



# Passages

Volume 33, Winter 2024

Continental Divide Trail Coalition



**GIFT GUIDE  
INSIDE!**



Also in this issue:

## **THE GREAT AMERICAN OUTDOORS ACT**

Celebrating a Once-in-a-  
Generation Investment

## **CONNECTING TO THE LAND**

A Conversation  
with Corey Torivio

## **IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF FAMILY HISTORY ON THE CDT**

by Diane "Grace"  
Gansauer

# HEART OF THE LAND: THE PIIKUNI LANDS CREW'S PATH TO STEWARDSHIP



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Continental Divide Trail Coalition

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*Cover Photo Credit: Rocky Mountain Front near  
Browning, Montana- Blackfeet Lands, Audra Labert*



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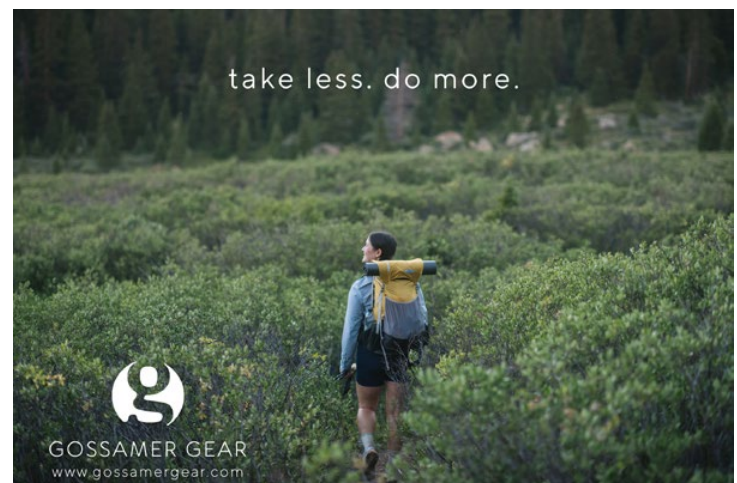
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# Passages

Volume 33, Winter 2024

Continental Divide Trail Coalition

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

CDTC's mission is to complete, protect, and elevate the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail and inspire a diverse community to steward the trail and its connected landscapes. 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.cdtcoalition.org](http://www.cdtcoalition.org).

Continental Divide Trail Passages is published three times a year for the members of the Continental Divide Trail Coalition. [You can learn more about becoming a member here.](#) Members are encouraged to submit story ideas and photographs for inclusion in Passages to the editor at [communications@cdtcoalition.org](mailto:communications@cdtcoalition.org).

For more information about advertising, please contact [development@cdtcoalition.org](mailto:development@cdtcoalition.org).



# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S LETTER

Dear CDTC Friends,

As we are nearing the end of another amazing year, I am writing again filled with gratitude for all of the support that we have received this year. I am excited by all the collaborations, new and long-standing, that have produced new trail miles, new approaches to trail gaps, invitations for new volunteers and stewards, and all the amazing work completed along the CDT this summer. It truly feels like the CDTC and all of our partners, friends, and supporters are thriving, and in our shared stewardship, our accomplishments are worth celebrating!

These past few months have been full of adventure for me. During this time I floated the Wild and Scenic segment of the Chama River in New Mexico- twice! I also floated the lower box of the Gila River and was joined by many of our partners all across the CDT. These unconventional meeting spaces provided time for all of us to dream big and since then, we have even implemented some of those big dreams! I hiked nearly 50 miles in the Gila Wilderness and Gila National Forest this spring as part of our Gila 100th Hike Series which was co-led with Silver City Trail Ambassador Simon Sotelo. I slept under the most amazing skies during a Star Party hosted by Dark Sky International at the Cosmic Campground in Catron County (NM) in partnership with New

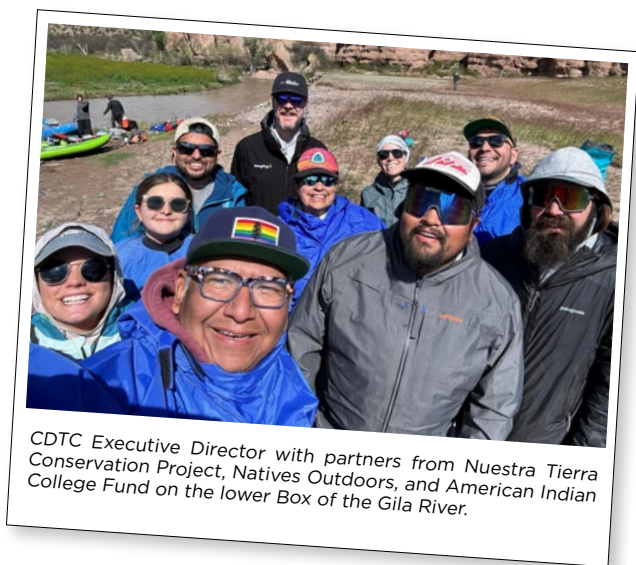


CDTC Executive Director, Communications Manager, and USFS CDT Program Team, NPS -Glacier team, and GDTA Partners at the Belly River Trailhead, Glacier National Park.

Mexico Wild and Wild Earth Guardians. I even visited the Chiricahua Desert Museum in Rodeo as part of a larger tour of Hidalgo County, NM, our newest Gateway Community. If you ever get a chance to visit, they have the most amazing reptile display, and it is one of the most spectacular landscapes along the CDT!

Even more amazing, was the 3 days and 2 nights I was able to spend in the northern portion of Glacier National Park along the Belly River Trail, one of the CDT's official Northern Terminus'. It was a lot of fun, AND it was also a lot of work. The trip included our partners from the USFS CDT Program Team- Ben Lara, USFS CDT Program Administrator, Valery Serrano Lopez, USFS CDT Partnership Coordinator, and Megan Gaitan, USFS CDT GIS Resource Assistant. We were also joined by Glacier National Park Rangers Jillian McKenna and Nicholas Corder, and Audra Labert from CDTC's staff. It also included Kate Hamilton, Great Divide Trail Association Executive Director, and one of GDTA's Board Members, Tara Fleming. It was wonderful to spend time with our Canadian counterparts to think broadly about how we share a deep love and commitment for an amazing landscape, and gave us time to dream big around "bridging borders" and how we could support each others work!

We had the time to have deep conversations about the CDT through Glacier National Park and how to be supportive of our common goals of providing high quality and enjoyable experiences, while also ensuring safe and sustainable experiences in one



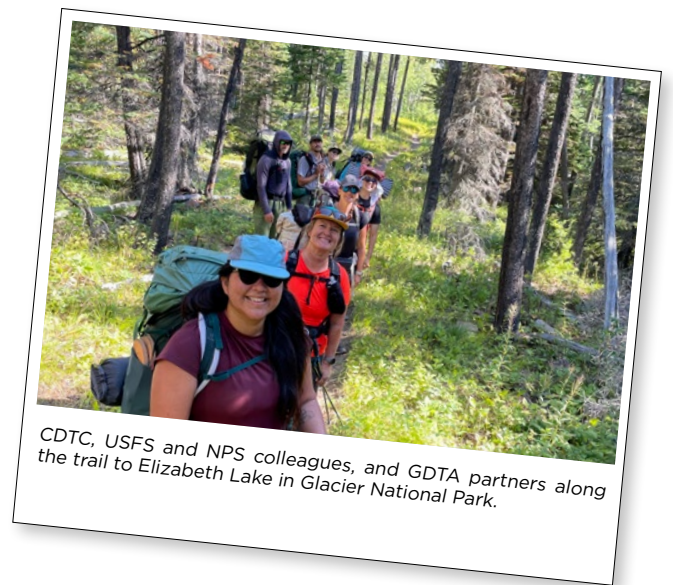
CDTC Executive Director with partners from Nuestra Tierra Conservation Project, Natives Outdoors, and American Indian College Fund on the lower Box of the Gila River.





of the Nation's most beautiful landscapes and protected places. The outcomes of our partnership hike are just beginning to take root, and I have no doubt they will grow into new approaches and ideas for supporting CDT hikers through Glacier National Park.

Through all of these adventures whether it was staring up at the dark skies over the Gila, the dark skies above Glacier, or the dark skies along the Chama and Gila Rivers, what was crystal clear is how much people love the landscapes along the Continental Divide and how important the CDT can be in providing a pathway for people to experience this incredible place where the water, or as some people consider it, life, emerges from the ground. I know for me, in all the places I visited this year along the CDT, I realized what a privilege it is to be a part of the team that works to ensure the connections people have to this place remain strong, deep, and vibrant. These deep connections and sense of importance was in full display when our partners from the USFS joined us for a visit to Anaconda, MT. Anaconda is one a CDT Gateway Community and during the summer months, as CDT hikers are making their journeys north and south, the Pintler's Portal Hostel hosts hiker dinners. We were lucky enough to join one of these dinners and it was powerful to see community members, CDT hikers, and members of the Anaconda Trail Society, share a meal, and share how much the CDT means to them and how the CDT brings people together.



CDTC, USFS and NPS colleagues, and GDTA partners along the trail to Elizabeth Lake in Glacier National Park.

In all the travels this summer- it was the power of the CDT to connect communities and cultures, as well as to remind us we are in this effort to protect this place we love, together. Whether across International borders, along the wild rivers of the divide, underneath the Milky Way of a billion stars, or the communities who are thriving because they are finding ways to celebrate their connections to the CDT- we are stronger together, and we have so much to learn from one another, while we also experience the beauty of the places we call home. Thank you to everyone who joined us out on the Trail this spring and summer. We made so many new friends, and got to deepen our connections to our existing friends, and to all the people who hosted us, or joined us for a walk, or a float, THANK YOU- the trail is better because of you, and the Continental Divide, itself, is alive and thriving because of your love.

Until we meet again at the next trailhead- I wish you all a wonderful Fall and Winter Season.



CDTC Executive Director, partners from USFS- CDT Program Team, American Indian College Fund, and Tribal Fellows and their Faculty Advisors on Skull Bridge over the Chama River, NM.



*Teresa Ana Martinez*

**Teresa Ana Martinez**, (she/hers/ella)  
Executive Director  
Continental Divide Trail Coalition





Ben Lara, Valery Serrano Lopez, Audra Labert, Megan Gaitan, Teresa Martinez.



Meeting with Joe Jessepe, middle, of East Glacier.

# CDT ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE

**By Ben Lara (he/him/el),  
Continental Divide Trail Administrator**

As fall peeks around the corner of the country, there is much to celebrate in the CDT program. In my role as the CDT administrator, I continue to be inspired and impressed with all the amazing work accomplished along the CDT. In late August, **I was fortunate enough to visit agency staff and partners near the northern terminus of the CDT.** This included members of the Blackfeet tribe, leadership from the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, US Forest Service, and many partners of the CDT. The trip was coordinated and led by CDTC, and a big shout out to L Fisher, Audra Labert, and Teresa Martinez for all the planning and logistics of this meaningful trip.

We started off the trip learning about the complex camping management strategies within Glacier National Park (GNP), where CDT hikers must navigate the camping reservation program. Interacting with top-notch staff from GNP was a very educational experience for all of us, and we certainly gained a new appreciation for the management of such a high-use area. After we left our esteemed colleagues from GNP, we headed to the other National Park that makes up the world's only International Peace Park, Waterton Lake in Canada. This park, and the boundary between the United States and Canada, form the northern terminus of the CDT. The idea that we have two amazingly beautiful natural parks on either side of the CDT northern terminus is incredible!

Speaking of incredible, this past summer, the Forest Service and CDTC have been doing a lot of planning around our anticipated funding for a large-scale Great American Outdoor Act (GAOA) project. **This project, set to begin work in 2025, will address deferred maintenance along approximately 700 miles of the trail in New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming, and Idaho.** Valery Serrano-Lopez, Partnership Liaison Specialist, is taking the lead for the US Forest Service and continues to coordinate all things GAOA with Forest Service units and partners in those states in the coming months. She is supported by Megan Gaitan

who is a Resource Assistant with the US Forest Service and Hispanic Access Foundation. Megan is providing much-needed GIS and data management support for the GAOA efforts along the CDT. It is a very busy and exciting time to be completing maintenance work along the CDT. We look forward to working with each Forest Service unit and many partners where we will be putting GAOA funds to use along the CDT.

In 2023 the US Forest Service launched a new Tribal Action Plan. To lead out on specific examples of how to implement this monumental plan, **we are excited to collectively launch a new Tribal Scholar Conservation Leadership Fellowship.** This first-of-its-kind initiative is presented in partnership with the Continental Divide Trail Coalition, the American Indian College Fund, and the U.S. Forest Service. It aims to inform and impact the professional trajectories of five American Indian/Alaska Native Fellows attending Tribal Colleges/Universities and/or non-native universities. The program's kickoff orientation took place on the riverbank of the Rio Chama in New Mexico during the first week of September. I was fortunate to be part of this initial gathering, and what an experience it was! The first cohort of this innovative program is stellar, featuring two students from Salish Kootenai College, one from Browning Community College in Montana, and two from Northern New Mexico University. During the initial orientation, we were guided down the Rio Chama Wild and Scenic River by Far Flung Adventures.

The event was designed to provide an outdoor space for the native scholars to begin considering potential future careers in conservation. This effort is a direct outcome of **the USDA Forest Service Tribal Action Plan and the four areas of focus, which include commitments to enhance, expand, improve, engage, and grow agency and tribal capacity to get work done.** The four focus areas are:

1. Strengthen relationships between Indian tribes and the USDA Forest Service.
2. Fulfill trust and treaty obligations.
3. Enhance co-stewardship of the nation's forests and grasslands.
4. Advance tribal relations within the USDA Forest Service.

There is so much to be grateful for working in the CDT program and as the cool fall breeze begins to set in, I feel a sense of joy, excitement, and energy for what the winter and new year will bring. It is a privilege, honor, and opportunity to work with the CDT community to help shape the future of this landscape. Happy Fall Ya'll!



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# THE 2024 TRIBAL FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

In August 2024, the Continental Divide Trail Coalition (CDTC) launched the Tribal Scholar Conservation Leadership Fellowship in partnership with the American Indian College Fund and the U.S. Forest Service to help inform and impact the professional trajectory of Native American students interested in exploring a conservation focus in their studies or professional goals. The program is a 5-month interactive professional development program to help establish an employment plan in the conservation field or develop stronger connections to conservation work. Students were recruited from the Salish Kootenai Tribal College, Blackfeet Community College, and the UNM -Taos Digital and Media Arts program.

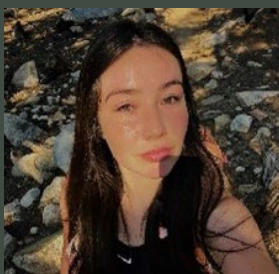
## Program Areas of Focus and Impact

Conservation is a vast field with a variety of employment and impact pathways. The Fellowship program will provide Tribal Fellows with an opportunity to learn about the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDT) and other National Trails, gain skills in creative storytelling, and get outside and learn outdoor skills while experiencing the CDT- some for the first time.

The group will also learn about the different areas of conservation and land management, and gain leadership skills.

The program launched with an in-person orientation and a first-hand experience of the Continental Divide along the Chama River in New Mexico. This trip was the first time many of the fellows had spent time camping, and it provided a unique opportunity to learn firsthand how important spending time in nature is for healing and the importance of protecting places like the CDT. Over the next few months, the fellows will participate in virtual webinars with other Indigenous professionals, including Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs, Wizipan Garriot, and CDTC's New Mexico Regional Representative, Corey Torivio. These leaders will share how they found their paths and assist and encourage the participants. These introductions are part of a network of support for the Tribal Conservation Fellows, and each participating fellow also has a faculty advisor during their fellowship. The entire team of fellows, faculty advisors, and program leaders are learning together during this pilot effort. The Fellows will produce a collective video to share their experience, and the project documentary video will be presented to the USFS Washington Office

## MEET THE FELLOWS



**Lauren Allen**  
*Student and Tribal Fellow, Salish Kootenai College*

Lauren Allen is enrolled in the Bishop Paiute Tribe and grew up on the Bishop Paiute Reservation in California. The Bishop Paiute Tribe has struggled in a 120+ year-long water feud with the City of Los Angeles; Lauren grew up amidst numerous lawsuits the Bishop Paiute Tribe was involved in against the City of Los Angeles. The tribal water rights issue has primarily impacted the trajectory of her academic and career goals. After graduating high school, she moved to the Flathead Indian Reservation in Montana to continue her education at Salish Kootenai College. She is interested in Federal Indian Law, which led her to the Tribal

Governance and Administration program. The Tribal Governance and Administration Program requires an Introduction to Tribal Historic Preservation class that intrigued her enough to declare a double major. She is currently working on her Bachelor of Arts in both programs.

Land conservation is a top issue for the Bishop Paiute Tribe. The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power manages large amounts of Owens Valley Paiute aboriginal territory, which the Tribes continue to fight for. Western land conservation management and Tribal Land conservation management look entirely different. Lauren advocates for traditional ecological knowledge to be heard and adequately applied with the help of Tribal Nations. She hopes to find a career that allows her to blend her love for cultural preservation and land conservation.





◀ *The first meeting of the Tribal Scholar Conservation Leadership program near the Continental Divide along the Chama River in Northern New Mexico in September.*



**Crucito A. Concha**  
*Student and Tribal Fellow,  
UNM Taos Digital Media  
and Arts Program*

From Taos Pueblo, the home of the Red Willow People, Crucito (“Cruz”) is a full-time

UNM student and a work-study participant. Formerly struggling with alcoholism and substance abuse, his search for a path to find his way out of addiction led him in 2019 to enroll at UNM-Taos in the Construction Certificate Program. Upon completing the program, he realized that education was his pathway to sobriety, healing, recovery, and a new life, which led him to push further and pursue a 2-year degree.

He graduated with honors in the summer of 2024 with an Associate in Film and Digital Media Arts (FDMA). He also received two additional certificates: 3-D printing and Film Technician. He continues his journey now, focusing on a bachelor’s in liberal arts from UNM’s main campus. A long-time work-study in the FDMA program, he has collaborated in filmmaking, including the Native Voices Film Series for the Continental Divide Trail Coalition (CDTC). Beginning with Acoma Pueblo and now focusing on Taos Pueblo, the series will eventually incorporate all 19 New Mexico pueblos.

He has worked extensively with the UNM-Taos FDMA team on a six-part safety series for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Public Lands Interpretive Association (PLIA), an educational film series illustrating how to recreate safely in the Río Grande Del Norte National Monument. He also recently completed a film project for the Taos Pueblo Tiwa Language program, a film documenting the language and culture of the Red Willow People.

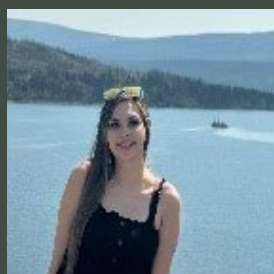
In addition to school and work, his greatest joy is raising a family with his significant other (also a UNM-Taos graduate). They are blessed with two daughters, one 14 years old and the other born in December 2021, and now a son, who joined their lives in August 2023. He feels truly blessed with his new lease on life and is grateful for how education has improved his life.



**Annalysia DuMontier**  
*Student at Salish  
Kootenai College*

Hello! My name is Annalysia DuMontier (Chula). I am a Qlispe and Ktunaxa direct descendant of the Salish and

Kootenai Tribes located on the Flathead Reservation in Northwestern Montana, along with Purepecha Mexican lineage. I am currently attending my second year of school working to obtain my Associate’s Degree in Forestry within the Land Management Division at Salish Kootenai College (SKC). It is an honor to represent SKC as a Fellow working with the American Indian College Fund, and Continental Divide Trail Coalition. I enjoy spending my time creating artwork or outdoors doing various activities such as hiking, and foraging. A personal interest of mine is ethnobotany, specifically the Indigenous usage of traditional plants. My goals are to give back to the earth and help protect this land for the next seven generations. Lemlmnts. (Thank you)



**Angel Loring**  
*Student at Blackfeet  
Community College*

Oki (Hello), Angel is a student at the Blackfeet Community College. A Native American who is an enrolled Choctaw member, and a descendant

of the Blackfeet Tribe. Angel grew up on the small Blackfeet Reservation, she has the goals of finishing school, and getting a bachelor’s degree in social work with a minor in wilderness studies or wildlife biology. Then, she would like to come back to her community and take what she learned to try to help her community with resources and ways that wildlife and people connect in today’s society. In her free time, she loves to hang out with her family and friends and listen to stories about her culture.

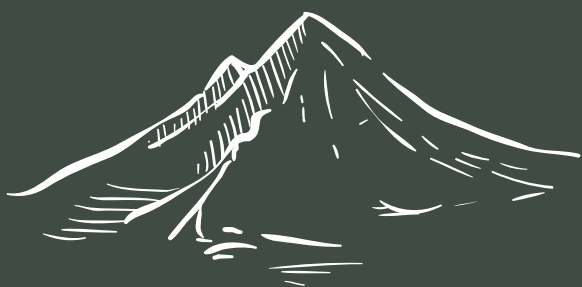




**Kasey Brooke Marie Romero**  
*UNM Taos FDMA  
Program and Taos Pueblo  
Day School Peer mentor/  
After school assistant*

Kasey Romero is from Taos Pueblo, Home of the Red Willow People, and Ohkay Owingeh, Home of the Strong. She was born and raised in Taos, NM, and is a recent graduate from the Film Digital Media and Arts Program at UNM Taos with her associate's degree in FDMA. She plans to attend IAIA in the fall of 2025 to pursue her bachelor's degree in FDMA and Investigative Journalism. Kasey has been the guardian of her younger brother, Iziah J. Romero, since he was 15 following the death of their mother, Rebecca D. Martinez, due to Covid and soon a year later their father, Paul D. Romero from a past head injury. She is as resilient as people make her sound while taking on all life throws at her she also has worked with Rocky Mountain Youth Corps since the summer of 2022. She was a supervisor of the Taos Pueblo Summer Youth Conservation Corps Crew. Following that summer leading into the 2022-2023 school year she joined RMYC's first Public Health Prevention Crew, allowing her to peer mentor 9-12 students in the local high schools. She continued with the summer of 2023 as the Supervisor of the Taos Pueblo Summer YCC Crew and continued working for the Public Health crew in the school year of 2023-2024.

Currently, Kasey is working with the Taos Pueblo Day School After School Program working with and peer mentoring students in k-8th grade, and the UNM Taos FDMA Program, working on a variety of different projects. She has worked with the Taos High School Emotional Intelligence to create a film about the importance of student voice. Kasey is someone who is deeply rooted in her community and working to make it a better place for her loved ones and the locals; we can see that through her films! Kasey's most recent film was in collaboration with Crucito Concha from Taos Pueblo as well, who both worked with the Taos Valley Watershed Coalition on creating a film about the Importance of Cedar and Juniper trees to the Indigenous and local community members in and around Taos Pueblo.



## FACULTY ADVISORS

**Dustin Hutchins**, Career Services Coordinator, Salish Kootenai College. Faculty Advisor for Chula DuMontier and Lauren Allen.

**Joe Jessepe**, Scholars of Promise Coach for Hopa Mountain. Faculty Advisor for Angel Loring.

**Peter Walker**, UNM Taos Film and Digital Media Arts Program. Faculty Advisor for Cruz Concha and Kasey Romero.

**Isaiah Branch Boyle**, Tribal Fellowship Videographer

---

## PROGRAM LEADERS

**Jack Soto, (He/Him)** [American Indian College Fund](#) - Career Readiness & Employment Sr. Program Manager

**Teresa Martinez, (She/Her/Ella)** Executive Director, [Continental Divide Trail Coalition](#)

**Ben Lara, (He/Him/El)** CDT Program Administrator, [US Forest Service](#)

**L Fisher, (They/Them)** Director of Trail Programs, [Continental Divide Trail Coalition](#)

**Valery Serrano Lopez, (She/Her/Ella)** CDT Partnership Coordinator, [US Forest Service](#)

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# TRAIL TIDBITS



Hikers at "SOBO Trail Daze" in Leadville, CO

CDTC worked with the Leadville Ranger District, Friends of Lake County, and Friends of Twin Lakes to focus on an important local access point to the CDT at Willis Gulch Trailhead. Buck and rail fencing was constructed to stop OHV vehicles from using a social trail, and "No Camping and Fires" signs were installed.



This unique project at the ever-popular Herman Gulch Trail provided an opportunity for seven participants from Environmental Learning for Kids to improve drainage along a section of CDT suffering from trail creep and mud. The participants got to backpack in and stay two nights to complete the work, which was possible through support from Clear Creek County and Colorado Parks and Wildlife.

Mt. Elbert Community Hike led by Gateway Community Ambassador Justice Wise, a handful of hikers summited Mount Elbert, the tallest point in Colorado and one of the fifty eight 14,000 foot peaks in the state.

The CDT provides an important access point to this popular "14er" a few miles outside of Leadville and Twin Lakes.







^  
Pride on the Divide 2024. CDTC Staff participated in the annual Yampa Valley Pride event in Steamboat Springs, CO.



^  
Lincoln, MT Outdoor Club enjoys a hike up Stemple Pass



## CDTC Hosted Acoma Youth Hikes

CDTC's Regional Rep. hosted 2 youth hikes with the Acoma Learning Center this year. It was an amazing time to spend with the youth from Acoma Pueblo. Our first hike was a 4 mile round trip from the Lobo canyon CDT trailhead north of Grants, NM to the top of Hores Mesa. The second hike was a 3 mile hike on the CDT on Mt Taylors west side. The hikes were to educate the youth about the outdoors using the CDTC universal hiking/training guide, which teaches youth about direction, leave no trace, respect for wildlife and forest lands, identification of (plants, animals, insects, birds and reptiles) and the history of their ancestral past. CDTC has been working in partnership with the Acoma Learning Center for 3 years and has conducted both youth and family engagement hikes along the CDT in Cibola County. A big shout out to the El Morro/El Malpias National Monument, and the Cibola National Forest agencies who made this possible by allowing us to host our educational hikes.

< Educating youth about the importance of protecting Mother Earth and showing her respect by picking up after others



# FROM THE FIELD

## 2024 Season Wrap-Up

By Haley Gamertsfelder (she/her) CDTC Field Coordinator



As the autumn leaves begin to turn, we wrap up another incredible season on the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail. From the sun-baked deserts of southern New Mexico to the rugged peaks of Colorado, and the open skies of Montana, our dedicated trail adopters and volunteers have left their mark on this iconic 3,100-mile pathway. Through sweat, teamwork, and unwavering passion, we've maintained existing trails, built bridges, and forged lasting friendships.

As we polish Pick-mattock handles and sharpen saws for next year, we're filled with gratitude for every volunteer who contributed to preserving this national treasure. The CDT stands stronger thanks to your efforts.

### Season Highlights:

- ✓ 130 volunteers
- ✓ Nearly 2,000 volunteer hours contributed
- ✓ 40,000 ft of tread maintenance completed
- ✓ Nearly 350 trees were cleared from the trail
- ✓ A 5-foot French drain installed
- ✓ 14-foot bridge constructed

And that's just the beginning of our accomplishments!

### Adopter Accomplishments:



**13**

new adopters



**700**

hours



**106**

miles of tread maintenance



**50**

confidence markers installed



**145**

drains cleared



**883**

trees logged out

### Project Spotlights

#### New Mexico Adopter Training, Gila National Forest, NM, April

Despite windy spring conditions in the Burros, we successfully trained 4 new adopters and welcomed back a returning adopter. The Silver City Ranger District provided excellent instruction on drain building. With nearly all of the CDT around Silver City now adopted, we're close to completing our mission in this area!



*Safety briefing before getting started on our New Mexico adopter training. CDTC Staff, Forest Service staff, and volunteers are pictured.*

#### Neglected Mine, Gila National Forest, NM, May

The CDTC's project in the Burrow Mountains of southern New Mexico was just completed! With a small but mighty crew, they were able to accomplish 4,200 feet of tread maintenance and 1100 feet of corridor cleared. They were joined by Bill and Michael of the Silver City Ranger District. The crew enjoyed talking about travels and unicycles vs pogo sticks - a perfect start to our volunteer season!



*Group photo of our hardworking Neglected Mine crew!*

**Thank you to the 2024 Field Season Funders who help make this work possible:** Athletic Brewing, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance, New Mexico EDD Trails+, Roundup Riders of the Rockies, US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and American Trails.



## San Pedro Parks, Santa Fe National Forest, NM, June

CDTC Field Staff just wrapped up their project in the San Pedro Parks Wilderness with New Mexico Volunteers for the Outdoors. With a turnout of 14 people plus a camp chef, they were able to accomplish everything on their to-do list, and then some! They refined 1,900 feet of tread, maintained 30 drains, installed 10 markers, closed 1,500 feet of social trail, and logged out an entire 6.5-mile section! The camp chef kept them well-fed with a variety of meals and of course snacks. The crew got to meet several thru-hikers who were very appreciative of all the work. There was lots of laughter, stories, a coconut, and of course a campfire! It was a good time with great weather! The CDTC and its users are incredibly grateful for all the hard work!



*New Mexico Volunteers for the Outdoors Board Associate Jim Sells helps coach volunteers on the magic of the crosscut saw.*



*Group photo at the San Gregorio Reservoir!*

## Devils Thumb, Arapaho Roosevelt National Forest, CO, July

The CDT just gained a new feature! In collaboration with Headwaters Trails Alliance, we completed a crucial 14-foot bridge on the CDT/High Lonesome Trail. Located about two miles from the Devil's Thumb Trailhead, you can test this bridge out for yourself! Our team moved an astounding three tons of rocks to construct robust approach ramps and fortify the surrounding bank, despite the sweltering heat.



*Photo credit: Michael McDaniel*

*Group shot testing out the new bridge!*



*Photo credit: Kinsey Warnock*

*Volunteers Doug and Joe debark the sill logs.*

## Archuleta Lake with Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado, Rio Grande National Forest, July

Down in the Weminuche Wilderness the CDTC and VOC completed a 5-day backcountry project clearing trees on the South Fork Archuleta Trail. Over the three days, they were able to clear 170 trees and redefine the trail junction! They were long days but our crew chef, Matthew, was always at camp to welcome us with refreshments and a delicious dessert! It was a great project with only a little bit of rain! And it couldn't have been done without some generous pack-out support from the San Juan and Trailwise Back Country Horsemen groups!



*Photo credit: Kinsey Warnock*

*Volunteers clearing the trail with everyone's favorite wilderness tool: the crosscut.*



*Photo credit: Kinsey Warnock*

*Volunteers help get supplies to camp for a remote, multi-day project.*



## Wild MT, Beaverhead Deerlodge National Forest, MT, August

We always enjoy working with Wild Montana volunteers and their fantastic leaders, this year in the Pintlers was no different! We had a great, interesting, and fun crew out at Mussigbrod Lake. We brushed, made a creek crossing easier, and installed a cairn along 4 miles of a connector trail to the CDT. We were also lucky enough to have a talented professional photographer on our project, thanks Lea Frye!



*Wild Montana Stewardship Director Matt Bowser trims back some willows from the trail corridor*



*Wild Montana/CDTC volunteer, Miles trims a lodgepole pine in the trail corridor.*

## MT Adopter Training, Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest, MT, August

We enjoyed training our crew on the Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest! We marveled at the historic railroad remnants and enjoyed a cooler day in an otherwise very hot summer up here in Montana. A big thanks to an appearance from the Helena Ranger District and our three new adopters!



*CDTC Coalition Field Coordinator Haley Gamertsfelder talks about backslope at our Montana Adopter Training.*

## Yellowstone National Park, August

Yellowstone National Park once again became a hub of trail stewardship as we welcomed a blend of familiar faces and newcomers to our annual project. The sight of returning volunteers, and their enthusiasm spoke volumes about the project's appeal. Together, we tackled the continued construction of a 120-foot turnpike in a critical thermal area, a task as challenging as it was crucial. Each foot of progress represented a step towards preserving Yellowstone's unique ecosystem while enhancing the visitor experience. As always thank you to our partner in the park, this enduring relationship allows us to contribute meaningfully to one of America's most iconic landscapes.



*Returning CDTC Yellowstone volunteers, Julie and Melissa high five after a job well done.*



*CDTC volunteers Dom and Mikaela (bffs from Iowa!) crush in gravel to make a level surface for a turnpike in Yellowstone National Park.*

## Hopewell Lake, Carson National Forest, September

CDTC's last project of the season took place at Hopewell Lake in Northern New Mexico. The crew of long-time volunteers and some new folk installed 3 kiosks around the lake and campground as well as installing 33 drains! New Mexico Regional Representative (and former chef) Corey Torivio and Colleen kept the crew fed and happy with some delicious food! A visit from Executive Director Teresa Martinez rounded out an amazing project!



*Kiosk installation at Hopewell Lake, New Mexico.*





## From all of our Field Staff:

“This field season has been full of excitement and great work accomplished. As the Technical Specialist, I’ve had the opportunity to see projects move from conception to completion across the past two seasons, meet and engage with fascinating and fun volunteers, grow relationships with partners, as well as partake in the growth of our organization as a whole.

I’ve gleaned many new skills this year, from installing kiosks to felling trees with crosscuts. I have felt the privilege of moving between many different agencies and forests within a season, experiencing mentorship from many people and places, while deepening my relationship to the Continental Divide landscape. My community is now one that intersects innumerable people, places, trails, corridors, groups, and organizations; and for this, I am so grateful. I am deeply appreciative of the opportunity to build personal connections with a place so vast as the Divide, and respect so much all that it has offered me.”

*-Michael McDaniel, CDTC Field Technical Specialist*

“This season was a whirlwind of new faces, familiar places, and playing in the dirt. I got to work in Yellowstone National Park, build two bridges, operate a crosscut saw for the first time, and get packed in by horses for a week in the San Juans! It was a great season and I’m sad to see it go (but also excited to slow down and rest and hit the slopes!).

The CDT holds a special place in my heart and it was extremely gratifying to improve this trail for everyone who steps foot or hoof on it! Thank you to the wonderful partners I worked with and the entire CDTC team for making it a great first season with CDTC.”

*-Kinsey Warnock, CDTC Crew Leader*

“Our deepest gratitude goes out to all our volunteers, agency and nonprofit partners, and CDTC staff who made this incredible season possible. Although I wasn’t able to get out on every project I loved seeing so many familiar faces and excitement for our shared love of this special trail. Your dedication and hard work continue to inspire me and everyone at CDTC to keep doing our part.”

*-Haley Gamertsfelder, CDTC Field Coordinator*

Until next season, happy trails!

# FROM OUR CONTRIBUTORS



**Diane “Grace” Gansauer**

*A book coming in 2025:*

**The Waypoints — From 400 Farewells and 3000 Miles on the Continental Divide**



**Madelyn “Wrong Way” Dukart**

*Welcome to the Majority:*

**Adventurer and blogger Madelyn “Wrong Way” Dukart captured the experience of starting and leaving a 2024 thru-hike attempt due to injury in a CDTC blog. [READ MORE](#)**





# HEART OF THE LAND

## Piikuni Lands Crew

Heart Butte, Blackfeet Nation

By Audra Labert (she/her), CDTC Communications Manager

In the shadow of Montana's Continental Divide, where the Rocky Mountains meet the Great Plains, the Piikuni Lands Crew is forging a path of stewardship. Formed in 2022 as a partnership between the Blackfeet Nation and the Montana Conservation Corps, this dedicated team of Blackfeet youth and leaders works to protect and restore the landscape. Their work honors the land and their Tribe while fostering a deeper connection between their community and the natural world.

The Piikuni Lands Crew is a Montana Conservation Corps (MCC) crew based out of Browning, Montana. The Blackfeet outdoor-based crew began in 2022 as a partnership between MCC and Blackfeet Manpower, a Tribal training and employment program. During their work season, the crew is involved in a variety of projects, focusing on the Blackfeet Reservation or nearby lands that were formerly Blackfeet lands. They have traveled south to Yellowstone National Park and west of the Continental Divide in the Seeley-Swan for projects and maintain partnerships with the U.S.D.A. Forest Service, Glacier National

Park, and receive support from the Glacier National Park Conservancy and Glacier-Two Medicine Alliance, National Park Foundation, Blackfeet Manpower, the Nature Conservancy, and Blackfeet Fish and Wildlife.

### HEART OF THE PLAINS

The Blackfeet Reservation in Montana spans 1.5 million acres along the Rocky Mountain Front, bordering what is now known as the Bob Marshall Wilderness, the Badger-Two Medicine Area, and Glacier National Park.<sup>1</sup> The angled, cliffy peaks of the Continental Divide provide a backdrop for rolling hills, buttes, grassland, forest, and wetlands—remnants of the glaciers that helped shape the landscape. Also simply known as “the Front” the area is known to be one of the most biologically diverse ecoregions in the lower 48 states.

During the 2024 season, the Piikuni Lands Crew was contracted to scout the borders and fencelines of a conservation property near Heart Butte, a prominent heart-shaped landmark on the Reservation and the name of a neighboring community. On a sunny summer day, they traced fencelines along the privately owned conservation property, abutting the mountains south of the town of Browning on the Blackfeet Reservation and the Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest.

Before beginning, the crew took some time to orient with the local Nature Conservancy representative spearheading this project. Maps were laid out on the hood of a vehicle in the parking lot of the Glacier Peaks





Piikuni Lands Crew T-shirt with the flag of the Blackfeet Nation.

Casino Cafe, and a plan for the day emerged. The Piikuni Crew leaders were attentive, and with them, the Tribal Partnerships Liason, Shelbi St. Goddard. She pointed out the flag of the Blackfeet Nation on the back of their matching dark green MCC uniform shirts– a ring of feathers around a headdress and a cutout of the Blackfeet Reservation.

Though she recently graduated from the University of Montana with a Bachelor's in Environmental Science & Sustainability, this is St. Goddard's third year with the Piikuni Lands Crew. Her first two summers were spent as Field Coordinator, and she is now the MCC Tribal Partnerships Liaison. In addition to the liaison, the crew consists of a coordinator, two crew leaders, and six crew members.

When the opportunity came about to get involved, St. Goddard saw it as a way to help her Tribe– especially the youth. While she grew up on a ranch in the Blackfeet Nation, St. Goddard didn't previously have much hiking or other outdoor experience. It wasn't until she started working with MCC that St. Goddard started to explore more and lead others.

"Our crew is made up entirely of enrolled Blackfeet members and grows stronger together," she said. "We support each other through tough times, both at work and in our personal lives, because we share a common bond being from the Reservation."



Members of the 2024 Piikuni Lands Crew (left to right): Mikaila Osborne, Katie Leadford-Palacio, Tanner Iron Pipe, Kobe After Buffalo, Shelbi St. Goddard, Olivia Hall, Aaron Wells.

St. Goddard was recruited into the position by her mentor Joe Jessepe, the former liaison. Jessepe is a local land steward and works with Hopa Mountain and the Blackfeet Community College, though he is involved in many projects that support youth, education, and the land. Originally from Browning, Jessepe encourages and assists local youth, from giving them a ride to their first semester of college to helping with education scholarships and job placement after college.

Jessepe's influence and mentorship have been paramount for St. Goddard and many others. It was his encouragement that led her to apply for the MCC position, though she was initially reluctant. "I've been able to gain valuable experience in my career field and most importantly, on my ancestral lands," she emphasized. "I am extremely grateful for Joe's mentorship, which has profoundly impacted my life and the lives of many other Native students."

Looking into the future, St. Goddard has plans for additional crews. Over thirty applications were received to fill the 2024 crew, and only eight could participate. She envisions multiple crews working together to offer more jobs, skills training, career pathways, and support for Piikuni youth and young adults. And, she is working not only to expand the Blackfeet crew but to help start crews among other Tribal Nations. St. Goddard believes that a similar model can also benefit other Tribes and landscapes.

She added, "As we enhance our program, I am confident that this expansion will be successful, nurturing our future leaders and benefiting the entire community."

## WALKING FAMILIAR PATHS

The crew bushwhacked up and down hillsides to follow the fenceline and assess conditions, and crew leaders used GPS and a phone app to record the information. They spotted Saskatoon berries while winding through the trees and shrubs, and most were keeping a hand out to collect them while walking. Also known as serviceberry, the plant has long been used by the Blackfeet for everything from teas with the highly nutritious berries to arrows from the sturdy stems. On that day, the blueish berries served as a trailside snack and even decorated some of the crew's faces at lunchtime. It's also a staple food for bears. As they walked and gathered, in addition to whatever the Bluetooth speaker attached to the bottom of St. Goddard's pack was playing, the group periodically chorused calls of "Hey bear" to make noise and avoid surprising any bears who might also be in the area enjoying the tasty fruit.

Like any trail crew, lunch was a time to relax and chat. One crew leader, Mikaila Osborne, had recently graduated from the University of Montana with a





*A crewmember holds out Saskatoon berries.*

degree in Native American Studies and is planning to pursue a graduate degree in Cultural Anthropology. It is clear that making a difference in their community is a driving force behind the leaders' involvement with the crew, plus the benefits of spending time outside and connecting with the land.

Many of the past leaders and members are currently attending or preparing to attend college or university. While some have completed their degrees and are now looking to pursue graduate school or dive deeper into their careers, others continue to work within the community. Although the leaders are sometimes not much older than the crew, they have a strong desire to model a positive pathway for the other members.

"I'm proud to say that I've witnessed incredible talent, perseverance, and determination in the paths that former Piikuni Lands Crew leaders and members have taken," said St. Goddard. "Their journeys inspire me and reaffirm the importance of the work we do together."

The leaders believe that the experience opens doors to new opportunities, strengthens the community, and uplifts Piikuni youth by providing them with jobs, a sense of purpose, and the opportunity to develop leadership abilities. "It empowers them to take pride in their work and their heritage, fostering a strong connection to the land and their community," St. Goddard added.

One crew member, Tanner Iron Pipe, carried large paper maps and paused periodically to reopen them. He had been to this area before and across the hillside, a familiar landmark came into view. There was a house and buildings, and a corral nestled in the foothills not far from the access road. From afar, there also appeared to be several tall, Y-shaped poles stuck in the ground like leafless and nearly branchless trees. As the group drew near, it became clear they were trees, trimmed and brightly decorated. Nearby was a circular wooden-framed building.

"It's the Sun Dance. My grandfather brings me here," said Iron Pipe as the crew hiked down toward the structures.

Passed through generations, the Sun Dance is an Indigenous gathering and religious ceremony still practiced among the Blackfeet and other Tribes. The Sun Dance they hiked past had recently ended, and the group passed by on the other side of a fence, close to the leaning structures. Two crew members were absent from that project to attend a Sun Dance elsewhere, and others were sharing their experiences. It was a stark reminder that they weren't just a youth trail crew out for a day hike. This landscape has been home to the Blackfeet since a time before memory.

***"The experience fuels the Piikuni Lands Crew with motivation and strength, knowing we are continuing the legacy of stewardship passed down through generations," said St. Goddard.***

## BACKBONE OF THE WORLD

From the mountains to the west of the Blackfeet Reservation flows not only the fresh water that sustains the Nation, but also part of their ancient connection, resources, and cultural traditions. Glacier National Park and the Badger-Two Medicine Area, or "the Badger," are areas of historic and cultural significance for the Tribe. They are rich with sacred sites and hunting grounds, and before the lands were ceded to the U.S. government in 1896, they were considered the last refuge for the Blackfeet after a nearly 50-year struggle to survive and remain in the remnants of their homeland.<sup>2</sup>

The Blackfeet Reservation was established in the Treaty of 1855 and included much of north-central Montana. The "Ceded Strip" is a swath of land that includes the East side of Glacier and the Badger at the north end of the Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest land that was part of the original 1855 Treaty. Though Blackfeet lands had already been dramatically cut by the 1855 Treaty, the Blackfeet Nation relinquished this additional strip of land to the U.S. government through the 1896 agreement. The agreement was signed during a period of intense starvation on the Reservation following a U.S. government policy of intentional eradication of bison, created to harm and control Tribes. The disappearance of their primary lifeway—the bison herds that once blanketed the Great Plains—was devastating and during the winter of 1883-1884 alone, over 500 Blackfeet died.<sup>3</sup> The U.S. government planned to use the Ceded Strip for hard rock mining during Montana's gold rush.



Now, the Continental Divide landscapes that encompass the Bob Marshall Wilderness, Badger-Two Medicine, and Glacier National Park are some of the most iconic and recognizable in the world. To the Blackfeet, it is *Miistakis*, the “Backbone of the World.”<sup>4</sup> Many Blackfeet place names were preserved in Glacier, offering visitors a glimpse of the area’s significance to the Tribe. Deep in the wild lands that hikers, hunters, packers, and tourists traverse are Indigenous sacred places—places of story and covenant.<sup>2</sup> Visitors to these reservoirs of beauty and life-sustaining resources have the opportunity to shape their views and absorb the history, stories, and culture that lies bone deep.

Working in the landscape they love offers renewal and continued connection among the Piikuni Lands Crew and the Tribe, and provides a space for those relationships to grow. Centered around stewardship in the heart of their lands, St. Goddard expressed how powerful and transformative the program has been:

“There’s a profound sense of pride in protecting what our ancestors protected for us. We are committed to giving back to the land and doing our part to conserve Blackfeet lands for future generations.”

*The Blackfeet Indian Reservation is home to the 17,321-member Blackfeet Nation, one of the 10 largest tribes in the United States. The present Reservation is located in northwest Montana, bordered by Glacier National Park to the west and Canada to the north. The original 1855 Blackfeet Indian Reservation encompassed most of the northern half of the state of Montana.*

*The Blackfeet Reservation has abundant natural resources, including forestlands and oil and gas reserves, and is home to many species of fish and wildlife. More than 518 miles of streams and 180 bodies of water, including eight large lakes, can also be found on the Reservation.<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Blackfeet Nation. 2003. <https://blackfeetnation.com>

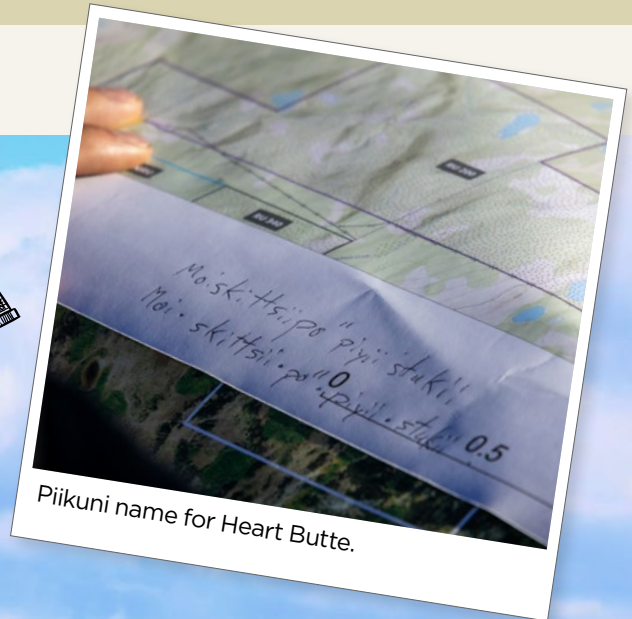
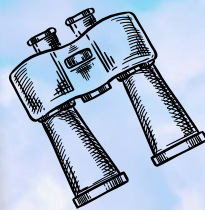
<sup>2</sup> Charles Redd Center for Western Studies at BYU. 2024. <https://www.intermountainhistories.org/items/show/341>

<sup>3</sup> Montana Office of Public Instruction. Blackfeet Reservation Timeline. <https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/K-12%20Resources/BlackfeetTimeline.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Native American Rights Fund. 2024. <https://narf.org/cases/badger-two-medicine/>



Crewleaders Mikaila Osborne and Olivia Hall round the side of Heart Butte



Piikuni name for Heart Butte.





# WELCOME TO LEADVILLE COLORADO

## THE SPIRITUAL HALFWAY POINT OF THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE TRAIL

By Liz Schmit (She/Her), CDTC Community  
& Outreach Program Manager

Nestled at 10,200 feet, Leadville, Colorado, holds a special place in the heart of the Continental Divide Trail as the spiritual halfway point for thru-hikers. This historic town, surrounded by the stunning peaks of the Sawatch Range, offers not just a resting place but a chance to connect deeply with the trail and the community that supports it.

As a dual CDT Gateway Community, Leadville lies just a short distance from its sister town, Twin Lakes, another gem on the CDT. This small community offers a tranquil setting less than a mile from the CDT for hikers to rest, resupply, and take in the breathtaking views of the Twin Lakes Reservoir and Mount Elbert, the highest peak in Colorado. Together, Leadville and Twin Lakes create a welcoming haven for hikers as they journey through the heart of the Rockies.

In September, Leadville comes alive with the spirit of the trail during the SOBO (southbound) Trail Daze event. This gathering is a celebration of the southbound hikers who have reached the halfway point of their journey. It is a time for sharing stories, reuniting with trail friends, and preparing for the adventures that still lie ahead. The event is a testament to the strong bond between Leadville and the CDT, bringing the community and hikers together in a unique and meaningful way. This past fall, over 50 hikers came to celebrate this exciting moment in their journey from Canada to Mexico.

Adding to Leadville's commitment to the trail, a new in-town kiosk has been installed, highlighting both the CDT and the rich history of the town. This kiosk serves as a gateway for hikers and visitors alike to learn more about Leadville's mining past, its connection to the trail, and the important role it plays in the broader CDT community. It is a point of pride for the town and a must-see for anyone passing through.



*CDTC Staff pose with the new Leadville, CO kiosk in town.*

Building on Leadville's commitment to the trail, CDTC partnered with Friends of Lake County and Friends of Twin Lakes this past summer for a community stewardship event. Volunteers from the local community came together to install new fencing, remove illegal fire rings, and perform light trail maintenance along the CDT. This effort not only improved the safety and accessibility of the



*Stewardship event with Friends of Lake County and Friends of Twin Lakes. Admiring the new gravel at the Willis Trailhead bridge in Twin Lakes, CO.*





*Hikers pose during a Pride on the Divide hike at Harvard Lakes Trail.*

trail but also reinforced the community's dedication to preserving the natural beauty of the surrounding area. The stewardship event was a testament to the power of collaboration in protecting and maintaining this iconic trail for future generations.

## **PROMOTING INCLUSIVITY ON THE TRAIL AND LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS**

Leadville has long been known for its commitment to fostering a deeper connection between people and the outdoors and it is not just about the trail; it is also about creating a more inclusive outdoor experience for everyone. Leadville hosts the Outdoor Equity Summit with Get Outdoors Leadville! (GOL!) - taking place in February 2025 - a gathering focused on making the outdoors accessible and welcoming to all. The summit will feature discussions, workshops, and community-building activities that highlight the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion in outdoor spaces. It is an opportunity for the Leadville community to lead by example, showing how a small town can make a big impact on outdoor culture.

This focus on equity and inclusion has resulted in meaningful community initiatives designed to create

accessible and inclusive outdoor experiences for Leadville residents and visitors alike. One such initiative is the community-led outdoor hikes, engaging local youth through GOL! in exploring the beauty of the CDT while fostering a sense of connection to the outdoors. GOL! hosts a summer camp, Rockies Rock, with activities that not only introduce young participants to the CDT and surrounding landscape, but also aim to empower the next generation of outdoor stewards, ensuring that the benefits of outdoor recreation are accessible to all.

In addition, Leadville's local CDTC Community Ambassadors have led Pride on the Divide community hikes, which celebrate inclusivity and visibility for the LGBTQIA+ community on the trail. These hikes create a welcoming space for queer and ally participants to experience the outdoors together, reinforcing the message that the CDT is a place for everyone.

As hikers continue their journey along the Continental Divide Trail, Leadville stands out as a place of reflection, celebration, and community. Whether you're passing through or staying for a while, Leadville and Twin Lakes offer a unique blend of history, culture, and trail magic that leaves a lasting impression on all who visit.





# CONNECTING to the Land

## A Conversation with Corey Torivio, CDTC New Mexico Regional Representative

By CDTC Staff

*“We must not forget the importance of our integrity as a People, for our generations depend on it.”*

- Lambert Torivio

Guwaadzi (Hello in Acoma), Trailblazers!

We sat down with one of the Executive Producers to discuss the 2024 film *Connections to the Land, Voices of the Acoma Pueblo*. The film is the first in a series and was produced by the Continental Divide Trail Coalition in partnership with the University of New Mexico Media Arts Program and funded by a generous gift from Tom and Valerie Armer. This conversation shares how Corey Torivio, as an Indigenous person, views the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDT). Torivio shares what knowledge he hopes the film series will impart, and how the film series might lay a foundation for healing past wounds and move toward a more collective future for protecting places like the CDT.

### **Why did CDTC make this film? Where did the idea originate?**

The idea originated when I was standing on top of Mt. Taylor... the last place that I remember being with my father, who talked about the importance of protecting Mother Earth, and the important role she plays in our lives. This film was made in part to honor the legacy

of my father and share his words, in his connections to Muuleenaakuu (Mother Earth).

We wanted to educate the CDT community and others, as well, about who Indigenous people really are, because for far too long we have been labeled in historical markers and history books as being unclean, marauders, murderers, and savages. This film, and all films in the series, are dedicated to doing just that.

We wanted people to hear the voices, issues, and concerns—of past, present, and future—so that the world begins to understand that we all share similar feelings, concerns, and issues as the rest of society.

To recognize that we are all her children, regardless of where we come from. To understand the lesson that Muuleenaakuu is teaching us: that if every grass, every tree, every plant, every bird, insect, and animal can all live in one place and create something beautiful together... then why can't we? And if we use that knowledge in our lives, we will teach our children and their children to understand that we are all part of this bigger plan.

### **What was the impetus to bring this film idea to CDTC?**

When I first began my work with CDTC, I read every land protection policy and every act pertaining to conservation, trails, and land protection. None



of these documents included an Indigenous voice or specifically encouraged or mentioned Tribal engagement. When we discussed this, all of us at CDTC felt it was important for Indigenous voices to be heard so we could change the way national trails were being managed. This included moving beyond acknowledging that the CDT is on stolen lands, to making amends and reimagining how stewardship of the CDT could include Indigenous voices, and move in a direction of co-management of the lands around the CDT and even the CDT itself, with all the Tribal Nations, Indigenous and Native people along the CDT.

CDTC as an organization takes a much different approach and view to how the CDT interacts with the surrounding landscapes and communities. This film and the film series we are building is an opportunity to ... share the voices of Indigenous people all along the CDT, in their own words, how they see their home and the importance of protecting Mother Earth, while also inviting CDT visitors into shared responsibility for leaving the CDT as not just as they find it - hopefully they leave it better.

### **What was the audience reaction at the film premiere of Episode One: Voices of Acoma Pueblo?**

The film premiered in November 2023 at the visitor's center at the Pueblo of Acoma. It was an emotional event that brought people of many backgrounds together... people who wouldn't have otherwise come together. The audience laughed, cried, and recognized the common thread that binds us all: our dependency upon and concern for Mother Earth.

How many episodes do you plan to make? Of course, it depends on funding but we would like to eventually include all the voices of all the Tribal nations, whether they are federally recognized or not, in the film series. This year we will add two more films into the series.

### **What can this film series help build for the entire CDT Community?**

While we can't change the past and the harm created from the past treatment of Indigenous people and Tribal Nations; we can definitely heal from it.

First, by recognizing that the issues and concerns shared by Native and non-native people are the same. Second, we should use this knowledge to bring us together and recognize the important role we all play in providing solutions facing places like the CDT from development, climate change, and today's world, in general.

To understand that while we all have differences, it's those differences that can be used to unite us together as one voice with access to more and broader



knowledge that needs to be shared for the protection of the integrity of our life-giving sources—like clean water— that without, none of us will survive.

When we come together we learn that we are a community first— a community that now shares a heritage of connection to these places, to the land, and that makes us family. And as family, while we might not always agree, we all come together to defend Mother Earth. She is our Mother and that's what makes us family.

### **What do you hope people take away from their time hiking the CDT?**

I want people to understand the lessons Mother Nature is teaching us: Every blade of grass, every tree, every plant, every rock has a Spirit and it is those Spirits that heal us—mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually.

I also want people to understand:

The trail they are walking is one of the original trade routes utilized since time immemorial by Indigenous people... it is and has always been a connector of communities.... past, present, and future.

The 3,100 miles of the CDT travels through stolen, Indigenous land... and we are walking in the footsteps of Ancestral People.

And, the beauty they see needs to be protected for the generations of our children, and the integrity of us as a people needs to be preserved.

### **How did the UNM-Taos Media Arts program get involved in the making of the films?**

When we initially decided to do this project we were working with a Native filmmaker who at the last minute was asked to take on a once-in-a-lifetime project and had to step away from our project. This happened in October of 2022 right around when the New Mexico Outdoor Economics Conference was occurring in Taos, NM. While in between sessions at the Conference, I began speaking to a young man named Cruz Concha,



who was sitting outside of the event hall and it turned out he was a part of UNM Taos' Media Arts program and suggested maybe they could take on the project. That led to a call with Peter Walker the Media Arts Program Director, and CDTC Executive Director Teresa Martinez—the other co-producer of the film; we were all excited and honored to be a part of the project. It also turned out that some of his students were also young people from the Acoma Pueblo and other Pueblos around New Mexico. It seemed like the perfect fit to work with them. From day one it was not only easy, but it was also a pathway for all of us to learn more about each other's efforts and begin to think about other ways we could work with students, especially Indigenous students, to engage them and their perspectives in other areas of CDTC's work. We filmed in March 2023 and the film was ready in November.

We are now working on two more films this year, and two of the students from the program, who are also members of the Taos Pueblo, are part of the inaugural CDTC Tribal Fellowship program. These endeavors are helping CDTC strengthen relationships with Native people across New Mexico and all along the CDT.

**What is most important to you about the work on Connection to the Land Film series as an Indigenous person and as a member of CDTC staff?**

To reconnect people to the land and re-educate the world about Indigenous people and the importance of coming together. To understand that regardless

of our differences, regardless of our history, we need to learn to heal together so that our children learn the value and the importance of being united in the protection of our homelands so that we can find better solutions and stop raping Mother Earth, and protect the cultural resources that are the sole integrity of us as a community.

**What's next?**

Through funding provided by the Natural Resources Defense Council, we are working with the UNM-Taos Media Arts Program to produce the next two films in the series. This past March we were on location on the Pecos River to begin filming for a film featuring the Jemez Pueblo, and this September, we are beginning the filming with the Taos Pueblo. We are thrilled to announce that both films will be completed this year and will be presented to the public in February 2025.

*To learn more about the Connection to the Land films or add your support, contact [info@cdtcoalition.org](mailto:info@cdtcoalition.org).*



On site at the filming of *Connection to the Land* with UNM-Taos at Acoma Pueblo



CDTC New Mexico Regional Rep. Corey Torivio with the cast and crew of *Connection to the Land* in Acoma





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# THE GREAT AMERICAN OUTDOORS ACT

## Celebrating a Once-in-a-Generation Investment

By Claire Cutler (she/her), CDTC Trail Policy Specialist

Hailed as one of the largest investments in public lands in U.S. history, the Great American Outdoors Act is a lifeline for America's most treasured places, including the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDT) and other congressionally designated trails.

The walk from Mexico to Canada on the CDT is anything but simple. Some of the complications are predictable— planning resupply, passing through water-scarce areas, or repairing a piece of broken gear. Others are less predictable, varying, and in some cases compounding, each year. Even the best-prepared hiker on the CDT may be startled to encounter dozens of blowdowns in a day, a washout, a stretch of trail damaged by a wildfire, or a dangerous road walk. With the CDT becoming more popular for day, section, and through-hikers each year, the need to maintain and complete the CDT is increasingly important. The Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) is a path for this much-needed work on the CDT and for similar work across America's public lands.

## Landmark Legislation for Growing Popularity

Over the past decade, recreation across the Continental Divide has increased dramatically, with visitors flocking to destinations like the CDT for a day hike, section hike, or even a 3,100-mile thru-hike. Visitation to national parks and other public lands nationally has also grown rapidly in the past twenty years, but funding for land management agencies has remained stagnant.<sup>1</sup> This chronic underfunding, paired with an increasing number of sites to manage, has left land management agencies struggling to maintain facilities such as campsites, trails, and visitor centers. At the end of 2023, the National Park Service estimated that the cost to address all deferred maintenance across their sites would be over \$23 billion.<sup>2</sup>

Introduced in early March of 2020, the Great American Outdoors Act quickly gained nearly sixty bipartisan cosponsors. When the COVID-19 pandemic struck not even two weeks later, policymakers in both chambers recognized that even in the midst of an emergency and extreme bipartisan disagreement, they couldn't



overlook this opportunity to codify support for some of America's unmaintained public lands. The Great American Outdoors Act passed the House and the Senate in June of 2020, and was signed into law that August, officially becoming a landmark piece of legislation for America's public lands.<sup>3</sup>

## What is the Great American Outdoors Act?

GAOA works to ensure that public lands are safe, enjoyable, and accessible by funding new and established public lands programs.

### THE NATIONAL PARKS AND PUBLIC LAND LEGACY RESTORATION FUND

The National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund (LRF), established under GAOA, authorizes up to \$1.9 billion per year from 2021 to 2025 to fund deferred maintenance on public lands. Funded by the revenue from coal, oil, natural gas, and renewable energy projects on public lands, LRF demonstrates the important relationship between the various ways that public lands are utilized and managed.<sup>4</sup>

As of March of 2024, \$2.4 billion had been allocated to specific projects under the LRF. Projects in national parks along the CDT include road, bridge, and water system rehabilitation in Glacier National Park, historic structure restoration in Yellowstone National Park, and campsite improvements in Rocky Mountain National Park.<sup>5</sup>

### THE LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND

Since its creation in 1964, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) has enabled conservation and outdoor recreation opportunities in every county in the nation.<sup>6</sup> LWCF directs federal government revenues from fossil fuel extraction into a fund that is distributed to federal agencies and state and local governments for land acquisition and conservation projects nationwide. The LWCF has funded conservation projects of all shapes and sizes, from federal land acquisition to project natural, cultural, and recreational resources, to local initiatives to build bike lanes and neighborhood parks.

In 2019, the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act permanently reauthorized the LWCF, but didn't permanently fund the program, leaving it vulnerable to political gridlock over appropriations. GAOA resolved this issue by permanently authorizing a mandatory annual

allocation of \$900 million to the LWCF. This level of funding is a significant increase from previous Congressional appropriations, and it will ensure that new land can be protected and promoted on a local and national level for years to come.

## What does this mean for the CDT?

### INVESTING IN COMMUNITIES THROUGH TRAILS

Together, the LRF and the LWCF will play crucial roles in ensuring that the CDT is safe, enjoyable, accessible, and eventually complete.

The US Forest Service CDT Program has applied for \$4.8 million under the LRF to address deferred maintenance on the CDT in New Mexico, Colorado, and Wyoming. CDTC has committed to providing another \$2 million in matched funds over the course of that potential investment, totaling an investment of \$6.8 million to address deferred maintenance. Pending passage of the Congressional budget, CDTC is excited to work with the Forest Service on projects that make the trail more accessible, more enjoyable, and safer for folks spending time on the trail through projects like clearing downed trees or building new connector trails.

The impact of the LRF funds could ripple well beyond the tread of the trail. An investment in the CDT is







fundamentally an investment in the communities that care for, support, and enjoy the trail. By engaging conservation corps, youth corps, partners, and volunteers in this work, youth and young professionals living along the CDT would have increased access to skill-building opportunities, pathways to careers in public lands management, and an opportunity to steward lands in their community.

In 2023, national park visitors spent a total of \$26.4 billion on lodging, restaurants, retail, and more in gateway communities nationwide.<sup>7</sup> In a 2023 survey of 134 small business owners in communities along the CDT, 82% believed that protecting, promoting,

and enhancing public lands was important to the general well-being of business and jobs in their local economy.<sup>8</sup> LRF funding ensures that public lands can support an ever-growing number of visitors and gateway communities can reap the benefits.

## COMPLETING THE CDT

While about 95% of the CDT follows constructed single-track trail on public land, several incomplete sections still force travelers to use highways and local roads to complete a continuous route. The LWCF is the greatest and in some cases the only, tool that CDTC has to address this remaining 5% and complete the CDT. “One of our most important goals at CDTC is completing the Continental Divide Trail. LWCF grants are the sole source of funding to do so through land acquisition or easements,” said CDTC Executive Director Teresa Martinez.

In 2016, LWCF enabled the purchase of nearly 5,000 acres of private land near Grants, New Mexico. Thru-hikers and community members alike benefitted from the project, which used the newly acquired land to reroute a portion of the CDT that had previously been a dangerous road walk. In the process, hunters benefitted from new access to a large area of big game habitat.<sup>9</sup> In 2019, CDTC’s Small Business Survey found that 98% of small business owners surveyed in CDT states supported full funding for LWCF.<sup>10</sup> As land acquisitions, easements, and completion remain high priorities for the CDTC, permanent funding for LWCF offers an opportunity to address some of our most pressing and challenging obstacles.

## Journey of a Once-in-a-Generation Public Lands Investment



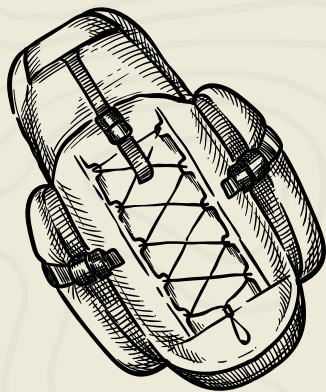


## What's next?

The original round of funding authorized for the LRF under GAOA is set to expire in 2025. While the impacts of the first round of funding have been huge, the funding has only made a small dent in the growing deferred maintenance needs on public lands nationwide. Reauthorization of the LRF is an emerging policy priority for the CDTC and other outdoor recreation advocates to ensure funding for the ever-growing list of deferred maintenance on public lands.

When paired together, permanent funding for LWCF and finite funding for LRF create a paradox: how do we care for a growing quantity of public lands without permanent funding for deferred maintenance? Policymakers must find a way to sustain the enthusiasm that exists for establishing new public lands and community greenspaces, while also providing care and stewardship for the public lands that already exist.

GAOA was a nearly unprecedented investment in America's public lands. Now, CDTC and other outdoor recreation and conservation advocates face a new challenge - recreating the enthusiasm that created GAOA to ensure its impacts can continue in the years to come.



<sup>1</sup>Dan Harsha, "The Likely Impact of Great American Outdoors Act," Harvard Gazette, July 27, 2020, <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2020/07/the-likely-impact-of-great-american-outdoors-act/>.

<sup>2</sup>"By the Numbers - Infrastructure (U.S. National Park Service)," National Park Service, 2023, <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/infrastructure/deferred-maintenance.htm#:~:text=The%20deferred%20maintenance%20and%20repairs.>

<sup>3</sup>"The Great American Outdoors Act: From Start to Finish," The Land and Water Conservation Fund Coalition, August 25, 2020, <https://lwcfc coalition.org/blog/the-great-american-outdoors-act-from-start-to-finish.>

<sup>4</sup>"Great American Outdoors Act" (2020), <https://www.congress.gov/116/plaws/publ152/PLAW-116publ152.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup>"GAOA LRF Projects in Action | U.S. Department of the Interior," U.S. Department of the Interior, June 12, 2023, <https://www.doi.gov/gaoa-lrf-projects-action.>

<sup>6</sup>"Land and Water Conservation Fund," Department of the Interior, May 31, 2015, <https://www.doi.gov/lwcf.>

<sup>7</sup>National Park Service, "Visitor Spending Effects - Economic Contributions of National Park Visitor Spending - Social Science (U.S. National Park Service)," National Park Service, 2022, <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/socialscience/vse.htm.>

<sup>8</sup>"2023 CDT Small Business Survey," Continental Divide Trail Coalition, February 12, 2024, [https://issuu.com/cdtc/docs/cdtc\\_small\\_business\\_report\\_2024.](https://issuu.com/cdtc/docs/cdtc_small_business_report_2024.)

<sup>9</sup>"The Land and Water Conservation Fund Gets One Step Closer to Full Funding - Continental Divide Trail Coalition," Continental Divide Trail Coalition, 2019, <https://cdtcoalition.org/the-land-and-water-conservation-fund-gets-one-step-closer-to-full-funding/>.

<sup>10</sup>"New Survey of Small Business Owners Demonstrates Positive Economic Impacts of Continental Divide Trail, Strong Support for LWCF - Continental Divide Trail Coalition," Continental Divide Trail Coalition, 2019, <https://cdtcoalition.org/new-survey-of-small-business-owners-demonstrates-positive-economic-impacts-of-continental-divide-trail-strong-support-for-lwcf/>.

<b>Pot 750ml</b> POT-750 Titanium 3.8oz/103g 2.5.4oz/750ml	<b>Portable Tripod</b> TRP-01 Titanium 7.2oz/205g Load: 4LB/1.8kg	<b>Long Handle Spoon</b> SLV-11 Titanium 0.65oz/19g 8 1/4"/220mm	<b>Siphon Alcohol Stove</b> STV-01 Titanium 0.7oz/20g 2 1/4" x 1 1/2"/53x40mm	<b>Pot Cozy</b> COZ-M / L Canvas w/ Heat Insulation 0.7oz/0.95oz Fit POT-750 / 1100	<b>Ultralight 450ml Cup</b> CUP-450-L Titanium 1.75oz/48g 15.2oz/450ml
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# Give Back While You Give This Holiday Season!

Looking for the perfect gift for your loved ones during this holiday season? With these gifts, you can buy once and give twice as a portion of each purchase helps support our work to complete, promote, and protect the CDT.

Not sure what to get that person who has everything? [Make a donation](#) to the CDTC in their honor!

## A. ENO HAMMOCK: \$84.95

ENO hammocks are comfortable, durable, and easily packable making them a great option for a variety of outdoor adventures. For each special edition Continental Divide Trail Hammock they sell, ENO donates \$10 to CDTC to help us protect all of the spots you love to hammock! [SHOP NOW »](#)

## B. DARN TOUGH CDT SOCKS: \$22

Keep your feet happy with the new CDT Darn Tough socks! Darn Tough socks are known for their comfort, durability, and moisture wicking capabilities, and Darn Tough donates 5% from every CDT sock purchase back to CDTC. Keep your feet happy and protect the trail you love! [SHOP NOW »](#)

## C. CDT BUFF: \$20

Fashion meets function with this gorgeous CDT BUFF® featuring some of the most spectacular flora and fauna along the CDT! [SHOP NOW »](#)

## D. CONTINENTAL DIVIDE TRAIL ROAST COFFEE: \$16.00-30.00

Triple Crown Coffee is dedicated to producing world-class organic coffees and the preservation of our National scenic hiking trails. For each pound of Continental Divide Trail Roast purchased, we donate \$1 to the Continental Divide Trail Coalition. Protect the trails you love; one cup at a time! [SHOP NOW »](#)

## E. TOWNSHIRT CDT SERVICE MARK HOODIE: \$85.00

This simplistic approach to our go to sun hoodie design makes a huge statement of love a support for the CDT and CDTC. This officially licensed product displays the USFS Continental Divide Trail service mark. 10% of the purchase price will be donated to the Continental Divide Trail Coalition! [SHOP NOW »](#)

## F. FARM TO FEET SOCKS: \$25

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## G. READYWISE OUTDOOR: \$13.99

Enjoy scratch made biscuits smothered in a savory pork sausage gravy next time you're on the trail! A portion of the sales from this meal goes toward supporting CDTC! [SHOP NOW »](#)



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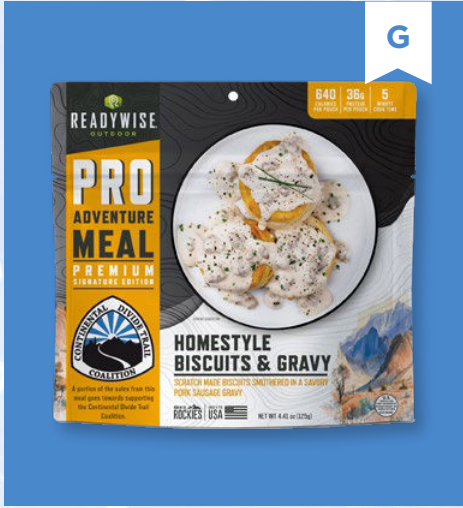
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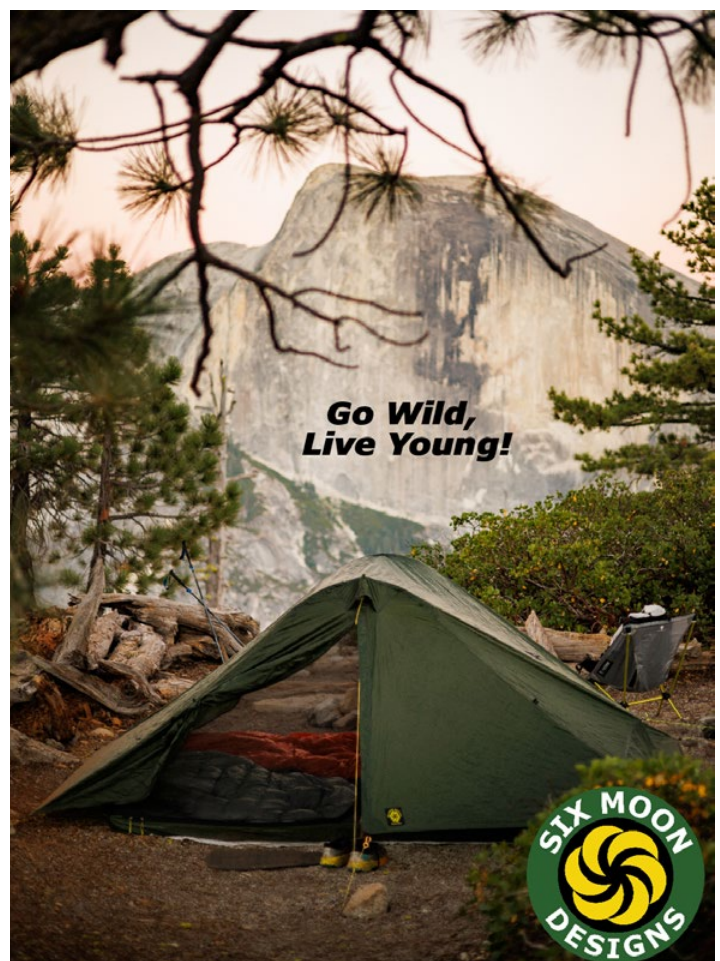
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Photo by Noah Wetzel





# IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF FAMILY HISTORY ON THE CDT

By Diane “Grace” Gansauer

## BETWEEN WORLDS

At a Nez Perce funeral, the women are not allowed to cry. Crying would make the soul reluctant to depart, suspending it between worlds. The men drum, stories are told, but no tears are shed. Instead, the women are permitted to wail. My brother Mike had witnessed the wailing. The sound felt primordial.

Mike told me this in July 2021 as we hiked on the Continental Divide Trail (CDT) in southern Montana where it intersects the Nez Perce trail. This was the escape route that the Nez Perce—led by Chief Joseph—took after they were compelled to leave their native land in what the United States called the Oregon Territory. They left to seek refuge in Canada and connect with other tribes. The day before we reached Gibbon’s Pass near Sula, while walking in their footsteps, we heard something like that ancient keening.

Two years later, while researching my family’s genealogy, I became aware of my family’s connection to the flight of the Nez Perce. I reflected on my hike in the Great Divide Basin in 2019, when I walked in my ancestors’ footsteps where the CDT intersects the Oregon Trail in Wyoming.

## TAKING FLIGHT

The parents of my great-grandmother and great-grandfather came west from Missouri on The Oregon Trail in the 1850s and ‘60s. The story of how they had followed the call to “Go West” to find a better life was iconic in my family. My grandmother Evelyn made sure her grandchildren knew the story and were proud of it. I stood near the wagon ruts in Wyoming

in awe of what they had done and that I was literally walking where they had walked. The bigger story they were a part of became clearer to me when I was farther north on the CDT, near Sula.

My great-grandmother was born near Portland in 1867. When she was ten years old, the U.S. federal government rounded up all the tribes in the Oregon Territory to move them to reservations. Some of the Nez Perce refused to sign the treaty giving up their land. Instead, they fled, hoping to return one day; one of their leaders was Chief Joseph. When I walked on the overlap of the CDT and the Nez Perce Trail, I was in their footsteps.

Chief Joseph and his people were fleeing, not fighting, when they crossed what is now Gibbon’s Pass in the summer of 1877. They didn’t know that General John Gibbon had been given orders to chase them down to make sure the Nez Perce never reclaimed their ancestral land in the Wallowa Valley of Oregon.

Thinking they were out of harm when they crossed into Montana, the tribe had posted no guards when the soldiers caught up with them and attacked their sleeping encampment, overcoming them at dawn in the Bitterroot Valley below Lolo Pass, not far from Sula. Those who survived managed to evade capture for so long that they impressed even their enemies, but their flight eventually ended at the Bear Paw battlefield, only a few miles from the Canadian border. Moved to reservations in Oklahoma and then the Northwest, and despite Chief Joseph’s peaceful interventions with the U.S. government, they were never allowed to return to their home, where Chief Joseph’s father had charged his son to always remember that the bones of their ancestors are buried.



## REMEMBERING

In the summer of 2021 below the pass named for General Gibbon, rain and hail overcame my brother, our hiking partner, and me as we paused in a burned area that we had walked in most of the day. How long had it been since the trees were overcome by flames? They were upended spears, stuck in the ground, nothing but limbless bleached bones of what they had been.

The wind enwrapped the barren spikes and they responded. A conversation surrounded us – like ghosts mourning what they had lost, wailing about what this forest had become. Were they also mourning the doomed people who walked through here more than a century ago? The wind played the planted nail-like remnants like an instrument, and the air vibrated around us. The roaring wail continued, and we knew that peace wouldn't be an option until either the wind ceased or we moved on from this place.

But we couldn't move. We were transfixed by a sound in nature we had never experienced before. The sound of a mournful wail from the trees was unmistakable. It felt to us like land and sky were voicing remembrance and pain in chorus.

"I will fight no more forever," Chief Joseph had said when he was forced to surrender. He accepted by then that fighting would be futile. Twenty-seven years after he walked with his people through what is now Gibbon's Pass, his people mourned his death far from home. The tear-less wailing of the women when he was buried distant from his ancestors must have been wrenching. My brother and I wondered if the trees and sky had shown Chief Joseph's people how to make the sound of wordless grief. We wondered if unsettled grief shared across time and beings still calls to sympathetic souls.

I was humbled into solemn respect for this place that I walked through, while I was also brought to solemn recognition that my family history is linked to the tragic passage that happened here. My ancestors had hoped for a better life as they walked west. Their arrival in the Oregon Territory was also part of a bigger story of people moving in and indigenous people being displaced. So many hopes and sacrifices across so many people preceded my being here.

Our lives are built on extremely complex history. The trail holds that history.

## A PASSAGE THROUGH HISTORY

I was heartened to later hear that, within a month of Mike and I walking across Gibbon's Pass, some of

Below  
Gibbon's  
Pass,  
Montana



Wagon ruts on  
the Oregon Trail  
in Wyoming

the land taken from the Nez Perce in Oregon was returned to them. But we can never rewrite history, and on the trail, we walk through history. By learning what happened on the land, a walk on the CDT took on a new depth of personal meaning and deepened my respect for all the land the trail crosses. Whether each of us has personal history there or not, all of us on this land have histories that are intertwined with places we cross and people from the past who called those places home.

We are never so far from history that we don't owe respect to the land that holds that history. We show that respect in our spirit, in our behavior, and in the words we use to describe where we are and what it means to us. Rather than regard the CDT experience as an opportunity for conquering miles, let's consider this trail as a passage through history, on land that holds memories of toil, sacrifice, family, loss, and hope.



# MEDIA ROUNDUP

## PLAYLIST | ON THE DRIVE



We started with flannel and boots, added some candle flame, and then a heap of darkness for this winter mix. No pumpkin spice on [this list](#).

## BOOKS | WHAT THE WILD PEOPLE READ

Looking for a little inspiration or your next page-turner? Check out these ten picks from the 2024 trail season.

1. *Wayward Pines Trilogy*, by Blake Crouch
2. *A Walk in the Park*, by Kevin Fedarko
3. *The Underworld*, by Susan Casey
4. *Valley of the Shining Stone: The Story of Abiquiue*, Lesley Poling-Kempes
5. *The Alchemist*, by Paulo Coelho
6. *Montana 1948*, by Larry Watson
7. *Life and Fate*, by Vasily Grossman
8. *Hush of the Land*, by Arnold "Smoke" Elser with Eva-Maria Maggi
9. *Gathering Moss*, Robin Wall Kimmerer
10. *The Only Good Indians*, by Stephen Graham Jones



Photo credit: Amazon

## CDT Winter Mix



Continental Divide Trail Coalition



1 save • 9min



Evergreen (feat. Caamp)

Richy Mitch & The Coal Miners, Caamp



San Luis

Gregory Alan Isakov



Listen  
on Spotify



## FILM | BILLY AND MOLLY: AN OTTER LOVE STORY

In the mood for a family-friendly flick or just a sweet story? When a wild otter in desperate need of help washes up on his jetty in the remote Scottish islands of Shetland, Billy, his wife Susan, and their devoted sheepdog Jade find themselves with a unique new member of their family. This documentary shows us how love can reawaken us to the beauty of nature.\*



\*<https://www.dgepress.com/natgeo/shows/billy-molly-an-otter-love-story/>





# 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!*

## CHARTER MEMBERS

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.

2013 FB CDT hikers/Lisa Karst  
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Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club  
Vince Auriemma  
Chris and Sanne Bagby  
Mark Bankey  
Mike Bates  
Susan Bates  
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Mike Wollmer  
Bill Youmans  
Tim Zvada



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We wish to thank the following individuals for their generous donations between April 1, 2024 - September 15, 2024.

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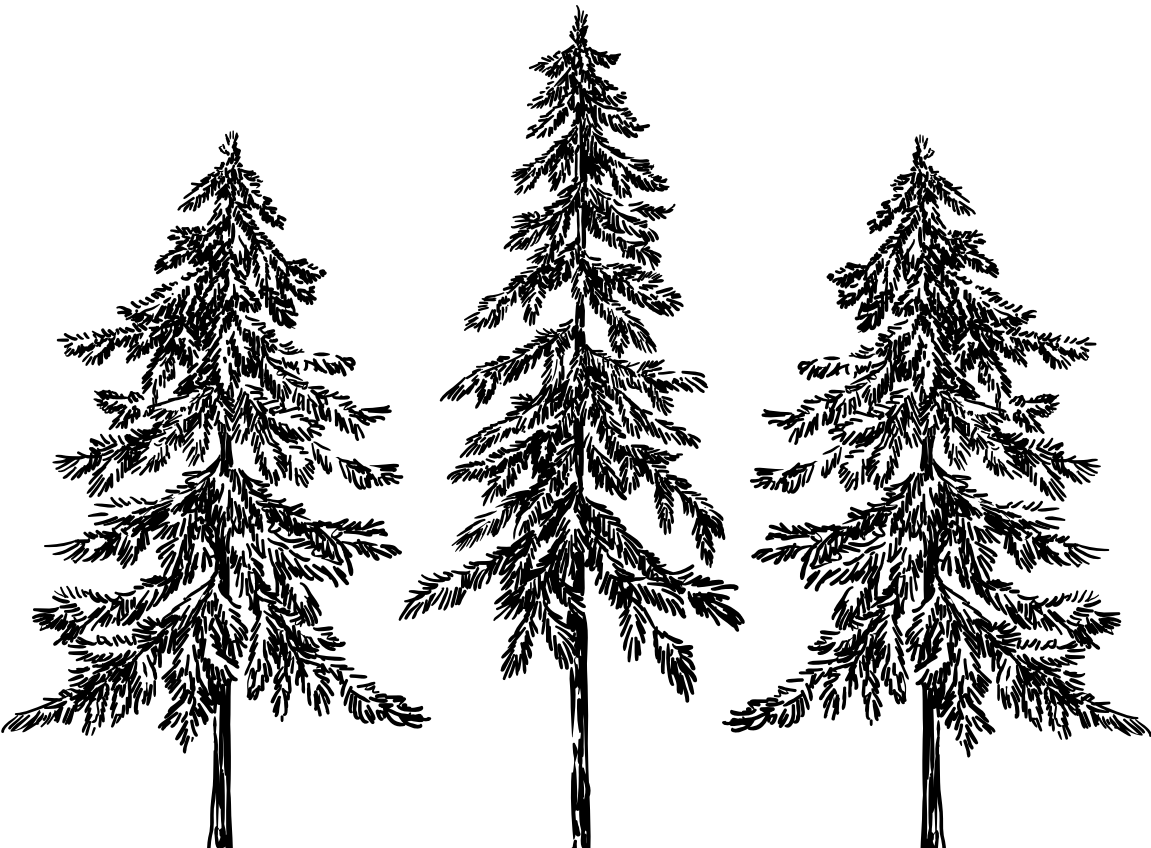
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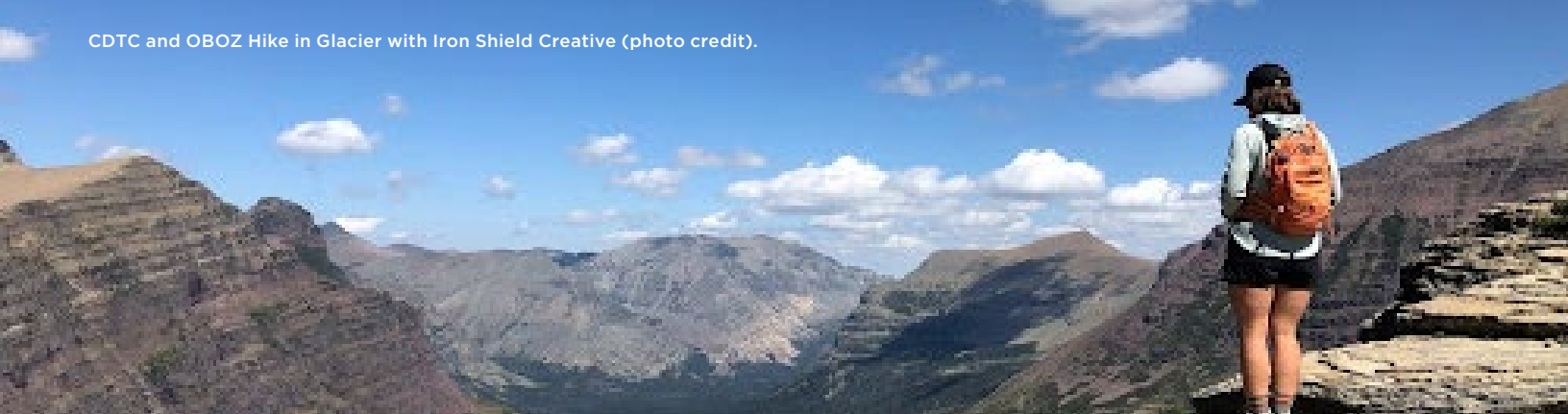




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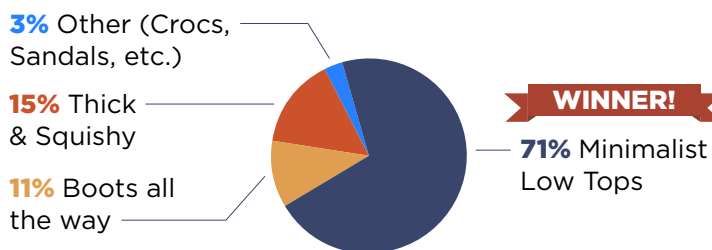




## The Shakedown | Sole Searching

For this issue, we asked the Instagram community: **What's your go-to choice for footwear?** While most were the minimalist sort, the community seems to be split between cushy thick soles, and boots, plus a group who prefers to buck the norm and opt out of conventional backpacking footwear altogether.

CDT Ambassador **Katie "Double Dip" Jackson** also weighed in:



Follow us on [Instagram](#) to weigh in on the next Shakedown!

## Lessons from 7 Million Steps on the CDT

As a thru-hiker, few choices are more important to me than footwear. In the past four months, I've walked nearly 3,000 miles across America on the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDT). Not only have I seen some of the country's most beautiful landscapes, from the green and red peaks of the San Juan Mountains to the rolling, golden hills of Idaho, but I've also gone through five pairs of shoes and walked about 7 million steps.

As the trail winds north, the terrain has changed dramatically. With these changes, what I've needed from a shoe has evolved as well.

In the bootheel of New Mexico, where the landscape is flat and the ground consists mostly of loose sand, I opted for lightweight and breathable shoes that minimized blisters. In the snow of Colorado, I wanted quick-drying and durable shoes capable of holding up to the wear and tear of the icy miles. Now that I've reached Montana, and my feet protest with every step, I prioritize cushion and comfort.

This trail- which has been transformative in every way- has primarily taught me the importance of adaptability. So many people on the trail refuse to try new shoes, even when terrain changes cause all kinds of issues with their feet. I don't think I would have made it this far into the trail without the willingness to change my plans and preconceived notions about shoes.

Of my five pairs of shoes, no two have been from the same brand. When endeavoring to hike across the country, fit and comfort come first.

My biggest piece of advice to outdoor adventurers is this: stay flexible. Few things go to plan in the backcountry, and mentally preparing for unplanned changes will save you- and your feet!- a lot of pain.

- Double Dip  @k80.trail



Photo credit Katie Jackson

Katie "Double Dip" Jackson on her 2024 CDT NoBo hike.



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# THE TERMINUS: COLORADO'S 14ERS: PEAKS OF ADVENTURE, HISTORY, AND HERITAGE

By Madelyn Dukart

Photo Credit Madelyn Dukart

**If you have hiked in Colorado for any amount of time, you've probably heard of the Colorado 14ers: 58 (or 53, depending on your definition) distinct peaks that rise a minimum of 14,000 feet above sea level. They vary in difficulty, trail mileage, and prominence, and it is not uncommon to hear of people aiming to summit all 58 of these majestic peaks.**

The weight they hold for most local Coloradans and adventure-seekers around the country resides in the sense of accomplishment one feels after checking off a high summit, but many of the peaks have held greater significance to the Indigenous peoples who traversed these mountains long before we did.

One important facet of these monumental peaks is their names. While many of these mountains had Indigenous cultural significance—whether they were locations for rituals and ceremonies or marked territorial borders—only a small fraction of the Colorado 14ers are named for Indigenous culture. Out of 58 14er names, only six of them are named for or by Indigenous people, one of which was renamed only a year ago.

## COLORADO 14ERS WITH INDIGENOUS NAMES

Of the six peaks with Indigenous names, four of them are named for the Ute Tribe, whose traditional territory spans much of present-day Colorado and Utah.

Mount Antero was named for Chief Antero of the Uinta band of the Utes. Chief Antero is remembered for being a strong advocate for peace between Native Americans and the white settlers.<sup>1</sup>

Mount Shavano, Tabeguache Peak (historically “Mogwatawungwantsingwu”), and Uncompahgre Peak are all named for the same band of Utes. The Tabeguache, which means “People of Sun Mountain,” was the largest band of the nomadic Utes. Later, the band was known as Uncompahgre, which roughly translates to “Rocks that Make Water Red.”<sup>2</sup>

Unlike Tabeguache Peak and Uncompahgre Peak, Mount Shavano was named not for the band, but for a specific person. Chief Shavano of the Tabeguache band was also remembered for his strong peacemaking desires and abilities. He once stopped a young Ute warrior from attacking the white settlers, which certainly would have led to the loss of lives on



both sides. In 1873, he and Chief Ouray signed the Brunot Treaty (also called the Brunot Agreement, as the Native Americans were not recognized as having an official government entity at that time), which removed almost four million acres of agriculturally significant land from the Utes and opened it up to mining. While this treaty negatively impacted the land and livelihood of the Native Americans who lived there, it also prevented further bloodshed over this area and kept peace between the Utes and the white settlers. Chief Ouray also has a mountain named after him; at 13,961 feet, Mount Ouray is just shy of being included in the status of 14ers.<sup>3</sup>

Huron Peak was likely named for the Huron people, also known as the Wyandot, a tribe in the Northeastern woodlands of North America. Why this mountain is named after a tribe so far from this area is unclear.

Perhaps the most controversial name of any Colorado 14er is the one that was changed in September of 2023: Mount Blue Sky, formerly Mount Evans. Mount Evans was named for John Evans, the second governor of the Territory of Colorado, who served from March 1862 to October 1865. Some major accomplishments of his include being a founder of both Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois (the town is named for him as well) and the University of Denver. Unfortunately, his lasting legacy includes instigating the Sand Creek Massacre, one of the deadliest and most grotesque massacres of Native Americans in United States history.<sup>4</sup> While the exact number of murders and mutilations in this attack is unknown, many sources estimate about 150 Cheyennes and Arapahoes were killed, most of whom were women, children, and older members of the communities.

More recently, the 43rd governor of Colorado, Jared Polis, established the Colorado Geographic Naming Advisory Board.<sup>5</sup> The board evaluates new name and name change proposals for geographic features in public places in Colorado, and Mount Evans was included for a possible renaming. The Southern Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes proposed Blue Sky, a name significant to both cultural histories. The name change was approved in November of 2022 and officially changed in late 2023.

## COLORADO 14ERS WITH NON-INDIGENOUS NAMES

Most 14ers were named after friends, mountain features, and events. For example, botanist Charles C. Parry named two peaks after his colleagues, Asa Gray and John Torrey. In the world of botany, it was common to name plants after colleagues, and as the first recorded to summit these peaks, Parry followed that same practice.<sup>6</sup> Maroon Peak was named simply for its color.<sup>7</sup> Challenger Point Peak was named for

the Space Shuttle Challenger disaster that occurred about a year before it was officially named.<sup>8</sup>

As is expected, some peaks were named for significant Coloradans. Evans is not the only Colorado leader with fraught Indigenous relations to have a peak named after him.

Mount Elbert is named for Samuel Elbert, son-in-law of John Evans who served as a Colorado governor in the 1870s. He is the governor who forced the Brunot Treaty between the U.S. government and the Ute Tribe.<sup>9</sup>

Kit Carson, who disagreed with the outright murder that took place at Sand Creek, did not physically harm the Navajo people, but instead destroyed their livelihood. He ordered mass destruction of their homes, livestock, and crops. When they finally surrendered, he forced them to walk to a part of New Mexico unsuitable for their agricultural needs – a 300-mile expulsion that became known as the Long Walk.<sup>10</sup> A failed attempt to rename the Kit Carson Peak (14,167 feet) in 2011 demonstrates the clash between the vision to rid the peaks of names that are symbolic of the cruel, unfair treatment of Indigenous peoples with the nostalgia some Coloradans have for the names of mountains they have known.

## WHY DO NAMES MATTER?

The names of Colorado 14ers hold profound significance, serving as both a testament to history and a reflection of the values we choose to honor. While some names commemorate Indigenous peoples



*Author Madelyn Dukart (she, her) Thru-Hiker, Colorado Resident*



and their enduring legacy, others memorialize figures associated with the oppression and violence against these communities.

Names hold weight; how places are identified speaks to whose history is remembered there. As we continue to recreate on these majestic peaks that punctuate the Colorado landscape with their grandeur, prominence, and rugged beauty, it's essential to understand the power of names in shaping our understanding of history and our commitment to a more inclusive and respectful future.

*Madelyn Dukart is an avid hiker, backpacker, and thru-hiker who currently resides in Colorado. Her backpacking journey began in her home state of Ohio, but after thru-hiking the Appalachian Trail, she decided to make Colorado home. She continued her love of backpacking on the Colorado Trail between 2022 and 2023, and after an injury prevented her from completing the Continental Divide Trail in 2024, she plans to try again in 2025. You can find her on Instagram [@madelyn\\_meanders](https://www.instagram.com/madelyn_meanders).*

<sup>1</sup> Continental Divide Trail Coalition. (2022, May 16). Chief Antero & Chief Shavano. <https://cdtcoalition.org/chief-antero-chief-shavano/>

<sup>2</sup> <sup>6</sup> <sup>7</sup> <sup>8</sup> <sup>9</sup> <sup>10</sup> Butzer, S. (2020, July 14). Stories behind the summits: The history & origin behind the name of every Colorado 14er. Denver 7. <https://www.denver7.com/news/local-news/stories-behind-the-summits-the-history-origin-behind-the-name-of-every-colorado-14er>

<sup>3</sup> Colorado Encyclopedia. (n.d.). Brunot Agreement. [https://coloradoencyclopedia.org/article/brunot-agreement#:~:text=The%20Brunot%20Agreement%20between%20the%20Nuche%20\(Ute\)%20and%20the%20US](https://coloradoencyclopedia.org/article/brunot-agreement#:~:text=The%20Brunot%20Agreement%20between%20the%20Nuche%20(Ute)%20and%20the%20US)

<sup>4</sup> National Park Service. (n.d.). Sand dunes historical overview. [https://home.nps.gov/articles/000/sand\\_historicaloverview.htm](https://home.nps.gov/articles/000/sand_historicaloverview.htm)

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior. (2022, September 15). Board on Geographic Names completes renaming of Mount Evans. <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/board-geographic-names-completes-renaming-mount-evans>



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View of the Muddy Pass CDT gap in Colorado on a recent Ecoflight.

Image Credit: Ecoflight