities. PCTA participated in training for employers around equitable hiring, identifying biases in hiring, and the onboarding process. PCTA hired **two new staff members** through the Project.



Taking up space in the middle of nowhere

By Crystal Gail Welcome

The Pacific Crest Trail is a long, challenging hike that takes you through some of the most beautiful and remote areas of the United States. As a Black woman, I often feel like I am the only one of my race on the trail. This can be both a blessing and a curse. On the one hand, it allows me to connect with nature and myself in a way that is often difficult in more populated areas. On the other hand, it can be isolating and lonely. I have learned to embrace the solitude and to find strength in my own resilience. The trail has taught me that I am capable of more than I ever imagined. I am proud to be a part of this incredible journey and to represent my community.



Supporting a BIPOC (Black and Indigenous people of color) Hiker

In 2021, the PCTA sponsored **Crystal Gail Welcome's "Footprints for Change Hike for Justice"** on the PCT portion of the Great Western Loop. Crystal shared her experience to encourage members of the PCT community to become **more aware and more mindful of ourselves**. Crystal's writing was featured in the PCT Communicator magazine and a series of PCTA blog posts.



2 Being Good Neighbors and Providing Excellent Customer Service

In addition to our restoration and protection efforts, the PCTA serves as the primary resource and customer service representative for PCT information, connecting people from around the world with one of the iconic recreation opportunities in the United States.

The PCTA employs a full-time Trail Information Manager and a part-time Trail Information Assistant who work with volunteers to act as public resources for PCT information and support the Trail's users. A crucial part of PCTA's public service is our 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 contact for trail-wide customer service inquiries. To do this requires collaborating on messaging, priorities, and best practices with agency partners along the PCT.

U.S. Forest Service and partner agencies receive assistance from PCTA in issuing interagency permits for trips of 500 miles or more and provides information about permits for all recreation users. Each summer, the PCTA rapidly shares crucial land-use regulations and emergency information, from fire closures to landslides. This year, we published new information clarifying where permits are required on the PCT and how trail users can apply for them.

PCTA oversees many sources of PCT information, including a comprehensive website, a blog, electronic newsletters and a quarterly magazine. These publications 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 PCTA's active social media presence on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and other online forums. PCTA's contributes information to numerous blog, newspaper, and magazine articles, as well as smartphone applications, map sets, and guidebooks.



A digital edition of the PCT Communicator magazine.

PCTA's website received 1,664,972 million pageviews from people all over the world looking to gain information about the PCT. While much of this information focuses on trip planning, current trail conditions and trail information, the PCTA provides a tremendous amount of Leave No Trace education for trail users. The goal is to encourage people to travel responsibly and lightly on the land, thereby reducing human influences on the Trail and protecting it for future travelers.

In 2021, PCTA's website received 1,664,972 million pageviews from people all over the world looking to gain information about the PCT. While much of this information focuses on trip planning, current trail conditions and trail information, the PCTA provides a tremendous amount of Leave No Trace education for trail users. The goal is to encourage people to travel responsibly and lightly on the land, thereby reducing human influences on the Trail and protecting it for future travelers.

Providing Up-To-Date Information Across Landscapes and in Rapidly Changing Situations

During the ongoing wildfire crisis in the West, PCTA plays a key role in keeping the public safe through providing timely, accurate, coordinated information focused on the PCT. In 2021, PCTA tracked wildfire impacts to the PCT and shared timely information with the public. Key incidents like the Dixie and Tamarack Fires impacted the PCT before they gained widespread media attention.

PCTA helped agency partners alert the public in the early days of these incidents. Similarly, a critical bridge on the PCT was damaged during a high-water event in North Cascades National Park. Through coordination with the Park, alternative routes were devised for bypassing the crossing and information was quickly disseminated to the public prior to a temporary bridge being installed.



The Trail Closures page on the PCTA website.

PCTA Hires GIS Specialist and Launches a Comprehensive Interactive Map

In 2021, the PCTA took big steps forward with technology, allowing our community to collect and share PCT information more accurately and efficiently with the hiring of our first full-time GIS Specialist. By April, we launched a comprehensive interactive web map that allows anyone with access to an internet browser on a computer or smartphone to visualize various data layers along the PCT. This map helps connect people to the Trail in new ways, serving as a tool for researching the PCT, planning trips, and sharing information.

The interactive map provides relevant and real-time GIS data on a wide range of topics, such as land management, current fire and weather conditions, snow depth, and much more. Combining information from these various layers allows the PCT community, PCTA staff, volunteers, and partners to better understand and communicate about the PCT and its surroundings than was previously possible.



The new PCT Interactive Map, here showing Northern California 2021 wildfire perimeters and forest administrative boundaries.

3 Promoting Shared Stewardship by Increasing Partnership and Volunteerism

The idea of shared stewardship for our National Trails is rooted in the National Trails System Act, which encourages strong public-private partnerships and volunteers to take care of our National Trails. Strengthening and expanding partnerships is crucial to sustaining the PCT for future generations.

Every year, the PCTA brings together partners and volunteers and serves as a liaison between people and our public lands. Volunteers provide dedication, energy, and assistance, ensuring that the PCT provides unparalleled recreation opportunities.

Each year the Corporation for National and Community Service sets a dollar value on volunteer time. This number is based on the average hourly earnings of non-supervisory production workers in the United States. According to this value, in 2021, the PCT volunteer community, including non-trail maintenance activities, contributed 57,643 service hours, an in-kind value of \$1.7 million.



In the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument, a Student Conservation Association corps crew excavates dirt to make the PCT passible to hikers and equestrians and return it to the Trail standard set forth in the PCT Comprehensive Management Plan. Photo by Michelle DiMeglio.

In 2021, the PCT volunteer community, including non-trail maintenance activities, contributed 57,643 service hours, an in-kind value of \$1.7 million. Volunteer stewards and corps crew performed hard, physical labor to complete annual maintenance on 1,170 miles of the PCT, allowing others to enjoy the beauty of the wilderness while traveling on a safe, passable trail.

Volunteer stewards and corps crew members performed the hard, physical labor of annual maintenance on 1,170 miles of the PCT, allowing others to enjoy the beauty of the wilderness while traveling on a safe, passable trail. Volunteers cut back overgrown vegetation, cleared fallen logs, constructed rock retaining walls, reconstructed trail tread, and built new trail. Twelve community-based volunteer groups dispersed along the trail serve as the foundation for PCTA's volunteer programs.

PCTA volunteers are a diverse group of all ages and backgrounds. In addition to community-based volunteer groups, PCTA partners with conservation nonprofits and community groups to ensure the PCT is maintained, protected, and enjoyed. In a typical year, many partner nonprofit and community organizations provide local volunteer trail maintenance opportunities, group hikes, and youth education.



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 an REI grant in collaboration with nonprofit and agency partners. It uses a modular course curriculum taught at multiple events along the PCT. 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 typically serves as the classroom for the courses, and topics range from brushing and scouting to tread reconstruction and leading crews.

Trail Skills College also typically includes saw training and certification courses conducted by PCTA volunteer saw instructors. PCTA's saw program is one of the first in the country authorized by the U.S. Forest Service and has served as a model for other trail organizations. While in-person activities were still limited in 2021 due to COVID-19, PCTA offered Trail Skills Colleges and training opportunities for volunteers throughout the year.

To adapt to the pandemic, PCTA developed online Trail Skills College courses to increase trail maintenance knowledge and engage new volunteers from a distance. This includes two live and interactive two-hour courses: Online Intro to Trail Maintenance and Online Intro to Trail Scouting. These courses were offered each month in 2021. PCTA also continued to promote the PCTA's Tabling Program through online trainings. These trainings focused on preparing volunteers to engage the public and provide information on the PCT and PCTA at in-person events.



In 2021, Trail Skills College courses were coupled with pre-trip online presentation.

This year PCTA also utilized online trainings to support multiple in-person Trail Skills Colleges, including saw trainings. Many in-person Trail Skills College courses were coupled with pre-trip online presentations so instructors could provide fundamentals to the students in an online setting and minimize the classroom time needed in-person. This allowed for more physically distanced one-on-one coaching and instruction when the class met in-person.

2021 PCTA Sponsored Trail Skills College Trainings

Number of volunteers attending crosscut or chain saw training	121
Number of crosscut and chain saw trainings hosted	9
Number of other volunteer trainings hosted	266
Number of volunteers attending other training	25

Salesforce Database

The PCTA has been working on a major technology project for several years to help meet the needs of both the trail and PCTA community. As part of this technology upgrade, in spring 2021 the PCTA launched a custom Salesforce-based database for PCTA staff and a connected online volunteer platform called PCTAConnect.

PCTAConnect brings together management for trail maintenance projects, volunteer project registrations, volunteer profiles, and agency partner information in one central, cloud-based system. The new technology automates some previously manual volunteer management processes, including allowing volunteers to register themselves for trail maintenance projects and trainings. The upgrades brought by this new system support the continued growth of volunteer programs and keeps agency partners more closely connected to the plans and efforts of PCTA volunteers.



In the Angeles National Forest in the San Gabriel Mountains above the Los Angeles basin, the Student Conservation Association Crew and PCTA staff work to clear the PCT of downed trees and encroachments to the trail corridor. Photo by Michelle DiMeglio.

Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA)

In 2021, \$4.42 million in GAOA funding was awarded to the PCT program in U.S. Forest Region 5 to support efforts to reduce the backlog of deferred maintenance along the Trail.

The multi-year funding is being used to increase agency and partner staffing to support expanded corps and volunteer work.

In the fall, a Student Conservation Association (SCA) corps crew started the GAOA work with six weeks in Southern California. The crew, accompanied by PCTA Trail Crew Technical Advisors, worked on addressing the backlog of deferred trail maintenance on both the Angeles and Cleveland National Forests.

For their work on the Angeles National Forest, the crew and PCTA worked in the San Gabriel Mountains in the vicinity of Cloudburst Summit, off of the Angeles Crest Highway (CA-2).

In the first four weeks, the crew maintained about five miles of the PCT including clearing downed logs, cleaning and installing drainage features, building rock retaining structures, brushing the trail corridor, rebenching buried trail, and restoring the outslope to the trail tread.

SCA then moved south to the Cleveland National Forest to work in both Hauser and Fred Canyons. Over the two weeks, they maintained 1.2 miles including installing stone check steps, installing drainage features, resetting and building rock retaining walls, and general tread work like rebenching, widening and returning the tread to standard.

With the season wrapped up, thanks to SCA, the backlog of deferred maintenance was reduced by over six miles. PCTA will continue to work with SCA in coming years thanks to GAOA funding.



The Pacific Crest Trail-John Muir Trail overlap offers incredible scenery throughout its length with granite spires, alpine meadows, and starry skies abounding. It's no wonder this part of the PCT holds a special place in the hearts of agency partners and the public alike. The Pacific Crest Trail-John Muir Trail Collaborative supports inter-agency management of this popular section. Photo by Florian Aster.

Continued Management of the John Muir Trail Overlap Through Partnership

The PCTA works with agency and non-profit partners to assure an excellent trail experience across administrative boundaries. The Pacific Crest Trail-John Muir Trail (JMT) section is an example of partnership in action. The JMT winds its way through the crest of the High Sierra, coinciding with the PCT for 190 miles of its 210 miles path.

The PCT-JMT overlap is a complex area to manage as it passes through four Wilderness areas: Yosemite, Sequoia-Kings Canyon, Ansel Adams, and John Muir; and across five management units: Sequoia-Kings Canyon and Yosemite National Parks, Devils Postpile National Monument, and the Sierra and Inyo National Forests. Additionally, four other national forests issue permits for sections of the PCT-JMT.

Agency partners, PCTA and researchers from Virginia Tech, Penn State, Humboldt State and California Merced Universities have work together since 2016 to steward and protect the PCT-JMT overlap through a partnership known as the "Pacific Crest Trail/John Muir Trail Collaborative." PCTA's contributions include assessing the efficacy of the PCT long-distance permit, collecting data on visitation to aid travel pattern research, providing volunteers that assist in Leave No Trace and Safe and Responsible Use education and resource surveys, and providing technical expertise on the PCT and how trail users interact with Wilderness.

Beyond a strengthened working relationship between partners in the High Sierra, the collaborative has increased ongoing communications, integrated transboundary patrols and monitoring, partnered on mapping and educational efforts, and has a better understanding of how permits are allotted across multiple agency boundaries.

4 Improving the Condition of the Forest and Grasslands

One of PCTA's priorities is to provide a world-class trail experience and to protect the landscapes that make such an experience possible. In the spring of 2020, the Tahoe National Forest informed PCTA that the PCT traveled directly through federally-designated critical habitat of a population of the endangered Sierra Nevada Yellow-Legged Frogs.

To protect the frogs and their habitat, a new route was needed that moved trail users away from the sensitive area. After consultation from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Tahoe National Forest began collaboration with PCTA on a small realignment of the PCT. The collaborative work included the Truckee Ranger District Trails Manager and aquatics and cultural biologists, PCTA and Truckee Trails Foundation. In the fall of 2020, work began to install a 530-foot realignment that included a footbridge and elevated turnpike.



Former PCT crossing through the Sierra Nevada Yellow-Legged Frog habitat. The Trail was moved slightly downstream to a more sustainable crossing of the creek where the habitat is minimally impacted.



Aquatics biologists from the Tahoe National Forest conducting field surveys on Sierra Nevada Yellow-Legged Frogs. Surveys are completed on a regular basis to identify suitable habitat for the Sierra Nevada Yellow-Legged Frog and monitor the existing populations.

The trail construction and restoration work spanned a two-year period. To protect critical habitat, all of the prep work for the footbridge was done off-site. Crews of six to eight people then carried the materials to the creek crossing. Working collaboratively, PCTA and the Forest developed educational signage for which the Forest received two grants that allowed for installation of an interpretive kiosk.

In the summer of 2021, PCTA continued the work with support from the American Conservation Experience (ACE), an AmeriCorps program and major trail maintenance partner. PCTA and ACE were able to complete the footbridge and install most of the elevated turnpike. This collaborative project protected an endangered species and its associated habitat, while also continuing to provide an amazing trail experience.



The footbridge was prepared offsite from the sensitive habitat to minimize impacts. Timbers were cut, notched and prepped to size before being moved to the creek crossing.



Tahoe National Forest and Truckee Trails Foundation transported materials to the creek crossing. Timbers were carried by six to eight people and refastened after being positioned on the abutments.



American Conservation Experience corps crew behind the footbridge installed to protect the Sierra Nevada Yellow-Legged Frogs on the Tahoe National Forest. Additional work was completed to protect the abutments and banks of the creek from erosion.

Sensitive Meadow Habitat

Please Stay on Trail and Keep Dogs on Leash

Help Protect Our Native Frogs!

The Endangered Sierra Nevada Yellow-Legged Frog lives here!

Why is the Sierra Nevada Yellow-Legged Frog endangered?
Predation by introduced trout, disease (especially chytrid fungus), chemicals, environmental / climate changes, and human-caused habitat degradation.

Life Cycle Facts:

Tadpoles take 2 to 4 years to metamorphose into juveniles and require year-round water. It takes 5 to 8 years for these frogs to become adults and to start reproducing.

How You Can Help:

- Practice LEAVE NO TRACE principles and "TREAD LIGHTLY".
- Clean and dry wet and muddy footwear before hiking into the next watershed to prevent the spread of deadly chytrid fungus.
- Avoid trampling through wet meadow areas and streams.
- Keep dogs out of streams and ponds in frog habitat.
- Avoid getting soaps and sunscreens in stream.

Learn more at:

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/tahoe/>
<https://www.fs.usda.gov/main/r5/plants-animals/wildlife>
<http://www.mylfrog.info/>



Educational information is displayed at the edge of the federally-designated habitat to inform trail users of the species. Interpretation information and education are essential for the protection of threatened and endangered species along the PCT.

Managing the PCT and Wildland Fire

Fuels reduction, wildfire suppression, and post-fire restoration are all issues agency partners deal with on a regular basis. Climate change has exacerbated these issues making the situation more challenging. The PCT passes through a variety of ecosystems with much of it in the dry fire prone forests of the Pacific ranges, as well, chaparral ecosystems in California. PCTA works closely with agency partners in California, Oregon, and Washington on wildland fire management before, during, and after a wildfire event to ensure the PCT is protected.

Forest thinning and prescribed burning management activities are essential to improve forest health and mitigate against future large-scale wildfire. When carried out in a manner that considers the PCT, these projects can meet project goals while protecting or even improving the Trail corridor and experience.

During wildfire events, PCTA stays in regular communication with agency partners as sections of the Trail are closed and impacted by associated fire suppression. Following a wildfire event, PCTA and agency staff assess damage to the PCT and make plans for post-fire restoration work. While fire suppression is ultimately necessary, these efforts can leave lasting impacts on the PCT experience, making restoration efforts essential to ensure the surrounding landscape remains as natural and unimpacted as possible.



Fire impacts the PCT in a variety of ways and the extent to which it is damaged is often directly related to the severity of the burn. Factors including soil type, dominant vegetation, and slope all effect how severely a trail is damaged during a wildfire event. Pictured above, the PCT passes through the Dixie Fire burn area on the Lassen National Forest.



Wildfire suppression efforts often have significant impacts on the PCT and surrounding landscape. U.S. Forest Service resource advisors are dispatched to fire events to monitor impacts on a variety of forest resources. PCTA works closely with agency partners to assess potential damage and plan for rehabilitation.



An example of a campsite along the PCT, while it has with incredible scenic and experiential qualities, it's also in a potentially unsustainable location. This impacted site is in a drainage, directly adjacent to the PCT, with some expansion potential nearby. Trail users often find campsites through the use of smartphone apps with crowdsourced information.

Campsite Management to Improve Resources and Experiences

As more and more people venture outside to experience the immense benefits provided by trails and open spaces, challenges relating to overuse have increased. A PCT-wide survey of agency partners showed campsites and camping to be the most common theme discussed by respondents. Among many issues, this survey showed the drivers of campsite and camping issues to include non-compliance with regulations, resource impacts, and crowding – all items that are associated and intertwined with increased use.

PCTA formed a staff team in 2019 to dig deeper into campsite use and possible mitigation. The team's ongoing work includes ongoing communication with third-party campsite information sources, site-specific actions on trail, synthesis and review of the current best-available science, and an assessment of current campsites along the PCT.

Part of the journey to better understand current resource conditions along the PCT has involved long-distance campsite surveys. While some data can be collected anecdotally, and other work extrapolated through existing limits of acceptable change research, volunteer data collection has focused on campsites published through smartphone apps. To date volunteers have assessed over 1,000 sites along 1,246 miles of the PCT.

5 Enhancing Recreation Opportunities, Improving Access, and Sustaining Infrastructure

Each year, PCTA works to improve the physical condition of the PCT. Volunteers and corps crews address annual maintenance and work with agency partners to remove more complicated obstacles. On June 14, 2021, multiple years of trail maintenance projects culminated in the coordinated removal of a pile of gigantic boulders from the PCT on an iconic section known as the Desert Divide. The boulders were in a remote location within the San Jacinto Wilderness, in the San Bernardino National Forest's San Jacinto Ranger District. Staging at the Humber Park trailhead just above the town of Idyllwild, two highly-experienced mule packers from the Redshank Riders Backcountry Horsemen of California Unit and Jacob Quinn, a U.S. Forest Service certified blaster from the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, brought in the explosives.

The volunteer packers dropped the explosives five miles from the trailhead where the supplies were then hand shuttled, under direct supervision of Quinn, the last four miles to the work site. Quinn set the charges. After years of effort to reach that moment, the boulders were gone in a matter of seconds. A loud explosion could be heard all the way down in the Coachella Valley below.

After the rocks were removed, an American Conservation Experience (ACE) corps crew came into to restore the tread that was under the boulders and rebuild tread damaged in the blast. Although this section of the PCT is still not recommended for equestrian use, it is much more easily traversed by hikers now that the boulders have been removed.



The pile of boulders that fell on the iconic Desert Divide segment of the PCT in the San Bernardino National Forest near the town of Idyllwild, California.



After the U.S. Forest Service certified blaster removed the boulders, much work needed to be done for the PCT to be ready for hikers to use it. Photo by Allegra Torres.



Overlooking the Coachella Valley below, the American Conservation Experience corps crew showing off their trail skills and handiwork making the PCT suitable for hikers. Photo by Allegra Torres.



On the Mt. Hood National Forest, PCTA volunteers clamber over the extensive blowdowns near Lolo Pass. Volunteers led 42 projects focused on logging out the PCT between Lolo Pass and Timberline Lodge. Photo by Robert Caldwell.

Oregon: Mount Hood Windstorm Cleanup

On Labor Day 2020, strong storms brought down thousands of trees on the Zigzag district of Mount Hood National Forest. Much of the PCT was rendered impassable, and in some areas blowdowns were stacked three or four logs high.

Determined to clear the PCT in time for the 2021 hiking season, PCTA volunteers hit the ground as soon as weather allowed. Between Lolo Pass and the Timberline Lodge, 42 volunteer crews cleared an astounding 941 logs. North of Lolo Pass, volunteer crews collaborated with the U.S. Forest Service and the Trailkeepers of Oregon to log out an additional 500 blowdowns from the same windstorm. As most of the PCT in this area is in designated Wilderness, the majority of this work utilized traditional crosscut saws.

While trail users are now able to safely navigate the PCT, many logs remain with the Trail needing extensive repair work due to the damage caused by upturned root wads. The work will continue throughout 2022 and beyond.



2021 Accomplishments Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail

Connecting People to the Outdoors Through Volunteer Stewardship

Providing volunteer support to organize and execute projects

PCTA staff hours spent on volunteer programs	12,773
New trainings posted online	35
New volunteer projects posted online.....	127
Volunteer project email announcements sent.....	67
New volunteers	693
Returning volunteers	599
Tool caches.....	46
Inventory of tools and equipment.....	<i>Separate report submitted</i>
Weeks JHA is posted online	52
High school programs contacted	0
University programs contacted.....	1

Reporting 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	55,167
Volunteer hours for land protection activities	105
Volunteer hours for administrative activities.....	268
Volunteer hours for governance and committee activities.....	1,053
Volunteer hours for communications and publications.....	84
Number of volunteer hours for trail protection.....	110
Number of volunteer hours for visitor use management.....	827





Volunteers reflecting age, gender, and ethnicity:

Age	
Under 18	5
18-54	375
55+	435
Unknown	477
Total	1,292

Ethnicity	
Asian/Pacific Islander	20
Black (non-Hispanic)	2
Hispanic	28
Native American/ Alaskan Native	3
White (non-Hispanic)	566
Unknown	617
Declined to Answer	56
Total	1,292

Gender	
Gender Non-Conforming/Fluid	5
Female	255
Male	466
Trans Female	1
Unknown	562
Declined to Answer	3
Total	1,292

PCTA-affiliated youth corps volunteer hours	12,762
PCTA-affiliated high school volunteer hours	0
Miles of trail maintained	1,170
Miles reconstructed/constructed.....	8.42
Trailhead kiosks constructed.....	0
Square feet of log cribbing constructed.....	306
Square feet of stone cribbing constructed	1,921
Bridges constructed (greater than 20' long, 5' off the deck)	1
Feet of turnpike/puncheon constructed	137



Sponsor volunteer training opportunities

PCTA staff hours spent on trainings	1,242
Volunteers attending Basic or Wilderness First Aid	4
Basic or Wilderness First Aid trainings hosted	1
Volunteers attending crosscut and/or chain saw training	121
Crosscut and/or chain saw trainings hosted	9
Number of volunteers attending other trail skills training	266
Other trail skills trainings hosted	25

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	110	48	24	182
Bureau of Land Management	14	6	5	25
National Park Service	1	6	0	7
Other	4	0	0	4
Total	129	60	29	218

Provide Trail and Land Management Support

PCTA staff hours spent on trail planning and protection	1,955
PCTA staff hours spent providing technical assistance	953

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	1,350
Number of acres acquired	0

Benefits to the Public & Trail Communities

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

Emails responded to.....	3,990
Phone calls responded to	2,269
Social media requests responded to.....	138
Media requests responded to	6

Publish a periodic magazine

Copies of the <i>PCT Communicator</i> magazine distributed.....	40,000
---	--------

Maintain a website

Website sessions	1,664,972
Updates to the Trail Conditions pages.....	47

Promote PCT at events

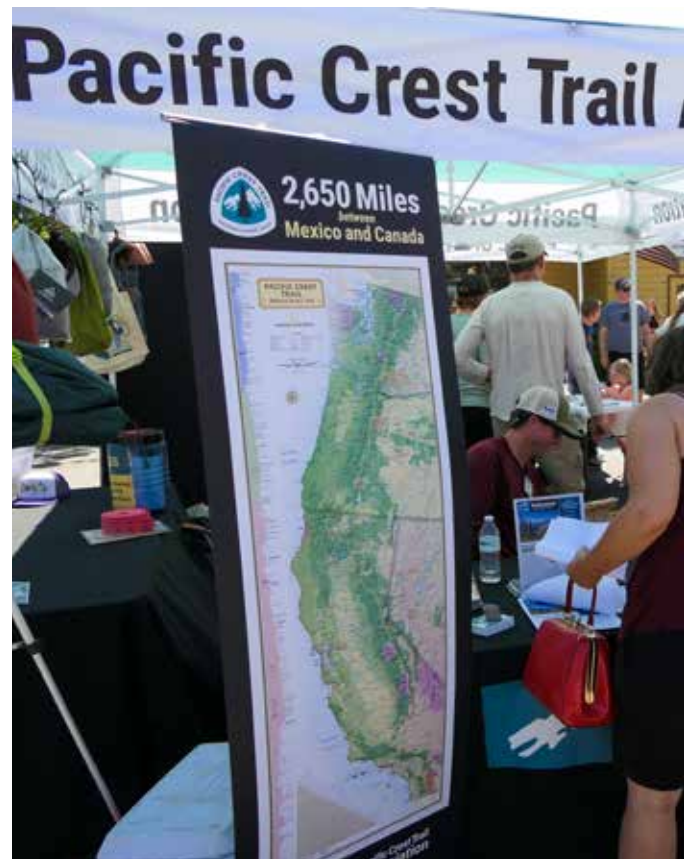
Conferences and outreach events attended.....	7
PCTA staff hours spent planning or participating in events.....	59
PCTA volunteer hours spent planning or participating in events	29

Issue long distance permits

Wilderness permits issued for travel in excess of 500 miles	7,216
---	-------

Distribute PCT brochures

Map brochures distributed.....	5,630
--------------------------------	-------



2021 Volunteer & Corps Crew Hours

Maintenance Program Hours

Southern California Region

American Conservation Experience	4,592
Big Bear Trails Program	232
PCTA Trail Gorillas.....	5,359
San Diego Ultra Running Friends (SURF)	425
Student Conservation Association.....	1,537

Southern Sierra Region

American Conservation Experience	1,496
Can Do Crew	2,554
PCTA Trail Gorillas.....	313
Miscellaneous Region Projects	54

Northern Sierra Region

American Conservation Experience	880
PCTA Carsonora Trail Crew.....	451
PCTA Pounder's Promise	1,085
PCTA Will Work for Krumms Crew	544
Tahoe Rim Trail Association	3,970
Miscellaneous Region Projects	622

Northern CA/Southern OR Region

American Conservation Experience	766
PCTA Lyon's Pride.....	441
PCTA Southern Oregon Rockers.....	351
Miscellaneous Region Projects	910

Columbia Cascades Region

Northwest Youth Corps.....	2,063
PCTA Mid-Oregon Volunteers	4,118
PCTA Mt. Hood Chapter.....	6,883
Miscellaneous Region Projects	19

North Cascades Region

Northwest Youth Corps.....	1,934
PCTA North 350 Blades	6,519
PCTA White Pass Chapter.....	672
Washington Conservation Corps.....	1,925
Washington Trails Association	3,052
Miscellaneous Region Projects	95

Trailwide Miscellaneous

Total PCT Maintenance Hours..... 55,167

Non-Maintenance Programs Hours

Administrative.....	268
Governance	1,053
Land Protection	105
Outreach.....	29
Publications	84
Trail Protection	111
Visitor Use Management.....	827

Total Non-Maintenance Hours.....2,476

Total Service Hours.....57,643



**Pacific Crest Trail
Association**

