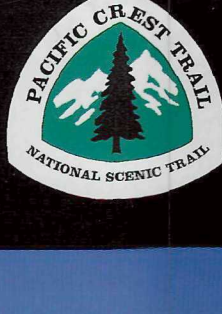


Pacific Crest Trail



National Scenic Trail • Mexico to Canada • Official Map and Guide



For more information write: Pacific Crest Trail Association, 5325 Elkhorn Blvd. #256, Sacramento, CA 95842 or www.pcta.org

Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail

The Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) is the jewel in the crown of America's scenic trails, spanning 2,650 miles from Mexico to Canada through three western states. It reveals the beauty of the Sierra Nevada, and provides commanding vistas of volcanic peaks and glaciers in the Cascade Range. The trail also passes through historic mining sites and evidence of man's endless quest for natural resources. Thousands of hikers and equestrians enjoy this national treasure each year. Some only travel a few miles, while others complete every mile in a single season!

The route was first explored in the late 1930s by teams of young men from the YMCA. Once



National Scenic Trails: 1 Appalachian Trail; 2 Pacific Crest Trail; 3 Continental Divide Trail; 4 North Country Trail; 5 Ice Age Trail; 6 Potomac Heritage Trail; 7 Natchez Trace Trail; & 8 Florida Trail.

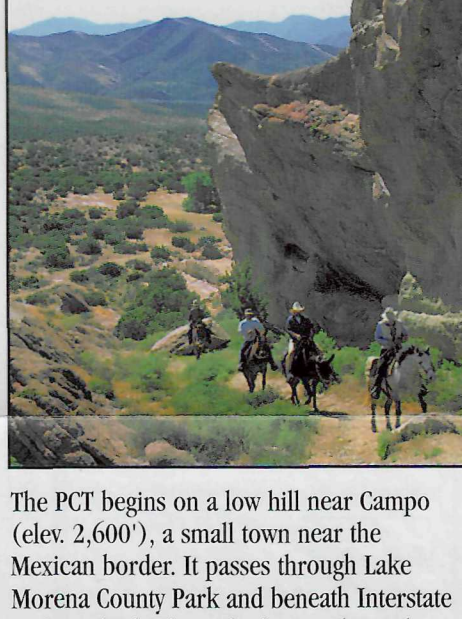
proven feasible, trail pioneers Clinton Clarke and Warren Rogers lobbied the federal government to secure a border-to-border trail corridor. They had to settle, however, for

several disconnected trails along the crest of each state. Largely through the efforts of hikers and equestrians, the PCT was eventually designated one of the first scenic trails in the National Trails System authorized by Congress in 1968, and was dedicated in 1993.

The PCT has five distinct sections, each having unique climate, geology, flora, and fauna. These sections are: Southern California, Central California, Northern California, Oregon, and Washington. A trail description is presented below in the order of the seasons in which each is at its optimum. The Pacific Crest Trail Association is an excellent source of information for anyone planning a trip on the PCT (see below).

Southern California

April–May • 648 Miles



The PCT begins on a low hill near Campo (elev. 2,600'), a small town near the Mexican border. It passes through Lake Morena County Park and beneath Interstate 8, then climbs through chaparral, scrub oaks, and pines to the rim of the Laguna Mountains. The trail dips into Anza-Borrego Desert State Park at Scissors Crossing, then winds up, down, and around the San Felipe Hills and lesser mountains of the Cleveland National Forest before crossing Highway 74 at 4,900' and climbing the backbone of the San Jacinto Mountains. It reaches its highest point in this section at 9,030' shortly before it plunges to its lowest, crossing beneath Interstate 10 at elev. 1,190' in broad San Geronio Pass.

From here, the PCT climbs steeply to the crest of two east-west-oriented ranges, often under welcome forest shade. It passes near



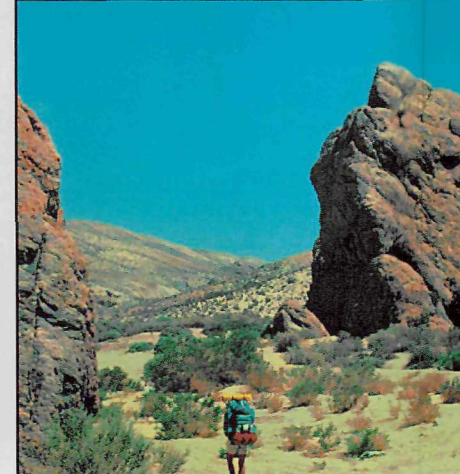
Big Bear Lake and Lake Arrowhead before crossing Interstate 15 between the San Bernardino and San Gabriel Mountains at Cajon Pass near Silverwood Lake State Recreation Area. The vistas from the trail in these mountains include the Los Angeles Basin and Mojave Desert. To the west of Mt. Baden-Powell and the Angeles Crest National Scenic Byway, it descends to Highway 14 at Agua Dulce, then traverses the often brushy landscape of the Sierra Pelona. It continues north for a generally hot and dry traverse across the San Andreas Fault Zone and western arm of



the Mojave Desert before climbing into the Tehachapi Mountains where it crosses Highway 58 and enters the Sierra Nevada.

The southern California section ends where the trail crosses Highway 178 at Walker Pass (elev. 5,246'). The mountains of this section are bounded by and internally laced with faults

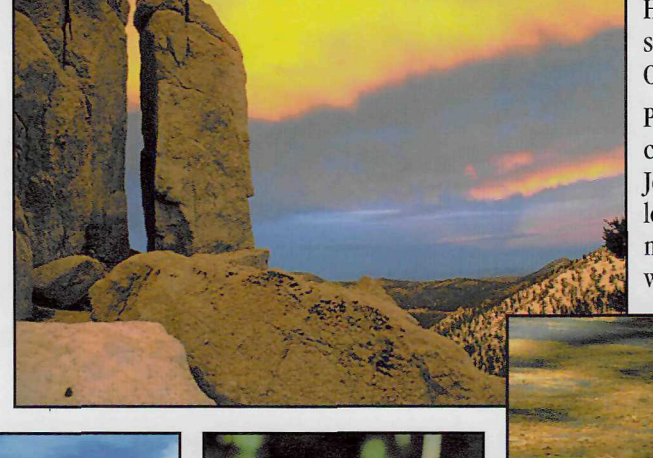
that have been active in recent geologic time. The animals in this section include lizards, rodents, snakes, coyotes, and cougars. Colorful and quick, hummingbirds can also be seen darting about, gathering nectar. The plants here are generally desert scrub, chaparral, or oak, with forests only at the higher elevations. Trail-side water is scarce in this section, particularly in the summertime, when temperatures range from the 80s to the low 100s.



Central California

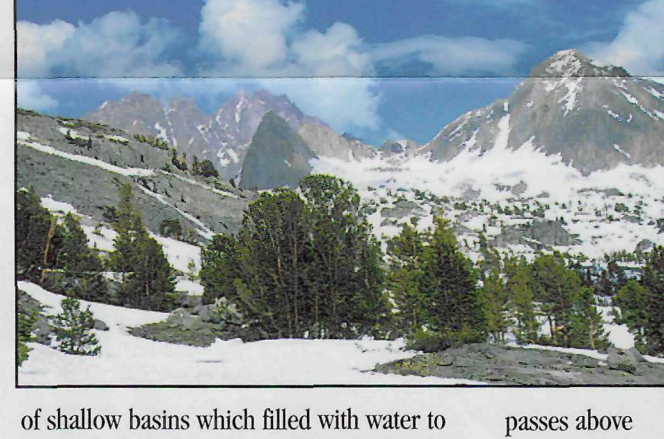
July–September • 505 Miles

Starting from this section's lowest point at Walker Pass (elev. 5,246'), the trail enters a roadless and wildly scenic realm, being met only occasionally by a dead-end road from the east. It hugs the relatively dry crest through the Chimney Peak Wilderness before reaching and crossing the South Fork of the Kern River near Kennedy Meadows. The route alternates between expansive meadows and conifer forests, then embarks on a 3,300' ascent and traverse to Cottonwood Pass. To the north is the majestic glaciated High Sierra. For trail users, the glaciers' most important accomplishment was the excavation



Sonora Pass to Echo Summit at Highway 50, and again near this section's end north of the Granite Chief Wilderness.

Plants in this section include corn lily, snow plant, red fir, Jeffrey, and ponderosa pine at lower levels and mule ears, mountain hemlock, and weather-twisted white bark

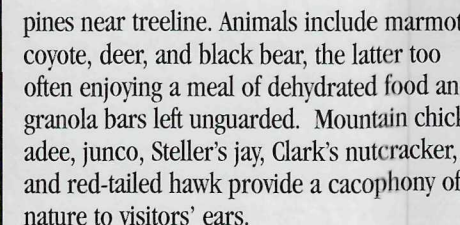


of shallow basins which filled with water to create thousands of photogenic lakes and tarns, many near or above treeline.

In Sequoia National Park, the popular John Muir Trail descends from nearby Mt. Whitney (elev. 14,494') to join the PCT. The trails share the same tread for most of the way to Highway 120 in Yosemite National Park's lush Tuolumne Meadows (elev. 8,690'). Along this mostly wilderness stretch, the route repeatedly descends deep canyons only to ascend to high saddles. The PCT crosses eight named

passes above 11,000' in this section, the first being Forester Pass (elev. 13,180'), the highest point on the entire trail.

After crossing Highway 108 at Sonora Pass (elev. 9,620'), the altitude changes diminish in amplitude, and the trail soon begins a generally subalpine, relatively level traverse that stays close to the Sierra crest until this section ends at Interstate 80 (elev. 7,200'). There is some volcanic rock south of Yosemite, but notable amounts are encountered from



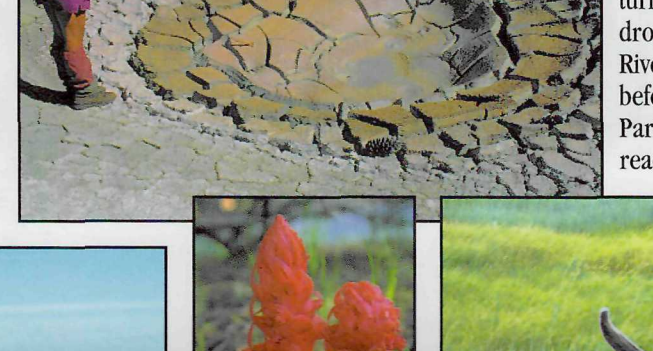
pinus near treeline. Animals include marmot, coyote, deer, and black bear, the latter too often enjoying a meal of dehydrated food and granola bars left unguarded. Mountain chickadee, junco, Steller's jay, Clark's nutcracker, and red-tailed hawk provide a cacophony of nature to visitors' ears.



Northern California

July–September • 567 Miles

North of Donner Summit (elev. 7,200'), old volcanic flows and sediments bury most of the ancient bedrock of the Sierra Nevada crest, making travel in this section potentially dusty in late summer. Beyond the North Fork of the Feather River, the Sierra Nevada yields to the southern Cascade Range. Rich in nutrients, the volcanic soils here are at the right elevation and receive sufficient rainfall to produce exceptional forests. Other plants include lupine, paintbrush, larkspur, columbine, gooseberry, and manzanita. Animals include raccoon, marten, mink,



which dominates the north-state skyline.

Rather than continue north through the dry southern Cascades beyond Mt. Shasta, the PCT turns west toward greener lands, dropping to cross the Sacramento River (elev. 2,130') at Interstate 5 before entering Castle Crags State Park and the Trinity Alps. The trail reaches 7,600' elevation in the

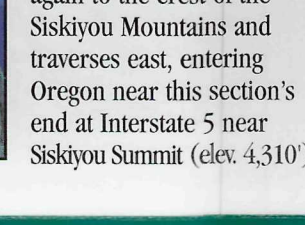
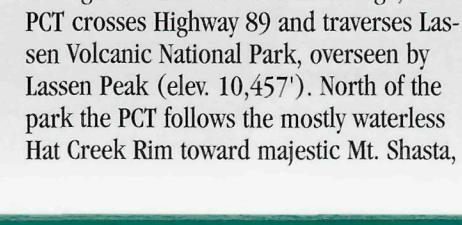


badger, fox, bobcat, and the ever-present deer and black bear. In the fall, the skies are often filled with migrating birds on their journey south along the Pacific coast flyway.

This is prime logging country (as are most of the PCT's lands north of here), and the trail crosses many back roads. Midway through the southern Cascade Range, the PCT crosses Highway 89 and traverses Lassen Volcanic National Park, overseen by Lassen Peak (elev. 10,457'). North of the park the PCT follows the mostly waterless Hat Creek Rim toward majestic Mt. Shasta,

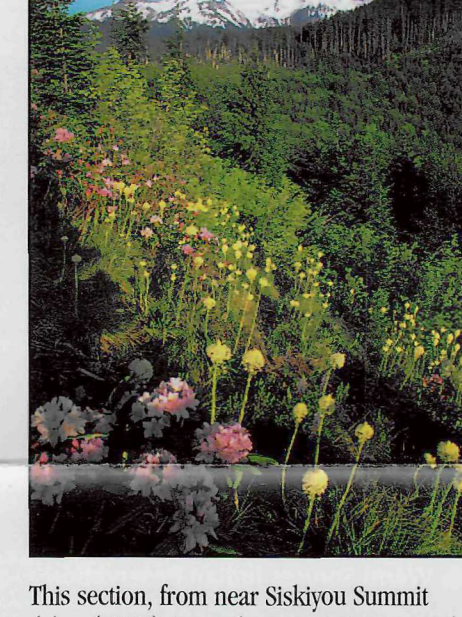


mountains connecting the inland Cascade Range with the coastal ranges, winding north through the Marble Mountains before descending to the Klamath River (elev. 1,370'). It climbs again to the crest of the Siskiyou Mountains and traverses east, entering Oregon near this section's end at Interstate 5 near Siskiyou Summit (elev. 4,310').



Oregon

July–September • 430 Miles



This section, from near Siskiyou Summit (elev. 4,310') in southernmost Oregon to the Washington border, is not only the shortest, but is also the easiest to hike or ride. Oregon's Cascade Range is a subdued volcanic landscape, having a gentle crest that is fairly constant in elevation. The highest point in Oregon is an unnamed saddle (elev. 7,560') north of Mt. Thielsen. This, and other ancient volcanoes—Diamond Peak, Mt. Washington, and Three Finger Jack, plus recently active Mt. McLoughlin, Mt. Mazama (Crater Lake), the Three Sisters, Mt. Jefferson, and Mt. Hood—punctuate the skyline and can be seen from miles away. However, these towering edifices don't hinder progress since the PCT skirts along their slopes. The only major elevation change in Oregon is the 3,160' drop into the

Columbia River Scenic Gorge to cross Interstate 84 and the Columbia River on the Bridge of the Gods (elev. 180').

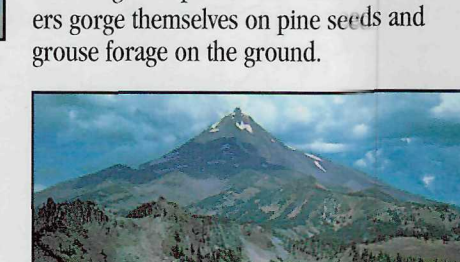
Whereas the prominent volcanoes are visible magnets luring travelers onward, so too are the lakes. These are not randomly scattered, but occur mostly in clusters, some of which are found north of Highway 140 in the Sky Lakes Wilderness. The trail traverses Crater Lake National Park, where a spur trail leads to the

largely lake-free, although the trail visits or presents views of several sizable reservoirs.

The chief attraction for this stretch is glacier-robed Mt. Hood (elev. 11,235'), Oregon's largest and most hazardous active volcano.



Precipitation in this section results in dense, shady forests, dominated by Douglas, silver, and noble fir at lower elevations and sub-alpine fir nearer the treeline. Other plants include pinedrops, prince's pine, and Oregon grape in the dense forests, while pasque flower and fireweed frequent open spaces. Animals include mice, squirrels, beaver, fox, deer, and elk. Songbirds pursue insects while nutcrackers gorge themselves on pine seeds and grouse forage on the ground.



rim for a spectacular view of this magnificent lake. The PCT passes the largely unvisited small lakes and ponds of the Diamond Peak Wilderness before crossing Highway 58 near Willamette Pass. More small lakes and ponds are found in the Three Sisters Wilderness and north of Highway 20 in the Mt. Jefferson Wilderness and the adjacent Olallie Lake Scenic Area. In northern Oregon, the PCT is

the cycle again. It traverses popular Alpine Lakes, Henry M. Jackson, and Glacier Peak Wildernesses before entering the Lake Chelan National Recreation Area, North Cascades National Park, and Pasayten Wilderness. The prime

attraction here is Glacier Peak, and the rugged, roller coaster, switchbacking route around it offers a memorable experience to trail users. Not only is the North Cascades Range rugged, it is the wettest along the route, lying in a storm track most of the year. All this wetness has produced about 750 perennial snowfields and small glaciers, which collectively account for about half the snowfield area in the lower 48 states.

The Washington section has several high passes and ridges. The one just edging out others is Lakeview Ridge (elev. 7,126'), encountered only 8 miles before the Canadian border. A number of Alaskan and Canadian plants, including Alaska cedar and grand fir, appear in Washington. By visiting this section in September, visitors will be treated to brightly colored patches of western larch, whose deciduous needles turn bright yellow at this time—a colorful conclusion to the end of a thru-hike or any visit to this magnificent trail. Many animals from the northern latitudes have also migrated south, including mountain goat, grizzly bear, and Canadian lynx.

This section begins at the Bridge of the Gods (elev. 180'), on the Columbia River, and ends at Monument 78 on the Canadian border (elev. 4,240'). An additional seven miles was added beyond the border by the Canadian government to provide access to Highway 3 in British Columbia's Manning Provincial Park (elev. 3,800').

The trail begins this section with a lengthy climb out of the Columbia River gorge and eventually reaches the crest near the Indian Heaven Wilderness, a lake-blessed land abounding with huckleberries. Next it rounds the base of mammoth Mt. Adams (elev. 12,276'). Just north is the rugged dramatic Goat Rocks Wilderness, similar to the deep glaciated canyons and towering peaks of the High Sierra, and a traverse of the Packwood Glacier.

The trail crosses Highway 12 at White Pass before encountering dozens of lakes in the William O. Douglas Wilderness. Between White Pass and Highway 410 at Chinook Pass, the trail skirts many lakes as it approaches the towering monarch of the Cascades, Mt. Rainier (elev. 14,410').

From Chinook Pass the trail has an easy, rapid run to Interstate 90 at Snoqualmie Pass, which is fortunate, since this stretch presents many private land clear-cuts that offer little cover from the often present rain.

The North Cascades offer challenges similar to the High Sierra of California. Here again, the PCT climbs up a deep canyon to a pass, only to descend another deep canyon and then repeat

the cycle again. It traverses popular Alpine Lakes, Henry M. Jackson, and Glacier Peak Wildernesses before entering the Lake Chelan National Recreation Area, North Cascades National Park, and Pasayten Wilderness. The prime

attraction here is Glacier Peak, and the rugged, roller coaster, switchbacking route around it offers a memorable experience to trail users. Not only is the North Cascades Range rugged, it is the wettest along the route, lying in a storm track most of the year. All this wetness has produced about 750 perennial snowfields and small glaciers, which collectively account for about half the snowfield area in the lower 48 states.

The Washington section has several high passes and ridges. The one just edging out others is Lakeview Ridge (elev. 7,126'), encountered only 8 miles before the Canadian border. A number of Alaskan and Canadian plants, including Alaska cedar and grand fir, appear in Washington. By visiting this section in September, visitors will be treated to brightly colored patches of western larch, whose deciduous needles turn bright yellow at this time—a colorful conclusion to the end of a thru-hike or any visit to this magnificent trail. Many animals from the northern latitudes have also migrated south, including mountain goat, grizzly bear, and Canadian lynx.

This section begins at the Bridge of the Gods (elev. 180'), on the Columbia River, and ends at Monument 78 on the Canadian border (elev. 4,240'). An additional seven miles was added beyond the border by the Canadian government to provide access to Highway 3 in British Columbia's Manning Provincial Park (elev. 3,800').

The trail begins this section with a lengthy climb out of the Columbia River gorge and eventually reaches the crest near the Indian Heaven Wilderness, a lake-blessed land abounding with huckleberries. Next it rounds the base of mammoth Mt. Adams (elev. 12,276'). Just north is the rugged dramatic Goat Rocks Wilderness, similar to the deep glaciated canyons and towering peaks of the High Sierra, and a traverse of the Packwood Glacier.

The trail crosses Highway 12 at White Pass before encountering dozens of lakes in the William O. Douglas Wilderness. Between White Pass and Highway 410 at Chinook Pass, the trail skirts many lakes as it approaches the towering monarch of the Cascades, Mt. Rainier (elev. 14,410').

From Chinook Pass the trail has an easy, rapid run to Interstate 90 at Snoqualmie Pass, which is fortunate, since this stretch presents many private land clear-cuts that offer little cover from the often present rain.

The North Cascades offer challenges similar to the High Sierra of California. Here again, the PCT climbs up a deep canyon to a pass, only to descend another deep canyon and then repeat

the cycle again. It traverses popular Alpine Lakes, Henry M. Jackson, and Glacier Peak Wildernesses before entering the Lake Chelan National Recreation Area, North Cascades National Park, and Pasayten Wilderness. The prime

attraction here is Glacier Peak, and the rugged, roller coaster, switchbacking route around it offers a memorable experience to trail users. Not only is the North Cascades Range rugged, it is the wettest along the route, lying in a storm track most of the year. All this wetness has produced about 750 perennial snowfields and small glaciers, which collectively account for about half the snowfield area in the lower 48 states.

The Washington section has several high passes and ridges. The one just edging out others is Lakeview Ridge (elev. 7,126'), encountered only 8 miles before the Canadian border. A number of Alaskan and Canadian plants, including Alaska cedar and grand fir, appear in Washington. By visiting this section in September, visitors will be treated to brightly colored patches of western larch, whose deciduous needles turn bright yellow at this time—a colorful conclusion to the end of a thru-hike or any visit to this magnificent trail. Many animals from the northern latitudes have also migrated south, including mountain goat, grizzly bear, and Canadian lynx.

Pacific Crest Trail Association

The not-for-profit Pacific Crest Trail Association is the government's major partner for the operation and management of the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail. As the "Voice of the Trail," it is an effective advocate for the protection and wise management of this unique resource.

Without constant attention, the PCT would quickly succumb to the effects of humans and the forces of nature. Working in partnership with the Forest Service, the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management, local government agencies, and private land owners, the Association organizes volunteer work to help protect and maintain the trail.

Members report trail conditions and other activities, which are summarized and relayed to appropriate officials. Through its bimonthly magazine, the "PCT Communicator," various publications, and Internet website, the Association reports route changes, pending legislation, trail conditions, and other activities which affect the trail, its corridor, or its users. It also provides information on trail food, equipment, resupply points, and trailhead transportation. Association activities also provide an opportunity for friends of the trail to meet and share their trail experiences. The Association encourages good trail ethics, no-trace camping, and an awareness of the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail as a valued

national heritage. For more information about the PCT or membership, write to the Pacific Crest Trail Association, 5325 Elkwood Blvd., #256, Sacramento, CA 95842, or set your web browser to www.pcta.org.

Credits:
Photos: Brian Booth, Taro Narahashi, Jeffrey Schaffer, Lolly Skillman, Bart Smith, & Lee Terkelsen
Text: Jeffrey Schaffer & Bob Ballou
Cartography: Allan Cartography
Design: Gary Haase & Rich Ray, Bureau of Land Management
Publisher: The Pacific Crest Trail Association
This brochure was made possible by a generous gift from Eugene & Marjorie Reid