

Pacific Crest Trail

National Scenic Trail • Mexico to Canada

U.S. Forest Service
Department of Agriculture



Washington • 500 Miles



The PCT's northern terminus

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 were added beyond the border by the Canadian government to provide access to Highway 3 in British Columbia's Manning Provincial Park (elev. 3,800').

Starting with a lengthy climb out of the Columbia River Gorge, the trail eventually reaches the crest near the Indian Heaven Wilderness, a lake-filled land abounding with huckleberries. Next, it rounds the base of mammoth Mount Adams (elev. 12,276'). Just north lies the dramatically rugged Goat Rocks Wilderness 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, Mount Rainier (elev. 14,410'). From Chinook Pass, the trail has an easy, rapid run to Interstate 90 at Snoqualmie Pass. This stretch presents many private land clearcuts that offer little cover from the often-present rain.

The North Cascades offer many challenges. Here, the PCT climbs a deep canyon to a high mountain pass, only to descend another deep canyon and repeat the cycle. The trail 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 is Glacier Peak, and the rugged 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. This precipitation 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 of the trail has several high passes and ridges. Lakeview Ridge (elev. 7,126') is the highest and is located only eight miles before the Canadian border. A number of Alaskan and Canadian plants, including Alaska cedar and grand fir, are found in Washington. When visiting this section in September, visitors will be treated to brightly colored patches of western larch, whose deciduous needles turn bright yellow providing a colorful conclusion to the end of a thru-hike.



Chikamin Ridge near Snoqualmie Pass



Goat Rocks Wilderness

Oregon • 458 Miles

From near Siskiyou Summit (elev. 4,310') in southern Oregon to the Washington border, this section is both the shortest and the easiest to hike or ride. Oregon's Cascade Range is a subdued volcanic landscape, with a gentle crest that is fairly constant in elevation. The highest point in Oregon is an unnamed saddle (elev. 7,560') north of Mount Thielsen. Other volcanoes, including Mount McLoughlin, Mount Mazama (Crater Lake), Diamond Peak, the Three Sisters, Mount Washington, Three Fingers Jack, Mount Jefferson and Mount Hood, punctuate the skyline. The only major elevation change in Oregon is the 3,160 foot drop into the Columbia River Gorge crossing Interstate 84 and the Columbia River on the Bridge of the Gods (elev. 180').

Like the prominent volcanoes, many lakes in this section lure travelers onward. There are many opportunities to visit lakes in the Sky Lakes and Diamond Peak Wildernesses. The trail traverses Crater Lake National Park, where a side trail leads to the rim for a spectacular view of this magnificent lake. More small lakes and ponds are found in the Three Sisters Wilderness, Mount Jefferson Wilderness and the adjacent Ollalie Lake Scenic Area. In northern Oregon, the PCT has fewer lakes, although it provides views of several sizable reservoirs.



Tunnel Falls on the popular Eagle Creek side-trail



The lava fields of Brown Mountain with Mount McLoughlin

The chief attraction for this stretch is glacier-robed Mount Hood (elev. 11,239'), Oregon's largest and most active volcano. Heavy precipitation in this section produces dense, shady forests dominated by Douglas, silver and noble fir at lower elevations and subalpine fir nearer treeline. Plants include pinedrops, prince's pine and Oregon grape in the forested habitat. 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.



Bear Grass (*Xerophyllum tenax*)

Northern California • 409 Miles

North of Donner Summit (elev. 7,089'), old volcanic flows and sediments bury most of the ancient bedrock of the Sierra Nevada crest. 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 optimal elevation to receive sufficient rainfall to produce lush forests. Other plants include lupine, paintbrush, larkspur, columbine, gooseberry and manzanita. Animals include raccoon, marten, mink, badger, fox, bobcat and the ever-present deer and black bear. In the fall, skies are often filled with migrating birds on their journey south along the Pacific Flyway. The PCT traverses Lassen Volcanic National Park and crosses Highway 89 midway through the southern Cascade Range. Nearby is Mount Lassen at elevation 10,457 feet.



Hat Creek Rim



Burney Falls

North of the park, the PCT follows the extremely dry Hat Creek Rim toward majestic Mount Shasta, which dominates the skyline. The PCT turns west toward greener lands and drops to cross the Sacramento River (elev. 2,130') at Interstate 5. It then enters Castle Crags State Park and the Trinity Alps Wilderness. The trail reaches 7,600 feet in the mountains connecting the inland Cascade Range with the coastal ranges, winding north through the Marble Mountain Wilderness 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').

Central California • 586 Miles

Starting from this section's lowest point at Walker Pass (elev. 5,246'), the trail enters a roadless and scenic area, hugging the relatively dry crest through the Chimney Peak Wilderness before reaching the South Fork of the Kern River near Kennedy Meadows. The route alternates between expansive meadows and conifer forests, and then embarks on a 3,300-foot ascent to Cottonwood Pass. To the north is the majestic, glaciated High Sierra. The glaciers formed shallow basins that filled with water to create thousands of lakes and tarns. In Sequoia National Park, the popular John Muir Trail descends from nearby Mount Whitney (elev. 14,494') to join the PCT. The two trails merge and share the same path for most of the way to Highway 120 in Yosemite National Park's lush Tuolumne Meadows (elev. 8,690'). Along this stretch, the route repeatedly descends deep canyons only to ascend to high saddles. The PCT crosses eight named passes above 1,000 feet in this section, the first being Forester Pass (elev. 13,153'), the highest point on the entire trail.



View of Mount Russell from Lower Crabtree Meadows



Mule Ears (*Wyethia ovata*)

After crossing Highway 108 at Sonora Pass (elev. 9,620'), the trail begins a generally subalpine, relatively level traverse that stays close to the Sierra crest until this section ends at Interstate 80 (elev. 7,200'). Volcanic rock formations can be found north of Yosemite, with increasing frequency from 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 pines near treeline. Animals include marmot, coyote, deer and black bear. Mountain chickadee, junco, Steller's jay, Clark's nutcracker and red-tailed hawks serenade visitors' ears.

Southern California • 697 Miles

The PCT begins on a low hill near Campo (elev. 2,915'), a small town near the Mexican border. It then passes through Lake Morena County Park, tunnels beneath Interstate 8, and climbs through chaparral, scrub oak and pines to the rim of the Laguna Mountains. The trail dips into Anza-Borrego Desert State Park at Scissors Crossing, and then winds through the San Felipe Hills and lesser mountains of the Cleveland National Forest before crossing Highway 74 at 4,900 feet and climbing the backbone of the San Jacinto Mountains. It reaches its highest point in this section at 9,030 feet shortly before it plunges to its lowest point, crossing beneath Interstate 10 at broad San Geronimo Pass (elev. 1,190').

From here, the PCT climbs steeply to the crest of two east-west-oriented ranges, San Bernardino and San Gabriel ranges, often under welcome forest shade. It passes near Big Bear Lake and Lake Arrowhead before crossing Interstate 15 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 Mount Baden-Powell and the Angeles Crest National Scenic Byway, the trail descends to Highway 14 at Agua Dulce, and then traverses the often-brushy landscape of the Sierra Pelona. It continues north for a typically hot and dry hike 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 faults that have been active in recent geologic time. Animals in this section include lizards, rodents, snakes, coyotes and cougars. Hummingbirds can be seen darting about, gathering nectar.

Flora encountered generally include desert scrub, chaparral or oak, with forests only at the higher elevations. Trailside water is often scarce in this section, particularly in summer, when temperatures range from the 80s to the low 100s.



Joshua Tree (*Yucca brevifolia*) near Walker Pass

- Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail
 - National Forest / National Forest Wilderness
 - Bureau of Land Management (BLM) / Bureau of Land Management Wilderness
 - BLM Offices that Manage Pacific Crest Trail Segments
 - 1 Palm Springs - South Coast Field Office
 - 2 El Centro Field Office
 - 3 Ridgecrest Field Office
 - 4 Bakersfield Field Office
 - 5 Alturas Field Office
 - 6 Ashland Resource Area / Medford District Office
 - National Park / National Park Wilderness
 - Tribal Lands
 - State or Provincial Park*
 - County/Municipal Areas*
 - Other Designated Area*
- *These areas are shown on this map only if they fall on, or are close to, the PCT.

