



CONTINENTAL DIVIDE TRAIL COALITION STRATEGIC VISION

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Dear CDTC Community,

We are excited to share the 2025-2029 Strategic Vision for the Continental Divide Trail Coalition (CDTC). We see the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDT) as a connector of communities, cultures, and landscapes that span 3,100 miles along the Continental Divide. This Strategic Vision states the actions we are taking to fulfill our mission.

The CDT landscape holds a complex history of human settlement, tradition, and spiritual significance. It is a connector of communities, a migration corridor, and it provides water for over 80 million people.

For many, the Continental Divide is part of their spiritual connection to the land, and it is known as a place where life emerges. These relationships and connections with the Continental Divide—and many others—help inform our work and ensure that the CDT remains an icon of the American West. We hope that the CDT provides everyone the opportunity for inspiration, play, and to experience the world around us and have it positively affect our hearts, bodies, minds, and souls.

CDTC's Strategic Vision is the framework that will guide our work to learn from the land and its spirit. From it, we may build greater understanding amongst all those who are connected to and love the CDT and its surrounding landscapes. The Strategic Vision is a statement of how we envision continuing to do our work in service of the CDT and connected communities and landscapes. It also reflects the feedback of the CDT community, and we share our deepest gratitude for sharing your insights.

Join us as we continue along this journey, and help us ensure that the Continental Divide and the trail along its spine continue to thrive and connect us today, tomorrow, and for all the generations ahead of us. Thank you for your contribution to the noble work of cooperative stewardship in the Continental Divide landscape.

Sincerely,



Greg Pierce,
President, CDTC Board of Directors



Teresa Ana Martinez,
Executive Director, CDTC

3100 Miles from Mexico to Canada

5 Major watersheds serving over 80 million people

7 Major ecoregions of the Rocky Mountains connected

160 Miles to complete



CONTINENTAL DIVIDE TRAIL COALITION STRATEGIC VISION

The 2025-2029 Strategic Vision for the Continental Divide Trail Coalition provides the long-range vision for the future direction and priorities of the Continental Divide Trail Coalition (CDTC). Since 2012, CDTC has coordinated more than 200,000 hours of volunteer stewardship to improve the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDT), raised almost \$10 million dollars to support its stewardship, built positive relationships with federal land managers and community-based organizations, hosted countless events to raise awareness of the CDT, implemented Trail Adopter and Gateway Community programs, and effectively advocated for the CDT on local, regional, and federal levels.

We remain extremely proud of our accomplishments to date, and yet, there remains much more to be done to fulfill our vision for the future. This includes protecting the CDT's wealth of natural and scenic resources, building a sense of community, promoting public land stewardship, inspiring healthy lifestyles and play, and above all, encouraging people to know, experience, and care for the CDT. After gathering feedback from our agency partners, non-profit organizations, CDTC volunteers and members, and members of the public, our board and staff present this Strategic Vision to guide our efforts over the next four years.

Strategic Planning Process

CDTC staff and Board of Directors worked collaboratively to assess the success of previous strategic planning efforts and CDTC's current opportunities and challenges. In the summer of 2023, our organizational and agency partners, along with over 800 members of the public, shared their feedback on CDTC's programs, priorities, and overall direction. CDTC staff worked with Ruby Mountain Consulting to perform more in-depth interviews with CDTC's staff, Board, and key partners. The review of feedback culminated in a strategic vision retreat held in Leadville, CO in September 2023. CDTC's Board, Staff, and key partners reviewed the information gathered from survey and interview responses and began to lay out a map for the future of CDTC to carry out our mission.

The review identified areas where CDTC needed to update existing language in its Mission, Vision, and Values statements, and Organizational Pillars. This Strategic Vision aims to provide meaningful, achievable overarching goals and objectives for prioritizing work, while still allowing room for creativity and innovation as the trail and the world around it inevitably change in the coming years.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SUPPORT THE CDTC AS A DONOR,

VOLUNTEER, ADVOCATE, OR MEMBER,

VISIT CDTCOALITION.ORG OR EMAIL US AT

INFO@CDTCOALITION.ORG.



Simon Eklov

Stakeholder Feedback

Through Stakeholder surveys and partner interviews, we heard that CDTC should continue to prioritize trail completion, trail connection, and corridor protection. We heard support for our work to amplify and engage communities along the trail, and to expand our efforts beyond designated Gateway Communities to all communities along the trail. We received positive feedback for regionalizing our operations across the Trail, the importance of CDTC staff living and working in trailside communities, and the importance of regional efforts and operations. We received positive support for our use of new technologies to provide free trail information and resources to access the CDT, and the demand for additional investment to ensure this continues to remain true.

We also received support for our work with Indigenous People and our leadership in creating opportunities for all people to enjoy the CDT. The feedback also identified areas for CDTC to improve systems, technologies, and operations so we continue to meet the demands of our current work and the identified gaps and areas suggested for future investment.

From our agency and organizational partners, we heard the importance of our transparent operations and support as conveners amongst the broader CDT community. We heard the increased importance and demand for our role as storytellers, ensuring that we amplify the voices of all who love the Continental Divide and the Continental Divide Trail to help inspire growth of the CDT community. And, we heard approval of our direction to remain flexible, innovative, creative in our work, and to remain a sustainably growing organization that continues to remain resilient in the face of change.

Those themes are reflected in our Strategic Vision Goals. We invite you to join us over the next few years and help us realize our vision!

About CDTC

Recognizing the need for a national advocacy group and unified voice for the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, the Continental Divide Trail Coalition was formed in 2012 by a group of dedicated volunteers.

CDTC is composed of volunteers, recreationists, trail supporters, and natural resource professionals who aim to build on past successes, carry forward the efforts of their predecessors, and strengthen relationships with local and regional groups that care about the CDT.

Together, we are working to cultivate a vibrant national and international community dedicated to the CDT.



THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE TRAIL COALITION WAS FOUNDED IN 2012.

Our Mission

CDTC's mission is to complete, protect, and elevate the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail while engaging in and inspiring stewardship of the trail and its surrounding landscapes.

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.

Our Values

CDTC conducts all relationships, transactions, and dealings with integrity and honesty and promotes working relationships with board members, staff, volunteers, partners, and program beneficiaries based on mutual respect, fairness, and openness inspired by the power and grandeur of the CDT.

A Commitment to Trail Completion and Connection

CDTC remains committed to CDT completion as our highest priority. We also commit to trail connectivity as a means of realizing the potential of the trail as a connector of landscapes, cultures, and communities along its path from Mexico to Canada. CDTC will prioritize trail completion and trail connection in our work.

Organizational Pillars

CDTC is grounded in its four organizational pillars:

Stewardship of the CDT: CDTC recognizes the CDT belongs to and should reflect all the faces of America, and we have a responsibility to steward the trail's resources for future generations. CDTC ensures all of the resources the trail connects are nurtured and held sacred. CDTC commits to building a non-motorized primitive trail and protecting the trail corridor along the Continental Divide for all people to enjoy and experience.

Building an Engaged Trail Community: CDTC establishes community-centered relationships through activities that promote connection to the CDT, as well as its construction, maintenance, and overall support. CDTC is grounded in its grassroots foundations and engagement with local volunteers and community-led stewardship as the most powerful way to preserve and protect the CDT.

Trail Information, Education, and Awareness: CDTC raises awareness and appreciation of the CDT and commits to maintaining free, high-quality, accessible trail data and information. CDTC serves as a convener to coordinate information among our partners and works to disseminate free trail information, media, and data.

Organizational Governance: CDTC develops and sustains an active, representative governing body that sets the mission and strategic direction of the organization and provides oversight of the finances, operations, and policies of CDTC.



ORGANIZATIONAL PILLARS & STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

STEWARDSHIP OF THE CDT

Cooperative Management: CDTC ensures high-quality volunteer stewardship of the CDT and its surrounding landscapes through mutually respectful and community-centered relationships with land managers, Indigenous People and Tribal Nations, trail communities, existing partners, and new groups.

CDT Connectivity: The CDT is 100% located on a high-quality optimal trail route(s) that maximizes corridor connection, the CDT Experience, and increased access for all.

Trail Condition: The CDT is well maintained and employs the highest quality trail design, construction, and maintenance standards to ensure a sustainable trail resource.

Landscape-Scale Conservation: CDT stewardship enhances the values of the nationally significant natural, cultural, and historical resources of the Continental Divide landscape.

TRAIL INFORMATION, EDUCATION, & AWARENESS

Trail Information: Information and educational resources encourage safe, sustainable, and enjoyable access to the CDT through signed trailhead kiosks, trail markers, hiking guides, interactive maps, and other media.

Community Voices: CDTC amplifies community stories to reflect the diversity of interests and experiences existing along the Continental Divide landscape.

Awareness of the CDT: CDTC creates opportunities, increases access, and raises awareness to welcome all CDT travelers, first-time visitors and local community members.

BUILDING AN ENGAGED TRAIL COMMUNITY

Community-Led Stewardship: CDTC supports the expansion of on-the-ground volunteer stewardship activities led by Tribal Nations, recreationists, partners, organizations, communities, and youth with a diverse range of perspectives and life experiences.

Trail Identity: All people who love the CDT feel connected in their stewardship efforts and contribute to the resilience of the trail and the communities and landscapes it connects.

Diversity of Voices: CDTC prioritizes fostering a sense of belonging and creating an inclusive and expansive community in all of our programs.

Community-Centered Relationships: CDTC maintains relationships to ensure that the voices of the communities along the CDT are reflected in the decisions affecting the CDT.

ORGANIZATIONAL GOVERNANCE

Adaptive Management: CDTC remains flexible and adaptive to the dynamic nature of sociopolitical and natural systems to ensure it has the resources, tools, capacity, and technologies to accomplish its mission.

CDTC Sustainable Growth: CDTC strengthens our presence along the trail, continues to regionalize operations, and invests in growth that responds to the needs of agency and organizational partners, CDT communities, and trail visitors.

CDTC Resilience: CDTC benefits from a diversity of funding sources, partners, communities, and trail visitors to ensure pathways for future CDT stewardship and enjoyment of the CDT Experience.

TRANSFORMING OUR VISION INTO ACTION

REGIONALIZE

Regionalize activities, programs, and staff to effectively respond, connect, and engage state, regional, and local community-centered efforts.

CONVENE

Serve as a convener to ensure communities, partners, and agencies maintain connection and understanding while creating opportunities for collaboration.

STORYTELL

Share stories to elevate and amplify voices that raise awareness about the CDT and the communities it connects.

SUSTAIN

Develop sustainable resources, systems, and relationships that support and allow for stability, resilience, and adaptability for all of CDTC's efforts.

The Piikuni Lands Crew, featured in the winter 2024 issue of Passages Magazine. Blackfoot lands, Montana.

A CDTC volunteer crew working hard in New Mexico.



The image is a composite of two aerial photographs. The top portion shows the underside of a white airplane wing with a camera mounted underneath, looking down at a vast landscape of white clouds and distant mountains. The bottom portion shows a close-up aerial view of a rugged mountain peak, Whiteley Peak, with a dirt trail winding up its side. The mountain is covered in green coniferous trees, and the sky is filled with soft, white clouds.

Continental Divide Trail Coalition

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Whiteley Peak from the 2024 Ecoflight of the CDT. Photo courtesy of Ecoflight