

A PUBLICATION OF THE PARTNERSHIP FOR THE NATIONAL TRAILS SYSTEM



Pathways

Across America

FALL 2019

BRIDGING THE DIVIDE

Continental Divide Trail Coalition celebrates diverse voices engaged in conserving Rocky Mountain landscapes

**NATIONAL TRAILS ACTION PLAN • CLOSING THE GAPS • COMINGS AND GOINGS
ENGAGING YOUTH IN AND OUT OF SCHOOL • TRAIL MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES**

Pathways

Across America

Pathways Across America is the only national publication devoted to the news and issues of America's national scenic and historic trails. It is published quarterly by the **Partnership for the National Trails System (PNTS)** under cooperative agreements with five Federal agencies.



Department of Agriculture (USDA):
U.S. Forest Service (USFS)

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National Park Service (NPS)
Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)

Department of Transportation (DOT):
Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)



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ABOUT US

The Partnership for the National Trails System (PNTS) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that connects member nonprofit trail organizations and Federal agency partners to further the protection, completion, and stewardship of the 30 national scenic and historic trails within the National Trails System.

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BUILDING COMMUNITY

National Trails System

Congress passed the National Trails System Act, signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson on October 2, 1968. Today, the National Trails System is composed of 11 National Scenic Trails (NSTs), 19 National Historic Trails (NHTs), almost 1,300 National Recreation Trails (NRTs) including 21 National Water Trails, and more than 2,000 Rail Trails. These trails provide outdoor recreation opportunities, promote resource preservation and public access, and encourage the appreciation of the great outdoors and America's history and cultural diversity.

PATHWAYS NATIONWIDE FOR DISCOVERY, LEARNING, AND UNDERSTANDING

Strengthening communities through heritage and ecotourism, public involvement, and community collaboration.

Enhancing access to natural areas and historic treasures through innovative interpretation and outreach efforts.

Facilitating public-private partnerships for preservation of history, natural environments, and human health through outdoor recreation.



SCENIC AND HISTORIC TRAILS

- Authorized by Congress
- Stewardship facilitated by the nonprofit **Partnership for the National Trails System**
- Total 55,000 miles through 50 States and the District of Columbia in wild, rural, suburban, and urban areas, connecting with every distinct ecological area or biome in the country
- Connect and travel through 70 wildlife refuges, 80 national parks, 90 national forests, 100 BLM field office areas, over 120 wilderness areas, numerous State and local parks, trails, and other protected areas, and 100 major urban areas
- Over 1 million hours of volunteer labor to build and maintain annually

RECREATION TRAILS

- Designated by Secretary of Interior or Secretary of Agriculture
 - Stewardship facilitated by the nonprofit **American Trails**
 - Total 28,000 miles through 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico
- www.americantrails.org

RAIL TRAILS

- Part of 1983 amendment to National Trails System Act
 - Stewardship facilitated by the nonprofit **Rails-to-Trails Conservancy**
 - Total 22,000 miles through 50 States and the District of Columbia, and 8,000 miles in progress
- www.railstotrails.org



Click the National Trails System tab to view a map and learn about our partners:

www.pnts.org



KEEPING HISTORY ALIVE

11 NATIONAL SCENIC TRAILS

The National Scenic Trails (NSTs) represent some of the most magnificent long-distance hiking trails anywhere in the world. Virtually every major ecosystem in the country is traversed by a NST, including deserts, temperate rainforests and deciduous forests, tundra, mountains, prairies, wetlands, and rivers. NSTs offer natural corridors for wildlife preservation and unspoiled views, and they create fitness and outdoor leadership opportunities for all ages.

- Appalachian NST
- Arizona NST
- Continental Divide NST
- Florida NST
- Ice Age NST
- Natchez Trace NST
- New England NST
- North Country NST
- Pacific Crest NST
- Pacific Northwest NST
- Potomac Heritage NST

19 NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAILS

The National Historic Trails (NHTs) may be foot or horse paths, travel routes, roadways, or a combination of several modes of travel designated as a route retracing a part of American history. Many NHTs have interpretive centers and regular events to immerse you in the past. While historic trails may run through urban and suburban settings, they also boast wilderness and hiking opportunities as beautiful and diverse as the NSTs.

- Ala Kahakai NHT
- California NHT
- Captain John Smith Chesapeake NHT
- El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro NHT
- El Camino Real de los Tejas NHT
- Iditarod NHT
- Juan Bautista de Anza NHT
- Lewis and Clark NHT
- Mormon Pioneer NHT
- Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) NHT
- Old Spanish NHT
- Oregon NHT
- Overmountain Victory NHT
- Pony Express NHT
- Santa Fe NHT
- Selma to Montgomery NHT
- Star-Spangled Banner NHT
- Trail of Tears NHT
- Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route NHT

Cover Photographs

FRONT

Latino Outdoors, in collaboration with the Continental Divide Trail Coalition, hosted a hike in Herman Gulch in August to celebrate Faces of the Continental Divide. Photo Credit: Janelle Paciencia

INSIDE

Left: The Arizona Trail Association recently installed water collection troughs in the Mazatzal Mountains. Photo Credit: Roger Smith

Center: Laie Elementary School students received an award for their play about the Lewis and Clark NHT. Photo Credit: LCTHF

Right: Melanie Lord collects sideoats grama grass seeds near the Lodi Marsh Segment of the Ice Age NST near Lodi, WI. Photo Credit: Gary Werner



PRESERVING BIODIVERSITY

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View more photos and full versions of each article:
www.pnts.org/new/category/pathways/



Preserving critical resources and closing gaps along national scenic and historic trails

Congress's intent in establishing the National Trails System was for national scenic trails to be continuous off-road pathways and for both the national scenic and national historic trails to preserve the natural, cultural, historic, and scenic resources along them. This lofty and ambitious intent has only been spottily and inconsistently accomplished in the 50 year history of the National Trails System.

A monumental effort by the National Park Service and the U.S. Forest Service between 1978 and 2005 conserved several hundred thousand acres of land to provide a continuous protected corridor for the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. A similar, but smaller-scale, effort by the U.S. Forest Service closed many of the gaps in the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail during that same time period. During this time, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) acquired a number of parcels along the Sandy River in Oregon to benefit the Oregon National Historic Trail.

Another surge of gap-closing and resource preservation funded by Congress through the Land and Water Conservation Fund occurred along the Florida and Ice Age National Scenic Trails through the first decade of the 21st Century. However, land acquisition to extend the rest of the national scenic and historic trails and preserve their resources has been a rare occurrence.

COLLABORATIVE LANDSCAPE PLANNING PROJECTS

The Collaborative Landscape Planning initiative of the second half of the Obama administration provided a major new approach and surge in land and resource conservation for the National Trails System. For the first time, from 2015 through 2018, the four Federal land managing agencies treated the National Trails System as a whole, and as one of several large landscapes in which to focus their land and resource conservation work. During each of those years, the Partnership for the National Trails System compiled packages of 50-60 land conservation projects along 12-15 of the national scenic and historic trails and presented them to the agencies to support. With that support, Congress appropriated more than \$77 million of Land and Water Conservation Fund money during those years to acquire 45 critically important segments



Photo Credit: Megan Wargo, PCTA

A young hiker pauses at the intersection of the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail and the Sisson-Callahan Trail. The Trinity Divide acquisition will allow for the U.S. Forest Service to develop new loop hikes incorporating the PCT and providing better access to these public lands.

of national scenic and historic trails. One example includes BLM's acquisition of the Alamocita Creek parcel in New Mexico, which allows 55 miles of Continental Divide National Scenic Trail to be removed from roads, accomplished in concert with the private landowners, the USFS, and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation.

In this issue of *Pathways Across America*, we are celebrating the recent completion of two of these Collaborative Landscape Planning projects. In June, The Conservation Fund and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service completed conservation of 252 acres atop Fones Cliffs along the Rappahannock River in Virginia. This site is critically important to the Rappahannock Tribe, the Rappahannock River National Wildlife Refuge, and to the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail. Read more on [page 13](#).

Later this summer, the Pacific Crest Trail Association and the U.S. Forest Service completed a multi-year effort to protect 17 miles of the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail along the Trinity Divide in northern California. This involved one of the largest land purchases—10,300 acres—made to protect the integrity and scenic quality of the Trail.

While we celebrate and salute these wonderful accomplishments and encourage

other trail conservation work currently underway along the Ala Kahakai, Ice Age, Oregon, Overmountain Victory, and Santa Fe trails, we also recognize that disruptive threats to the integrity of all the national scenic and historic trails are increasing and require that we devise ways to significantly increase the progress of permanent protection of trail resources throughout the National Trails System. To that end and toward fulfillment of our Decade Goal Number 2—To Complete and Protect the National Scenic and Historic Trails on the Ground—set in 2008, we happily share updates on two important projects now underway within the Partnership for the National Trails System.

GAP ANALYSIS PROGRESS

The first of these projects is preparing a Gap Analysis of all 30 national scenic and historic trails. We introduced this project in the Summer *Pathways*, and now close to nine months into the project we are able to provide an accounting of the work done to date. This project, funded by the Federal Highway Administration, involves a significant new collaboration with The Trust for Public Land, bringing their sophisticated mapping capabilities to bear to map the national scenic and historic trails in ways not yet done.

PNTS consultant Don Owen, who has more than 30 years of experience in conserving and managing lands and easements with the National Park Service, the Land Trust of Virginia, and the Land Trust Alliance, is managing this project. He reports on it on [page 6](#).

Another component of this project involves researching, collecting, and sharing the various kinds of legal agreements being used to protect land and resources within the National Trails System. We will also prepare a series of case studies describing how successful trail land preservation projects have been done. The first of these case studies, about the recently completed Trinity Divide project on the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail, can be viewed and downloaded from our website at www.pnts.org/new/our-work/reports.

While the Gap Analysis will provide useful information to help us guide conservation of land and resources along all 30 national scenic and historic trails, it will add an important dimension to our understanding of the collective resources of the national historic trails.

We already have a good estimate of the length of the gaps along the nine national



Photo Credit: Gary Werner

The Table Bluff Segment of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail near Cross Plains, WI features shortgrass prairie and oak savanna.

scenic trails authorized after 1968. The Gap Analysis will refine the location and length of these gaps and provide information to help analyze the threats to them and how to prioritize which ones to try to close first. But the Gap Analysis also will be the first time that a comprehensive list of the "High Potential Sites" and "High Potential Route Segments" along the 19 national historic trails will be compiled and analyzed in a similar manner. This information should help us to prioritize how to focus resources to conserve these essential components of the historic trails.

NATIONAL TRAILS ACTION PLAN

The second of the projects now underway is working on devising a strategy to revive the magnitude of funding support provided by Congress during the Collaborative Landscape Planning years of the Obama Administration. Retired Appalachian Trail Conservancy Executive Director Ron Tipton is leading a team of strategists to devise a five year Action Plan to greatly increase the resources for both operating all 30 national scenic and historic trails and acquiring the land to close their gaps and preserve their critical resources.

While significantly increasing support for the national trails by Congress and the Federal agencies is a major

focus of this effort, strategizing is not confined to the Federal arena alone. Mobilizing ways to greatly increase the support of State and local governments and attracting private sector funding to aid this work to appropriately fund the national trails are also major components of this project. Although the initial planning time frame is five years, the strategies within this National Trails System Action Plan could propel a new era of consistent year-by-year conservation of land and resources along national scenic and historic trails for many years to come. The intent is to have a draft Action Plan ready to present to the leaders of the Partnership for the National Trails System before the end of this year. Learn more about this plan on [page 6](#).

We are poised on a threshold to embark on the joyful and fulfilling work of consistently conserving lands, resources, and the quality of the experiences provided by our national scenic and historic trails—all the while strengthening our connections to our good Earth. Won't you help us cross that threshold?

Happy Autumn enjoying the beauty of our trails and the lands through which they lead us!

About Us



MISSION

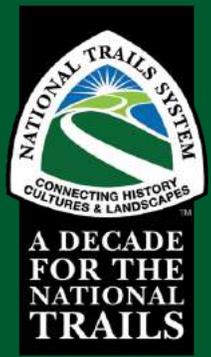
To empower, inspire, and strengthen public and private partners to develop, preserve, promote, and sustain the national scenic and historic trails.

VISION

PNTS envisions a world-class system of national scenic and historic trails that preserves natural and cultural values and provides recreational benefits for all.

PURPOSE

The purpose of PNTS is to promote and support the efforts of national scenic and historic trail organizations, to secure public and private resources, and to serve as a collective voice for policy and action that supports national scenic and historic trails.



GOALS

1. Outreach and public awareness
2. Resource protection and trail completion
3. Capacity building

AWARDS

by Partnership for the National Trails System

Adapted from an Oregon-California Trails Association news release

Gary Werner receives Meritorious Service Award

Gary Werner, the Executive Director of the Partnership for the National Trails System, was presented with the Oregon-California Trails Association (OCTA) Meritorious Service Award at the organization's 37th Annual National Convention in Santa Fe, NM, in September 2019.

One of OCTA's top awards, Meritorious Service recognition is presented to those who have made lengthy contributions supporting OCTA's trail preservation and education efforts.

"One of our most important partners continues to be the Partnership for the National Trails System, which has provided a unified voice in every public policy debate that helps preserve and conserve our historic, scenic, cultural and recreational resources," said Bill Martin, a past OCTA President, in presenting the award.

He added that the imprint of Gary Werner's hiking boots can be seen on virtually every public policy decision involving national historic and scenic trails for the past three decades.

"He has been instrumental in helping OCTA achieve several national goals, including expansion of the footprint of the California and Oregon National Historic Trails," Martin said. "Gary's personal support for and friendship with OCTA has been an invaluable asset to our mission and objectives."

Action Plan



The Partnership for the National Trails System (PNTS) has engaged a team of experienced conservation and trail advocates to create an Action Plan to fund the protection and management of America's 30 national scenic and historic trails.

This idea was presented to the PNTS Board and Trail Leaders Council in February 2019 by Ron Tipton, who retired at the end of 2017 as the President and CEO of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. The Board directed Tipton to move forward and recruit a working group to pull together a five year plan for approval by the Board at its next in-person meeting during the 2020 Hike the Hill week.

While important progress has been made in recent years toward protecting and funding our 11 national scenic trails and 19 national historic trails, we have not yet been successful at fulfilling the vision of Congress and past administrations for creating a world class national trails system. The Appalachian and most of the Pacific Crest and the Continental Divide National Scenic Trails are publicly owned and have permanent protection in place, and many high priority sites and segments of our national historic trails are also protected and capably managed. However, in the last several years Federal and State funding for the national trails for land acquisition and trail management has been reduced, and the highly effective Collaborative Landscape Planning initiative created by the Obama administration to fund national trails no longer exists.

During the past six months, the Action Plan team has interviewed nearly 20 national trail leaders and Federal agency partner representatives to identify their top priority goals for the next five years for the protection and sustainable management of their trails.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TOP PRIORITY GOALS

- Funding for land protection is critically needed to have significant progress towards protecting high priority sites and segments for the majority of the national trails.
- Increased annual funding to achieve sustainable effective management of all national trails is essential for both public and nongovernmental partners.
- State governments and their respective conservation and outdoor recreation agencies should provide increased support for national trails within their State.
- Each Federal agency and its nongovernmental partner develop resource protection plans to preserve natural and cultural resources for the national trails.

"America's 55,000 miles of national scenic and historic trails clearly represent the greatest commitment of any nation to a system of national trails," said Tipton. "Yet it is widely recognized that the U.S. has not yet fulfilled that commitment; in fact, our national trails are significantly undervalued by our country at present. It is time to reach the PNTS vision of a world-class system of national scenic and historic trails that preserves natural and cultural values and provides recreation benefits for all."

Members of the national trails working group include Kathy DeCoster, recently retired Director of Government Affairs for The Trust for Public Land; Margaret Gorski, retired from the U.S. Forest Service and recent past President of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation; Destry Jarvis, President of Outdoor Recreation and Park Services; Andrea Ketchmark, Executive Director of the North Country Trail Association; and Kevin Thusius, Director of Land Conservation for the Ice Age Trail Alliance. Both PNTS Board President Barney Mann and Executive Director Gary Werner are also part of the working group.

Gap Analysis

National trail administrators and planners estimate that there are more than 58,000 miles of national scenic and historic trails that crisscross the landscape of the United States. Of that total, nearly 20,000 miles—or more than one third of the entire National Trails System—have never been built or are not accessible for the public. These "gaps" in the National Trails System represent perhaps the biggest challenge we face as a community: unless an organization or agency holds an interest in the land traversed by a national scenic or historic trail, there is no assurance that we will be able to fulfill our mandate to administer, manage, and promote these trails for the American public to experience and enjoy.

The first step in protecting these trails is identifying where these gaps exist. Thanks to funding from the Federal Highway Administration, the Partnership for the National Trails System (PNTS) and The Trust for Public Land (TPL) are conducting a Corridor Protection Gap Analysis and Connectivity Assessment for National Trails.

Since January 2019, PNTS and TPL have been collecting and analyzing trail data, using an integrated Geographic Information System (GIS) approach to identify, map, and prioritize trail protection projects throughout the National Trails System. In April 2019, the administrators and managers of four national trails (the Santa Fe and Lewis and Clark National Historic Trails and the Ice Age and North Country National Scenic Trails) volunteered to serve as pilot projects for the study. Using the best available data for each trail, researchers have developed a preliminary methodology for the project.

PRELIMINARY METHODOLOGY

1. Collect the best available data for each national trail;
2. Identify all conserved lands along trail routes, including publicly owned land, interests owned by land trusts, and other lands that have been permanently protected;
3. Conduct a spatial analysis to determine which areas are most vulnerable to development;
4. Prioritize these "gaps" in trail protection; and
5. Identify potential partners that may be interested in conserving lands in high-priority areas.

Researchers also have met with GIS specialists, trail administrators, land protection specialists, trail organization leaders, and land trust personnel to determine what data would be most useful. Ultimately, the study (which will be completed in November 2020) will assist trail administrators, managers, trail organization leaders, and others in identifying the most critical areas that need to be conserved along all 30 of the national scenic and historic trails so they can be protected and managed in perpetuity.



Read our first case study on the successful Trinity Divide land preservation project on the Pacific Crest NST:

www.pnts.org/new/our-work/reports

Great American Rail-Trail connection

Multiuse pathway would intersect a dozen national scenic and historic trails

America's rich tapestry of national scenic and historic trails provides immersive opportunities to learn about the country's extraordinary story and experience its diverse and breathtaking landscapes in unforgettable ways. Now, a new multiuse pathway intersects a dozen of these iconic national treasures on a developing route spanning more than 3,700 miles between Washington, D.C. and Washington State.

The Great American Rail-Trail's own unique journey through 12 States and the District of Columbia, combined with its ties to both national scenic and historic trails, offers an enriching and meaningful lens through which to see the country. The Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) has envisioned a cross-country trail since the late 1980s as it tracked rail-trails being developed east to west along the same course charted by the railroads a century ago. Today, existing trails comprise more than 52% of the Great American's preferred route, and RTC is spearheading efforts to close the remaining gaps, an endeavor which may take as many as two decades.



STAR-SPANGLED BANNER NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL

The Great American Rail-Trail starting point in the east is at the steps of the U.S. Capitol, and from there it travels along the National Mall. The Star-Spangled Banner Trail, a 560-mile route connecting sites in Washington, D.C., Virginia, and Maryland, provides access to these same patriotic touchstones and commemorates historical events leading up to the birth of our National Anthem.

WASHINGTON-ROCHAMBEAU REVOLUTIONARY ROUTE NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL

Stretching from New Hampshire to Virginia, the Washington-Rochambeau route commemorates the troop movements of the joint forces of the Continental Army and the French Army during the Revolutionary War. In Washington, D.C., it crosses the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park, a featured pathway in the Great American Rail-Trail. Traversing the park is a 184.5-mile towpath along which hundreds of 19th-century structures can be seen, including canal locks, lock houses, and aqueducts.

APPALACHIAN NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL

Established in 1968, the Appalachian Trail is one of the granddaddies of long-distance hiking trails. Spanning some 2,100 miles from Georgia to Maine, a short section overlaps with the Great American Rail-Trail in Maryland. The junction is along the Chesapeake

and Ohio Canal National Historical Park across the Potomac River from the historic town of Harpers Ferry.

POTOMAC HERITAGE NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL

The Potomac Heritage Trail is steeped in American history, following routes once traveled by George Washington and passing by his Mount Vernon estate. Portions of the route align with the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park and the Great Allegheny Passage, which together allow travelers to go between D.C. and Pittsburgh as part of the Great American Rail-Trail experience.

NORTH COUNTRY NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL

At a whopping 4,600 miles, the North Country Trail is the longest national scenic trail, crossing eight States from Vermont to North Dakota. In Ohio, it aligns with the Great American Rail-Trail twice. On the eastern half of the State, both routes utilize the Zoar Valley Trail. On the western half of the Buckeye State, both routes follow the Mad River Trail and Great Miami River Trail through vibrant Dayton.

LEWIS AND CLARK NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL

Commemorating the famed Lewis and Clark Expedition, the eponymous trail touches 16 States. Along the way, there are several points near the historic pathway and the Great American Rail-Trail, including the Lewis and Clark Landing park in Omaha, NE, and the Western Historic Trails Center in Council Bluffs, IA. The two cities are linked across the Missouri River by the Bob Kerrey Pedestrian Bridge.

CALIFORNIA, MORMON, OREGON, PONY EXPRESS NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAILS

In Casper, WY, the Great American Rail-Trail overlaps with a nexus of national historic trails: the California, Mormon, Oregon, and Pony Express routes. The city offers the beautiful Platte River Trail, which heads past the Fort Caspar Museum—a trading post once visited by pioneers—and near the National Historic Trails Interpretive Center.

CONTINENTAL DIVIDE NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL

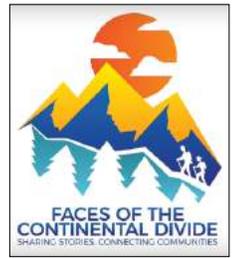
The Continental Divide Trail provides a backcountry experience tracing the Rocky Mountains from Canada to Mexico. Nestled in one of the many national forests along the route, it meets the Great American Rail-Trail at Pipestone Pass, south of Butte, MT. From there, the Great American follows a former Milwaukee Railroad corridor through Thompson Park, offering a true rail-trail experience with two tunnels and a stunning trestle bridge.

PACIFIC CREST NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL

Extending more than 2,600 miles, the Pacific Crest Trail spans the country north-south through Washington, Oregon, and California. Tucked into the Cascade Range, the route crosses the Palouse to Cascades State Park Trail near Snoqualmie Pass. The Palouse to Cascades State Park Trail, a component of the Great American Rail-Trail, travels more than 200 miles across Washington, providing up-close views of some of the State's best scenery.



Learn more about the Great American Rail-Trail:
www.greatamericanrailtrail.org



Summer of storytelling

Showcasing the diverse faces of the Continental Divide

In 2018, the Continental Divide Trail Coalition (CDTC) celebrated the first 40 years of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail. We applauded decades of progress toward completing the trail—there are fewer than 180 miles yet to be protected—and we marveled at the widespread community of individuals dedicated to its stewardship. We looked back at the amazing accomplishments of the men and women who have thru-hiked the Divide and we welcomed new CDT Gateway Communities into the network of cities and towns that recognize the unique economic and cultural value that the CDT brings.

However, as we looked back at the last 40 years, we noticed there were many people that were omitted from the story we told of the Continental Divide Trail. We realized that there were many voices missing from the effort to conserve this amazing national resource. So, we began to gather and tell the stories of people who have been traditionally left out of recreation and conservation spaces with our effort, Faces of the Continental Divide, made possible by a grant award from Hydro Flask's Parks for All program and donations from REI Co-Op.

Beginning at the start of Latino Conservation Week and ending on National Public Lands Day, Faces of the Continental Divide was envisioned as a summer of events and storytelling celebrating the diverse communities engaged in conserving the landscapes of the Continental Divide. From July 13 to September 28, we invited groups engaged in outdoor recreation and conservation in the Rocky Mountain West to host events that celebrated their relationship with public lands and we asked participants to share their unique stories with us. Our goal was to expand the narrative about the Continental Divide Trail and its surrounding landscapes, and to begin to tell a story about the CDT that includes indigenous nations, people of color, and other underrepresented communities.

During this effort, we've partnered with over 20 organizations—many of which we haven't worked with before—to share the Continental Divide Trail and public lands with new audiences. We hosted events in conjunction with organizations working to diversify public lands, including Latino Outdoors, Denver Environmental Learning for Kids (ELK), Hispanic Access Foundation,



Photo Credit: Janelle Paciencia

Members of the Latino Outdoors Denver Colorado chapter review a map of Herman Gulch after their hike to Herman Lake. Latino Outdoors hosted an event called "Conchas y Cafe," and shared pastries and coffee with members before their hike as part of the Faces of the Continental Divide effort.

Outdoor Afro, Outdoor Asian, Spirit of the Sun, Americas for Conservation + the Arts, as well as our traditional partners like the U.S. Forest Service and CDT Gateway Communities.

The events we've hosted in four CDT states are as diverse as the landscapes and people of the Continental Divide, serving people of differing backgrounds, ages, abilities, and knowledge of the trail. Events included a poetry workshop bringing the Continental Divide to the Denver metro area, group hikes with Latino Outdoors and Outdoor Afro, a family camp-out with indigenous and Latinx families in Rocky Mountain National Park, and a service project on National Public Lands Day in the Carson National Forest.

Each individual community has their own way to connect with the landscapes of the Rocky Mountains. Some have a long history with these lands, and others have never visited the Continental Divide, despite being intricately connected with the watersheds that begin on its ridgelines. Some communities want to hike fast, while others prefer to go slowly, intimately meeting each stream, rock, and knoll. We've learned that all the histories, knowledge, and uses of these

landscapes are equally valuable, and each voice will be important to help us preserve them.

Now, we're looking forward to the next 40 years of protecting the CDT and the challenges these years will bring. With shrinking land management budgets and changing policies, the protection of public lands is more important than ever. We at CDTC know that the best way to face these challenges is to continue to build a diverse community of people dedicated to the protection of the trail.

We know that to complete, promote, and protect the CDT and serve all people, we must invite the folks who have traditionally been left out of conservation and public lands issues into our conversation. It's our hope that with Faces of the Continental Divide, we have begun to do just that.



Share why you value the landscapes of the CDT by submitting a story through December 31, 2019. You can also view the CDTC's new video, "Stories of the Gila," that showcases why and how the people of southern New Mexico connect to the Gila National Forest:

www.continentaldividetrail.org/faces/

Agents of Discovery

App engages youth along historic trails in Bitterroot

Two years ago, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) Conservation Education program in the Washington Office created an opportunity for USFS sites across the country to opt into a pilot program with the Agents of Discovery app. Geared toward fourth grade age youth and older, but fun for all ages, Agents of Discovery is an educational mobile gaming platform that uses augmented reality to get youth outdoors, moving, and learning. For each mission completed, users can earn an award and enter to win prizes.

The Bitterroot Cultural Heritage Trust works to highlight and interpret the three national trails in the Bitterroot Valley—the Ice Age Floods National Geologic Trail and the Lewis and Clark and Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trails—and leapt at the opportunity to garner this tool to better engage youth and families in our community.

In mid-June 2019, four Agents of Discovery Missions in the Bitterroot Valley went live at Travelers' Rest State Park (a high potential historic site on the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail), Historic St. Mary's Mission, River Park in the City of Hamilton (featuring the Nez Perce Nee-Me-Poo National Historic Trail), and a mission developed by the Bitterroot National Forest at Lake Como, a popular summer day use recreation area.

The Conservation Education program pilot offer came with 50% of the funding in place. The Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail (administered by the USFS), the Bitterroot National Forest, and Travelers Rest Preservation Heritage Association contributed funds to make the project possible. Each mission was developed by a unique group of volunteers at host sites.

"Nearly 2,500 school children come to Travelers' Rest State Park for field trips each year, and now we can invite them to come back to the park with their families and share a rich interpretive experience on any day of the week," reports Molly Stockdale, Executive Director of Travelers' Rest Preservation Heritage Foundation. "The app reinforces what they've learned on their field trip and adds a layer of place-based education to their next visit."

Kristine Komar, of the Bitterroot Cultural Heritage Trust, worked with Sandra Broncheau-McFarland and Roger Peterson, staff of Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail (NPNHT), to develop the concept for the River Park mission and then built it. Partners Ravalli County Museum and the Mayor and



City Council of Hamilton were instrumental in ensuring the success of the app as well. "The trail has embraced technology and is eager to offer engaging and powerful learning experiences to visitors of all ages as they explore their national forests. We are especially grateful to all of our partners who helped make this possible," said Broncheau-McFarland.

As a group, all four mission sites worked together to create matching posters, selfie spots cutouts, rack cards, and collectable pins featuring each agent. We are particularly proud of Agent Itse-Ye-Ye. Her name means coyote in Nez Perce and she is clad in her regalia: a fan, shawl, corn husk bag, and shell earrings. We also love that she is female as most of the other agents are males.

If you are an interpreter—or outdoor educator or a practitioner in any related field where a learning tool like Discovery Agents can be used—our advice is to jump in, because the app is extremely flexible and can be used in many ways. For example, it's possible to have a new mission (game) every hour, day, week, or month, and it's easy to see how the app can work for special events and vacation weeks.

Most missions are in parks or other outdoor recreation sites that are perfect for a picnic, hike, or swim, especially for families on a budget. We haven't yet had the opportunity to involve students in mission development, but we plan to since the Conservation Education Office and the NPNHT just renewed our access for another year. Stay tuned!



Missions are free to download and play, and once downloaded do not require Wi-Fi or a data connection to function. Learn more:

www.agentsofdiscovery.com

Exploring Trails in the Classroom

TRIUMPH AND TRAGEDY

Each year, the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation (LCTHF) supports National History Day with two \$1,000 prizes in the Junior Division (grades 6-8) and the Senior Division (grades 9-12) that links the annual theme, "Triumph and Tragedy in History," to the student's chosen topic as it relates to the story of the Corps of Discovery or the American Indian peoples the Corp met on their journey.

The national contest's special prize judges awarded one of the LCTHF special prizes to a three-person team from Laie Elementary School, located on the north shore of Oahu, HI, for their Junior Division performance exploring the stories of the triumph and tragedy of York, Captain William Clark's African-American slave, and Sacagawea, the Corp's 16-year old Agaiduka Shoshone interpreter. Ambrose Robertson, Naomi Cannon, and Dallin Reece performed their original 10-minute play titled "Sacagawea and York: Triumph and Tragedy on the Lewis and Clark Trail" at the National History Day ceremony in College Park, MD.

WESTWARD EXPANSION

The recipient for the Oregon-California Trails Association's 2019 Outstanding Educator Award is Jill Jones, who teaches eighth grade U.S. history at the Silver Lake Intermediate School in Oconomowoc, WI. She received a \$250 honorarium during the annual convention in Santa Fe, NM in September. Nominations are open to any individual and/or group of educators or institution that contributes significantly to students' education about the 19th century westward overland migrations in the United States.

Jill's unit on westward expansion "To Oregon or Bust" used a simulation of traveling the Oregon National Historic Trail, and at the end each student "pioneer" created a presentation, video, or short story about their experiences making the time period come alive with facts and figures that would be authentic to that era.



View the full articles and photos:
www.pnts.org/new/category/pathways/

PNTS plans to hire interim executive director, move to D.C.

The Partnership for the National Trails System (PNTS) will retain the services of an interim executive director as a bridge between the retirement of long-time Executive Director Gary Werner and the hire of a permanent, full-time executive director.



In addition, PNTS will move its national headquarters from Madison, WI, where it has been located for nearly three decades, to the Washington, D.C. area.

Both decisions were made by the PNTS Board of Directors following recommendations from a Board-appointed Transition Task Force (TTF), which was established earlier this year to help guide the organization through a time of change and opportunity.

"As we considered the needs of the organization, it became clear over the course of our discussions that there was much more involved than simply posting the job and waiting for qualified applicants to pour in," said Liz Bergeron, PNTS immediate past president and chair of the TTF.

"We found that transitions from beloved founder executive directors are particularly challenging and that organizations that hire an interim executive director emerge stronger, more financially sound and more optimistic about the future than organizations that transition immediately to a new permanent executive director. Most significantly, we concluded that an interim executive director would best assist the PNTS in addressing any systems and capacity issues and lay the foundation for the permanent executive director's success."

Bergeron and the TTF praised the leadership of Werner, who has served since 1991, first as chair and now as Executive Director of the Partnership.

"We would not be where we are today, nor would we be as successful, without the hard work and leadership of Gary Werner," she said. "When he announced his retirement, the Board recognized that we had some big trail boots to fill."

Werner is scheduled to retire at the PNTS Board meeting in February 2020 at Hike the Hill, the annual Washington, D.C. gathering of scenic and historic trail supporters organized by PNTS and the American Hiking Society.

The TTF expects to identify an interim executive director before the end of 2019, a hiring that will require approval by the Board of Directors. The interim executive director will be retained on a part-time basis for no more than 12 months while the formal search of a permanent executive director is ongoing.

"PNTS has benefitted from stable leadership and a strong, passionate Board and membership," said Bergeron. "A new executive director gives us an opportunity to bring a new perspective and a new energy. However, it has become clear that there could be unreasonable expectations in hiring a new executive director and asking this person to 'hit the ground running,' developing short- and long-term strategies and goals for the organization while at the same time addressing organizational infrastructure development."

The move of the PNTS headquarters to Washington, D.C., planned for late in 2020, is seen as necessary because of the importance of the Federal legislative process and Federal agency partners to PNTS scenic and historic trails.

In addition to Bergeron, who is Executive Director of the Pacific Crest Trail Association, members of the TTF include: Christy Corzine, former PNTS Treasurer, at large Board member; Sandi Marra, President and CEO of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy and PNTS Board member; Bill Martin, Oregon-California Trails Association and Trail Leaders Council member; Elizabeth Stewart, Anza Trail Foundation, PNTS Board and Trail Leaders Council member; and Mike Wollmer, Executive Director of the Ice Age Trail Alliance, PNTS Board and Trail Leaders Council member. PNTS Board President Barney Mann serves as an ex-officio member of the Task Force, which also uses the services of consultant Mary Stelletello and Vista Global Coaching and Consulting.



Photo Credit: Matt Menietti

Chelsea Bodamer hikes during a visit to Glacier National Park last year. She will be back in the Pacific Northwest as she starts a new career in Washington.

Happy trails, Chelsea Bodamer!

by Partnership for the National Trails System

Adapted from the August 2019 e-News

Chelsea Bodamer has accepted an event coordinator position with Western Washington University and will be departing from her Outreach and Youth Programs Coordinator role with the Partnership for the National Trails System.

Chelsea received her bachelor's degree in media and professional communications with a certificate in digital media from the University of Pittsburgh in 2010. In 2014, Chelsea became a Trail Apprentice and later joined the PNTS staff in 2015.

In her work for the Partnership, Chelsea has actively recruited new staff members and Trail Apprentices, developed a new and innovative communications plan, and planned and executed several national conferences and workshops. Chelsea also envisioned, designed, and implemented monthly informational and training webinars and a trail intern grant program.

Chelsea's dedication, growth mindset, and passion for the trails will be greatly missed. The PNTS sincerely thanks Chelsea for her incredible work and wishes her well on her new career endeavors. See you on the trail!

NPS selects new Superintendent for North Country Trail

The National Park Service (NPS) selected Chris Loudenslager as Superintendent of North Country National Scenic Trail in Michigan. Loudenslager, who had served as the Trail Manager, assumed his new role in August.



Chris Loudenslager

With over 15 years of experience with the Federal land management agencies, Chris has held numerous leadership positions. He joined the staff at North Country in 2014, after working for the NPS at Isle Royale National Park and the U.S. Forest Service at Superior and Huron-Manistee national forests in Minnesota and Michigan, respectively.

Prior to his civilian service, he served in the U.S. Army for nine years. Chris has a bachelor of science degree in forestry from Michigan Technological University and a master of science degree in park, recreation, and tourism resources from Michigan State University. An avid outdoors person who is fascinated by the beauty and science of nature, Chris loves to call northwest Michigan his home.



Sandra Marra



Suzanne Dixon

Leadership change in the Appalachian Trail Conservancy

Suzanne Dixon, who joined the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) as President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) in 2017, resigned from her position effective August 30, 2019. Suzanne has had an immediate and long-lasting impact on the organization, increasing the organization's visibility and helping protect thousands of acres along the trail.

The ATC's Board of Directors selected Sandra Marra, who has been a partner consultant with Capacity Partners, as the new President and CEO. Sandi joined ATC's Board of Managers in 1999 and played a significant role in leading the organization through its transition from a Conference to a Conservancy. In accepting her new position, Sandi has resigned as Chair of ATC's Board of Directors. She also serves on the PNTS Board of Directors.

USFS selects new Administrator for the Pacific Northwest Trail

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) has selected Becky Blanchard to be the lead Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail (PNT) Trail Administrator in 2019, and she is loving the challenge. Becky started working on the PNT six years ago as the Planning and Partnerships Specialist, a position now held by Brye Lefler.



Becky Blanchard

Becky was the Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Program Manager for the USFS's Pacific Northwest Region from 2016 to 2019. Before joining the USFS, she was a Sea Grant Knauss Fellow in the Office of Marine Conservation at the State Department and taught anthropology classes. She has a bachelor of arts degree from Stanford and a master of arts degree from the University of Florida in environmental anthropology.

Her highlights in the position so far have been experiences on the trail, such as hiking by moonlight along the Wilderness Coast section of the PNT in Olympic National Park. Becky and her husband live in Portland, OR with their toddler. At home, she enjoys gardening, music, books, and time with friends and family.

Don King retires after 50-year NPS career

After a 50-year career with the National Park Service (NPS), Don King retired as Chief Realty Officer of the National Trails Land Resources Program Center in Martinsburg, WV on September 27, 2019.

Much of his career since 1979 has been devoted to the complex Appalachian National Scenic Trail land acquisition program. He also contributed to protection efforts on the Ice Age, North Country, Pacific Crest, and Florida National Scenic Trails, as well as the Overmountain Victory and Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trails.

He has received many awards and commendations for his service, including the Class of 2019 Appalachian Trail Museum's Hall of Fame, a Department of Justice Special Commendation, and a 1992 Department of the Interior Meritorious Service Award. Don plans to spend his time in retirement with Joanne, his wife of 48 years, visiting their children and grandchildren and touring some of the national parks he helped acquire.



Don King

Peter Bonsall is the NPS National Trails System Program Specialist

The National Park Service (NPS) announced in September that Peter Bonsall is the new NPS National Trails System Program Specialist, based out of Denver, CO. After Helen Scully's retirement from that position in late 2018, Peter has served in a detail position, leading the National Recreation Trails program and the Connect Trails to Parks Fund Source.

Peter was hired by Steve Elkinton as an intern in 2013 to assist and grow the National Park Service's Conservation and Outdoor Recreation (COR) Division's GIS capabilities, and he later assisted Don Briggs on the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail with GIS support. In 2015 he was hired as the GIS Specialist for the COR Division, where he managed geospatial data, provided cartographic products, and developed robust geospatially enabled databases for the National Trails System, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program. He assisted both rivers and trails with his GIS and communications skills during the 50th anniversary in 2018.



Peter Bonsall



Bringing a vision to life

North Country National Scenic Trail extends partnerships and trail route

The North Country Trail Route Adjustment is a project that has been decades in the making. The two main objectives are to reroute the North Country National Scenic Trail (NCT) in northeastern Minnesota to a more scenic and sustainable location using nearly 400 miles of existing trail, and to extend the eastern terminus of the trail to meet the Appalachian National Scenic Trail (AT) in Vermont. With this year's signing of S.47 into law—the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act—this vision will become reality.

"Our community has long understood that these two route changes were key moves in fulfilling the vision for the NCT and that of the National Trails System Act, and because of the support of our volunteer advocates, local partners, and the bipartisan support of Congress, we finally got it done," said Andrea Ketchmark, Executive Director of the North Country Trail Association.

The Vermont extension will extend the North Country Trail approximately 40 miles east from its current terminus at Lake Champlain, through Vermont's rolling hills and into the Green Mountains to meet with the famed Long Trail to extend all the way to the Appalachian Trail, creating a significant connection between the longest and one of the best known trails in the National Trails System.

The route will pass through the farmland of western Vermont, the Village of Middlebury, and the Green Mountain National Forest. The North Country Trail Association (NCTA) and National Park Service (NPS) are excited to begin working with many new friends and partners, including the Green Mountain Club (GMC), Middlebury Area Land Trust (MALT) and our longtime friends the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC).

"Extension of the NCT into Vermont helps support the mission of the Green Mountain Club by making the mountains of Vermont play a larger role in the life of the people," said Mike DeBonis, Executive Director of the GMC. "Bringing the NCT to Vermont expands the long distance hiking opportunities, connecting local trail networks, and contributing to the state's recreation-based economy."

The Minnesota Reroute, or the "Arrowhead," will replace a 100-mile stretch



Photo Credit: Molly Cochrane
A view of Lake Superior from the trail in MN.



Photo Credit: Dan Dorrrough
South end of Lake Champlain between NY and VT.

of undeveloped trail between Jay Cooke State Park southeast of Duluth and the eastern end of the North Country Trail in the Chippewa National Forest near Remer. Since the Trail was authorized by Congress in 1980, there have been no efforts to actually construct trail along this route because it contains extensive wetlands.

The Arrowhead Reroute would utilize more than 400 miles of existing trail—including the Superior Hiking Trail, Border Route Trail, and Kekekabic Trail—and incorporate outstanding Minnesota scenery like the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness and the North Shore of Lake Superior. This reroute was evaluated and identified as the "preferred alternative" in the National Park Service's "Northeastern Minnesota Route Assessment," approved in 2004.

The Superior Hiking Trail hosted a ribbon

cutting ceremony in May 2019 to celebrate this reroute alongside enthusiastic partners and affiliates, such as the Superior Hiking Trail Association (SHTA).

"Beyond the welcomed 'National Scenic Trail' designation, SHTA is excited to partner more closely with NCTA to address some of the trail's biggest problem areas and highlight the incredible hiking, backpacking, and trail running opportunities in northern Minnesota," stated Jaron Cramer, Development and Communications Director of the SHTA.



Learn more about these efforts and affiliates, as well as volunteer opportunities to help build, protect, and promote these trail resources:

www.northcountrytrail.org



A cause for celebration

Fones Cliffs protected along the Captain John Smith Chesapeake NHT

Partners gathered at historic Fones Cliffs along Virginia's Rappahannock River and the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail on June 28, 2019, to celebrate the permanent protection of 252 acres recently added to the Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge. The event marked an important victory in a decade-long effort to save one of the most pristine landscapes in the Chesapeake watershed.

The cliffs that tower 100 feet above the river provide globally significant habitat for bald eagles and other bird species. The area is culturally significant as an ancestral home for the Rappahannock people and as a site documented in the journals of English explorer Captain John Smith. Thanks to The Conservation Fund and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), this parcel will now be protected from development and will add opportunities for hiking and birdwatching. Funding for the acquisition came from the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which Chesapeake Conservancy helped to secure.

Fones Cliffs was once home to three American Indian towns, and it retains great significance to the Rappahannock



Photo Credit: Jeffrey Allenby, Chesapeake Conservancy

Chesapeake Conservancy helped secure funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund to acquire Fones Cliffs in Virginia. A total of 252 acres were permanently protected and added to the Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge by the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail.

people today. "We are so pleased to see this portion of the Cliffs protected from development," said Rappahannock Tribe Chief Anne Richardson, who is also a member of Chesapeake Conservancy's Board of Directors. "This is the land where our ancestors lived for thousands of years, and it is sacred to our Tribe. Thanks to all the partners who understand how essential land preservation is to our very existence."

The entire conservation community

and the public can rightfully celebrate this tremendous accomplishment. However, an adjoining 968 acres remain threatened as the corporate owner seeks to reorganize under Chapter 11 bankruptcy proceedings.

Chesapeake Conservancy will continue to be vigilant in monitoring all activities related to the proposed development and will continue our strong advocacy for conserving this property and its irreplaceable natural, historical, and cultural values.

New 7.5 mile OVNHT segment wraps around Lake Whelchel

by Ben Richardson, Chief of Planning and Partnerships
and Will Caldwell, Park Guide

National Park Service

On October 6, 1780, during the American Revolution, 900 Patriot soldiers left a temporary camp at what is now Cowpens National Battlefield and continued the pursuit of their British foes following local creeks. The next afternoon, they charged into battle at Kings Mountain (now Kings Mountain National Military Park) and entered our history books. The creeks they followed along this portion were dammed in the 20th century to create Lake Whelchel, a municipally-owned water source for Gaffney, SC, which submerged the old paths.

Previously, a 2.5 mile trail along the southern shore allowed visitors to shadow the trail of these Patriots. But in June 2019, the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail partnered with the Carolina Thread Trail, City of Gaffney, Cherokee County SC, Gaffney Board of Public Works, and the Cherokee County Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail (OVNHT) Committee to add another chapter to the story of this march.

On June 29, 2019, the ribbon was cut on the now 7.5 mile Lake



James H. Kelly, Treasurer of the Gaffney Board of Public Works, cuts the ribbon for the 7.5 mile Lake Whelchel Trail on June 29, 2019.

Photo Credit: NPS

Whelchel Trail. This new trail completes a portion of the OVNHT Master Planning Process to connect Chesnee, SC with Kings Mountain National Military Park. The trail now wraps around the entire lake, providing a variety of route options for the historic trail. The opening ceremony was visited by U.S. Rep. Ralph Norman, South Carolina State Sen. Harvey Peeler, local supporters, and trail advocates from across the southeast. Guided walks, rides, and runs gave visitors the chance to explore and enjoy the nature and the history that can be found on the OVNHT.



Arizona Trail management strategies for a changing climate

Maintaining and protecting the Arizona National Scenic Trail (AZT) has always been a challenge, especially considering the diversity of ecosystems the trail traverses. Through deserts, canyons, mountains, and forests, the AZT climbs and descends over 110,000 feet in only 800 miles and showcases nine of the state's 11 bioregions.

Over the past decade, the impacts of climate change have been glaringly obvious and increasingly alarming. The wildfire season has extended from four months to eight months, and water sources that have been historically reliable are disappearing. In an effort to fulfill our mission, the Arizona Trail Association (ATA) has been studying the best available science and adopting resiliency models to ensure the long-term sustainability of the AZT.



WILDFIRES

Every year we watch in horror as Arizona's volatile wildfire season wreaks havoc across the landscape. In the past, this season of worry (and trail closures) started in May and was usually over by August. But over the past few years we've seen wildfires start as early as March and extend through October. With highly variable seasons that defy our previous understanding of precipitation and the terrain's proclivity to combustion, it has become increasingly difficult to predict when fires may begin, how long they'll last, and their impacts to watersheds, communities and the trail.

In June, the Woodbury Fire started from a lightning strike in the Superstition Wilderness. Fueled by tall grasses that covered the landscape from a very wet winter and driven by hot summer winds, the fire grew exponentially every day until it consumed the entirety of the mountain range. In all, 123,000 acres were incinerated and over 60 miles of recreational trails were lost. Thirty miles of the AZT were impacted by the Woodbury Fire, and the safety hazard of flash floods within a burn scar have prevented U.S. Forest Service and ATA staff from entering the wilderness area to conduct a proper conditions assessment.

The AZT's typical southbound thru-hiking season began in mid-September and it's still unclear whether or not hikers will be allowed to travel through the Superstition Mountains. Because the fire impacted all



Photo Credit: Tonto National Forest

This summer, the Woodbury Fire consumed 123,000 acres of the Tonto National Forest and 31 miles of the Arizona National Scenic Trail.

of the trails within the wilderness, there is no viable detour. Many will rely on passing motorists to transport them from Roosevelt Lake to the Town of Superior. The good news is that the Tonto National Forest secured \$105,000 in Burned Area Emergency Response funding, and Conservation Corps will be deployed in October for critical trail repairs, deadfall removal, sign installation, and hillside stabilization efforts.

In an effort to minimize future catastrophic wildfires, the ATA is supportive of forest health initiatives, including selective thinning and prescribed burning. While the immediate impacts detract from the AZT's scenic qualities, the health of our forests is paramount for the trail's sustainability.

IMPROVING WATER SOURCES

A long-distance trail without water is irrelevant, and is simply not sustainable. The ATA has invested in numerous projects to enhance water sources along the Arizona Trail, including installation of bear boxes so trail users can cache water; identifying and signing water sources within a half mile of the trail; rehabilitating springs negatively impacted by erosion, cattle, and wildfires; and most recently, construction of a remote rainwater collector.

On August 31, 2019, a dedicated crew of staff and volunteers braved the heat of summer to install the first remote AZT Rainwater Collector. This unit is the first of its kind and was designed by the ATA and metalsmith extraordinaire Rob Bauer in consultation with sustainability professionals, land managers, and engineers.

The rainwater collector features a steel apron that catches rainwater and stores the precious resource within a 1,500-gallon tank that is protected on all sides by steel panels. A spigot with an automatic shutoff valve allows trail users to fill and filter their



Photo Credit: Zara Bauer

The AZT Rainwater Collector will store up to 1,500 gallons of fresh rainwater for trail users along a particularly dry segment of the Arizona NST.

bottles. Once the tank is full, an overflow pipe fills a steel water trough nearby for the benefit of wildlife. The entire unit is fenced to keep livestock out, and posted signs inform trail users that the water must be filtered before consumption.

Since it is not visible while on the trail, it doesn't detract from the Arizona Trail's scenic values. It sits at ground level and no disturbance was necessary for its installation, unlike wildlife water projects that require a large footprint and significant ground disturbance. The steel panel construction is literally bulletproof and will require minimal maintenance over many decades.

The collector will likely fill during summer monsoons for trail users to tap into during the busy autumn trail season. The pattern will be repeated with winter moisture refilling the tank for the spring season. Water quality will be studied over a period of one year by the University of Arizona's Project Harvest students, and those results will be shared on the ATA website. Since rainwater is essentially distilled and the unit features a three-stage screen system, it's unlikely any natural contaminants will find their way into the storage tank. The water never receives direct sunlight, so algae will not grow. Unlike most tanks, streams, ponds, and other sources along the AZT, cattle will have no opportunity to contaminate the water. Fine mesh screens cover the intake and outflow to prevent mosquitoes, bees, and other insects from accessing the water source.

The AZT Rainwater Collector was funded by a Restoration and Resilience Grant from the National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF) and Freeport-McMoRan Copper & Gold Foundation. After studying this pilot project for one year, the ATA will consider fabricating and installing other rainwater collectors along the driest segments of the AZT.

NSHT IAM: A method for capturing trail resources, qualities, values, and settings

by **Deb Salt**, *Trails Program Lead* and **Christopher Douwes**, *Community Planner*
Bureau of Land Management and Federal Highways Administration, respectively

In 2018, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) agreed to cost-share a contract to develop a standardized, resource integrated national scenic and historic trails (NSHT) inventory, assessment, and monitoring program (IAM).



Photo Credit: BLM

BLM Richfield Field Office staff and a Weber State University student conduct an inventory on the California National Historic Trail in Skull Valley, UT.

products, such as interactive maps, mobile applications, and electronic location services, all of which need accurate and authoritative data. Proposals for energy development, infrastructure, roads, and pipelines which have the potential to adversely impact national trail values must be reviewed and assessed against accurate data.

To that end, the purpose of the agreement was to contribute an inventory and monitoring program that Federal, Tribal, State, and local governments and private sector entities could use to better understand trail resources, protect trail corridors, and support quality trail experiences. With comprehensive policies already in place for inventory, assessment, and monitoring, the project would support a more systematic approach to BLM management of NSHTs on public lands, while serving as a model to help other agencies responsible for trail or highway programs to inventory and monitor these assets. The agencies also agreed that shared resources would support more effective program management, project delivery, and build capacity to better administer, manage, and sustain all kinds of trails.

Together, the BLM and FHWA, and all who assisted in this landmark effort, look forward to offering a way to better understand and protect these trails for future generations to enjoy through a standardized, resource integrated inventory, assessment, and monitoring program.

Mutual objectives for the NSHT IAM program development included making advancements in trail corridor protection, data collection, system resiliency and sustainability, project delivery, multimodal transportation connectivity, wayfinding and awareness, and technological challenges and opportunities.

Based on BLM policies, the project would offer a more systematic way to capture scenic, historic, cultural, and natural and recreation resources, qualities, values, and settings called for by the National Trails System Act. The deliverables will include a methodology, field guide, and training that will be publicly available in 2020. The concepts developed will be readily transferable to any Federal or State agency and for any kind of trail.

The reasons for the joint effort are that systematic collection, analysis, management, and availability of national trail data is paramount to meeting National Trails System Act purposes and public expectations, including maintaining high quality recreational experiences, protecting natural and cultural resources, and supporting public safety. Demand also is growing within the BLM, other Federal agencies, the State agencies that administer the Recreational Trails Program (RTP), and State transportation agencies to collect and maintain accurate, validated, and authenticated national trails data, and to share that data with other Federal agencies, Tribes, States, nonprofit organizations, and private interests. Demand is growing for various trail-related public and agency innovative



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Sandi Marra • Appalachian Trail Conservancy

Teresa Martinez • Continental Divide Trail Coalition

Margaret Gorski • Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation

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 Partnership for the National Trails System
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Event Calendar



www.pnts.org/new/events/

October 23-26, 2019	National Wilderness Workshop	Bend, OR	www.wildernessalliance.org
November 5, 2019	Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategies	Webinar 2PM ET	www.pnts.org/new/webinars/
February 8-13, 2020	Hike the Hill presented by PNTS and AHS	Washington, D.C.	www.pnts.org/new/our-work/hike-the-hill/
February 9-12, 2020	35th Annual Corps Network National Conference	Washington, D.C.	www.corpsnetwork.org/conference/
February 21-23, 2020	Oregon-California Trails Association Spring Symposium	Yuma, AZ	www.octa-trails.org
March 15-21, 2020	Professional Trailbuilders Association Sustainable Trails Conference	Bentonville, AR	www.trailbuilders.org
April 25-28, 2020	National Planning Conference	Houston, TX	www.planning.org/conference

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