

CONTINENTAL DIVIDE TRAIL COALITION

2025 CONGRESSIONAL REPORT



Photo by Jasmine Starr



About This Report

Connecting communities, cultures, and landscapes, the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDT) is a setting for community members, decisionmakers, outdoor enthusiasts, and everyone connected to the headwaters of our continent to come together to steward the vital natural, cultural, and historic resources along the Continental Divide. Within this report, the Continental Divide Trail Coalition uplifts the importance of the cooperative stewardship model in the management of the CDT, our major accomplishments in 2024, and areas of excitement and growth in 2025.

About Hike the Hill

Celebrating its 28th year, Hike the Hill® is a joint effort between American Hiking Society and Partnership for the National Trails System to bring the trails community together and advance shared priorities for trails across the country through both the legislative and executive branch, such as trail funding, public lands management, and access to public lands.



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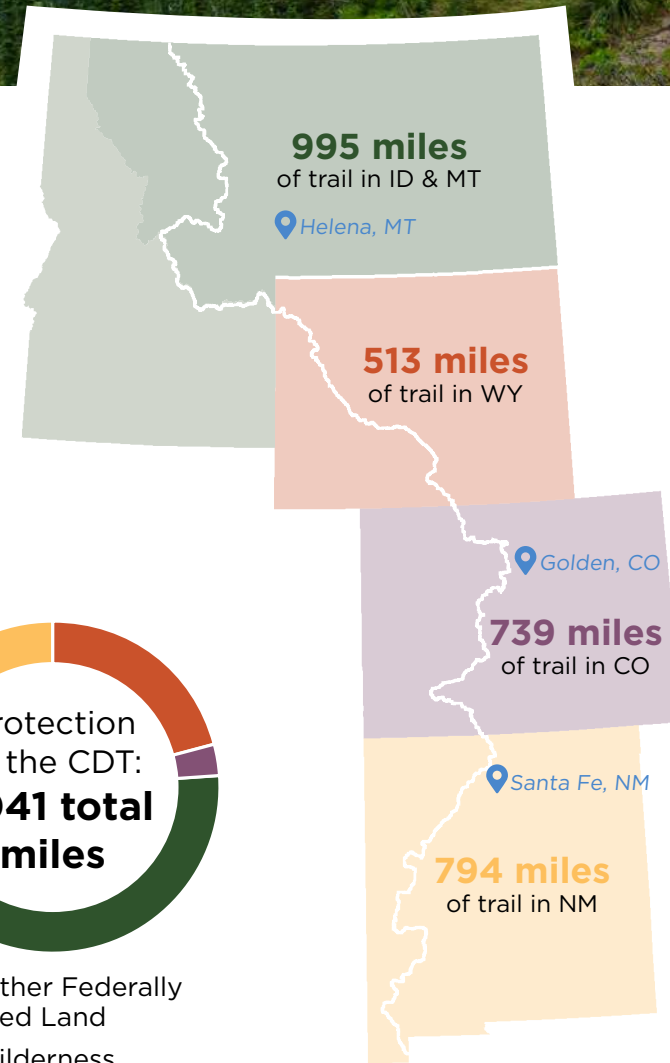


Photo by Ryan Lim

Photo by Steven Schattuck

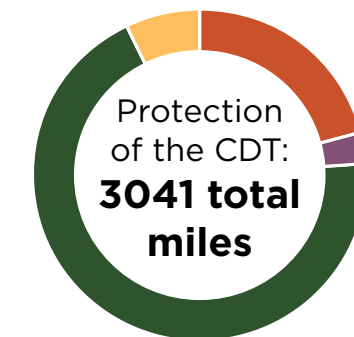
THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE TRAIL

Designated by Congress as a National Scenic Trail in 1978, the CDT follows the Continental Divide for 3,100 miles through New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming, Idaho, and Montana. The CDT traverses nationally significant scenic terrain and areas rich in the heritage and life of the Rocky Mountain West. Traveling through the biodiverse landscapes and unique communities located along America's backbone, the CDT provides opportunities for both solitude and community, challenge and respite, and a step into both the past and the future of the West.



Holistic Benefits of the CDT

- Connection & Community Identity
- Sustainable Rural Economic Development
- Public Health
- Access to Public Lands



- 69% Other Federally Managed Land
- 21% Wilderness
- 7% State, Private, Unprotected, or Other Land
- 3% Wilderness Study Area

CDTC Office Location

Photo by Mike Fuhrmann

Photo by Mike Fuhrmann

ABOUT THE CDTC

Photo by Mike Fuhrmann

Who We Are

The Continental Divide Trail Coalition's mission is to complete, protect, and elevate the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDT) while engaging in and inspiring stewardship of the trail and its surrounding landscapes. With a growing trail community, including 21 CDT Gateway Communities and over 70,000 supporters, CDTC supports protection of, connection to, and access for Continental Divide landscapes, preserving a way of life for the communities, wildlife, and plants that call the Rocky Mountain West home.

Who We Work With

In 2020, CDTC signed an MOU with USFS, BLM, and NPS, establishing the Continental Divide Trail Coalition's position as the lead private partner in the stewardship of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail. CDTC works in tandem with federal and state agencies, sovereign nations, Gateway Communities, Indigenous communities, local leaders, and volunteers through a cooperative stewardship model to effectively and proactively manage the trail and provide a CDT experience that is open to all, independent of age, experience, or background.

Our Vision

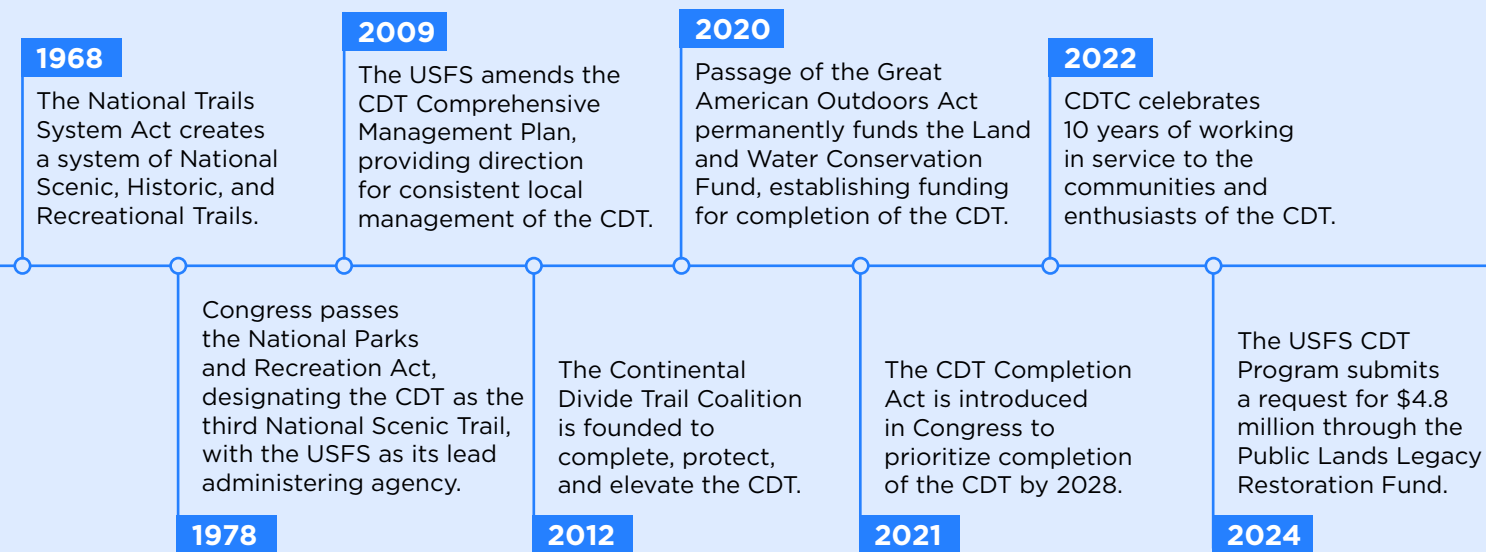
A completed Continental Divide National Scenic Trail establishes a fully protected corridor that ignites love and passion for the breathtaking landscapes of the Continental Divide and unites people from all cultures, communities, and trail experiences.

Where We Work

Over twenty CDTC staff are spread along the length of the trail, from as far south as Las Cruces, New Mexico to as far north as Bigfork, Montana. Staff gather at three regional offices in Santa Fe, New Mexico, Golden, Colorado, and Helena, Montana.



History of the CDT



RETURN ON INVESTMENT

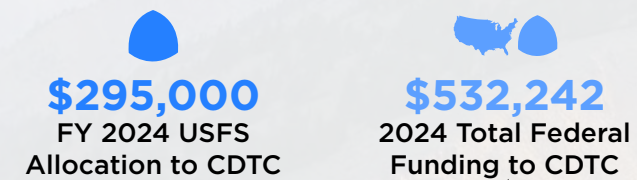
2024 ROI

The National Trails System exemplifies successful public-private partnerships. In 2024, CDTC and partners had another record-setting year in our return on investment to the American public.

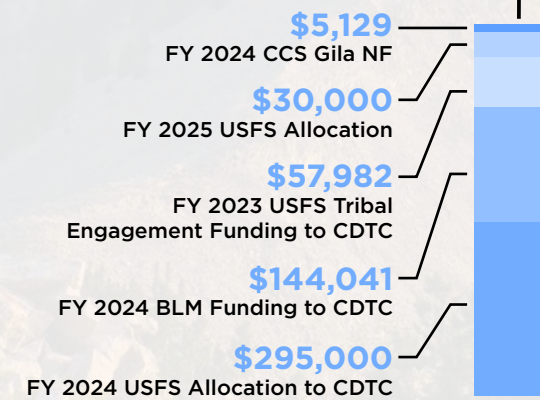


6.8 : 1
Match on the FY 2024 USFS Allocation to CDTC

6.7 : 1
CDTC and Partners' Match on the FY 2024 USFS Allocation to CDTC and Partners

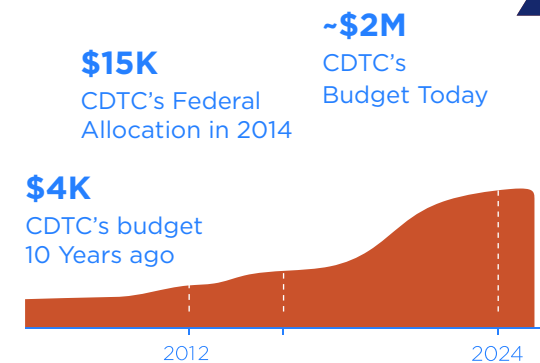


22,490
Partner & CDTC combined volunteer hours, valued at **\$753,190**



Budget Growth

In 12 years, CDTC and partners have grown to match **1 to 1 in CASH** the entire USFS allocation to the CDT.



\$579,544
Combined, CDTC provided over 17,305 volunteer hours valued at **\$579,544**

CDTC Match

Leveraging the FY 2024 USFS Allocation to CDTC, over 1,350 volunteers with CDTC contributed 17,305 volunteer hours, valued at **\$579,544**. Paired with an additional **\$1.44 million** in private funding, CDTC delivered a total of **\$2.02 million** in contributions, representing a match on the FY 2024 USFS Allocation to CDTC of **6.8 : 1**.

FY 2024 USFS Allocation to CDTC (\$295K)

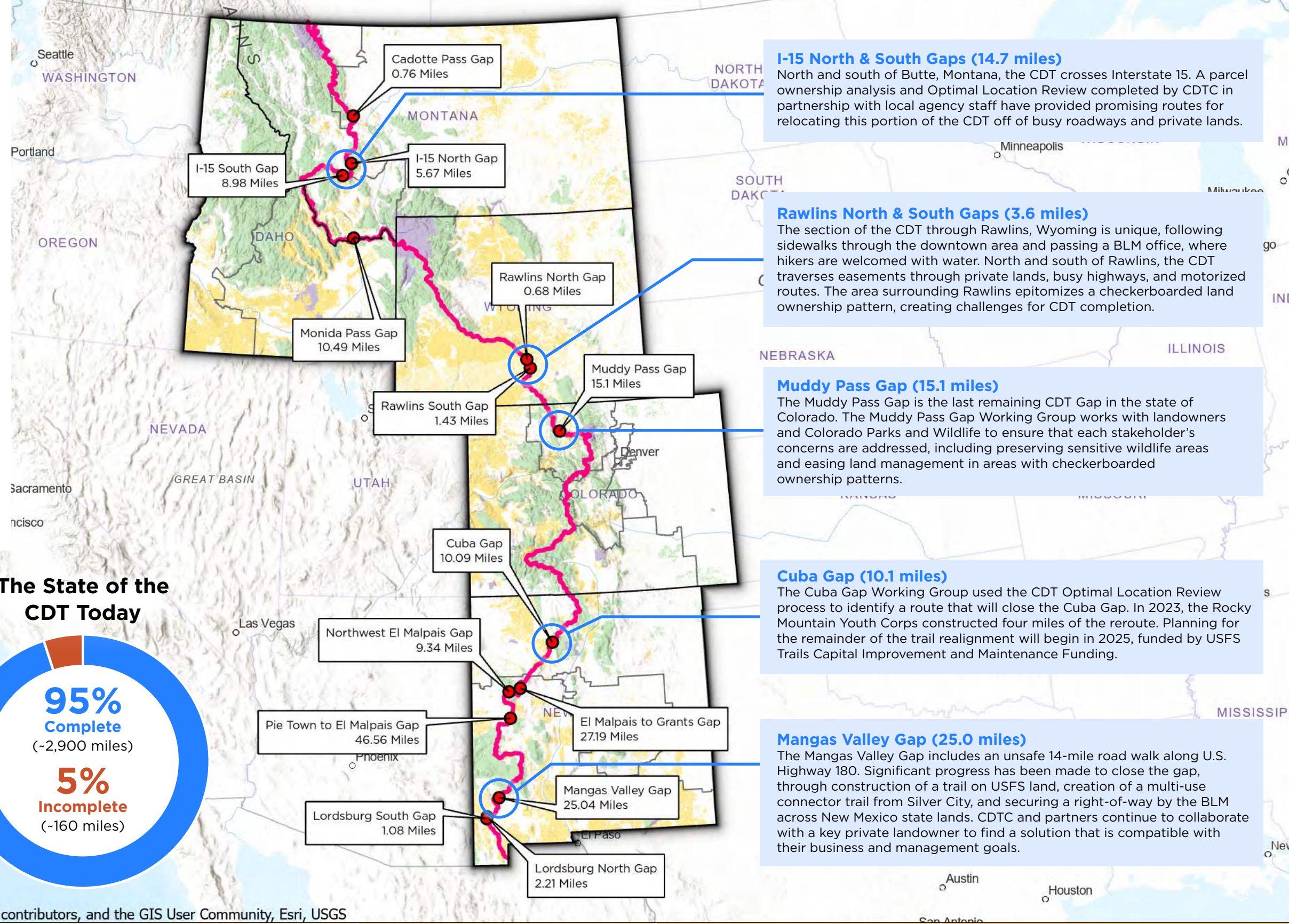
TRAIL COMPLETION & CONNECTIVITY

Now is the time to complete the CDT. Federal agencies, nonprofit partners, and volunteers have worked for nearly fifty years to complete the CDT, but today about 160 miles of the CDT are still routed on busy roadways and highways. These “gap areas” pose obstacles for hikers seeking a continuous footpath and hinder local community access to the CDT.

Completing the CDT will provide more opportunities for community members living near the CDT to safely visit the trail, allowing them better access to hiking, hunting, angling, and camping opportunities - and boosting local economies in the process!

The Path to CDT Completion

The CDT Completion Act directs the Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior to prioritize completion of the CDT, recognizing the value of cooperative stewardship and locally-led decisionmaking in the process. The CDT Completion Act states that eminent domain will never be used to complete the CDT.



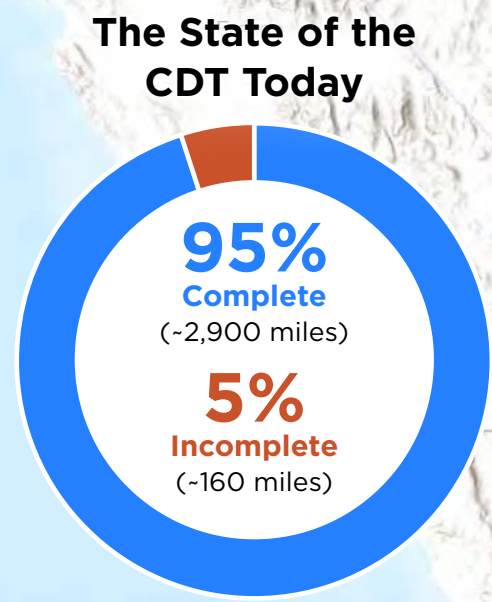
I-15 North & South Gaps (14.7 miles)
North and south of Butte, Montana, the CDT crosses Interstate 15. A parcel ownership analysis and Optimal Location Review completed by CDTC in partnership with local agency staff have provided promising routes for relocating this portion of the CDT off of busy roadways and private lands.

Rawlins North & South Gaps (3.6 miles)
The section of the CDT through Rawlins, Wyoming is unique, following sidewalks through the downtown area and passing a BLM office, where hikers are welcomed with water. North and south of Rawlins, the CDT traverses easements through private lands, busy highways, and motorized routes. The area surrounding Rawlins epitomizes a checkerboarded land ownership pattern, creating challenges for CDT completion.

Muddy Pass Gap (15.1 miles)
The Muddy Pass Gap is the last remaining CDT Gap in the state of Colorado. The Muddy Pass Gap Working Group works with landowners and Colorado Parks and Wildlife to ensure that each stakeholder's concerns are addressed, including preserving sensitive wildlife areas and easing land management in areas with checkerboarded ownership patterns.

Cuba Gap (10.1 miles)
The Cuba Gap Working Group used the CDT Optimal Location Review process to identify a route that will close the Cuba Gap. In 2023, the Rocky Mountain Youth Corps constructed four miles of the reroute. Planning for the remainder of the trail realignment will begin in 2025, funded by USFS Trails Capital Improvement and Maintenance Funding.

Mangas Valley Gap (25.0 miles)
The Mangas Valley Gap includes an unsafe 14-mile road walk along U.S. Highway 180. Significant progress has been made to close the gap, through construction of a trail on USFS land, creation of a multi-use connector trail from Silver City, and securing a right-of-way by the BLM across New Mexico state lands. CDTC and partners continue to collaborate with a key private landowner to find a solution that is compatible with their business and management goals.



Continental Divide National Scenic Trail

- CDT Gaps
- 👉 Continental Divide NST
- 🗺️ Congressional Districts
- 🟡 Bureau of Land Management
- 🟢 US Forest Service
- 🟣 National Park Service

Miles: 0 50 100 200 300 400

Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Esri, USGS

1968
The National Trails System Act creates the National Trails System

1978
Congress designates the CDT as a National Scenic Trail

2012
The Continental Divide Trail Coalition is founded

2020
Passage of the Great American Outdoors Act permanently funds the Land and Water Conservation Fund

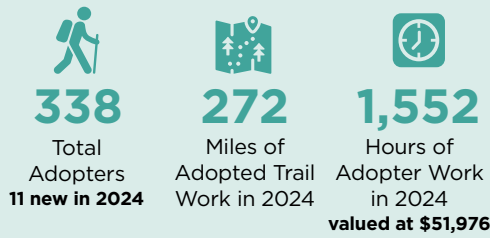
2021
The CDT Completion Act is introduced

2023
The CDT Completion Act is reintroduced bicamerally and is later reported favorably out of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee

COMMUNITY-LED STEWARDSHIP

CDTC believes that community-led stewardship is the most valuable tool that we have to care for the CDT. CDTC's Trail Adopter Program encourages regular monitoring and maintenance of the CDT by local individuals and groups. The Trail Adopter Program pairs with CDTC-led volunteer projects along the length of the trail to add capacity for land managers, elevate community priorities, and provide pathways to careers in trail-management for community members.

Trail Adopter Highlights

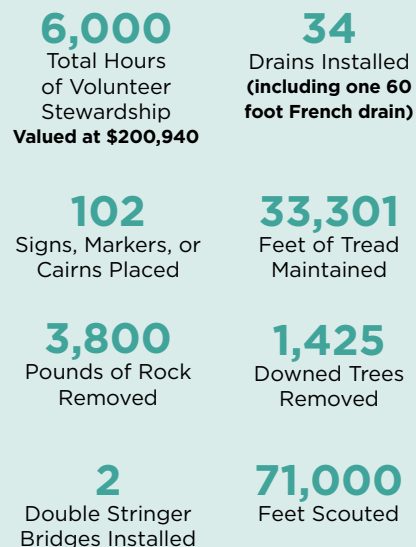


2024 Adopter Trainings

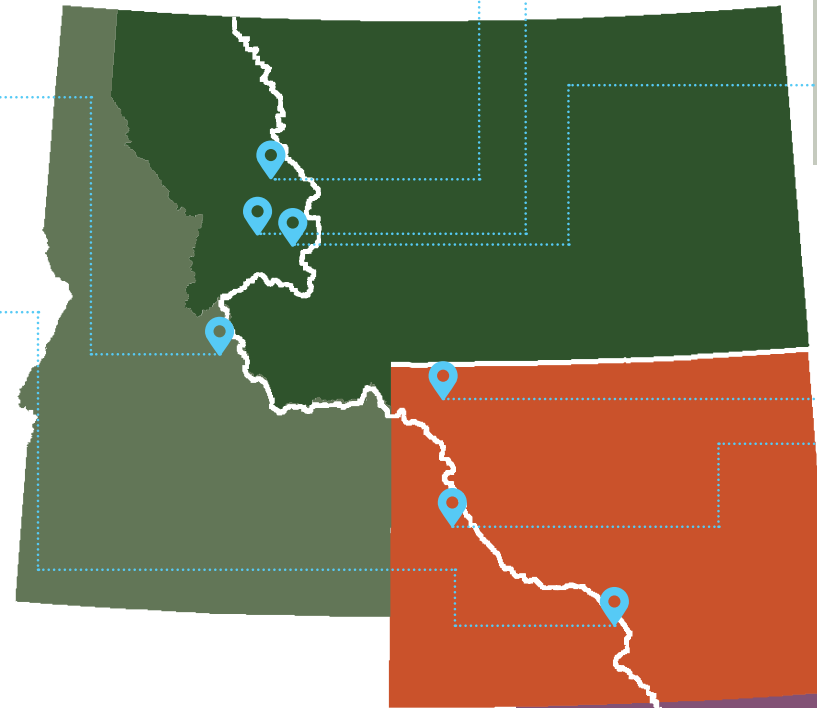


2024 Cooperative Stewardship

by the Numbers



CONNECTING COMMUNITIES, CULTURES, & LANDSCAPES



Salmon, ID
The town of Salmon, Idaho (part of the Lemhi County CDT Gateway Community) hosted a Gateway Community celebration, including free food, storytelling, and connections with local businesses, to welcome 20 CDT hikers passing through the area.

Rawlins, WY
Community members gathered at the Rawlins Adventure Fest, an event spearheaded by members of Rawlins' CDT Gateway Community Advisory Committee, which included a guided group hike on the CDT.

Carbon County, WY
Graduate students at Colorado State University conducted interviews and surveys to gain a better understanding of community members' perceptions of the relationship between wind energy development and outdoor recreation.

Breckenridge, CO
CDTC partnered with Friends of the Dillon Ranger District and the US Forest Service to host a Trail Adopter Training on a portion of the CDT that is co-located with the Colorado Trail.

Lake City, CO
Two CDTC staff members joined a Hiker Dinner at the Lake City Hiker Center, a community-led initiative to greet hikers and build connections. The visit was part of a longer road trip including trail management planning and a volunteer meet-up.

Chama, NM
Eight community members joined CDTC and Hike for Mental Health for a group hike focused on the value of the outdoors for mental health and wellbeing.

Grants, NM
The town of Grants unveiled a new CDT-themed mural along its mainstreet celebrating the local landscape and culture. This community-driven artwork highlights the town's connection to the CDT and its unique role as a Gateway Community.

Hidalgo County, NM
Hidalgo County was officially designated as the 21st CDT Gateway Community! Designation was marked with a ceremony at the 2nd annual Explore Hidalgo County Outdoors Festival and a community hike with the Bootheel Youth Association on the CDT.

Lincoln, MT
CDT Gateway Community Ambassadors hosted a new hike series with the local school's outdoors club. Students learned about the flora, fauna, and natural history of their area during guided interpretive hikes.

Montana
In partnership with the American Indian College Fund, CDTC Tribal Scholars from the Taos Pueblo, Blackfoot Nation, and Confederated Salish-Kootenai Tribes visited the National Bison Range.

Butte, MT
Community members gathered for the 8th annual Pete Sorini Day community stewardship project, with this year's focus being logging out trees from the CDT.

Anaconda, MT
The owners of Pintlers Portal Hostel hosted two hiker nights, drawing over 50 hikers and community members for evenings of storytelling and camaraderie.

Yellowstone National Park, WY
Eight volunteers joined CDTC staff for a field project in Yellowstone National Park, which laid the first round of dirt on a 120 foot turnpike and closed 250 feet of social trail to protect sensitive ecosystems. Volunteers enjoyed a visit from the park's Vice Superintendent!

Pinedale, WY
Sublette County Visitor Center hosted an Art Stop where CDT hikers could reflect on their experience and create art to share with the community. Over 120 CDT hikers participated and 25 pieces of art were left on display.

Georgetown, CO
Youth volunteers from Denver's Environmental Learning for Kids joined CDTC for a trail maintenance project, which also included informational presentations about career opportunities in conservation and land management.

Leadville, CO
During Leadville's annual SouthBound Trail Daze Festival in September, CDTC unveiled a new downtown informational kiosk and connected with over 60 community members and hikers.

Leadville, CO
A CDT Gateway Community Ambassador led CDTC's first-ever group hike up a peak over 14,000 feet, summiting Mt. Elbert, the tallest mountain in Colorado.

Salida, CO
Community members celebrated the unveiling of a new CDT-focused kiosk in downtown Salida, which provides information about trail access and responsible outdoor recreation.

Silver City, NM
This year's annual CDT Trail Days festival celebrated the tenth anniversary of Silver City as a CDT Gateway Community, and included a vendor festival, a speaker series, and a kickoff party.

Silver City, NM
A CDT Gateway Community Ambassador led six community hikes in commemoration of the centennial anniversary of the designation of the Gila Wilderness, bringing together over 100 community members throughout the year.



TRAIL PRIORITIES

Photo by Jasmine Star

Trail Funding & Appropriations

- ✔ **Increased funding** for the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail
- ✔ **Dedicated, robust, and increased funding in FY25 and FY26** for the entire National Trails System through the U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Fish and Wildlife Service
- ✔ **Passage of a FY25 appropriations bill** and a full FY26 appropriations bill in order to protect \$100+ million in trails and trail-related funding
- ✔ **The USFS CDT Program applied for \$4.8 million** in Great American Outdoors Act Legacy Restoration Fund funding to address deferred maintenance and infrastructure improvements in New Mexico, Colorado, and Wyoming.

Trail Legislation

- ✔ **Support & Co-Sponsor** the CDT Completion Act
- ✔ **Support & Co-Sponsor** the America the Beautiful Act, extending the Legacy Restoration Fund

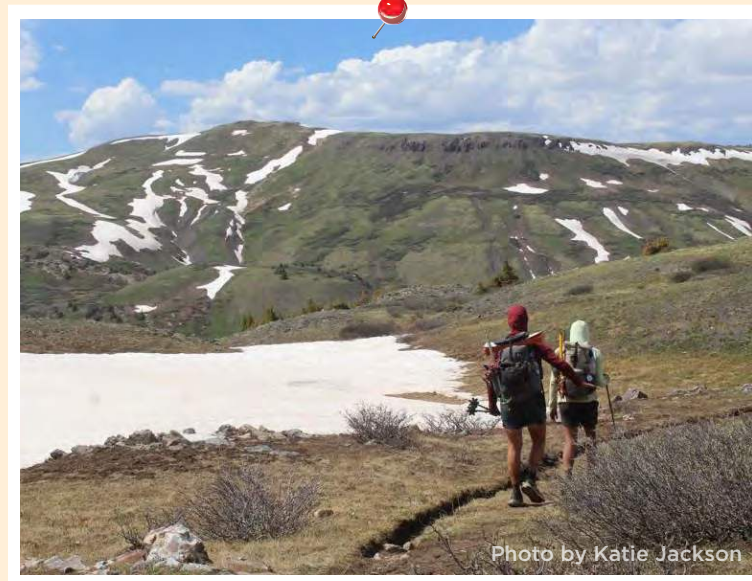


Photo by Katie Jackson



Photo by Jasmine Star



VISIT US ON THE CDT

Our biggest ask... explore the CDT with us!

Photo by Jasmine Star

2025 Events

CDT Trail Days

April 18-20, 2025
SILVER CITY, NEW MEXICO

National Trails Day

June 7, 2025

National Public Lands Day

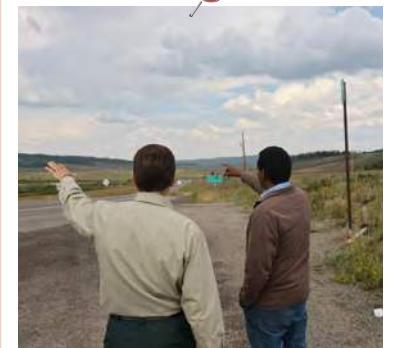
September 27, 2025

CDT Birthday

November 10, 2025



Rep. Vasquez & Senator Heinrich in Silver City, NM



Rep. Neguse visiting the Muddy Pass gap



New Mexico Roundhouse celebrating the CDT Easement



A Christmas tree at the Capitol displays National Trails System ornaments



Senator Bennet at the Camp Hale - Continental Divide National Monument Designation



CDTC staff and partners at Hike the Hill 2025



Former CO Senator Cory Gardner views a map of the Muddy Pass Gap during a field visit



Explore the CDT with Us!

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