


Wulfman's Continental Divide Trail

Trail at a Glance



Route: Crest of the Rocky Mountains

Highlights: Glacier National Park, Butte America, Yellowstone National Park, Colorado Rockies, Great Divide Basin, and the New Mexico desert.

Completion: ~70% done. Each of the five states along the CDT has significant stretches of unfinished trail, but most of the uncompleted segments lie on BLM land in New Mexico and Wyoming.

Hiker Purity: Some portions of the trails are open to ATVs. Some road walking. The eventual idea is to connect the whole CDT with foot and horse trail only.

Keep your fingers crossed for good luck to keep the 14 Beautiful kilometers of *Continental Divide National Scenic Trail* (CDT) between Homestake Pass and Pipestone Pass free of snow and fallen trees on race-day, as normal. The trail is single-track and easy to follow the whole way. There are only two spots on the trail where you could reasonably turn onto an alternative route, and both of those points will be clearly marked and personed by a volunteer who will point the way during the race. We use only "harmless" markings that can be removed from the trail the same day.

John "The Wulfman" Wulf said it best when he described the route as having "just one hill." When run from south to north, as the trail will be for this year's race, it starts at Pipestone Pass and climbs steeply for 5.5 km to a modest maximum altitude of 2260 m. By comparison, the Colorado CDT tops out nearly twice as high above sea level, at 4340 m. The altitude gain on the way up Wulfman's trail is 450 m at an average grade of 8%. After briefly cresting the high rocky outcropping at 5.5 km, the trail winds downward on standard grade USFS trail for the final 8.5 km to the finish at Homestake Pass. The net elevation loss of the entire trail is 43 m.

The footing is normally good (for a trail) with only a few soggy spots, but please take care about stepping clear of rocks, roots and any other hazards that may appear. It is a long way for our first-aid volunteers to carry you out if you get hurt.

The entire Montana CDT follows a turning route from Yellowstone to Glacier, including the horseshoe-shaped jog around Butte.

The greater CDT provides spectacular backcountry travel along the length of the Rocky Mountains from Mexico to Canada. American trail visionary Benton MacKaye and members of the Rocky Mountain Trail Association began plans for the CDT in the late 1960s. The group hiked what would become part of the trail, marking it by nailing blue-painted cans to trees for later approval by the Forest Service as trailways. In 1966, lobbyists for the trail were successful in having the plans brought before the US Congress.

In 1978, Congress designated the CDT as one of the US National Scenic Trails, and created a protected corridor on either side of the trail. In an effort to cut costs, the plans for the CDT initially incorporated over 3,000 km of existing trails and rural roads which wind their way through some of the most spectacular scenery in the United States and encompassing five ecological zones. Unlike the Appalachian Trail, which provides more comfortable hiking, the CDT is deliberately primitive. The total length of the trail is estimated to be 5,000 km.

For those new to Wulfman's CDT-14K informational postings, please study the highlighted sections (at least) of previous links below.