



Pacific Northwest Trail Association
Strategy Framework
2023-2028

Our mission is to build and manage the Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail and conserve the wild places that it traverses

A Pathway to Wilderness

The Pacific Northwest Trail (PNT) is an expression of deep appreciation for wild places and the many benefits that they provide.

The 1,200-mile congressionally designated national scenic trail spans from The Continental Divide to the Pacific Coast providing opportunities to be immersed in some of the most remote, ecologically diverse areas left in the continental United States.

It opens doors to solitude and reflection, environmental study

and appreciation, challenge and adventure, community and connection – to something new for everyone.

Conserving this experience and ensuring the PNT is “as much as possible a wilderness trail” was core to the founding vision of the trail outlined in 1974 and continues to be central to our mission today.



About the PNTA

PNTA members come from all walks of life, coast to coast, and all around the world.

We are trail users, local volunteers, partners, staff and board. Together we share a deep commitment to stewarding the Pacific Northwest Trail.

ADVOCACY

We play a critical role in advancing policies to develop and protect the trail, actively engaging with federal and state partners throughout the year.

TRAIL WORK AND CONSERVATION

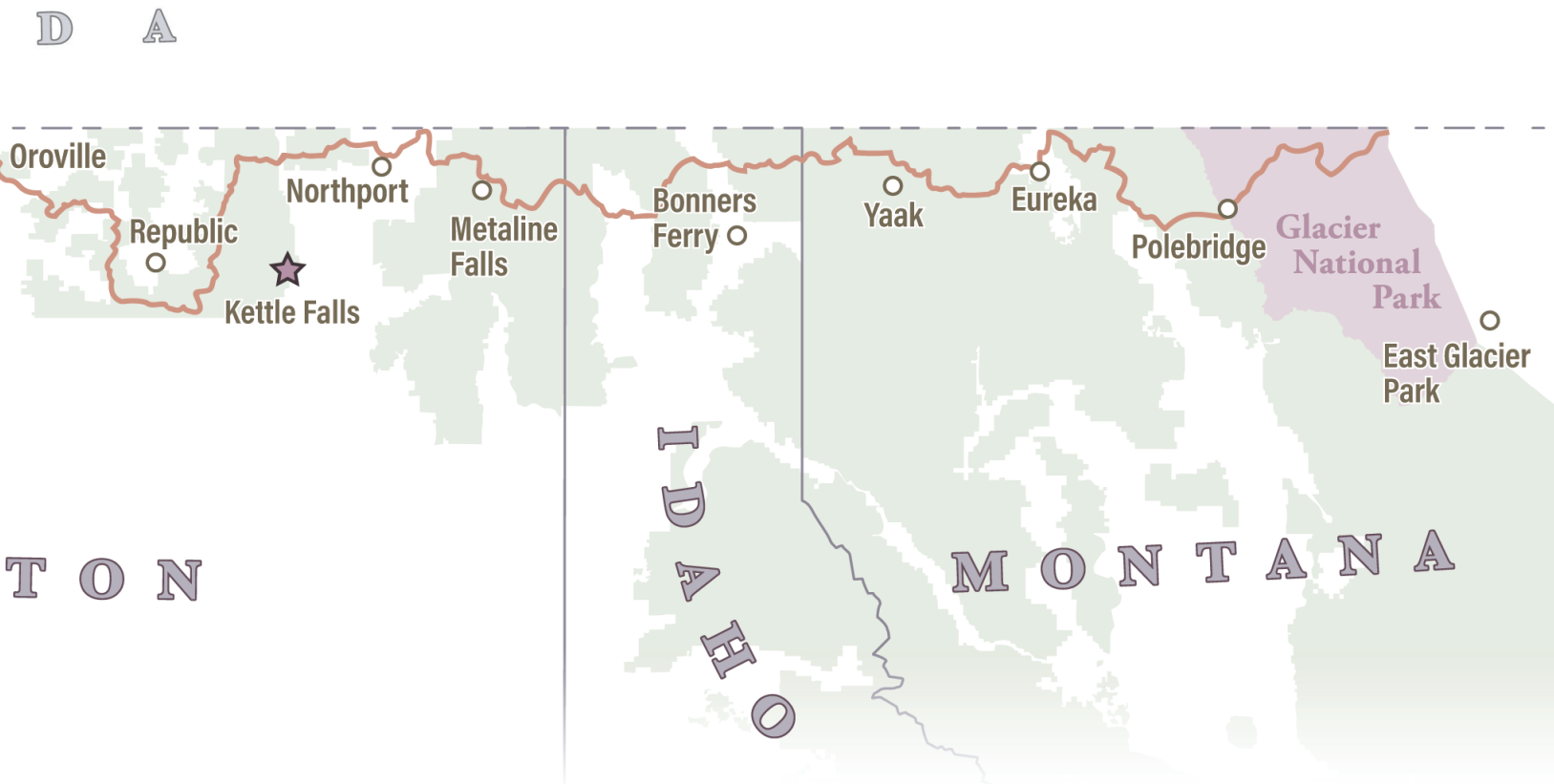
We recruit, train, and mobilize youth and young adult trail crews and a growing community of volunteers to perform trail development, trail maintenance, and conserve natural resources.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

We maintain comprehensive and up-to-date information on the trail (i.e. maps and conditions) alongside resources for visitor safety and environmental protection.

PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

We work alongside a wide network of public land managers, tribal partners, peer trail and conservation organizations, counties, and local groups, coordinating and facilitating effective collaboration with and across partners to drive our mission forward.



OUR VALUES

INTENTIONALITY

We are thorough and thoughtful in our approach, advocating for careful decision-making that considers short and long-term impacts of the trail on our environment, wildlife, historical and cultural qualities, and communities.

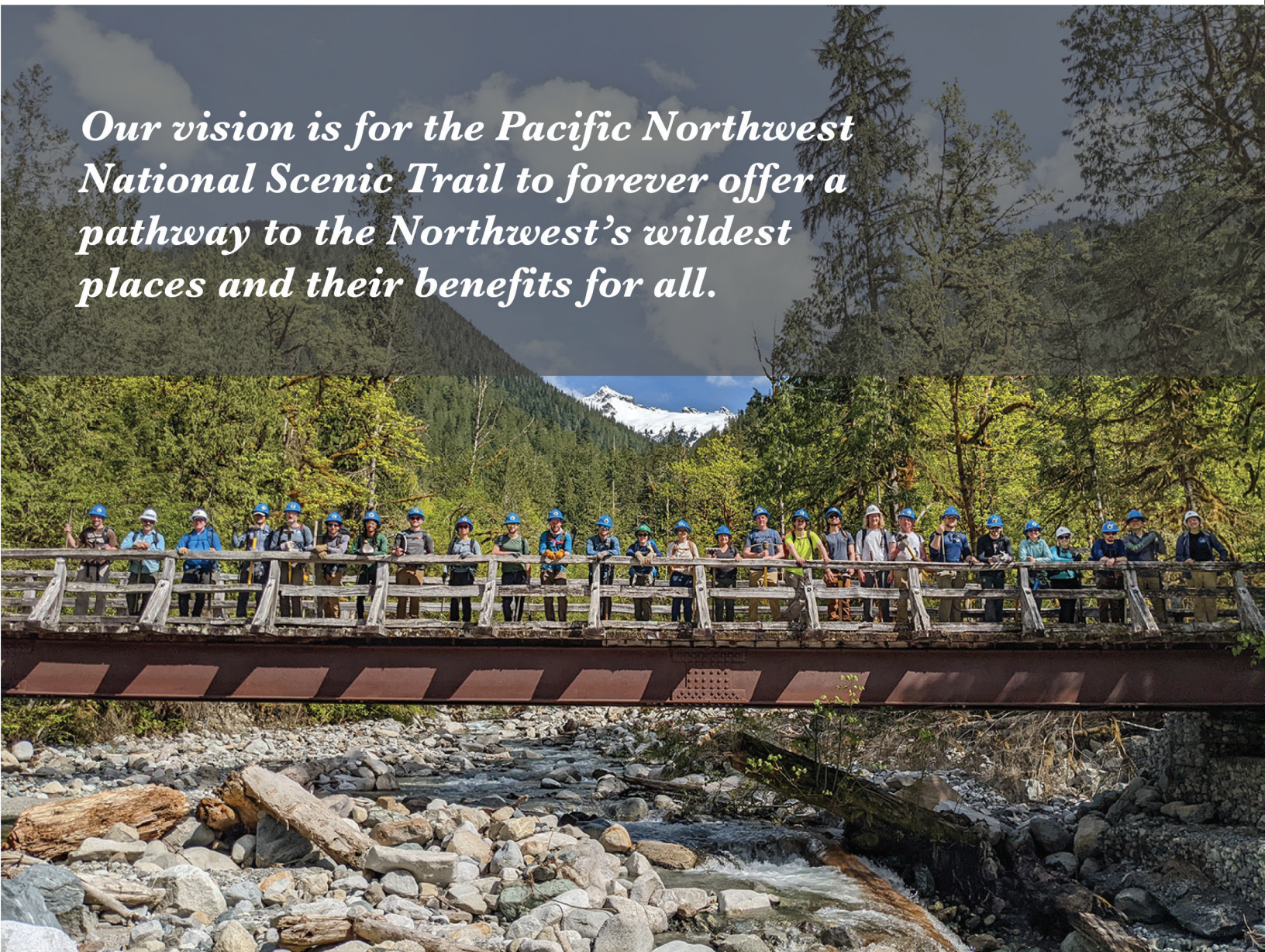
TRUST

We value quality, integrity, and reliability so our partners, trail users, and PNTA community can always count on us.

INCLUSION

We believe in the benefits that wilderness experiences provide and are committed to educating ourselves on physical and social barriers to access, removing or lowering them when possible.

Our vision is for the Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail to forever offer a pathway to the Northwest's wildest places and their benefits for all.





2023–2028 Priorities

The Pacific Northwest Trail is at a critical moment in its journey as we anticipate the approval of a Comprehensive Management Plan.

This plan will authorize a blueprint for the trail's completion and ensure consistent management and protection of the trail from one end to the other.

While much of our work will be directed by the plan in the years to come, we're taking a holistic approach that best supports the sustainability and growth of the PNTA's efforts and impact we have together with our members, partners, friends, and communities. Our strategic priority areas include:

- 1. Trail Experience**
- 2. Community Activation**
- 3. Staff Development and Wellbeing**
- 4. Financial Health**

1. Trail Experience

Today a third of the Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail miles is on roads and a fifth crosses private lands where permanent public access is not guaranteed.

Trail conditions across the three states remain inconsistent. Trail development, management, and protection in alignment with the founding vision will be top priorities for the PNTA and include:

ADVOCACY & COORDINATION

PNTA will lead the effort to advocate for agency prioritization of PNT completion at the district, forest, regional and national levels within the Forest Service.

This may include completing Optimal Location Reviews (OLRS) as determined by the Forest Service for each section of the trail as well as supporting land acquisition and protection planning.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT MITIGATION

Throughout trail development and management, PNTA will advocate for processes that ensure environmental impact is minimized and wilderness areas are protected.

In addition to OLRs and land acquisition planning, this includes reviewing all project proposals on and adjacent to the PNT, advocating for visitor use management practices that consider environmental impact, and staying up-to-date on conservation best practices for trail work.

TRAIL OPERATIONS CAPACITY GROWTH

The PNTA will expand trail operations program capacity, with a focus on Idaho and Montana.

We will also continue to facilitate relationships and foster cooperation across jurisdictions to ensure that the trail is developed and managed consistently by all federal, state and local agencies.

The PNTA performs over 80% of our maintenance and construction on the PNT with youth and young adults from trailside communities and schools near the PNT. In 2023, seven trail crews worked across the trail corridor in Washington.



PERFORMANCE TRAIL CREWS

The Performance Trail Crew Program provides paid, summer-long employment to the next generation of trail stewards.

Working in four to eight person teams, crew members hone their trail maintenance and construction skills and develop outdoor leadership skills all while camping out under the stars in national parks, national forests, and other scenic public lands along the Pacific Northwest Trail.

On a typical backcountry hitch, our Performance Trail Crews will spend up to ten days at a time backpacking and working out in the wilderness to service all of these hard to reach places.

The experience provides crew members with a rare opportunity to take a break from life as usual, to build things by hand, and to immerse themselves in the natural world, well away from modern distractions.

2. Community Activation

Communities play a critical role in the process of developing a national scenic trail. Developing and protecting 1,200 continuous miles across our public lands is a community effort.

As we continue to advance our mission, we are building out a strategy and approach that enlists our PNT community—trail users, volunteers, trail town residents, private landowners, and donors—so we can continue this work to develop both the trail and our community together. Our focus areas will include:

LOCAL RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

The PNTA is committed to increasing our local presence, better understanding local needs, and working in close partnership with local communities to ensure the PNT delivers maximum benefits not only to its users, but also to its trail-side communities.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

The PNTA will continue to expand our volunteer program and deliver end-to-end volunteer experiences that advance trail education, development, and maintenance and community building.

COMMUNITY CELEBRATION

In the coming years, we look forward to bringing opportunities for the PNTA community to connect, exchange stories, and celebrate our collective work and experiences together.

Since 2022, Boeing Employees Alpine Society members have partnered with the PNTA to fulfill the service stewardship requirements of their alpine program through volunteer trail stewardship on the Pacific Northwest Trail.



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Maintaining the 1,200 mile trail system is a big job and its season is short. It takes dedicated teams of professional, student, and volunteer crews, coordinated by the PNTA, to prepare the trail for visitors each summer. Volunteers may also support projects designed to enhance the young trail system so that it better meets agency standards.

Each season, PNTA hosts dozens of volunteer events that range from front country projects that last only a few hours, to week-long backpacking trips into remote wilderness areas. Volunteers may help with annual brushing and log-out, provide pack support to back-country trail crews, or help build trail structures.

3. Staff Development and Wellbeing

Our full-time staff and seasonal trail crew members are the nerve center of our trail community. With boots on the ground year-round, they bring insight and expertise on both small details and the big picture. They uphold a strong reputation for thoughtful, high-quality, and reliable partnership amongst the outdoor Pacific Northwest Trail community, and their development and wellbeing are pivotal to the success of our collective work. Our priorities include:

WELLBEING & TEAM CULTURE

The PNTA is committed to nurturing a culture that makes all staff feel valued, connected, and excited to come into work to support individuals' overall wellbeing.

This includes working towards offering staff investible wages, expanding staff benefits, and supporting employee growth.



CAPACITY

Increasing our team's capacity will be critical to delivering on all aforementioned priorities, and in particular, ensuring staff wellbeing.

In the coming years, the PNTA is committed to growing our team with a focus on bolstering our trail operations, volunteer program, and development efforts.

4. Financial Health

As the PNTA moves forward and grows as an organization, our continuous growth and development necessarily relies on our financial health. By addressing financial priorities, the PNTA aims to solidify its financial standing, build a strong foundation for future growth and sustain our mission for generations to come. Our focus areas will include:

FUNDRAISING

The PNTA heavily relies on government grants to fund operations and trail maintenance efforts. To achieve long-term financial sustainability, we recognize the need for a diversified funding model.

Although government grants are essential, we will develop a comprehensive fundraising strategy to secure non-governmental funding. This will involve engaging individual and corporate donors and establishing clear financial goals, timelines, and metrics to measure our fundraising success.



RESERVES

Maintaining a healthy cash balance and strategic reserve is required for continued financial stability.

We will establish targets for our cash balance and reserves, accounting for potential expenses like unexpected costs, interruptions in cash flow, and declining revenue. The PNTA will invest reserves, to ensure that we have enough capital to meet our financial goals. By setting these targets, the PNTA will prepare for future challenges and ensure the PNTA has resources to continue our mission.



At 120 miles in length, the Pasayten Wilderness section of the PNT provides visitors with an immersive roadless experience. PNTA trail crews typically spend 100 days per year working to keep the PNT and critical approach trails in the wilderness accessible to hikers and equestrians. Photo by Tyler Yates.

**“If future generations
are to remember us with
gratitude rather than
contempt...we must leave
them with a glimpse of the
world as it was in the
beginning, not just after
we got through with it.”**

**- Lyndon B Johnson upon signing the
Wilderness Act of 1964**