

Pacific Crest Trail

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The Pacific Crest Trail, officially designated as the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (PCT) is a long-distance hiking and equestrian trail closely aligned with the highest portion of the Sierra Nevada and Cascade mountain ranges, which lie 100 to 150 miles (160 to 240 km) east of the U.S. Pacific coast.

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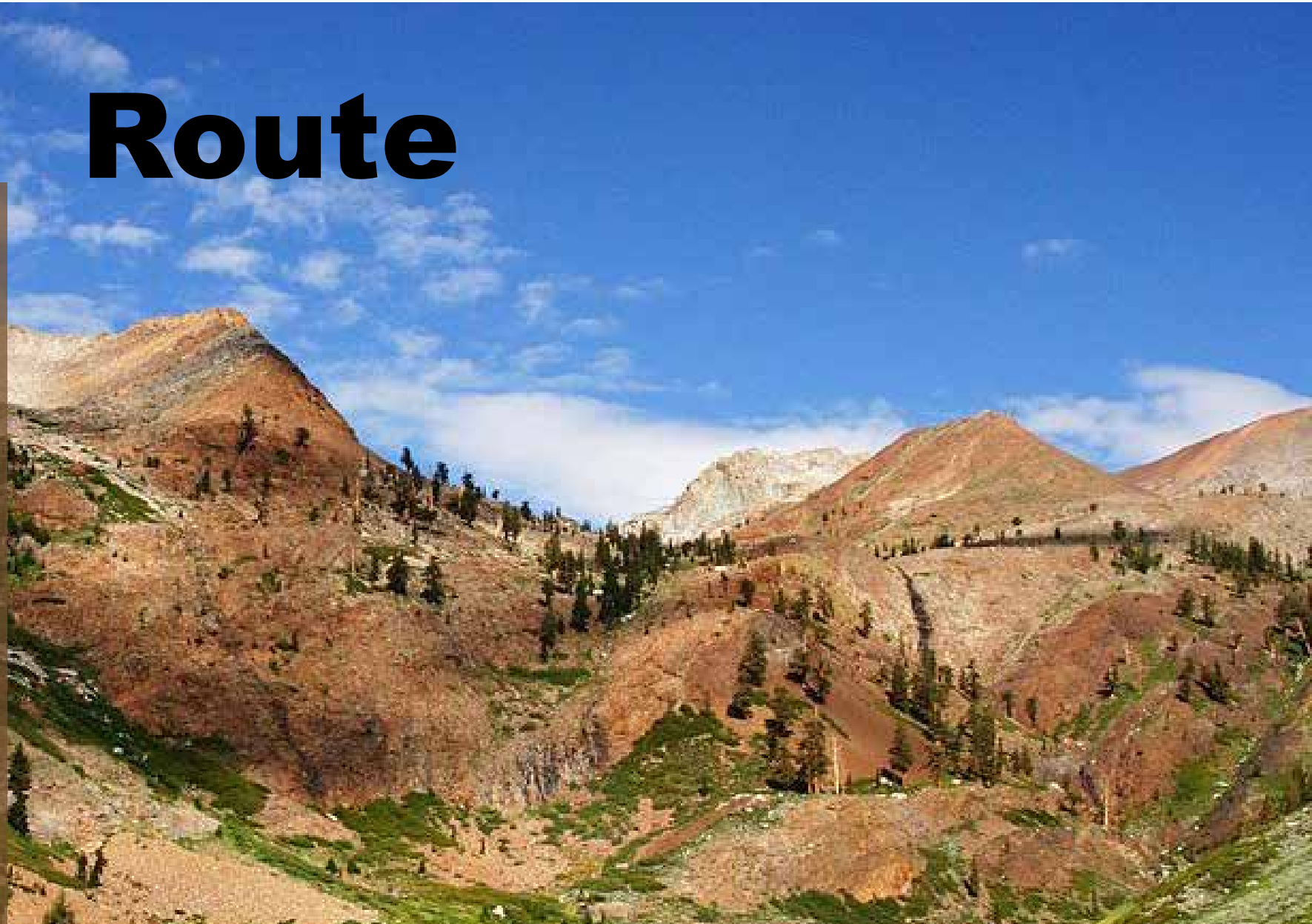
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The route is mostly through National Forest and protected wilderness. The trail avoids civilization and covers scenic and pristine mountainous terrain with few roads. It passes through the Laguna, Santa Rosa, San Jacinto, San Bernardino, San Gabriel, Liebre, Tehachapi, Sierra Nevada, and Klamath ranges in California, and the Cascade Range in California, Oregon, and Washington.

A parallel route for bicycles, the Pacific Crest Bicycle Trail (PCBT) is a 2,500-mile (4,000 km) route designed closely parallel to the PCT on roads. The PCT and PCBT cross in about 27 places along their routes.

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The Pacific Crest Trail was first proposed by Clinton C. Clarke, as a trail running from Mexico to Canada along the crest of the mountains in California, Oregon, and Washington. The original proposal was to link the John Muir Trail, the Tahoe-Yosemite Trail (both in California), the Skyline Trail (in Oregon) and the Cascade Crest Trail (in Washington).

The Pacific Crest Trail System Conference was formed by Clarke to both plan the trail and to lobby the federal government to protect the trail. The conference was founded by Clarke, the Boy Scouts, the YMCA, and Ansel Adams (amongst others). From 1935 through 1938, YMCA groups explored the 2000 miles of potential trail and planned a route, which has been closely followed by the modern PCT route.[9]

In 1968, President Lyndon B. Johnson defined the PCT and the Appalachian Trail with the National Trails System Act. The PCT was then constructed through cooperation between the federal government and volunteers organized by the Pacific Crest Trail Association. In 1993, the PCT was officially declared finished.[9]

The Trust for Public Land has purchased and conserved more than 3,000 acres along the Pacific Crest Trail in Washington.[11] Consolidation of this land has allowed for better recreational access as well as greater ease to manage conservation lands.[11]

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A scenic view of a mountain range with a lake in the foreground and evergreen trees. The mountains are rugged and rocky, with some snow patches. The sky is clear and blue. The foreground shows a rocky ledge and several evergreen trees.

Thru hiking is a term used in referring to hikers who complete long-distance trails from end to end in a single trip. The Pacific Crest Trail, Appalachian Trail, and Continental Divide Trail were the first three long-distance trails in the U.S.. Successfully thru-hiking all of these three trails is known as the Triple Crown of Hiking.[12] Thru-hiking is a long commitment, usually taking between four and six months, that requires thorough preparation and dedication. The Pacific Crest Trail Association estimates that it takes most hikers between six and eight months to plan their trip.

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Don and June Mulford made the first verifiable equestrian Thru-Ride of the PCT in 1959.[53][54][55] In that year the Pacific Crest Trail stretched a poorly marked 2,400 miles from Mexico to Canada. More concept than footpath, the trail was an oft-broken, high-ridge track disappearing regularly from map and terrain. On April 19, 1959, on an empty scrub sage plain seven miles east of Tijuana, with four horses, Don and June Mulford began their journey north to the Washington–Canada border. The Mulfords went to Hollywood for three months immediately after the ride and were featured on network television.

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In 2008, an agreement for realignment through Tejon Ranch in Southern California was reached. This realignment would relocate 37 miles of the PCT from the Mojave Desert floor to the more scenic Tehachapi Mountains. While an agreement was reached, the realignment is a long-term project; many details remain to be determined, as well as an Optimal Location Review—a lengthy process through which the ideal path for the new section of trail is specified. Actual relocation of the trail is unlikely to happen before 2021.

Portland, Oregon's 40-Mile Loop proposes to extend the Springwater Corridor hiking and bicycling spur trail to connect the Pacific Crest Trail[58] with the proposed Cazadero Trail.[59]

Plans are currently in progress to add a dedicated pedestrian/equestrian lane to the Bridge of the Gods (modern structure) across the Columbia River. Currently, PCT hikers and equestrians must cross the bridge walking in vehicle traffic lanes—a potential danger which the new lane will eliminate. A completion date for this project is unknown.

Sources

A scenic landscape photograph of a mountain lake. In the foreground, a hiker wearing a yellow hat and a backpack is standing on a rocky outcrop, looking towards the lake. The lake is calm and reflects the surrounding environment. The background features a steep, rocky mountain slope covered with evergreen trees under a blue sky with scattered white clouds.

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Available at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pacific_Crest_Trail#References