



Passages

Volume 25, Spring 2022

Continental Divide Trail Coalition

A DECADE OF STEWARDSHIP

TEN YEARS IN RETROSPECT

Lenses on the progress of CDTC and the trail

IN PRAISE OF FUNGI

The vitality of the forgotten kingdom along the CDT

A HIKER'S LIFE REMEMBERED

Celebrating Continental Divide hiker Joe Schuler



PLUS

Now when you support the CDT, you could receive a great prize! *Page 3*

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S LETTER

Dear friends,

I can't believe it. CDTC has made it to our first decade of work in service of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail. Ten years. As I am reflecting on our first decade, it's hard to fathom how far we have come and that it has *only* been 10 years. In some ways it feels like we have always been here. I started thinking about what ten years actually is, in a purely mathematical definition. Ten years is the equivalent of 315,569,520 seconds, 5,259,492 minutes, 87,658 hours, 3,652 days or 521 weeks. Now, *that* feels more like it!



As I reflect on the 315,569,520 seconds we have spent in stewardship of the CDT, I can think back on our first volunteer project on the Clear Creek Ranger District on National

Public Lands 2012. It was myself and one volunteer, Anneliese Ring, working to address drainage issues along the CDT in the Herman Gulch Area. That day we built one rock drainage and cleared out 6 existing structures and talked to hundreds of people about the CDT. Since then, our volunteers have contributed over \$10 million in volunteer labor for the completion and maintenance of the CDT, and have helped create one of the most revered and respected shared stewardship models across the entire National Trails System.

As I reflect on the 5,259,492 minutes we have spent raising awareness of the CDT, I think back on May 21, 2013, when a few hundred people met us at the American Mountaineering Museum as we launched our Indiegogo Campaign in support of building the CDTC. It was a night full of anticipation, hope, surprise, and awe for everyone who wanted to make sure that the movement to protect the CDT endured. Since then, we have grown to over 2,500 members and supporters, who have helped us become the stable and thriving organization we are today.

As I reflect on the 87,658 hours we have spent in building a community in support of the CDT, I remember the day in April 2014, that we celebrated the life of Sam Hughes, the original Trail Angel of Hachita, NM, who took so many hikers out to start or finish their journeys along the CDT in the Bootheel of New Mexico. It was a wonderful day spent with the community of Hachita, and also marked the first group of veterans we supported along the CDT. It was also the year we launched the CDT Southern Terminus Shuttle to fill in the gap left by Sam. That year we took 90 hikers to the Southern Terminus of the CDT. Since then, we have supported over 1,500

people as they begin or end their journey along the spine of the Continent.


As I reflect on the 3,652 days we have worked toward completion of the Trail, I am thrilled that since 2012, not only do we have [a completely free and downloadable map set](#) of the current CDT route, we have an annually updated, [free downloadable planning guide](#), and in 2018, we signed the entire CDT from end to end for the first time. We have seen Trail completion move from 60 % to 96% and are beginning to finally make progress on major gaps along the CDT. And we have also garnered enough attention and support that Congressman Joe Neguse introduced the [Continental Divide Trail Completion Act!](#)

As I reflect on the 521 weeks of building an amazing team that works in service of our communities, members, supporters, the landscape and the trail itself, I am in awe of the talent and passion people bring to their work everyday. From our first small, all-woman team of Liz "Snorkel" Thomas, and Valerie Bader, sharing a desk in the Colorado Mountain Club, to our growing team of 16 fulltime employees (still majority women!) Our team is now based out of a small office behind the stage of the American Mountaineering Center, a co-located office with Wild Montana in Helena, MT, and home offices sprinkled all across the Divide, and I couldn't be more proud of the innovation and creativity we bring to our work to reimagine a model of cooperative trail stewardship for the CDT. And we are just getting started.

And, as I reflect on the first decade of our efforts to help build an incredible movement on behalf of the Continental Divide and the wonderful trail along its spine, we are honored, humbled, privileged and grateful that this is a "we" and an "us". And as we look toward our next decade, we hope you continue to join us as we steward one of (if not *the!*) most important landscapes of the North American Continent, and continue to ensure that we all are able to build, maintain, and rediscover a relationship to this place that gives us all dreams, hope, and life!

Many happy trails. We hope to see you somewhere along this landscape in the coming months!

Teresa Ana Martinez
Executive Director
Continental Divide Trail Coalition



THE BACKBONE OF AMERICA

Spanning 3,100 miles from Canada to Mexico, the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail is a living museum of the American West. A place to reconnect with nature, and a unifying force that brings communities and people of all walks of life together — *this is the Backbone of America.*

Join the Coalition! When you give, you receive.



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JASMINE STAR

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COVER PHOTO BY STEVEN SHATTUCK
BACK COVER PHOTO BY RYAN CHOI

**CONNECTING THE COMMUNITY THAT SUPPORTS
THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL**

The Continental Divide Trail Coalition's mission is to complete, promote, and protect the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail. CDTC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, and donations to CDTC are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law. To donate, visit our website at www.continentaldividetrail.org.

Continental Divide Trail *Passages* is published three times a year for the members of the Continental Divide Trail Coalition. Membership begins at \$5 per year. Members are encouraged to submit story ideas and photographs for inclusion in *Passages* to the editor at communications@continentaldividetrail.org.



GREG SPENCER

**TRAIL
ADMINISTRATOR'S
UPDATE**

With the arrival of Spring, we are in full swing planning for another busy CDT season. Volunteers, youth corps, trail partners, and land managers have some exciting projects planned to improve trail conditions and user experiences. A few - and certainly not an exhaustive list - highlights for the upcoming field season include:

- **New Mexico Youth Corps Pilot:** This is a pilot project for a CDT youth corps where each youth corps and land management partner can count on two weeks of funding in addition to any other maintenance, relocation, or trailhead development projects along the CDT.
- **CDT Field Technician:** CDTC is hiring a field technician that is funded through the partnership agreement between the Forest Service and CDTC. The field technician will hike the CDT across New Mexico to document maintenance and project needs and work with land managers to submit proposals for future funding.

In addition to projects, I am happy to share that the Forest Service hired an intern for the CDT. Amanda

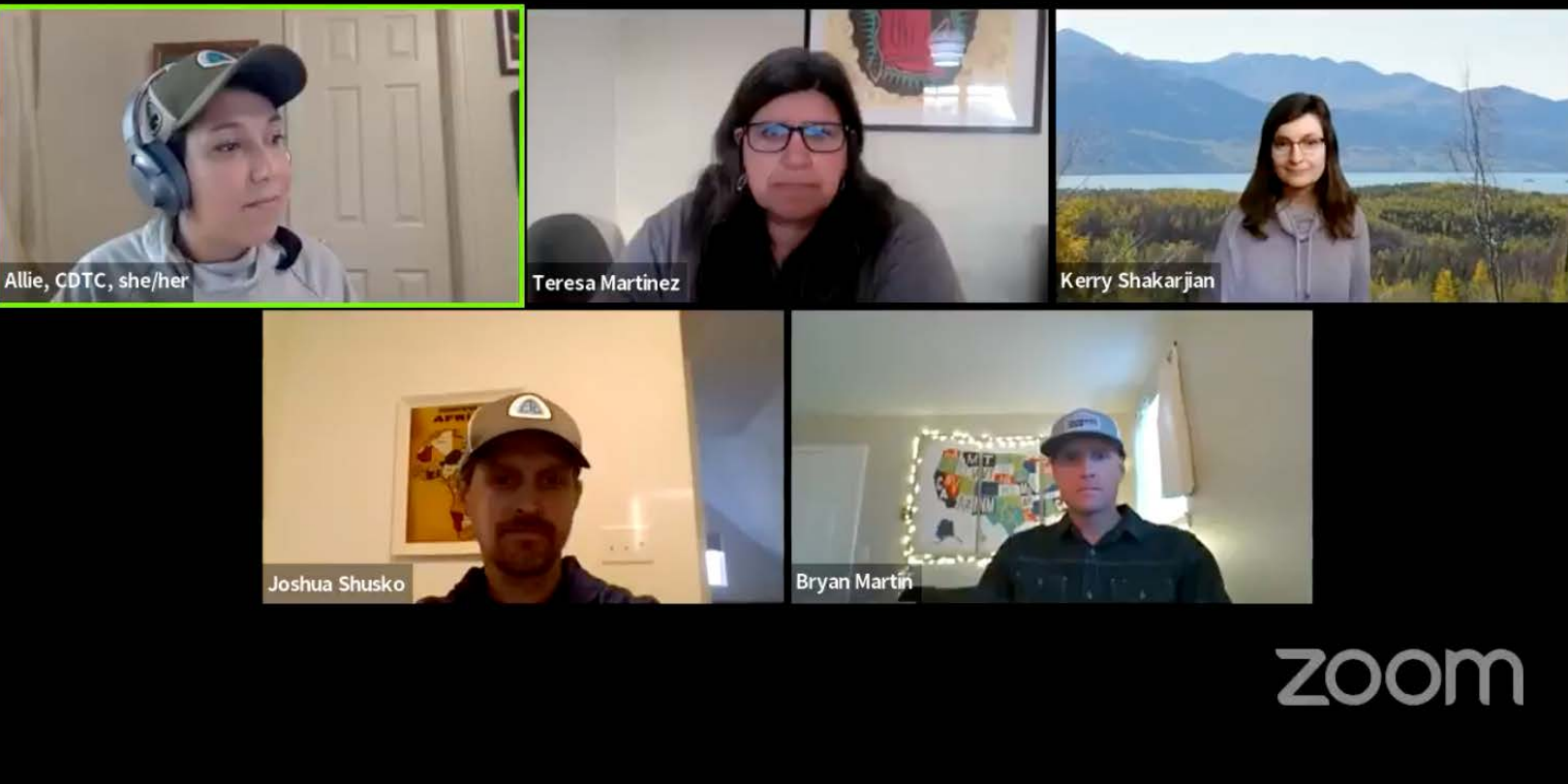
Grace Santos started in January and is developing a framework for informal tribal engagement to diversify engagement points with tribes and better understand indigenous connections to and perspectives of the Continental Divide. Amanda Grace is based in Santa Fe and is working with several national forests and BLM field offices as well as pueblos and tribes. She will work until September 2022.

While all of these projects are focused in New Mexico this year, the intent is for them to be replicated across the CDT. We chose New Mexico for these pilots due to CDTC staff support in the state such as Corey Torivio, the New Mexico Regional Representative, and Dan Carter, the Trail and Lands Conservation Program Manager. The take-home is that the land management agencies cannot do this work without the support of the CDTC and many other partners!

Rachel Franchina

Rachel Franchina
National Trail Program Manager
U.S. Forest Service

TRAIL TIDBITS



NEW GRANT
 CDTC is thrilled to announce that we're the recipients of a new grant from Bass Pro Shops and Cabela's Outdoor Fund! This funding will directly support our efforts to complete, protect, and promote the trail by providing us funding to translate our Day and Overnight Hikes Guides. We're grateful for the funding and its impact on our programs.



TRAIL DAYS RECAP
 We had a fantastic time last month in Silver City, NM, for our first in-person Continental Divide Trail Days celebration since the start of the pandemic. It was a great joy to catch up with the community. For the Saturday festival, CDTC partnered for the first time with Gila Earth Day in a joint celebration of the local environment. Thanks to all who volunteered and attended!

CDTC FOUNDERS ROUNDTABLE

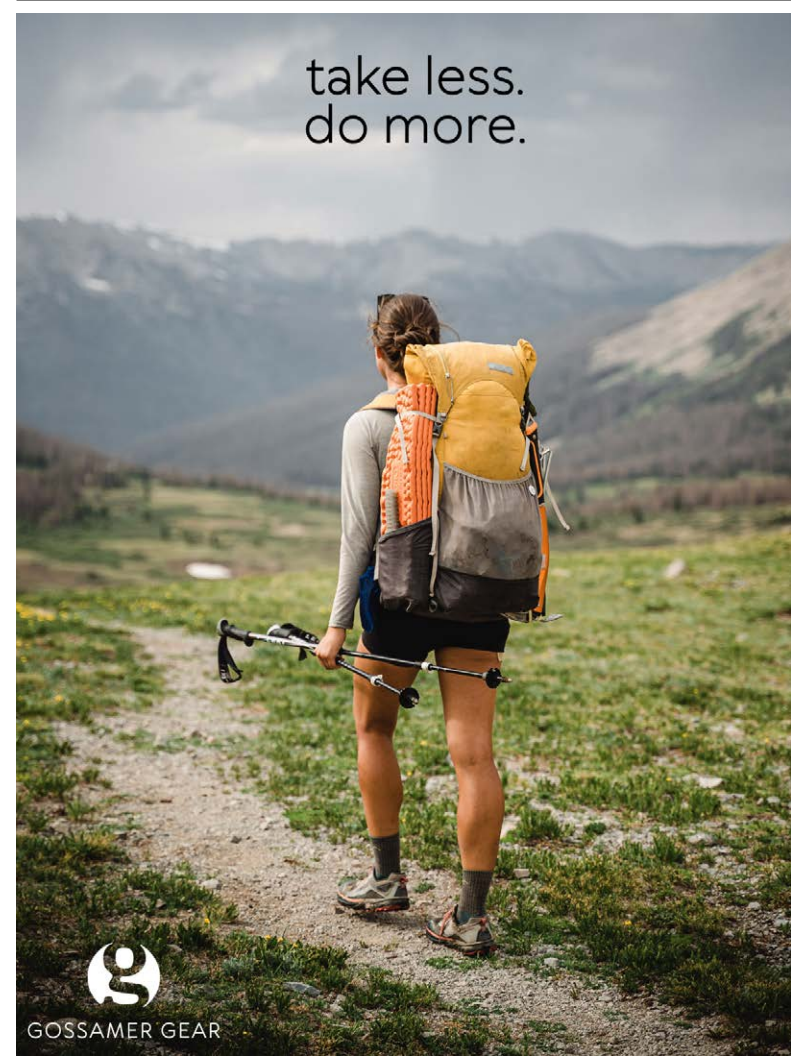
At the start of this month, CDTC's four co-founders sat down for a roundtable discussion of the past, present, and future of the Continental Divide Trail Coalition. For the first time in several years, these four friends, who started the organization with a vision for cooperative stewardship and community engagement, were able to gather, reminisce and share insights into their work to protect the landscapes of the Divide. [Catch up with the conversation here!](#)



PRIDE ON THE DIVIDE

CDTC is excited to celebrate our very first #PrideOnTheDivide this year! Starting in late June, and continuing through July, we'll have community hikes up and down the Divide, photo contests, and more as we celebrate the LGBTQIA2S* members of the trail community.

Stay tuned on [our Facebook](#) and [our Instagram](#) to see what events may be happening near you!



TEN YEARS OF STEWARDSHIP

Reflecting on where we've come from...

... and celebrating where we're going!



CDTC trail maintenance project in May 2013



CDTC founders at the fundraiser in 2013



CDTC staff supporting veterans at the Southern Terminus, 2014



CO Business Roundtable with Michael Bennet, 2018



Fundraiser at the American Mountaineering Center, 2013

History of the CDT

- 1968** The National Trails System Act creates a system of National Scenic, Historic, and Recreational Trails.
- 1978** Congress passes the National Parks and Recreation Act, designating the CDT as the third National Scenic Trail and making the Forest Service its lead administering agency.
- 2009** The USFS amends the CDT Comprehensive Management Plan, providing direction for local management.
- 2012** The Continental Divide Trail Coalition is founded to complete, promote, and protect the CDT.
- 2020** Passage of the Great American Outdoors Act secures permanent funding for completion of the CDT through the Land and Water Conservation Fund.
- 2021** The CDT Completion Act is introduced to Congress to prioritize completion of the CDT by 2028.
- 2022** CDTC celebrates 10-years of working in service of the communities and enthusiasts of the CDT.

THEN



NOW

CDTC is founded around a living room table with the 4 Founders, Bryan Martin, Josh Shusko, Kerry Shakarjian, and Teresa Martinez.

CDTC Growth

14 full-time CDTC staff are located along the entirety of the trail, with interns, fellows, and seasonal positions supporting ongoing projects.

The CDT is 68% complete with many sections unmarked.

CDT Completion

The CDT is 95% complete. CDTC participates in standing working groups across the trail on the major gap areas.

CDTC maintained a memorandum of understanding with just the U.S. Forest Service.

Cooperative Management

CDTC holds a memorandum of understanding with USFS, BLM, and NPS recognizing CDTC as the lead private partner in the completion, protection, and promotion of the CDT.

CDTC's first field season has 1 projects in Colorado.

Trail Stewardship

CDTC had 21 field projects in 2021 across all 5 states.

CDTC started with crowdsourcing fundraiser, raising \$40K with 600 donors.

Return on Investment

CDTC's annual operating income is over \$1 million and has launched the first CDT Endowment.

There was no consistent signing across the CDT, leaving travelers to find their own way on a regular basis.

Trail Promotion

USFS, BLM, CDTC, youth corps, and other stewardship organizations partner to "Blaze the CDT," marking the trail in its entirety for the first time in 2018.

Silver City, NM becomes the first CDT Gateway Community.

Gateway Communities

Butte, MT becomes the 19th (and largest) CDT Gateway Community.

25 hikers attempt to thru-hike the CDT annually, with many section hikers and recreationalists enjoying the CDT in their own backyard.

Popularity of the CDT

400-600 hikers attempt the thru-hike the CDT annually, with the growing popularity of public lands brings thousands of new recreationists and international travelers to the CDT.

HOW A TRAIL GETS MADE

The down-to-earth details from CDTC staff on how to take the CDT from 95% to complete

HOW A TRAIL GETS MADE: DESIGN & LANDS

Trail Lands and Conservation Manager Dan Carter tells *Passages* what it takes to scout new routes, engage stakeholders, and work to #CompleteTheCDT

By Allie Ghaman
CDTC Communications Manager

As the Continental Divide Trail gets closer to completion, with only 5% of the trail incomplete (or not available to walk on), Trail and Lands Conservation Manager Dan Carter provided us with insights to his work to complete the CDT, and how he engages with the partners to find solutions.

A primer on general trail design

When first approaching trail design generally, there are several factors in determining where the trail should go. Against a wide landscape of possibilities, Dan assesses which route might best meet the needs of a scenic trail, before heading out to check the area in person. “I’m looking for a route that is scenic, in wilderness, remote, single-track, non-motorized, ideally on as much public land as possible and avoiding structures and habitations, as natural as possible. That’s the overarching goal. The hope is to build sustainable trail that follows contour lines, which makes the grade better for pack animals, equestrians and human travelers. I’m always looking for landscape topography that will allow you to build on a side slope.”

Dan’s hope for a trail is for it to be primarily “bench cut” along the side of a slope; that way, water will move sustainably over the trail, instead of along its length, allowing for greater erosion control and sustainability. This method also allows for easy switchbacks and can help preserve fragile environments on top of ridgelines or at water sources in valleys. Determining which natural resources can be sustained with new human traffic, and which would benefit from remaining farther from trail, can also help steer decision-making.

Dan describes assessing an area for positive

and negative control points. “Positive control points could be a really great view that travelers might like, or an interesting feature or landscape feature, something positive you’d want to add to the trail experience. Negative control points might be cultural sites, shrines, old structures, sometimes water sources that are too sensitive like a riparian area, or a spring that can’t withstand any more impact, sensitive wildlife habitat, or threatened and endangered species. It could also be geological concerns like knowing which soils will be a maintenance headache or that an area is prone to landslides,” he says. “A lot of that knowledge is compiled with working groups, specialists like the rec planners, archaeologists, biologists, engagement with Indigenous communities, as well as feedback from permittees or local landowners, and consulting GIS databases.”

Filling in the CDT’s gaps

When it comes to the CDT specifically, the USFS and CDTC have co-developed a process called the [Optimal Location Review \(OLR\)](#), which helps ensure compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act, needed to assess all adjustments of National Scenic Trails. This tool has six steps to make sure that the CDT will follow its goals as laid out by its Congressional designation:

- Determining if an OLR is needed.
- Forming a OLR team, which may include a team leader, Agency specialists such as biologists or archaeologists, non-governmental personnel, and many other types of stakeholders.
- Defining the scope and scale of the OLR, to outline the project.
- Initial team meeting and reviewing data, which might include things like land ownerships, surveys, deeds, easements, hydrology reports, GIS information, existing or potential land uses, and more.
- An on-the-ground field review is conducted. Efforts are made to avoid paralleling roads and utility corridors and to minimize impact on riparian areas and other sensitive habitats, among many other considerations.
- After the field review, findings are documented. Problems or challenges are identified and plans are made.

The Divide region has a patchwork of land designations, so finding a clear path on public lands for the trail isn’t always easy. Part of Dan’s work includes speaking with local landowners and managers, filling them in about what the CDT is, and engaging in further conversations to see if

Get involved with the CDT!

Want to exercise your voice about issues impacting the CDT? There will be an upcoming 30 day public comment period starting on May 27 for the public to review and comment on the Environmental Assessment for the Continental Divide Trail right-of-way between the New Mexico State Land Office and Bureau of Land Management across NM.

Per the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) the comment period is an opportunity for the public to learn and provide input on actions on our public lands. There will be a virtual public meeting and presentation on June 15, 2022. The Environmental Assessment will be available online at [ePlanning.gov](#) and at local BLM offices. Comments can be submitted online or by mail. The process for submitting comments will be part of the public meeting and explained online. Details about the meeting will soon be available on [eplanning.gov](#) and CDTC platforms.

Want to stay in touch about future opportunities to speak up for the trail? [Sign up for our advocacy alerts!](#)

they would be interested in allowing an easement across their lands or being a willing seller of land.

“A lot of these projects, the landowners have been there longer than the trail,” Dan says. “I can call them up and have an initial conversation about the gap near their property. I’ll let them know I’m scouting for potential routes, get feedback on their familiarity with the trail, and hear their local knowledge about the landscape or where routes might exist.”

[You can learn more about the policies for CDT’s trail management here!](#)

Best practices for recreating

With this patchwork of designations, Dan reminds trail users that staying on public lands and not trespassing is helpful for maintaining strong relationships with the landowners and communities of the Divide. “There’s a lot of mixed land statuses: private, tribal, state, and federal lands — they all have different laws and ways they allow access to the public,” he says. “That can cause issues [if you’re heading off trail.] You might end up with a deadend that you can’t cross, or someone’s house, or on a roadway, or end up in an unsafe or illegal place. When you stay on designated public lands, you avoid those issues. Just by being a good neighbor and sharing these public lands is a way that we recreationists and trail users can do our part of sharing the space that people are using for many other purposes.”



Muddy Pass is one of the gap areas needed to bring the CDT to completion.

STEVEN SHATTUCK

HOW A TRAIL GETS MADE: POLICY

Trail Policy Program Manager L Fisher updates us on the Continental Divide Trail Completion Act, introduced in Congress last fall.

By L Fisher || CDTC Trail Policy Program Manager

Congress designated the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail over four decades ago with an amendment to the National Trails System Act in 1978. The legislation called for a continuous footpath from New Mexico to Montana, traveling along the spine of the continent, giving access to one of the most remote, natural landscapes in the world. Leaders in D.C. and stakeholders all along the Divide advocated for founding a trail that would connect the cultures and cultures of the Rocky Mountain West. And since its founding, thanks to the tireless work of volunteers, community members, agencies, and recreationists, the CDT has grown into an iconic monument to outdoor exploration, not only for those who can see the trail from their own backyard, but world-renowned for the trail's towering ridgeline views, the thriving ecosystems filled with abundant wildlife

and lush vegetation, and the history and cultural touchstones that have imprinted on the landscape for time immemorial.

Completion of the trail has consistently progressed since 1978, with 65% of the trail complete by 2009, and with the passage of the Public Lands Omnibus bill in 2009 and the Great American Outdoors Act in 2020, trail completion efforts have grown exponentially, with almost 95% of the trail complete in 2022. But for those seeking that continuous footpath was originally envisioned by Congress, there still remains a major obstacle: approximately 160 miles of gap areas still exist on the CDT. This leads to long, strenuous roadwalks, that are not only not the natural, scenic experience that the trail was designated for, but present a safety and logistical challenge. These priority gap areas include Muddy Pass outside of Steamboat Springs that results in a 15-mile road walk on the interstate and 50-mile gap needed to connect Pie Town to Grants in New Mexico. Fortunately, travelers on the CDT could see these gaps complete if H.R. 5118, the Continental Divide Trail Completion Act, successfully makes its way through Congress.

Congressman Neguse (CO-2) introduced the CDT Completion Act last fall. The legislation prioritizes projects that work toward the completion of the CDT by the trail's 50th anniversary in 2028. Completion would be achieved by the creation of a Trail Completion team composed of U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and Bureau of Land Management

(BLM) staff, working in concert with the USFS CDT Administrator, who would work to address trail gaps through consultation with Gateway Communities, recreationists, Tribal Governments, land grant communities, conservationists, and others. In the bill's introduction, Congressman Neguse recognized the environmental significance of the Divide, and how important finishing the trail is for rural communities, who would benefit from a boost to the local economy and benefit from more opportunities to get outdoors. Movement on the bill has steadily progressed, and in the bill's first hearing last November, original co-sponsor Congresswoman Leger Fernandez (NM-03) passionately spoke on the environmental benefits of the Divide landscape for New Mexicans and the cultural significance indigenous and land grant communities. Since then, the bill received a mark-up in the House Natural Resources committee this Spring, where the amended language was approved and the bill was moved out of committee. Congresswoman Stansbury (NM-02) and Congressman Beyer (VA-08) have since been added as co-sponsors in support of the bill.

The CDT Completion Act comes at a time when public lands and waters are experiencing an unprecedented rise in popularity and visitation.



The legislation prioritizes projects that work toward the completion of the CDT by the trail's 50th anniversary in 2028."

Now more than ever, CDTC and those in our trail community, including members of Congress, must ask ourselves how to make the most of this opportunity by investing in our trails and forests, protecting critical ecosystems that make up the CDT Experience, and protecting the futures of rural communities who depend on holistic conservation to preserve the way of life in the Rocky Mountain West. As CDTC celebrates its 10-year anniversary, we know from experience that all these goals can be achieved by working cooperatively to steward the Divide so all people are able to enjoy the splendor of the CDT far into the future.

WHAT WILL YOUR LEGACY BE?

"...Hiking Mexico to Canada along the spine of the continent changed my life just as it has that of many other long and short stay visitors. When I see what the CDT Coalition and the women and men before them have done to make this amazing path accessible to lovers of wilderness travel, I want nothing more than to contribute to that effort in whatever way is possible for me. For this reason, I choose to include CDTC in my estate plan."

- Jean Ella, the first woman to thru-hike the CDT

HELP US PROTECT THE CDT FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS BY BECOMING A LEGACY MEMBER
TO LEARN MORE, CONTACT LAUREN MURRAY AT LMURRAY@CONTINENTALDIVIDETRAIL.ORG



HOW A TRAIL GETS MADE: **FIELD WORK**

When it comes to the practice of laying and maintaining the Continental Divide Trail, CDTC's Field Programs are in charge! Director of Field Programs Morgan Anderson and Field Programs Manager answer some FAQs about the nitty-gritty of trail maintenance.

By Morgan Anderson and Kylie Yang

Morgan Anderson (above, left) is the Director of Field Programs with CDTC. She plans projects and logistics each field season, develops and directs our programs, and writes and manages grants to fund Field Program work and staff. Morgan has worked in conservation and trails for 8 years, 5 of them with the Continental Divide Trail Coalition.

Kylie Yang (above, right) is the Field Programs Manager for the CDTC. Kylie supervises our two seasonal Field Instructors, works collaboratively with land managers and partners to coordinate our volunteer trail work projects, and is responsible for overseeing and coordinating and implementation of the CDTC Adopter Program. Kylie joined CDTC in 2021, and has worked in conservation and trails for four years.

Q: How do you determine which projects to work on every year?

Land managers, partner organizations, and volunteers reach out to Field Programs to discuss

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WE'RE PROUD SUPPORTERS (AND HUGE FANS) OF THE CDTC.



PARKS FOR ALL

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REPEAT DAILY.



project proposals on the CDT. Field Programs focus on trail construction, maintenance, and high-priority work like fire rehabilitation, clearing downed trees, and tread (trail surface) stabilization.

Q: Who does CDTC work with to complete these projects? What do those partnerships look like?

CDTC works with land managers like the Forest Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, and local municipalities to complete these projects. Since the CDT predominantly traverses public land, Field Programs have to work closely with land manager staff to develop volunteer agreements, build expectations, and learn about the local history, land impacts, and long-term project goals of each agency office or unit. Because of the great expanse of the CDT and just two full-time staff in Field Programs, our staff works with many localized trail stewardship organizations and outdoor enthusiasts to build a foundation of mutual expectations that drive shared goals. Other partnerships may be with companies or organizations interested in learning more about trail maintenance and stewardship.

Q: What do volunteers on a project do?

Volunteers get important maintenance, restoration, and construction or reroute work done on the CDT. Much of that work requires different trail tools like loppers, picks, saws, and more to clean up the footpath and surrounding area so trail users can stay safe and enjoy the scenery along the Divide. Some volunteers sign up for projects that involve working in a specific site to build larger trail structures that protect waterways and keep folks out of the mud. Outside of the work volunteers do on the trail, they soak up the sun, share deep belly laughs and stories by the fire, help out with crew meals, and learn new things about themselves, one another, and the land.

Q: Who funds these projects?

The funds for these projects come largely from grants which focus specifically on trail maintenance, construction, and environmental conservation. Membership and corporate donations go a long way to fill our funding gaps and support our staff, especially during the field season.

Q: What are your favorite kinds of trail work to do?

Field Program staff love building new portions of the CDT that help close gap areas, increase access, and bring the trail into a more sustainable, optimal location. It's hard work, but having a hand in building this National Scenic Trail is a powerful and humbling experience for everyone involved

Q: What makes trail work enjoyable or satisfying?

Field Programs believes that knowing that you've physically put effort into improving, or helping



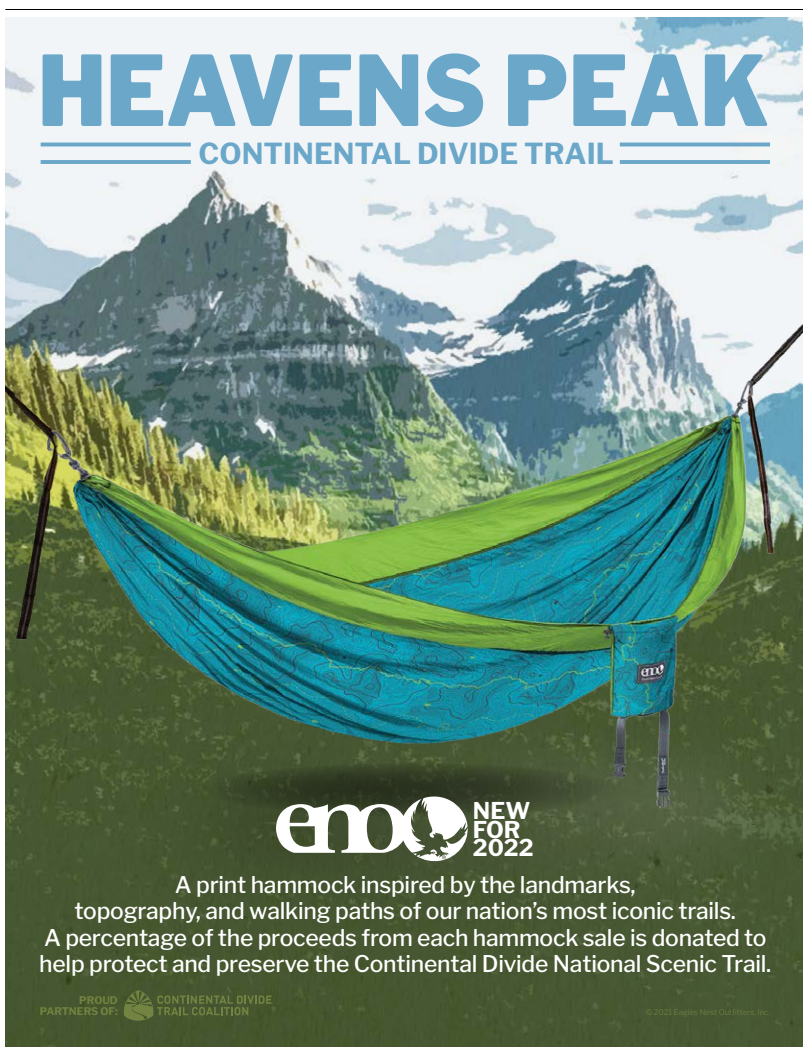
Volunteers from the chilly March volunteer project in Sycamore Canyon!

to complete the CDT makes for a satisfying experience. (The before and after often helps with this as well!) Our volunteers are truly what makes trail work enjoyable; the sense of community and connection that comes from meeting others who are interested in giving back to the CDT makes for a fun and unforgettable project.

Q: How can someone best help the trail, either as a volunteer or from afar?

Share your story and passion for nature and the CDT with your family, friends, and community.

All volunteers are a huge help! Whether it's going to a Volunteer Trail Work Project or becoming a Gateway Community Ambassador, all volunteers contribute to the improvement and preservation of the CDT.





King Bolete mushroom. These mushrooms have tubes under their caps, instead of gills. The porcini is a particularly prized culinary favorite found in the Rocky Mountains.

THE HIDDEN LIVES OF FUNGI

VIV LYNCH

By Allie Ghaman || CDTC Communications Manager

While the flora and fauna of the Divide are often praised for their biodiversity and brilliance, the Fungi Kingdom is sometimes overlooked, despite playing critical roles to the flourishing life of the region. CDTC caught up recently with Britt Bunyard, mycologist, author, editor-in-chief of [Fungi magazine](#), and Executive Director of the Telluride Mushroom Festival to learn more about the powerful role fungi play in our landscapes.

The Divide is a unique landscape in North America, Bunyard says. “It’s a big island, separated by the plains on one side, and other mountains on the other side. Things in the Rockies are indigenous to the Rockies, though some can go to the west coast,” Bunyard says. There are also wide differences in what fungi are present depending on elevation. “Coming up to Monarch Pass and going back down, you can see a variety of trees: white bark fir, douglas fir, and bristlecone pine as the highest elevation; as you come down 2,000 feet you’ll see aspens, you’ll see so much change in a couple minutes’ drive. There are mushrooms that are mycorrhizal partners with trees at the top but not the ones down low. You’d see some different mushrooms.”

That term, “mycorrhizal partners,” is one Bunyard reports is critical to sustaining most forms of plant life. (Oddly, mustard plants are a rare exception that do not have mycorrhizal partners.) “[Fungi] are not

really just decomposers, but the vast majority are partners with plants,” he says. “Mycorrhizal partners” is a term for the symbiotic relationship between fungi and plants. The two connect at the roots of the plants, and the fungi will help provide water and nutrient absorption, while the plant provides carbohydrates from photosynthesis. “80-90% of mushrooms are tied to root systems [in the soil], and we can’t culture them, can’t see mushrooms,” Bunyard said. “The business of water uptake and nutrient uptake in plants is thanks to the fungal partner.”

Especially in challenging conditions where nutrients are limited, plants can’t survive without a fungal partner, Bunyard says: “The Colorado Blue Spruce — that’s the champ of all Rocky Mountain trees for hosting mycorrhizal mushrooms, including king boletes.” He says the distance of a “fungal hyphy,” or fairy ring of mushrooms, from the forest can demonstrate the reach of the mycelium networks, a root-like network of fine filaments, makes up the bulk of a fungus and spreads throughout soils and other substrates, which can be astonishingly large in nutrient-scarce conditions. “We’re talking 30-50 feet from the edge of the forest, it could be rocky. [The Colorado Blue Spruces] rely on mushrooms to bring in moisture and break down rocky material to release nutrients,” he says.

This knowledge can help inform ecological restoration after a hard forest fire, which may sterilize

soil. “If you totally zap the soil or it got burned over, those mycorrhizal partners won’t be there and the trees won’t grow. You can’t just replant a burn area with seedlings without the microbes,” Bunyard says. “Plants, bushes around your house, grass, cacti, they all have fungi that are their partners. They’re adapted to dry conditions or wet conditions, but they all have this mycorrhizal partner on the roots. When we learn about fungi in school, we just learn about rot. The vast majority [of fungi] don’t do that.”

Bunyard also touched on research showing the ancient symbiosis between fungi and plants, and how that can impact the future. “Based on research, it’s established that that’s how plants moved onto land: the fungi came ahead of them, moving further and further inland, and they allowed plants to come with them. Now where the fungi go, they are the puppetmasters for plants to follow. Studying these interactions now is really important with the climate changing. We’re seeing catastrophic changes; in Colorado, we’re seeing less and less snow cover, it’s drier, [with more intense wildfires.] To undo some of these problems, to repopulate these areas, scientists are looking to fungi. Understanding how these associations happen in the environment is now more important than ever before. Mushrooms have a phenomenal potential for preserving habitats. Just in my lifetime there’s been really amazing discoveries.”

For mushroom enthusiasts, some of the more prized mushrooms to spot along the Divide are of the genus amanitas (or fly agaric, the famous speckled-red capped mushroom), and king boletes, known as porcini in the culinary world. “There are for sure Amanita species in the Rocky Mountains that you wouldn’t find in the West Coast,” Bunyard says. “They may grow with aspen trees or pines in the Rocky Mountains. The most highly-prized edible prize is the one of the king boletes that is only found in the region — they are a mushroom with tubes instead of gills. The group that are really prized are known as porcini mushrooms. The tastiest of all North American king boletes. This last year was the best year in 50 years [for them to grow.]”

Mushroom enthusiasts may be interested in checking out Bunyard’s book for newbies, [“The Beginner’s Guide to Mushrooms: Everything You Need to Know, from Foraging to Cultivating.”](#) He recommends finding a local mycological society to begin your mushroom hunting journey with, as a quicker and safer way to learn about mushrooms. Fungi fanciers may also be interested in attending the [Telluride Mushroom Festival](#), August 17-21 this year.

A NEW VIEW ON GOING #2!

By Allie Ghaman || CDTC Communications Manager

Have you ever wondered what happens to your cathole once you hike away? Are you worried about the impact of human waste on the environment?

CDTC has recently started partnering with Pact Outdoors, a company seeking to reimagine the backcountry bathroom experience through the use of mycelium. Mycelium, the network of root-like filaments, makes up the bulk of a fungus and spreads throughout soils and other substrates. (The mushrooms you see above ground are the fruits of the organism, not the majority of it!) By dropping one of Pact’s tablets of mycelium into your cathole, followed by a wetted wipe made of paper (conveniently used for post-#2 cleanup), the fungus can quickly break down your waste, without disrupting the local environment.

CDTC caught up with mushroom researcher and author Tradd Cotter, to learn more about how these fungi can help human waste disappear faster.

Cotter reports that he was approached by Pact to help find a species of mushroom native throughout the U.S., viable in a variety of ecosystems (though not all — some extreme conditions do not work well), which was active against *e coli* and coliform bacteria. From his laboratory’s library of 300 possibilities, Cotter had a few in mind and was able to conduct lab tests to determine which species could best break down solid human waste — king stropharia.

“This is the ‘sh*ttiest’ job I’ve ever had but also the most rewarding,” Cotter says, laughing. He says that



ANN F. BERGER

King Stropharia (*Stropharia rugosoannulata*.) While this species is used to break down human waste in Pact’s new product, Cotter reports the mycelium will not fruit into mushrooms in a cathole without specific fruiting conditions; photo for illustration purposes only.

he had a prior interest in the possibility of fungi to break down waste and was excited to be approached by Pact to conduct further research. However, due to the smell, he worked solo on the project. "I did keep the lab techs away from it!" he says.

After identifying which fungus was most useful for breaking down the waste, the next step was figuring out what kind of wipe would best act as a nursery for the growing fungus. Synthetic wipes were quickly dismissed as non-optimal, but Cotter found that a wettened paper wipe was a fantastic support to the growth of the fungus.

Cotter reports that the mycelium "use the paper as a battery and really leaped off and attached to the fecal materials and the coliforms like a springboard. Mushrooms are very opportunistic, so they're going to go for the fast food [like the wipe] first, and then they're going to go after what's next, they're going to look for food sources — and *e coli* is 50% protein. The mushrooms stun, kill, and deactivate the enzymes and use the *e coli* as a nitrogen source."

Cotter reports that because the wipe jumpstarts the process, the mycelium can colonize the waste in a variety of conditions and climates. And, good news for your #1 concerns, too: Cotter reports that



PACT OUTDOORS

The Pact Outdoors all-in-one bathroom kit. The small yellowish tabs in the upper right are the mycelium. The white tabs below are compressed wipes that may be wettened with water from your water bottle, and help jumpstart the process. A trowel, hand sanitizer, trash bag, and instructions are also included.

urinating in the same cathole will not interfere with the colonization process. This may be a new way to use a backcountry bathroom with peace of mind!

During the month of May, Pact is donating \$10 from every all-in-one bathroom kit sold back to CDTC. Learn more on their website, <https://pactoutdoors.com/>



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DERICK LUGO

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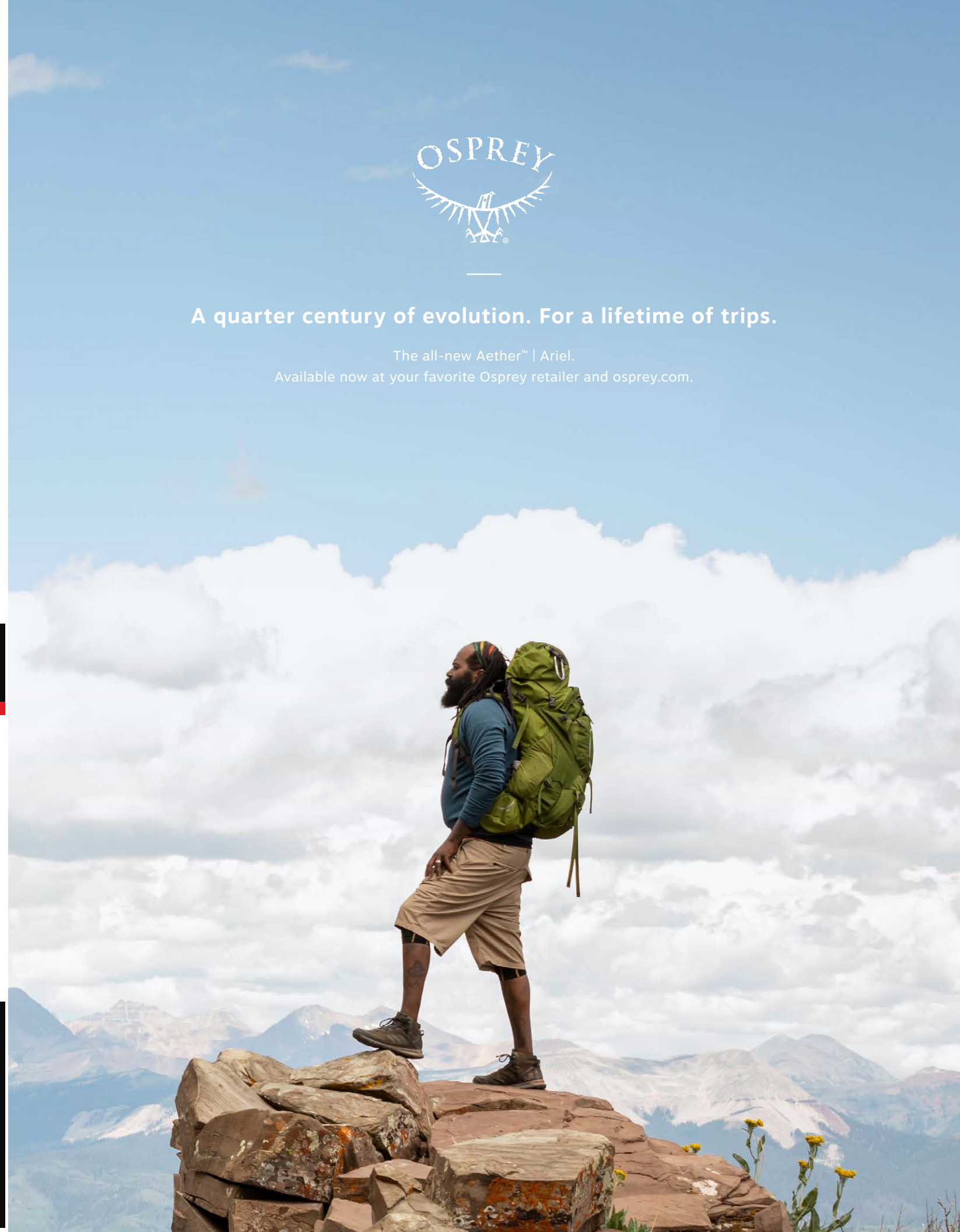
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PERSONAL REFLECTIONS



CDTC staff members offer their reflections during our 10th year

MORGAN ANDERSON DIRECTOR OF FIELD PROGRAMS

In my five years at CDTC, I've worked to build Field Programs from the ground up — refining our programs, increasing staffing, and investing in the national scenic trail that inspires us all. It has been an incredible experience meeting people, working the land, and watching CDTC grow, shift, and focus on so many important facets of our mission. Through the years, Field Programs has encompassed the CDTC Adopter Program and Volunteer Trail Work Program which drive our on-the-ground stewardship and surveying along much of the CDT.

In 2022 we are excited to pilot a new Gateway Community Stewardship Program where we work with our Ambassadors to develop community-focused and driven stewardship events that provide greater access, education, and fun for families, students, and community members. We're excited to continue to try new ideas and serve so many wonderful people and places. Cheers!

DAN CARTER TRAIL AND LANDS CONSERVATION MANAGER

I began working for CDTC in the Fall of 2019. No one could have imagined how drastically the world would change in the coming months. My first board meeting and New Mexico partners meeting was on the cusp of Covid. There were a few elbow and fist bumps that weekend when I met the people who I would be working with to complete the CDT over the coming years. The silver lining of being forced into the virtual world is I ended up meeting and staying connected with more partners over the coming years. We were able to talk more often and thoroughly go through the initial stages of plan the Trail. I scoured old documents, maps, and talked with folks to find out what happened in the past and where we can go next. As things started to open back up I'm able to hit the ground running with scouting routes discussed by working groups.

Traveling and field work lends itself to the chance encounters of the local community and trail users which is so much of what the CDT is about. We just hired our first field technician for New Mexico. They will help survey conditions along the entire trail which will help direct trail maintenance and improvements. In the coming years I'm excited to see the reroutes and plans be implemented and see trail crews cutting some fresh trail!

L FISHER, TRAIL POLICY PROGRAM MANAGER

In the two years I have been at CDTC, I have seen the strength of the cooperative stewardship of the Divide accomplish amazing feats. From the push to eliminate trail gaps with the CDT Completion Act, to the excitement of the America the Beautiful initiative, to the innovative creation of a landscape-level vision for the conservation of the Divide anchored on the CDT in the [Connecting Across the Continent Report](#), I have seen the enthusiasm and creativity of CDTC and our partners shine despite the many challenges we face.

As we look toward the future, I am excited to see CDTC continue to support the locally-led efforts that put community prosperity and environmental justice at the forefront of conservation and recreation. And as the popularity of the CDT continues to grow, I look forward to the CDT and the work happening here continuing to create new connections and new solutions that bring together our worldwide trail community.

LAUREN HENDRICKS, GIS PROGRAM MANAGER

When I joined CDTC in January of 2021, my predecessors in the GIS Program had already developed several impressive resources, such as the [free Map Set](#), resources for Gateway Communities, and the [Atlas of the CDT](#). In addition to maintaining and developing similar products across the CDT (see the new kiosk in Lordsburg!), we have developed additional materials and resources, such as our Connecting Across the Continent Report, detailing how the CDT can be part of national 30x30 conservation initiatives. I am excited to continue this important, conservation-focused work with the forthcoming Climate Report as well as resiliency planning for the CDT and CDTC, while continuing to work with our partners to further develop the State of the Trail to help identify needs and opportunities along the CDT.

ALLIE GHAMAN COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

When I joined the organization in 2021, the pandemic presented challenges not only to CDT travelers and users, but also to those disappointed hopefuls who delayed trips along the trail in order to stay safe. Online events and social media were great ways to keep in touch with those passionate individuals who valued the Divide around the world. In 2022, we're seeing record numbers of trail users, and I'm looking forward to hearing and sharing their stories as they work, live, and play along the Divide.

We're celebrating our tenth anniversary with new monthly lenses on ways to interact with the trail, from mycology to photography to hunting, and it's been thrilling to learn more about the landscape I once traversed and now call home. I hope to continue to highlight the wild and beautiful stories of the Divide in the years to come.

JACKIE HORNE, TRAIL INFORMATION AND MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR

I joined CDTC in January of 2020 shortly before Covid-19 shut everything down. We were busy getting ready for the Southern Terminus Shuttle and the 2020 thru hiker season to begin when we abruptly had to cancel all operations. We thought we would be back up and running in a few weeks, but fast forward to now and we have FINALLY relaunched the shuttle. This year we will bring almost 300 hikers to the Southern Terminus via the CDTC shuttle alone and estimate between 500-600 total hikers out on the trail this year. Here's to hoping that trail users this year have as smooth of a journey as possible.



ANDREA KURTH
GATEWAY COMMUNITY PROGRAM MANAGER

In my 3 years at CDTC, the organization has grown in so many ways. We've added four staff positions, 5 CDT Gateway Communities, and hosted some amazing events and initiatives like Faces of the Continental Divide and Virtual Trail Days. I'm especially proud that I've been a part of CDTC's growth in reimagining how we host inclusive programming for all people to learn about and experience the CDT, and how we tell the diverse stories of the many peoples and groups who have interacted with the Divide landscape and how they fit into our work of stewarding this landscape. I'm excited to see CDTC continue to grow and to invite people to experience the magnificent places that the trail provides access to.

ALLIE MCCURRY
DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR

Since joining CDTC last fall, it's been so exciting to connect with the CDT community! From helping to plan our 10th anniversary events and connecting with local businesses along the Divide with our Imbibe the Divide Campaign, it's been thrilling to see the passion and excitement for conservation and the protection of our National Scenic Trails. As a mom of two young children, seeing the collective stewardship of our shared resources is both encouraging and uplifting.

LAUREN MURRAY, DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

I joined CDTC as the 5th employee in 2018, and boy does it feel like a different lifetime 4 years later! We've grown tremendously (doubling our annual income and moving from 5 employees to 14 full time/3 seasonal), and have developed amazing new partnerships all along the Divide to support our work to complete and protect the trail. Now as we celebrate our 10th anniversary, I couldn't feel more proud of the CDT community and all we have accomplished together, we're truly stronger than ever before. As we move into our second decade, I'm excited to develop new and creative ways to keep our amazing community engaged in our work, and to help build long-term sustainability for the CDT.

STEVEN SHATTUCK,
DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES

In my third full year as the Director of Finance and Human Resources, the Continental Divide Trail Coalition achieved two significant milestones that reflect positively on the growth and maturity of the Organization. First, the entire staff and board utilized years of training we had received in Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion and applied that lens to completely revamp our Employee handbook. This power sharing allowed all staff to have a voice in shaping the values and culture of the Coalition moving forward. Second, the Coalition successfully completed our first financial audit for the fiscal year of 2021. This enhanced financial credibility will give us the opportunity to search out additional funding for our core programs through the demonstration of sound financial practices.

CALLIE SMITH
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COORDINATOR

I started working with the CDTC in the first week of June, 2021. This was a very exciting time as events along the trail were just starting to come back to life after slumbering during the pandemic. Throughout my first few months with CDTC I was able to attend several events throughout CDT Gateway Communities and connect with hundreds of people who shared a sense of enthusiasm for the trail, whether it be brand new or decades old. The past year has been an exciting time to find new beginnings and foster new connections throughout our wonderful trail community. I look forward to continuing to create connections, expand access, and engage people all along the Continental Divide Trail over the next year.

KYLIE YANG, FIELD PROGRAMS MANAGER

I joined CDTC in the summer of 2021, and I immediately hit the ground running! 2021 proved to be a great year, with Field Programs Volunteers contributing more than 5,000 hours to improving the CDT. 2022 is off to a great start and will have a record number of volunteer projects this year (25 in 2022 vs. 20 in 2021). I'm especially excited about our new one-day Community Stewardship events that will make getting out to volunteer easier and more accessible. Looking to the future, and looking back at Field Programs' roots, I hope to work towards continuing to expand Field Programs. I hope to see a bigger Adopter Program that works more closely with our Gateway Communities, as well as more volunteer projects across the divide, and continuing to empower communities and individuals and improve the CDT.



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MIKE FURHMANN

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

CDTC's founders and network offer their reflections during our 10th year. Stay tuned for our next Passages for more reflections!

DON OWEN, CDTC BOARD

In the fall of 2012, I took my annual hiking and fishing trip to the Western Slope of Colorado, where I had lived for more than a decade. After disappearing into the Black Canyon of the Gunnison for four days, I met Teresa in Grand Junction, and we drove to the Land Trust Alliance Rally in Salt Lake City. Teresa talked to me about how the CDTA (the previous nonprofit organization for the CDT) had fallen apart, and how she was not going to let that happen to the CDT. She said she wanted to organize people to form a new organization. The CDTC started with four board members, including Teresa, and a budget of \$4,500. I was the fifth member when I joined the board in January 2013...

Right now, I think we're in a sweet spot, with great staff, lots of volunteers, a solid membership base, an engaged board of directors, and strong partnerships with agencies and other organizations.

I would love to see us have regional offices in each state where we can rally support for the CDT. I would also like to see us have a wider volunteer program run out of each regional office. I think regional offices are essential to completing a protected corridor of land for the CDT, which is perhaps the biggest challenge we have. I would love to see us complete the protection of the CDT in my lifetime.

LEE GAULT, HELPED CDTC'S FOUNDING

[A favorite memory] was an experience where [Executive Director] Teresa Martinez came up to Montana. We were on the edge of Glacier National Park. Our regional director came out and he hiked with other people and with Brenda Yankoviak. Teresa and I didn't have time to participate in the hiking part of the trip and I gave Teresa a ride back to where she needed to go and it was lovely to spend time with her as a person and to hear about her vision for the CDTC. This was probably within the first couple of years of the CDTC. I had time and she had time and we had a really lovely time spending time together

I think the CDTC is a great program and a great organization and it has such a strong mission in working with one of the major trails in the country. It's such an iconic landscape and trail that is fun in many ways.

To have seen partnerships develop and the way we are working together makes me very proud. I think it's just the relationships and partnerships that Teresa and the coalition have built. Teresa and the CDTC as a whole take the word coalition to heart. The relationships that the CDTC have built are not just transactional; everyone is a partner in design, plan, vision, and implementation.

DANA FOULKS, HELPED CDTC'S FOUNDING

[When asked about the inspiration for joining CDTC], I kind of remember this same question from Teresa. We were at Washington Park for one of the initial meetings and my answer was since I did not have a family to leave a positive mark on the world I wanted to volunteer so I could leave a good legacy through trail and design work. The biggest [accomplishment] is the creation of Passages, the newsletter. (*Editor's note: Hooray!*) I think I did the first 8 or 9 issues and I don't want to take all the credit, but it was my baby because I created the design, the name, and layout. I would say that four people gave birth to Passages.

[A favorite memory] was actually with the CDTA working on the trail with my sister up at Bridger Peak in Southern Wyoming; it was amazing to do it with a family member and to bond over doing that work.

GLENN KNIPPENBERG, HELPED CDTC'S FOUNDING

I was fortunate to meet Teresa in February of 2011 when I showed up at the Continental Divide Trail Alliance office on Arapahoe Street in Golden. I had come to discuss some programs that I thought might be mutually beneficial to the CDTA and a small beer brand I was developing, at the time.

We were developing the beer brand Colorado Native, the first and possibly only beer made with 100% Colorado ingredients. Our hops were grown on the West Slope, our barley came from the San Louis Valley and our water came from a watershed that originated near the Continental Divide Trail on Berthoud Pass. The trail traversed some pretty important terrain for Colorado Native. What better organization to partner with than the Continental Divide Trail Alliance?

I recall how disappointed I was to read that "CDTA was closing its doors" [and] was delighted when Teresa shared her plan to create the Continental Divide Trail Coalition.

Colorado Native adopted a portion of the CDT from Berthoud Pass to Herman Gulch. I think we were the first to adopt a portion of the trail. We adopted that stretch of the trail because it was the watershed that gave us the water, we used to brew Colorado Native. Each summer we organized members of our team and members of the Colorado Native Brew Crew to help maintain our section of the trail. Though I have retired and don't stay as close to the organization I am anxious to see where Teresa takes the organization during the next ten years.

FAITH GARFIELD, HELPED SUPPORT THE COALITION

I used to backpack in the Sierras in California and in the Pecos in New Mexico. I'm unable to do that anymore, so being involved with the CDT is my way to stay in touch with the long-distance trails. The first time that I volunteered on a project where we actually built new trail rather than just maintaining trails, at the end of the workday, we walked back on a trail that hadn't been there before. It was such a satisfying feeling, and I was hooked. I've worked on the CDT in New Mexico from the Mexican border to the Colorado border, so I have a good feel for the terrain and the land features. Over the years, we've formed a community of committed volunteers from many surrounding states who show up every year with the desire to see each other again and share the work. (Having Ross' great food has been a great motivator, too!) Being able to work in the Carson each year has been wonderful, and working with Jeff Muggelston, who has come to know us and the trail, and has been more than helpful; we have always been able to count on him.

I feel good about having supported the volunteer community. I hope that I inspired some people to continue volunteering on the CDT.

AMANDA WHELOCK, FORMER CDTC STAFF

[I'm proud of] generally getting to be a part of a lot of the broader coalition work and getting the Great American Outdoors Act. I am proud of bringing the organization to a new level of national visibility and working to protect values on public lands. Getting to write our strategic plan was very cool because I got to do a lot of the pen to paper work on it. It was also cool that we took ownership of the plan and didn't hire outside consultants to write it and it was the first time as a staff we had the capacity to take ownership. I am really proud of CDTC and working there because we started from the beginning with the goal of increasing diversity and equity on public lands and the CDT.

I would love to see the CDT become a greater part of the national conversation about large landscape conservation, and issues like conserving water resources in the west.

I want the CDT to make the places it touches feel like home for people across the Mountain West and make us proud to be from where we are from. I want to see greater pride and recognition over the entire length of the CDT.

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We've got some great limited edition gear for our birthday!

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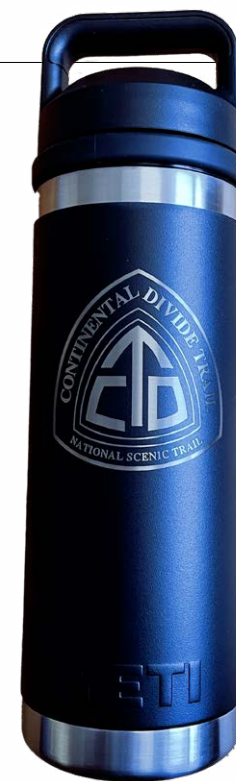


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CDT YETI RAMBLER BOTTLE, \$35

YETI RAMBLER® 18 OZ BOTTLE is a necessary addition to your morning hike, kayak trips, and daily commutes. This tough bottle is double-wall vacuum insulated to keep your water cold until the last sip, dishwasher safe for easy cleaning, and comes standard with the Chug Cap. The shatter-resistant, dishwasher-safe spout allows for controlled gulps on the go. When it's time for a wash or refill, remove the entire cap.



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In celebration of the ten-year anniversary of the CDTC we are stoked to offer this limited edition single source blend. Using our organic Mexican Chiapas bean we have blended a medium roast with a dark roast for an exceptionally smooth cup of coffee. Triple Crown Coffee will be doubling our standard donation to \$2 per pound sold for the duration of this anniversary blend.



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GATEWAYS TO THE DIVIDE

CDT Gateway Communities are welcoming destinations along the Continental Divide Trail for people from around the world looking to experience the CDT. We wanted to give communities a chance to tell us about a day in their homes — in their own words.

From our Gateway Community Ambassadors and Advisory Committees, and file



SILVER CITY, NM

Silver City, NM is located on the southern edge of The Gila National Wilderness. This town is home to about 10,000 residents and, at a 6,000-foot elevation, enjoys four mild seasons. Silver City is a great homebase to explore local history, arts and of course, The Gila mountains, Gila River and the CDT.

A day in Silver City is filled with enjoying unique galleries, gift shops, local music, lively restaurants, relaxing coffee shops and homemade ice creams while exploring the streets with over 70 murals and buildings dating back to the 1870s and 1900s.

Silver City offers plenty of green space for scenic

hikes including Boston Hill with its views of the town and the San Vincente Creek Trail. Just outside of town, walk through the history of Fort Bayard and the Dragonfly Trail, named after nearby petroglyphs.

A single day in Silver City isn't enough — so it's no wonder that Silver City has so many choices to spend a few nights. Rest your head under the stars, pamper yourself in historic hotels, mountain lodges and cabins plus lodging for every budget and adventure.

Be sure to stop by The Murray Ryan Visitor Center and the town's hiking and biking shops for ideas on what Gila adventure to start with.

GRANTS, NM



Grants lies in central New Mexico's high desert in a valley below the 11,000' volcanic summit of Tsodzil (Mt. Taylor) and the San Mateo mountains to the north. The Zuni Mountains lie to the west and the Rio San Jose flows east through Grants on its way to the Rio Grande. The most iconic part of this landscape, however, are the malpais — vast flows of volcanic lava that form rugged badlands extending south from Grants for about 40 miles. The area has a rich cultural history, with humans having lived in the area for almost 12,000 years. This area has been and continues to be home to the Laguna, Zuni, and Acoma pueblos, as well as the Diné (Navajo) people.

Visitors to Grants will find a diverse, welcoming community, small-town friendliness, and fascinating history at every turn. While the town's economy was built on the railroad connecting Gallup to Albuquerque, more recently, the region's natural wonders are giving the area new life. From forest to mountaintops to volcanic badlands, there's something for all sorts of outdoor enthusiasts in Grants. Download the [Explore Grants! app on Apple](#) or [Android](#) to get the full scoop on events, places to see, and where to eat while you're in Grants.

CUBA, NM



Along the Sierra Nacimiento on the western border of the Santa Fe National Forest, Cuba, New Mexico sits atop the Continental Divide at 6,900 feet and is home to nearly 750 residents in this diverse gateway community. A hidden gem tucked between notable cultural hubs and recreational hot spots of the enchanted high desert and Four Corners region, this humble little village is just 1.5 hours away from Albuquerque's Sun Port, and 2 hours from Santa Fe and Durango, CO. A well-anticipated stopover on the broad and well-maintained US Highway 550 thoroughfare, Cuba offers full-service amenities and a wealth of opportunity for adventure-seekers and Southwest enthusiasts alike. See more about what makes Cuba, New Mexico "naturally wonderful"!



CHAMA, NM



Nestled on the western slope of the New Mexico's San Juan Mountains, Chama is nine miles south of the Colorado border. Despite having just over a thousand residents, the sprawling town seems larger as it spreads south and north between the Rio Chama and the Rito Chamita. Residents regularly donate bicycles to help hikers traverse the nearly two miles between the Post Office, located downtown blocks from the train station, and the grocery store on the south end of town.

Excellent lodging choices can be found throughout the town, and all of them are family-owned, so visitors experience amazing character that creates cherished memories. Restaurant choices can be slim in the winter, but the summer season offers a good array of hiker favorites including Fina's large breakfast burrito or a steak and cocktail at Foster's Bar.

Chama is a hub for hunters, snowmobilers, cross-country skiers, mountain bikers, and hikers; but many folks discover Chama first by coming to ride the Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railroad, a historic narrow gauge train that takes all day to cross the mountains.



PAGOSA SPRINGS, CO



This quaint mountain town of 1,500, tucked at the base of Wolf Creek Pass in the San Juan mountains of Southwest Colorado, is bustling with restaurants, breweries, shopping, events, and outdoor activities to be enjoyed year-round.

When visiting Pagosa Springs you will want to experience the abundant geothermal hot springs – both natural and at our hot springs properties, the enchanting history and culture of Chimney Rock National Monument, a relaxing float down the San Juan River through the middle of the historic downtown area and enjoy the fresh mountain air during a stroll through over 2.5 million acres of the surrounding national forest and wilderness areas.

Treat yourself to earth-powered beer at Riff Raff, a local brewery that uses the town’s geothermal heat in their brewing process or visit one of the many local eateries nestled along our historic mainstreet along with San Juan Riverwalk.

Exciting events abound throughout the season including the Folk n’ Bluegrass Festival on Reservoir Hill, Colorfest Weekend featuring hot air balloon ascensions, car shows and summer night rodeos.

Accommodations include luxury resorts, boutique hotels, cabins or vacation rentals, Pagosa offers a variety of lodging options for all budgets.

SOUTH FORK, CO



South Fork, Colorado is a quiet mountain town of 500 year-round residents who enjoy 1.8 million acres of the Rio Grande National Forest in their backyard. South Fork is located in Southern Colorado and is the gateway to the Silver Thread Scenic Byway and the closest town to Wolf Creek Ski Area.

In the summer months, South Fork offers amazing OHV trails that connect and run through National Forest land, giving you breath-taking views of the mountains. One of the most unique being from Wheeler Geological area, which can be accessed by OHV or 4X4 vehicles during the summer months. During the winter months, South Fork provides a quick 20-minute drive to Wolf Creek Ski Area, historically known for getting the most snow in Colorado.

South Fork also offers an array of restaurants from authentic Mexican food to BBQ to comfort food. You are sure to find something you will love in South Fork.



CINDY SWINARSKI

SALIDA, CO



Salida is located in the heart of the Rockies. The Sawatch Range, the Arkansas River, and Monarch Mountain surround this charming rural mountain community of 6,000. Many consider Salida to be the crossroads of central Colorado, where the Continental Divide is only 25 miles away, and where North and South diverge to create the “Banana Belt” of the Arkansas Valley, where climates are pleasant year-round, with recreational opportunities abundant.

Named as the first Certified Creative District in the state of Colorado, Salida is home to artist-owned galleries, family-run dining establishments, breweries, distilleries, and unique shops. A

stroll downtown might include indulging in a scoop of Espresso Chip ice cream at Howl Mercantile and Coffee, playing a game at Fun Street Family Arcade, or hitting Salida Mountain Sports for the latest in outdoor gear.

One thing which you will find when visiting Salida, is that it’s the people that make Salida so special.

They take pride in their history, culture, and environment. “Salidians” are often told that they are some of the friendliest people to be found, and it’s believed that living at an elevation of 7,083, breathing fresh mountain air with bluebird skies has a little to do with it.

LEADVILLE AND TWIN LAKES, CO



Leadville and Twin Lakes are two small towns situated within 15 miles of 5 CDT trailheads. Nestled at the foothills of Mt. Elbert and Mt. Massive, the second and third highest peaks in the lower 48, and home to Melanzana – fleece worn by hikers the world over – Leadville’s downtown is a designated historic district with wild west charm, plenty of bars, restaurants, and hotels. CDT SOBO TRAIL DAZE was started by 2 thru hikers in 2018 and is a convening of Leadville community and SOBO hikers passing through the area each September featuring trivia and lectures.



JUSTIN TALBOT

Don’t miss karaoke at the Manhattan bar every other Saturday. Dive into history, take a ride on the historic railroad, check out live performance or tours at the Tabor Opera House, or bike around the 11 mile paved Mineral Belt trail passing relics from Leadville’s mining history. Golden Burro, a restored 50’s era diner, has vegan comfort food, a full bar, and was recently voted “best breakfast

in Leadville.” The 1880’s Legendary Silver Dollar Saloon is a must-stop for history lovers, beer swillers and ghost seekers. Zero Day Coffee, started by two thru-hikers, boasts fantastic coffee, matcha and thoughtfully curated hiker gear. Leadville has three hostels including Inn the Clouds, CT house, the Abbey, as well as hotels and short term rentals. Twin Lakes features a general store with hiker-oriented resupply and is next door to Twin Lakes Inn with fantastic brunch and lodging.

LAKE CITY CO



In the valley of the Lake Fork of the Gunnison River and Henson Creek, sits Lake City. The diverse, rural county of Hinsdale includes the headwaters of the Rio Grande, the vast meadows of the upper Piedra River, and the meandering Cebolla Creek that spills into the agricultural lands of the community of Powderhorn. The Slumgullion Earthflow slid 700 years ago, damming the Lake Fork and creating Lake San Cristobal, the second largest natural lake in Colorado. Hinsdale County is 96% public land and home to several 13,000 and 14,000 foot mountain peaks, making the county unparalleled in its opportunities for outdoor recreation and enjoyment. Thousands of abandoned mining structures dot the hillsides. The Lake City Historic District is one of the largest in the nation. In fact, the Lake City Courthouse is largely unchanged from the September afternoon in 1877 when Susan B. Anthony spoke from its steps, and the 1883 trial of Alfred Packer.

These trails became 4x4 roads, railroad grades, scenic byways and pathways for many kinds of travel.



MICHAEL UNDERWOOD



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GRAND LAKE, CO



Located at the headwaters of the Colorado River and situated on the shores of Colorado's largest natural body of water, Grand Lake is the gateway to the CDT in Rocky Mountain National Park. Established in 1881 as a supply point for the area's mining settlements, the town boasts amazing access to a variety of year-round outdoor recreation opportunities, and has been dubbed the "Snowmobile Capital of Colorado" due to its access to Colorado's largest network of groomed snowmobile trails.

The Continental Divide Trail (CDT) passes directly through the Town of Grand Lake, making it the ideal place to start a CDT adventure or to resupply on a longer journey. The CDT route through Rocky Mountain National Park consists of approximately 30 miles of spectacular scenery. Although it does not travel the actual Divide, it provides breathtaking scenery, including sections of high peaks and fragile alpine tundra at elevations of up to 11,500 feet.



RIVERSIDE AND ENCAMPMENT, WY



At the base of the Sierra Madre Mountains, the small towns of Riverside and Encampment are a popular destination for hikers, bikers, fishermen, and other outdoor enthusiasts. With close access to the Encampment River and the Medicine Bow National Forest, these small friendly towns make a great vacation destination.

Encampment is home to the Grand Encampment Museum (GEM), which has a collection of over a dozen historical buildings filled with artifacts representing the timber, mining, and agricultural history of the Encampment River Valley. Encampment also boasts the Grand Encampment

Opera Hall, which is over 100 years old and still hosts melodramas several times a year. If you're hungry, check out The Divide or Dee's Bar & Grill.

Riverside is a quaint small town offering campsites and cabins. For a great burger, try the Bear Trap or Mangy Moose. A special sight to see is the Indian Bathtubs. Located a short distance outside of Riverside, these are bowl shaped rock formations which, when filled with rainwater, become natural bathtubs.

Food and lodging are available in both towns. For a directory be sure to check out wyomingcarboncounty.com. Make plans to "Get Your West On" in Wyoming's Carbon County!

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS, CO



A Rocky Mountain destination in Northwest Colorado, Steamboat Springs is a year-round outdoor playground and a historic town where western heritage meets abundant adventure. From world-class skiing on Champagne Powder® in the winter months, Steamboat Springs has more Olympians than any other town in North America. Summers are filled with miles of single track, endless county roads, tubing the Yampa and soaking in our famous hot springs, golfing among the peaks and valleys, and exploring the abundant lakes, rivers and streams that dot the landscape.

Downtown Steamboat Springs pays tribute to its ranching roots with a renowned weekly rodeo, heritage shops and outfitters, and a culinary community that takes homegrown to new heights. Throughout the summer, Steamboat blooms with activity from Lincoln Avenue to the mountain base and beyond.

RAWLINS, WY



Rawlins sits at the southeastern edge of the Great Divide Basin, a unique expanse of high desert where the Continental Divide splits in two. While it may appear desolate, the Basin is in fact an extraordinary desert ecosystem teeming with wildlife and diverse flora, and is home to wild horses, sand dunes, archeological relics, and the world's largest herd of desert elk. The area has supported humans for at least 12,000 years, and by the time European settlers arrived 200 years ago, nomadic Plains tribes like the Ute, Crow, Arapaho, Cheyenne, Lakota, and, most predominantly, the Shoshone traversed the area.

Rawlins' beginnings, like those of many western

towns, are closely tied to the railroad. While surveying for the transcontinental railroad's route with a Union Pacific Railroad survey crew in 1867, Army General John Rawlins became thirsty. A spring was found nearby. Gen. Rawlins thought the water from the spring was particularly refreshing, and said, "If anything is ever named after me, I hope it will be a spring of water." A small community, initially known as Rawlins' Spring, arose around the railroad and eventually became known as Rawlins.

The Continental Divide Trail passes right through Rawlins. Visitors will discover a unique, friendly city that's home to a nationally-recognized downtown, where rich and colorful Old West history intersects with a modern, multicultural community.

PINEDALE, WY



Pinedale Wyoming is a gateway community in many senses of the word. As a backpacker, biker, hunter, or a road tripper stopped along a longer journey, it provides opportunities for rest and resupply. This gateway community for many serves as a 7,182 foot basecamp before entering the Wind River Mountain Range.

The best way to experience this area is to take it slow and become a local. Allow yourself to acclimate to this altitude, fuel up with a good breakfast and coffee, chat it up at the visitor center, make friends with the forest service, swing by the farmer's market, listen to some tunes in the park, grab a map and have a beer (don't forget that pitcher of water) at the brewery. There are endless opportunities, find the best option for your timeline, expertise, and stoke to create an experience unique to you.



ALEX SHOLES



ALEX SHOLES

LEMHI COUNTY, ID



Are you wanting to explore one of the most beautiful rural Cities in the West? If so, you need to jot down Salmon, Idaho! Salmon is nestled beneath the Continental Divide and along the incredible Salmon River, near the Montana Idaho border on the eastern part of the State. According to the 2020 census, nearly 8,000 people reside in Lemhi County and 4,000 live within the City of Salmon.

Come explore the Salmon Valley by plane, car, bike, foot, boat, or horseback. There's a tremendous network of trails and roads for your wandering soul. For a small rural City, there's always something to do! Whether it's shopping downtown, eating at one of our many delicious restaurants, hiking the trails, fly fishing and rafting the Salmon River, or simply enjoying the scenery, Salmon is the place to be. Please check out the Greater Salmon Valley Chamber of Commerce's website (salmonvalleychamber.com) for more information to help plan your adventure in Salmon, Idaho!

ANACONDA, MT



Humbled by the towering Pintlers, nestled in a mile high valley in the Deer Lodge National Forest, Anaconda presents unsurpassed recreational opportunity just outside town in any direction. The town sprang up when the giant Anaconda Copper Mining Company of Butte needed a smelter for its vast amounts of copper ore. Smelting operations were suspended in 1980, but “The Stack” remains an important landmark and state park.

LINCOLN, MT



Native Americans have occupied the Blackfoot Valley for at least 10,000 years, using it primarily as a hunting ground. Territory was contested between different tribes, none of whom established permanent settlements. The Nez Perce name for the Blackfoot River, Cokalahishkit, means “river of the road to the buffalo.” Merriweather Lewis famously took this route on his return journey from the Pacific Ocean in 1806. Montana Highway 200, stretching from Idaho to North Dakota, follows the path of this historical trail.

Founded over 150 years ago, Lincoln began its life as a mining outpost during the gold boom of the 1860s. By the time the boom died out in the 1970s, Lincoln had been established as a settlement and continued to attract tourists to its nearby wilderness areas.



KEVIN LEAGUE

BUTTE, MT



In the beautiful Silver Bow Creek Valley, and sitting almost on top of the Continental Divide, you can find the deeply historic city of Butte, Montana. Butte, and the entirety of the Northern Plains lands, were and still are lived in by Indigenous Peoples including the Shoshone-Bannock and Salish Kootenai (Flathead) Nations.

At its height, Butte was not only the largest city in Montana — it was the largest city west of the Mississippi River between Chicago and San Francisco. The city was a major mining hub and began in the late 1800s as a silver and gold camp, eventually turning to copper mining at the advent of the Industrial Revolution. The copper boom in Butte was one of the first centralized and industrialized businesses in the world.

More recently, Butte has started to turn away from the boom and bust economy of mining and begun to capitalize on its historic downtown, one of the largest National Historic Districts in the country. Butte’s many festivals earned it the nickname “The Festival City.” Throughout town, you can find the influences of the many ethnic and cultural groups who made Butte their home in the 20th century.



KEN LUND VIA CREATIVE COMMONS

HELENA, MT



The Helena Valley was a transitional zone for a number of Native American tribes including the Blackfeet, the Salish, the Crow, and the Bannock, with archaeological evidence suggesting that people have been in the area for over 12,000 years. More recently, the Lewis and Clark expedition also crossed the valley while following the upper Missouri River in both 1805 and 1806.

After gold was discovered in “Last Chance Gulch” on Helena’s present-day main street in 1864, the city boomed and became known as the “Queen City of the Rockies.” Helena became the capital of Montana territory in 1875 and remained the capital when Montana became a state in 1888. Even as gold resources were depleted, Helena was able to transition out of mining and sustain a growing economy and population with the development of the Northern Pacific Railroad. In recent years, agriculture in the valley and outdoor recreation in the mountains, rivers, and nearby Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest has continued to grow and shape Helena.

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- Connect with long lost friends from previous hikes

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2taps Akuna Baby Becky

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All things long distance backpacking. The top news, resources, advice, gear reviews, and entertainment from the AT, PCT, CDT, and beyond.

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OVERVIEW OF THE MAJOR ALTERNATES on the CONTINENTAL DIVIDE TRAIL

10 Things 2020 CDT Hikers Need to Know

A GUIDE TO RESUPPLYING on the CONTINENTAL DIVIDE TRAIL

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JOE SCHULER, COURTESY THE SCHULER FAMILY

*Pie Town was welcoming as I had mailed my next week's provisions to their post office. As a vegetarian, I did not have a chance to sample the "Chicken Sh*t Seasonings" that was being marketed by the local restaurant, but it did make me laugh.*

As I headed north, I opted out of the portions that need a road crew to support and I made a beeline to Grants, NM. I would rest a few days there. As the elevation was climbing, I recognized additional clothing was a must. Eventually I would make steady progress over Mount Taylor (MP-555) and its panoramic views.

My second disclaimer is that my 23rd birthday on May 6th at mile post 589 was not supposed to be my final birthday on the trail. But it would be my last as I would die of natural causes in February 2022.

Joe would continue north to be resupplied at Cuba. Skull bridge at the flooded Chama River (MP-689) would be the next highpoint. Elk, mule deer, sheep, and long horn cattle would cross his path. He would also meet turkey hunters and other outdoorsmen who would share a cool beverage or a snack. He would make friends like "Jenga," "Early Bird," "Revolt", and "Heidi." We would try to mention them all if we could ever decipher his entire log book.

Eventually, he would live up to his promise to his mother: "Be Safe, Be Smart" and at the elevation of 10,000 ft and May snows, he would follow a forest service road from mile post 784 to Colorado RTE 17 at Cumbres Pass. He would take shelter in welcoming Chama, New Mexico along with a multitude of other hikers. May 2021 snow levels above 10,000 ft in Colorado were too deep to proceed. So by shuttle, long-distance bus, and a flight from Denver, he returned to Michigan and continued his high school teaching career in physics, astronomy, and of course, botany.

Joe accomplished a lot in his 23 years. He was planning on returning to Colorado this summer at the end of the semester, to complete the next leg. On March 3rd, we collaborated with the CDTC to direct financial support for Joe's dreams of the trail. We are focusing on a project along the New Mexico/Colorado gateway where he spent his final night on the trail.

If you met Joe on trail, CDTC will gladly pass along stories and memories to the Schuler family. Email us at communications@continentaldivide-trail.org.

His family has started [a collaborative fund supporting the CDT in remembrance of Joe.](#)

IN MEMORIAM

“GO NORTH, YOUNG MAN”

Recalling Joe “Plant” Schuler’s 700 miles on the Continental Divide Trail

I acquired the trail name “Plant” soon after I left the US border in New Mexico on April 14, 2021. I was okay with that moniker because I am a botanist at heart but my long hair reminded people of Robert Plant of Led Zepplin fame. Born into a tent-camping family with parents and grandparents that are Eagle scouts, I was destined for the great American Adventure which became conquering the Continental Divide Trail.

My first disclaimer is that you do not conquer the trail. You share it with the plants and animals you find along the way. You embrace it with the

fellow hikers and the kind souls that facilitate your movements. Whether it's the goodhearted trail angels or the various outposts that accept your packages from home, its all good and refreshing in this convoluted world.

My story first starts when we first tent camped along Lake Michigan on the summer solstice of 2000 at the ripe old age of 2. Summers expanded to rafting expedition in the Grand Canyon and another westward odyssey to Yellowstone. Adding another Eagle Scout to the family and exploring Philmont scout ranch in Eastern New Mexico. Midway through my degree at the University of Michigan, I took summer classes in the mountains of Wyoming. My destiny and passion had become the Rocky Mountains.

Mom called it “planes, trains, and automobiles” as I made all the tight flight connections and Amtraked to Lordsburg NM. And has been written by others before me, from Lordsburg, you get shuttled the 84 trail miles to the US Border and the starting monument. Given the 3000 miles that the total trail encompasses, the 14 miles that I accomplished

the first day seemed trivial. At least we caught up to the morning shuttle group that had a 4 hour head tart. One of the advantages of hiking solo is that you set your own pace. You hike with a variety of people, exchange cell phone numbers, and move on to the next mile post.

After 8 days on the trail, I enjoyed the hospitality of the Triple Crown Hostel in Silver City NM. And then I continued north into the beautiful Gila Wilderness and Cliff Dwellings National Monument. I eventually emerged from the wilderness having been enthralled by the spiraling cliffs and trout streams.

Satellite tracking is great for the loved ones watching me. They see where I stop for the night and when I get moving in the morning. One of the downfalls of all this information is when I stopped hiking for 4 hours at midday just south of Pietown. From a satellite view, I was at an “older” metal building in the middle of nowhere and half a mile off the trail. I was not injured, just enjoying the hospitality of a trail angel that provided fresh food to the hikers.

Portraits of the CDT

As part of our 10-year anniversary this year, CDTC is celebrating stories from members of the trail community, in their own words. Here are some we've shown so far! [Share yours, too!](#)

1. JENIFER BROWN Hillsborough, NC

"I hiked the CDT in search of a new perspective and answers regarding where I should go in life. I ended my hike with so much more. I learned about the generosity of strangers, what small town America actually looks like (not what the media portrays), the importance of camaraderie, and that it's futile to worry because things will work out anyway. I hope that more people, especially black women like me, will take the leap and conquer one of the most remote trails in the US. It's not as scary as people make it out to be, so just do it! This was my first thru-hike and I'm so happy it was. The trail in southern Montana was burning in 2021, so we had to get creative with our route. As a result, we ended up in country full of beautiful rolling hills and sweet smelling sage that I could never get enough of."

2. JONATHON FRANKSON AK

"When i first learned about thruhiking, the CDT was immediately at the top of my list. However, with the mystique and rumored difficulties surrounding the CDT, I ended up saving it for a later date to get some miles on my legs first. While there certainly are difficulties inherent to the trail, the CDT is without a doubt my favorite hike to date, despite the few small sections of roadwalking. However, the trail will be

completed given time and funding. Until then, my advice is to embrace the adventure, take an alternate. And maybe take a trail zero in in the Wind River Range."

3. MINDI BENNETT Battle Ground, WA

"Our 151 days on the CDT will always be treasured memories for our family. We learned we can do hard things, met new friends from all over the world, saw the most beautiful vistas, and gained a new appreciation for our wonderful earth. Our hopes for the future of the CDT is that many more families will be able to enjoy its marvels."

4. HEIDI AND ROMY GATES Ranchos De Taos, NM

"My daughter and I hiked 127 miles in NM in 10 days together during the start of the pandemic. It was one of the best times of our lives!"

5. ZACH "TAPEWORM" LAWYER Las Cruces, NM

"The CDT is wild, primitive, and a very special trail. Unpredictable weather, rugged backcountry terrain, surreal landscapes keep one completely absorbed in the experience every day. If you asked me to change anything I'd say no, keep the CDT remote, unmarked, and gritty. Getting lost, climbing peaks way off trail... is all a part of the 'choose your adventure' motto. The CDT will always have a special place in those who remain a child at heart because it can be a fulfilling path into the unknown."

6. JUSTIN "2taps" HELMKAMP Bend, OR

"The CDT is the embodiment of freedom for me. More so than other trails, the ability and encouragement to create your own journey is what is so special about this trail. My hope for the future of the CDT is continued funding to help protect this land for all to use and create even more options for those who wish to wander."

7. MOOSE Belmont, MA

"Immersing yourself into an experience and environment like the ones you have on the CDT is life changing. Places like the Gila River, the Wind River Range, Glacier National Park, Bob Marshall Wilderness. They give you a different experience then you'll ever have anywhere else, especially when they're all combined together into one beautiful trail. I don't think I'll ever have more fun or a more beautiful experience then the one I had on the CDT."

8. KENDRA "SKUNKBEAR" ALLENBY Brooklyn, NY

"On this trail I have seen some of the most beautiful things in the world. Some are places that are visited by millions. Some are places tucked deeply away and seen only by a few. Some were moments that were a mix of light and water and sound and air

that had never happened quite that way before, and never will again. It was hard, beautiful, satisfying, scary, delightful, fresh and repetitive. I'm grateful I got to spend so much time on it."

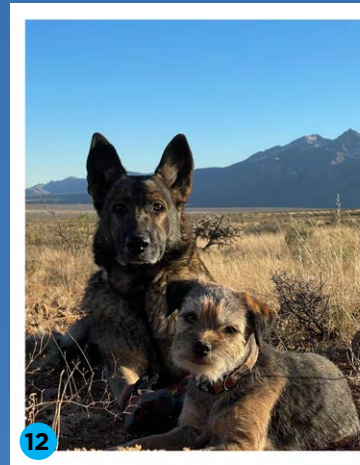
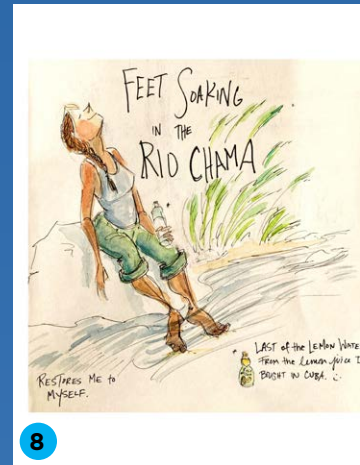
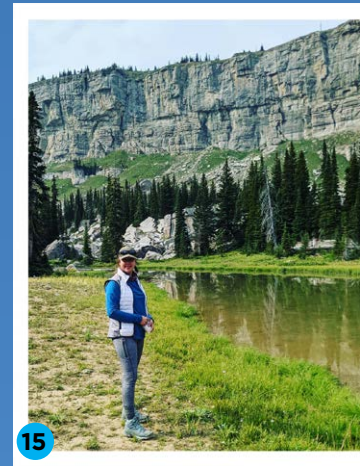
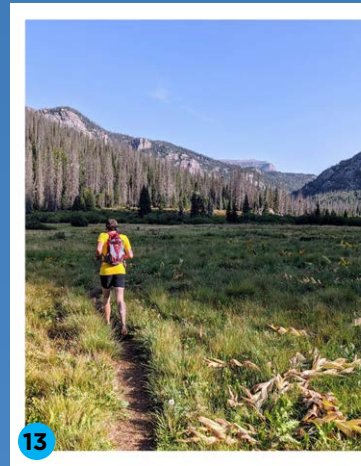
9. TIM STALEY Las Cruces, NM

THE SNOW COVERED YOU UP - for Sean Branson 1977-2004

The snow covered you up and I thought after hiking the spine of the Continental Divide and down the Atlantic side and up the Mimbres to you we could dance again like we used to like puppets, our bones loose in our skin.

10. NATHAN BOSCHMANN Fort Collins, CO

"I was working with a crew of volunteers to clear a section of the CDT that was blocked by a derecho blow down the previous fall. North bound travelers would stop to rest and tend their wounds when they reached the point where we were making slow Southbound progress. In one of these encounters early on our first work day I was admiring and asked about the reflective umbrellas that many of the Northbound through hikers we're carrying. We removed over 400 trees from almost 1/2 mile in our 3 day project. On our final day, when we returned to camp we found, propped



against our camp kitchen, a well used umbrella. There are many possible explanations for how it got there, but I like to think that the Northbounder, upon seeing all of the cutting they hiked through the rest of their day, remembered my admiration, and sent it with a Southbounder with instructions to leave it for us as a thank you for our work. It has now become a cherished addition to my trail pack."

11. ALLEN & KAREN Thornton, CO

The CDT near Bear Lakes is one of Allen and Karen's favorite trails — and they've seen plenty of moose on it! Allen is also an avid backpacker. He and a friend had an annual joint backpacking trip for 33 years.

12. BAILEY BREMNER CO

"Some of my favorite memories from the CDT were hiking in the desert south of Lordsburg. It was such a magical time for me as our hike wound down and moving by foot really immersed me into the landscape in a way that no other means of transportation could. The open expanse was empty of other humans and the sunsets were incredible. I felt even luckier to have been able to share the experience with my two dogs and the journey brought me closer to them as well as the land we walked through."

13. JOSH KURZ Pagosa Springs, CO

"Thirteen miles into our wilderness trail run, two worlds collided. As we rounded a corner, we came upon an old man in jeans who didn't have a pack. I thought, 'Where did he come from?'"

He had a puzzled look on his face that expressed equal confusion about

our origin. Or maybe he questioned our wisdom in wearing short-shorts into the backcountry.

Taking the well-worn path at an indistinct junction had accidentally led us into an outfitter camp that was surrounded by horses. The sight of us caused chatter in the camp... The lead outfitter came out of a weathered wall tent.

'Jesse!' I exclaimed. I'd known him since he was a kid. Outfitting suited him well. When he was younger, a haircut or a shower were special occasions.

'You came from where?' Jesse asked in disbelief.

We clarified how we got there and where we were going.

Despite our differences in age, apparel, and mode of travel, we were drawn to the wilderness for the same reasons. We sought the invigorating adventure inherent in exploring a wild and pristine place. We both prized the endless views, the clean air and water, and the schools of the native trout that we spooked at each stream crossing.

We would have liked to stay and share our worlds but we had to race the clouds to the summit and we weren't even halfway there. And the clouds were winning.

Jesse offered us some useful route advice and then wished us luck. The older men in jeans nodded their brims as our ghostly hamstrings disappeared into the forest."

14. SNICKERS VIRGIN (ALYSSA) Seattle, WA

"A storm had been on the horizon moving towards us for a while. We were at the last bit of tree line before a climb and decided to

stop. We quickly set up a tarp and got comfortable, as comfortable as one could be with three people and packs under a one person tarp. The seconds we counted out between lightning and thunder decreased until the storm was directly over us. We could see the lightning bolts clearly through the tarp and felt the thunder it was so loud. The wind, rain and hail picked up so badly we thought the tarp would blow away. We huddled close together to gain warmth. I don't think I would have made it through without them. I'm immensely thankful for the conversations, jokes and all the memories we made along our journey."

15. KELLY McDERMOTT Helena, MT

"A college friend and I (class of '98, Go Buffs!) decided around 2016 we wanted to start hiking long trails, despite never having backpacked. We grew up in Texas and had plenty of day hiking and car camping experience, with family and friends, but no multi-day solo treks into the wilderness. We started with 60 miles sections of the PCT in Oregon and got hooked. It was hard, and scary, and logistically a nightmare, but we did it, and we loved it. In 2019 I moved to Helena, so we decided to try a section of the CDT. We choose the Chinese Wall, because why not?"

Our hikes have become our respite, our 'me' time, our time to reconnect and do what many of our friends and most of family think is crazy, but has become an integral part of who we are. We hope to one day complete an entire trail, but there are so many to choose from! We will definitely be back on the CDT in Montana this summer though. As far as a favorite memory, it's hard

to say. We have overcome some crazy situations, and just knowing we will get through them, together, and see another day on the trail is all I need. But I really did love seeing the mama moose and her calf near Rock Creek at the base of the Chinese Wall!"

16. JENN "ONE DAY" GIFT Durham, NC

"I came to the Divide to decompress and integrate my experience as a graduate student, having acquired my Masters in Clinical Mental Health Counseling... also, to go for my Triple Crown.

I hope that others may feel encouraged to hop off the hamster wheel of life and do something extraordinary for themselves. Yes, it requires risk. Yes, there is sacrifice. Yes, others may question your decisions or look at you funny... but choosing to go your own way could also bring immense joy!

I estimate that I spent 88% or more of my time on the CDT utterly alone. I learned to fully lean into and embrace the solitude. After all, I was doing this for myself. This moment of pure joy, which I captured by myself via self timer, was not on the "official route" but rather, on the High Route in Wyoming's Wind River Range. I love it because it exemplifies what I loved most about this trek. I felt empowered to test my skills of navigation and route finding as a solo hiker, and found that there were so many varying and beautiful ways to forge a path ahead [yes, that it a metaphor]. I was able to uphold the integrity of placing one foot in front of the other and connecting my steps, while also challenging myself to think and explore outside of the box... the reward should be as clear as the expression on my face!"

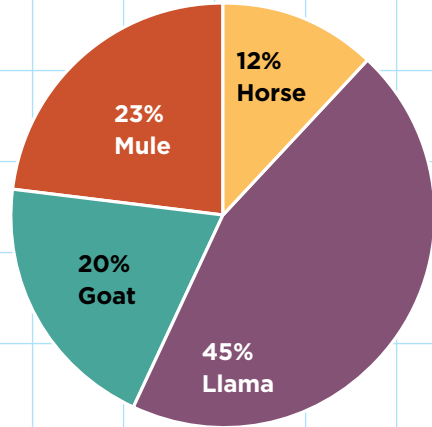
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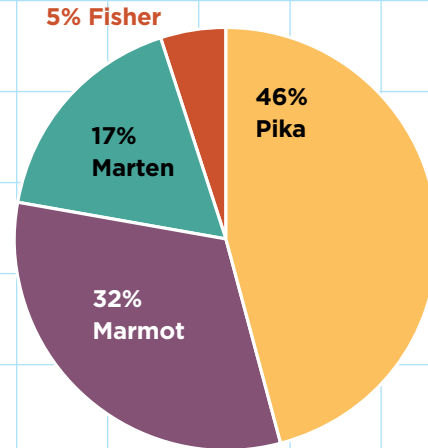
TRAIL REGISTER

Highly unscientific polling of our Instagram followers on the most hot-button issues. Want to give us your takes? Follow us at [@cdtcoalition!](#)

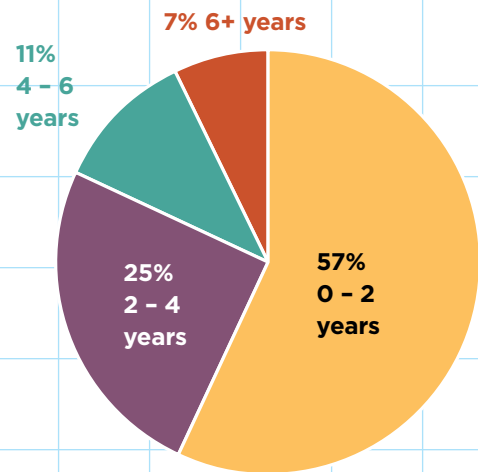
WHICH PACK ANIMAL WOULD YOU MOST WANT TO HAVE ON THE CDT?



WHICH SMALL MAMMAL WOULD BE THE BEST TRAVEL BUDDY?



THRUHIKERS AND THRUPACKERS, IF YOU'VE ALSO TRAVELED ANOTHER TRAIL, HOW LONG WAS THE GAP BETWEEN THE TRIPS?



WHICH SONG WOULD BE YOUR CHOICE OF EARWORM FOR 200 MILES ON THE TRAIL?



MEDIA ROUNDUP

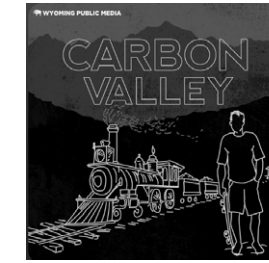


PODCAST

HELLO, NATURE
Dustlight Productions, REI Co-op Studios

Misha Euceph visits National Parks, conducting interviews with people historically barred from these places, and relays the stories often omitted from mainstream narratives. Episodes include Glacier and Yellowstone National Parks.

Available on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and other platforms.



PODCAST

CARBON VALLEY
Wyoming Public Radio

This podcast follows the pursuit of the relatively new technology of carbon capture being pursued within the state of Wyoming, and explores the debate around the efficiency and utility of this technology.

Available on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Google Podcasts, Amazon Music and Stitcher.

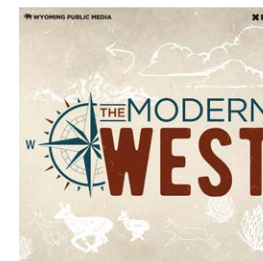


PODCAST

WE KEEP THE FIRE
Jennifer K. Falcon
Ashley Fairbanks

Still in its funding stages, this podcast will profile Indigenous climate activists, from a variety of disciplines, who are working to create "a world that is sustainable, just, re-indigenized, and whole."

This podcast is not yet available. More information on [wekeepthefire.com](#).



PODCAST

THE MODERN WEST
Wyoming Public Radio and PRX

This celebrated monthly podcast continues to explore the ever-changing life of the American West. New episodes, themed "The Great Individualist," discuss the mythos of the iconic cowboy.

Available on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, and Google Podcasts, Stitcher, iHeartRadio, and several other platforms.

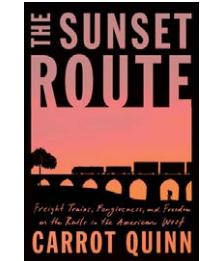


PODCAST

SHE EXPLORES
Ravel Media

This long-running podcast features a variety of profiles of people and groups exploring the intersection of gender and the outdoors. Don't miss episode 200, with our partners at the Outdoor F.U.T.U.R.E Initiative, or Episode 176 with CDT hiker Gabaccia Moreno!

Available on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Google Play and Stitcher



BOOK

THE SUNSET ROAD
Carrot Quinn

From 2015 CDT hiker and author of PCT memoir "Thru-Hiking Will Break Your Heart," Carrot Quinn, comes a new memoir about her time riding freight trains, exploring new landscapes and communities, and finding space to heal in the West.

From Penguin Random House. Available from several retailers.



CDT SUPPORTERS

Members are the core of our organization and its efforts to protect the Continental Divide Trail. By being a member, you support the protection of the CDT and our work to build a broad-based community of people who love and support the Trail. Thank you!

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CDTC Charter Members helped build the base of support necessary to help launch CDTC's efforts in 2012. CDTC owes an incredible debt of gratitude to these important supporters.

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CDT Explorers support CDTC with donations of \$100 or more. We wish to thank the individuals below for the generous donations they made between January and April 30th this year!

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CDT Sustainers help us protect the trail all year long by giving monthly donations. Join them by signing up on our website for as little as \$5 per month!

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Legacy Members make a lasting impact to protect the CDT for future generations by including CDTC in their will or estate plan. Contact CDTC Development Manager Lauren Murray at lmurray@continentaldivide-trail.org if you are interested in becoming a Legacy Member.

Roger & Cindy Carpenter
Jean Ella
Josephine Hazelett

Tom Lefferts
Barney & Sandy Mann

Teresa Martinez
Dick Vogel

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CDTC is also supported by businesses and corporations who provide monetary and in-kind donations. For more information on how your company or business may collaborate with CDTC, please contact Development Program Manager, Lauren Murray at lmurray@continentaldivide-trail.org. Thank you to the following businesses for supporting the Continental Divide Trail as CDTC members and corporate sponsors in 2020.

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FROM THE COVER

BIG HATCHET, IN SHORT

By L Fisher || CDTC Policy Manager

Towering high above the Playas Valley in southern New Mexico, Big Hatchet Peak (8,336ft) stands watch over a landscape that may seem harsh and solitary at a glance, but is teeming with life, history, and opportunities to explore. The Big Hatchet Mountains sit at the intersection of geographic extremes, nestled where the Rocky Mountains and the Sierra Madre Occidental meet between the Sonoran and Chihuahuan deserts, and are often one of the first iconic views for those heading northbound on the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail.

Travelers in this area are not only hikers and equestrians though, as this area serves as a critical wildlife habitat and migration corridor. Keystone species such as pronghorn, desert bighorn sheep, and mountain lions use the corridor to move between the seasons in their ranges, while wildlife like golden eagles, javelinas, and rattlesnakes have found a place to settle down among the steep cliffs and the thickets of juniper, oak, and mountain mahogany. The isolated location of the Big Hatchet Mountains also makes it ideal for migratory birds and significant bat colonies who roost in the caves among the cliffs, which rely on an unobstructed, clear night sky to navigate.

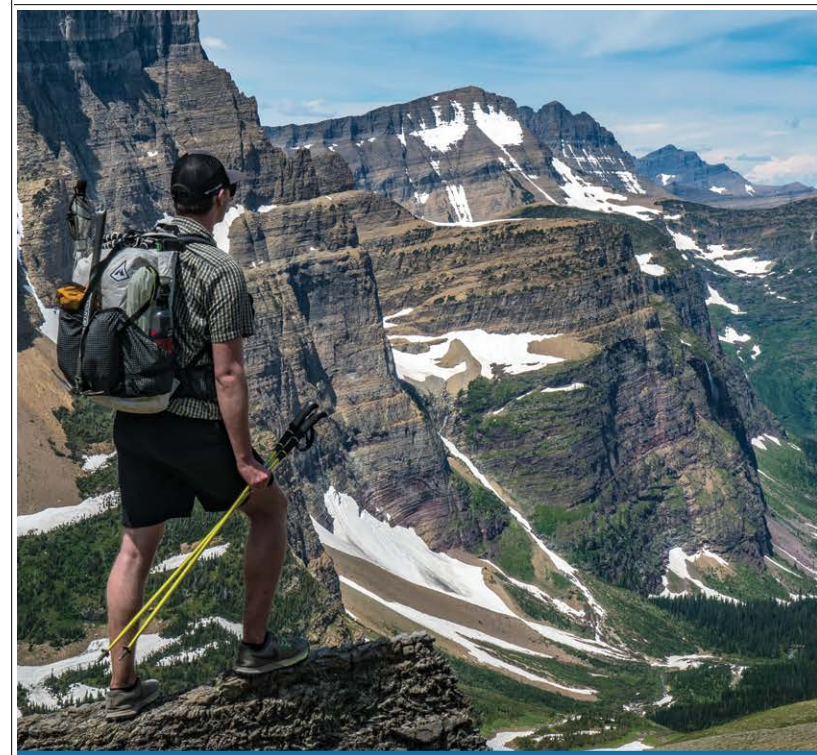
In the spring and summer, flocks of climbers, bird watchers, and other outdoor enthusiasts congregate in the area to bask in the sun amongst the limestone walls and breathe in the smell of piñon.

And for those seeking a connection to the people of the past, the landscape holds histories spanning centuries, from the Indigenous people who have stewarded the land for time immemorial, to the history of wars and pioneering that brought dramatic changes to the land and waters. Big Hatchet Peak epitomizes the ridgeline views the CDT is world-renowned for and for which it was originally designated by Congress, but more than that, it is home to the wildlife, stories, and dramatic ecological extremes that make the CDT Experience one that is wholly unique.

PHOTO BY STEVEN SHATTUCK

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