

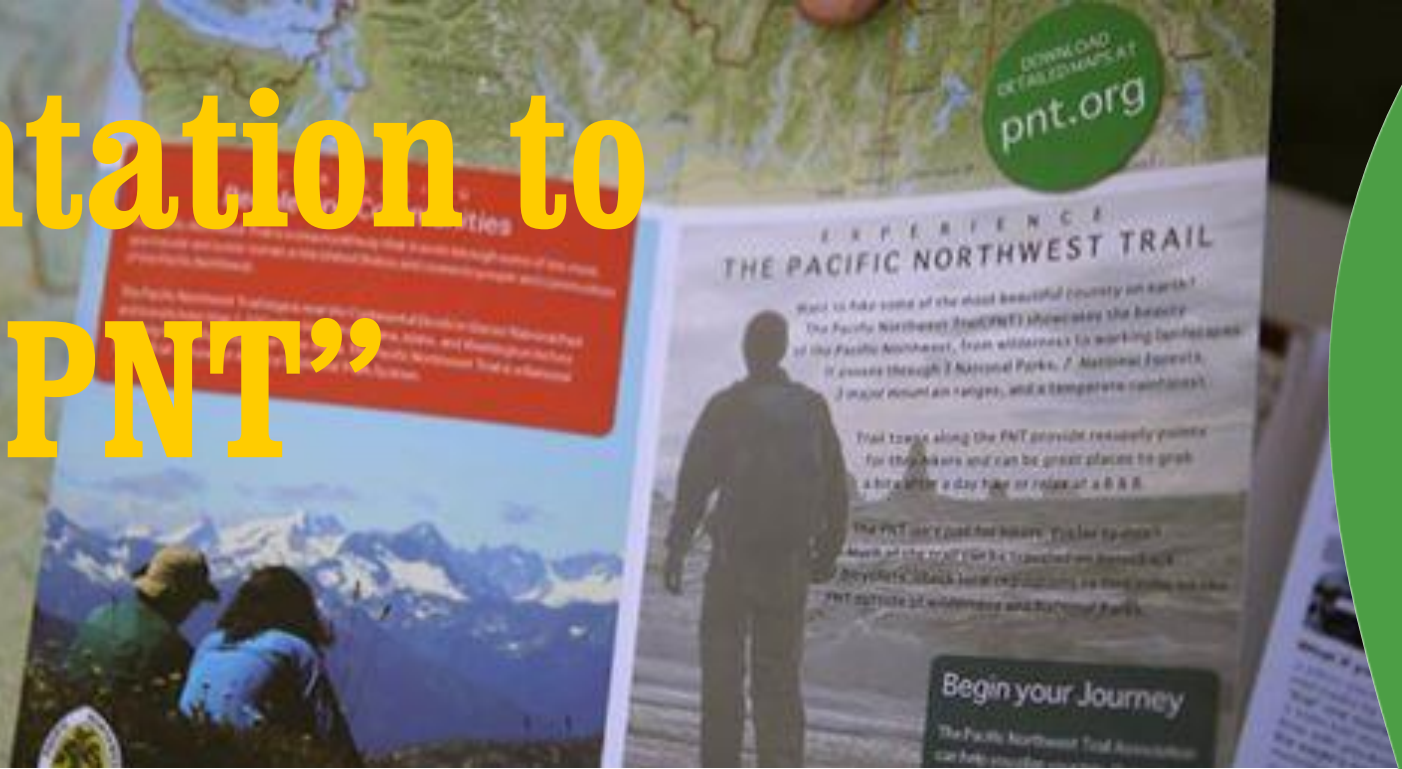


from the Continental Divide to the Pacific Ocean

Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail



Orientation to “the PNT”



Designated by Congress in 2009 as one of America's 11 National Scenic Trails

1,200-mile route provides outstanding opportunities for long-distance non-motorized recreation

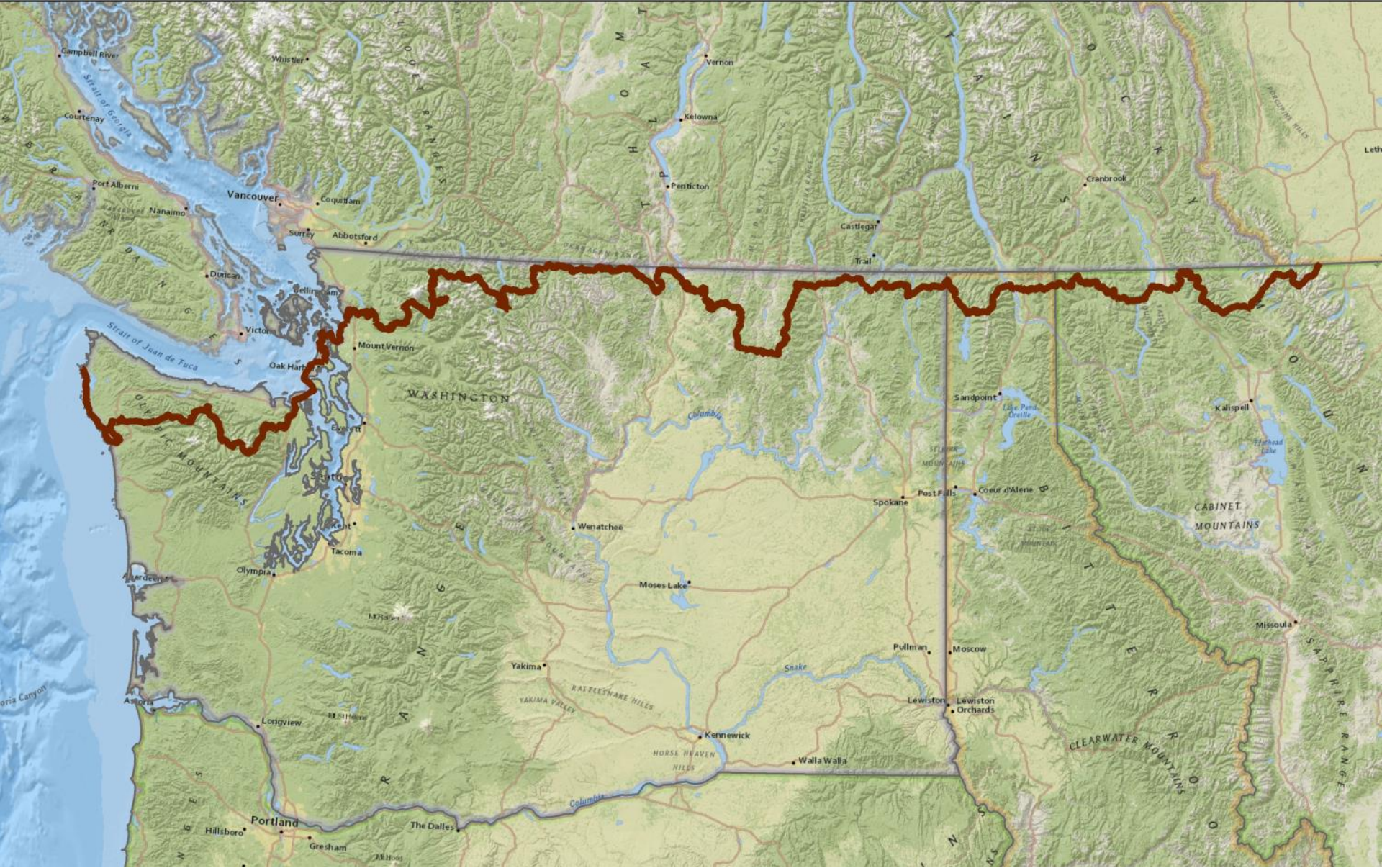
Starts at the Continental Divide: Chief Mountain in Glacier National Park, Montana

Ends at the Pacific Ocean: Cape Alava in Olympic National Park, Washington

Experience wilderness, working landscapes, and small town Main Streets



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Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail



About the PNT

What is a National Scenic Trail?

About the Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail

Comprehensive Plan and Environmental Assessment



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What is a National Scenic Trail?



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History of National Trails

Early long-distance recreation trails: Appalachian, Pacific Crest

1966: Bureau of Outdoor Recreation's **Trails for America** report recommends a series of long-distance trails across America, defined as *extended trails which have natural, scenic, or historic qualities that give them recreation-use potential of national significance.*





History of National Trails

1968: President Johnson signs the **National Trails System Act**

- Established National Scenic Trails (NSTs) and National Historic Trails (NHTs)
- Designated Appalachian and Pacific Crest as the first NSTs

Amended many times since to include 11 NSTs and 19 NHTs



National Trails System





Why we have National Scenic Trails

Section 2(a) of the National Trails System Act:

to provide for the ever-increasing outdoor recreation needs of an expanding population and in order to promote the preservation of, public access to, travel within, and enjoyment and appreciation of the open-air, outdoor areas and historic resources of the Nation.





What are National Scenic Trails

Section 3(a) of the National Trails System Act:

extended trails so located as to provide for maximum outdoor recreation potential and for the conservation and enjoyment of the nationally significant scenic, historic, natural, or cultural qualities of the areas through which such trails may pass



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Section 7(c) prohibits use of motorized vehicles on NSTs

A photograph of two hikers on a dirt trail. The hiker in the foreground is wearing a brown shirt, shorts, a white helmet, and sunglasses, and is pointing towards the left. The hiker behind is wearing a blue shirt, shorts, a red helmet, and sunglasses. They are both carrying backpacks. The trail is surrounded by dense evergreen trees and dry grass. In the background, a hillside with more trees is visible under a clear blue sky.

Allowable Uses of National Scenic Trails












National Scenic Trails are non-motorized.

Section 7(j) of the National Trails System Act:

Potential trail uses allowed on designated components of the national trails system may include, but are not limited to, the following: bicycling, cross-country skiing, day hiking, equestrian activities, jogging or similar fitness activities, trail biking, overnight and long-distance backpacking



11 National Scenic Trails

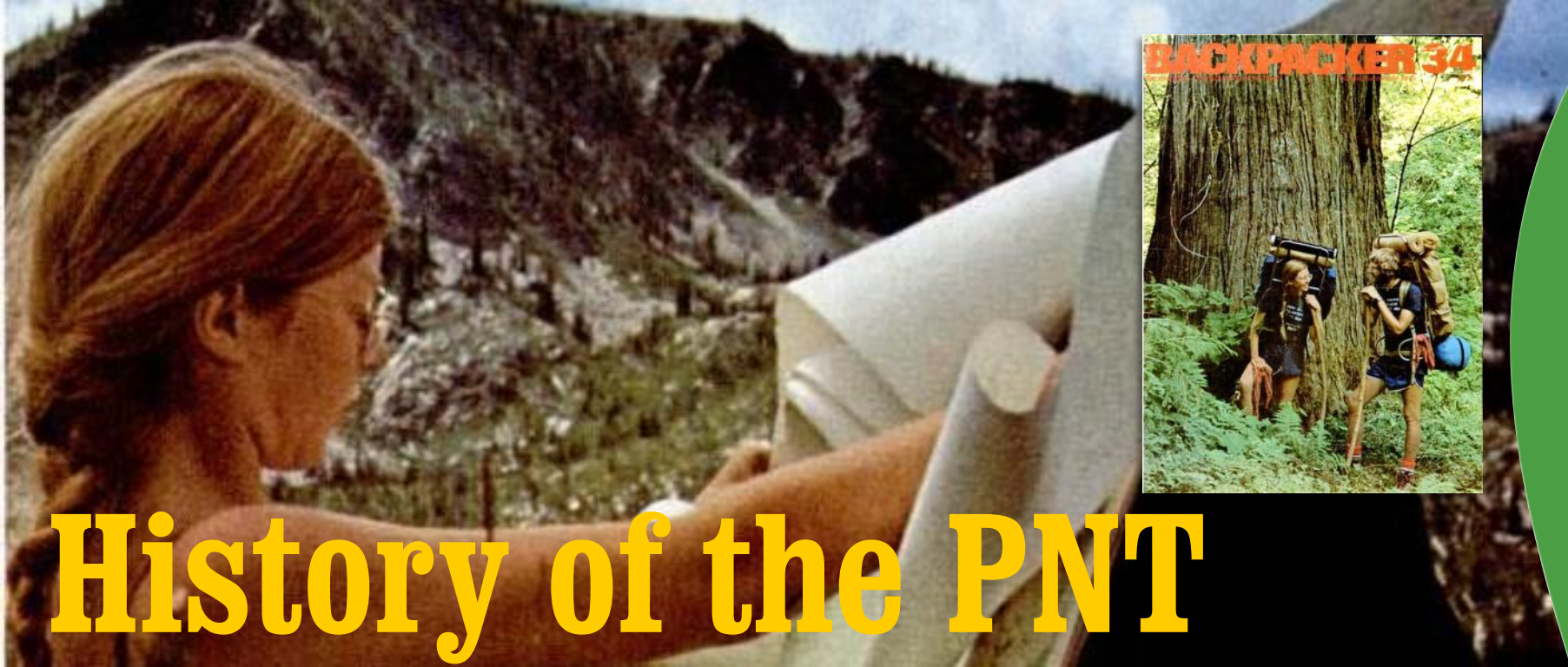
Trail Name	Year Designated	Miles	Lead
Appalachian	1968	2,174	
Pacific Crest	1968	2,638	
Continental Divide	1978	3,100	
North Country	1980	4,600	
Ice Age	1980	1,200	
Florida	1983	1,400	
Potomac Heritage	1983	700	
Natchez Trace	1983	695	
Arizona	2009	807	
New England	2009	220	
Pacific Northwest	2009	1,200	

The Pacific Northwest NST and Arizona NST were designated by Congress in 2009 and are administered by the Forest Service.

About the Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail



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History of the PNT

1970: Ron Strickland's big idea

1977: First thru-hike completed by Janet Garner & Rex Bakel

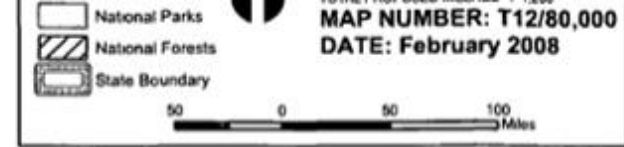
1980: Feasibility study completed

1990s: First local trail maintenance organization formed

2000s: Volunteers advocate for National Scenic Trail status

2009: Congress designates the PNT as a National Scenic Trail

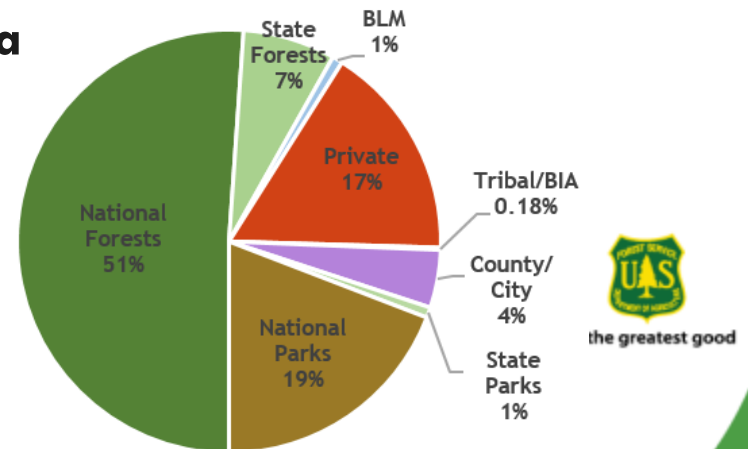
C A N A D A



The Congressional Route

1,200 miles from Chief Mountain to Cape Alava

- 3 states: Montana, Idaho, Washington
- 7 National Forests and 3 National Parks
- 6 Wilderness areas (300+ trail miles)
- 2 other NSTs: Continental Divide, Pacific Crest
- 3 major mountain ranges, the Columbia River, and Puget Sound





What is our PNT niche?

“Vital link” connecting the National Trails System

East-west orientation: up into mountain ranges, down into river valleys

Crown of the Continent to the Sea: traveling like a raindrop

Diversity of lands: wilderness, working landscapes, small town Main Streets

1,200 miles: a summer-sized challenge





What NST status does:

- Directs the Forest Service to collaborate with partners to manage the PNT as one linear unit
- Provides additional resources for maintenance of the PNT and helps improve adjacent trail systems
- Provides increased support for environmental education, youth and diversity outreach, interpretation
- Can be a valuable promotional tool for local communities



What NST status does not do:

- Does not grant access across private lands or affect private landowner rights
- Does not prohibit motorized use on existing motorized routes
- Does not prevent multiple use management of National Forest lands
- Does not take away the decision authority of local land managers on the PNT in their area



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Planning



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Comprehensive Plan

When it designated the PNNST, Congress charged the Forest Service with developing *a comprehensive plan for the acquisition, management, development, and use of the trail* [National Trails System Act, Sec. 5(e)]

- Guides long-term administration and management of the trail as one unit
- “All lands” shared vision for connectivity, stewardship, and services developed with the National Park Service, BLM, other land managers
- Establishes *rights-of-way* (trail corridor) published in Federal Register and *objectives and practices* (standards and guidelines) for management



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Planning questions

What are the unique **nature and purposes** of the PNNST?

What **objectives and practices** should be followed to protect the trail experience and resources?

How wide should the **trail corridor** be, where might width vary?

How to work towards a **continuous, non-motorized route**?

How will we determine and monitor the **carrying capacity** of the trail?



Nature and purposes

Section 7(c) of the National Trails System Act:

*National scenic trails may contain campsites, shelters, and related public-use facilities. **Other uses along the trail, which will not substantially interfere with the nature and purposes of the trail may be permitted ... to the extent practicable, efforts shall be made to avoid activities incompatible with the purposes for which such trails were established.***

Comp Plans include **nature and purposes statement** that also identifies **trail uses** and key **characteristics of trail experience**





Trail protection plan

National Trails System Act [Sec. 5(e)] says Comp Plan must include:

- (1) *specific **objectives and practices** to be observed in the management of the trail, including the identification of all significant natural, historical, and cultural resources to be preserved,*
- (2) *acquisition plan for all lands to be acquired and anticipated necessary cooperative agreements for any lands not to be acquired,*
- (3) *general and site-specific development plans.*

Objectives and practices guide how we manage the trail corridor



Corridor/“rights-of-way”

Section 7(a) of the National Trails System Act:

*Secretary shall select the **rights-of-way** ... and shall publish notice thereof*

In policy and practice, more than linear feature of trail tread:

*provide for ... the conservation and enjoyment of the **nationally significant scenic, historic, natural, or cultural qualities** [Sec. 3(a)]*

Executive Order 13195 “Trails for America in the 21st Century”:

*Federal agencies have duty in **protecting the trail corridors** associated with national scenic trails ... to the to the degrees necessary to ensure that the values for which each trail was established remain intact.*





Trail route

Section 3(a) of the National Trails System Act:

*so located as to provide for **maximum outdoor recreation potential** and for the conservation and enjoyment of the **nationally significant scenic, historic, natural, or cultural qualities** of the areas through which such trails may pass*

Congressionally designated route includes roads, gaps

Working toward **continuous, non-motorized** [Sec. 7(c)] trail route

Can relocate non-substantial sections of route to achieve these requirements. Only Congress can authorize substantial relocations.



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Carrying capacity

Trail protection plan also includes, as part of the **objectives and practices**, *an identified carrying capacity of the trail and a plan for its implementation* [Sec. 5(e)]

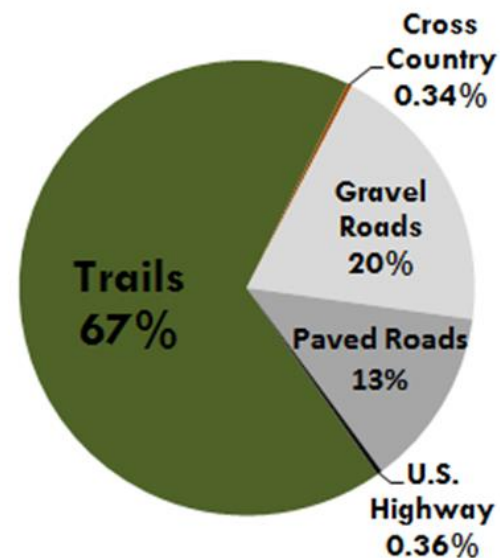


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Management challenges

To make the 1,200-mile connection, more than 400 miles of the PNT is currently on roads.

- In the context of declining budgets, we need a plan to move the PNT off roads and onto non-motorized trails
 - Took the PCT 40 years but it can be done!
- 20% of the PNT is off federal lands
- We must work with landowners to establish access agreements and a shared vision





National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

Programmatic **Environmental Assessment (EA)** will analyze potential effects of the proposed action and alternatives

For future projects like trail construction, project-level analysis will tier from this programmatic EA

Opportunities for public comment through meetings, mail, and email





Advisory Council

Required under National Trails System Act [Sec. 5 (d)] and compliant with the **Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA)**, the Council provides recommendations to the Secretary of Agriculture

*with respect to matters relating to the trail, including the selection of **rights-of-way**, standards for the erection and maintenance of **markers** along the trail, and the **administration** of the trail*



Projects, Partnerships & Public Services



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2017 Forest highlights

Kootenai National Forest (MT): Laying out new trail along Lake Koocanusa to connect the town of Eureka to Webb Mountain, gets PNT off busy Hwy 37

Idaho Panhandle National Forests (ID): Collaborating with neighboring Colville National Forest to maintain trails in the Salmo-Priest Wilderness

Colville National Forest (WA): Reconstructing trails in the Salmo-Priest Wilderness, assessing needs after wildfires along 15+ miles on the Kettle Crest

Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest (WA): logging miles of trail after fire

Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest (WA): Designing new trail to get the PNT off the busy Mt Baker Highway



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Partnerships

National Trails System Act emphasizes role of **citizen volunteers** and private trails groups in “**planning, development, maintenance, and management**”.

Partners inventory and monitor trail conditions, perform trail maintenance, provide maps and visitor information, and work with gateway communities.

In 2014, private trails groups contributed **1,053,896 volunteer hours** (valued at \$23,765,355) and **invested \$10,836,694** of private contributions in the National Trails System.



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Gateway communities

The PNT brings **outdoor recreation-based tourism** to 18 gateway communities that provide access to the trail and services for visitors

NSTs can be a catalyst for **economic development** in trail towns:

- The U.S. “outdoor economy” generates \$646 billion in direct yearly spending, supporting 6.1 million American jobs
- Hikers patronize cafes, grocery stores, laundromats, motels, resorts

The PNT improves **quality of life** for local people, strengthening local trail systems and making it easier to stay healthy and connect to the outdoors



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2017 Hiking Season

About 50-60 thru-hikers attempted the trail, about the same as 2015 and 2016

Longer thru-hiking season: start dates from mid-June to early September

Visitor use monitoring project with University of Montana began

Significant fire impacts to several sections of the trail

PNT community building on the trail and through social media



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Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail

Matt McGrath

Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail

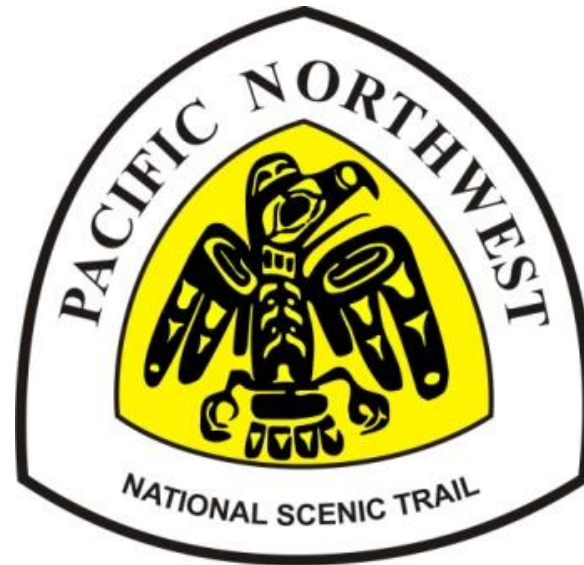
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