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Montana & Idaho's Continental Divide Trail: The Official Guide (The Continental Divide Trail Series)



Synopsis

This book picks up the Continental Divide Trail in Idaho at the western border of Yellowstone National Park and takes the reader some 900 miles all the way to the Canadian border. From the Beaverhead Mountains in the Bitterroot Range to the Scapegoat and Bob Marshall Wilderness, Idaho and Montana's most spectacular and remote wild lands fill page after page in a book that fits into your backpack or makes for great reading anytime. You'll have no better companion than the lively and humorous voice of Lynna Howard and the dramatic, breathtaking photography of Leland Howard. Aspects of history, wildlife, geology, and biology are explained along the way. For day hikes, destination hikes, or longer treks for the avid backpacker, this book is a must. "This trail is rougher and more challenging than the Pacific Crest Trail or the Appalachian Trail," Lynna writes. "A spirit of adventure is the best thing you can pack!"

Book Information

File Size: 10097 KB

Print Length: 314 pages

Page Numbers Source ISBN: 1565793307

Publisher: Westcliff Pub Inc (July 31, 2000)

Publication Date: July 31, 2000

Sold by: Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B002WYJBWA

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Not Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #1,259,496 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #20 in Books > Travel > United States > Idaho > General #25 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Nonfiction > Travel > United States > States > Idaho #38 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Nonfiction > Travel > United States > States > Montana

Customer Reviews

Book was in perfect condition. A must read if planning the CDT trip. It is written for hikers and does not have info about horse use.

I was extremely satisfied with the book, its condition and the timeliness of its arrival. I would recommend this book to anyone hiking on and near the continental divide. Though some of the store names have changed in the local towns.

Received promptly and in condition promised. Very satisfied. Thanx much. C

This is one of the best hiking guides I have ever seen. The author has packed an amazing amount of information into this book, and it is all clear and easy to use, whether you are planning a day hike or longer adventure. Introductory material covers everything you need to know - how to avoid grizzly bears, how to physically prepare for long distance hiking, how to respect the environment as you pass through. Alternate, proposed and real routes are all covered. The book also covers things you don't necessarily NEED to know, but that will make your experience of the area so much richer - history, geology, wildlife and more. Everything is presented in an enormously readable tone, with humor and insight. For example: "definition of lost: when you know where you are, but you don't know where the damned trail is." How many guidebooks can make you laugh out loud? You know Lynna Howard has been there and experienced the trail fully, and she inspires you to see it for yourself. Each section of trail is represented by clear maps and gorgeous color photos by Leland Howard - well above the usual guidebook standard. In checking for other books by Lynna and Leland, I was thrilled to see that they have done a coffee table book on the same section of trail, so the photography will get its full due. The publisher should be commended for putting together such a well-published, attractive package. I can't wait to hit the trail!

Mr. Morgan, in a review below, says that the book was written for armchair reading, from the seat of a car and offers as proof the trail description near Schultz Saddle. On page 151 of the guidebook the text reads in part "The Forest Service has plans to cut a trail through the trees above the road to Gibbons Pass, but that trail was incomplete when we hiked the CDT..." On page 23, the author notes, "The Continental Divide Trail is a work in progress...Significant improvements have been made in the past two years and the pace of change is accelerating as interest in the trail increases. Sections of the trail have changed since we hiked them; more will change in the future." It's great that the trail from Chief Joseph Pass to Schultz Saddle is now complete, and I've heard that further work after the fires of 2000 improved the trail even more. This book shows interim, proposed, and alternate routes for the CDT and also tells the reader which routes are depicted correctly on maps.

Extremely detailed information throughout the book confirms a step-by-step familiarity with the trail. While the mileage info is accurate, I agree that the book would benefit from the addition of a table showing landmarks and miles for each segment.

The nice qualities about this book have been noted (if overstated), by the reviewers below. In addition to its good photography, the book provides some information on how to prepare for a long distance hike, low-impact hiking, bear avoidance, etc. However, the information basically serves as a brief review. If you're not already acquainted with these concepts, this book will not serve as an adequate source of knowledge of these very important backpacking considerations. You'd do well to pick up another book specifically devoted to these sorts of issues if you're unfamiliar with them. My biggest complaint about this book is not its lack of information on how to backpack properly. I don't expect that from a guidebook, really. I'm just sort of disappointed by its impracticality. For backpackers who are concerned about pack weight, this book is simply a monster. Sure, it includes lovely color photographs and maps to give you a rough idea of the route. But it's all printed on 312 pages of heavy, glossy paper, making the book insanely heavy to actually be carried for hundreds of miles along the trail. In addition, in comparison to the other available guidebooks for the Continental Divide Trail, the trail descriptions are only so-so and conspicuously lack mileage indicators a lot of the time. In fact, for the 300+ miles of the Continental Divide Trail I plan on completing next season, I have found better, more detailed descriptions on a popular outdoor website. The one strong point about this book is this: it's the most up-to-date guidebook for the ever-changing CDT. 2 other guidebooks (separated into Northern Montana and Southern Montana volumes), written by Jim Wolf, are available for this trail, but they are somewhat out of date. Because the route of the CDT is not yet fully determined, less developed portions of the "official" trail route might change from one year to the next. While Wolf's books are much smaller, more detailed, and more practical for actual backpackers, the flashy, picture-filled volume by Lynna Howard DOES provide more recent, and therefore valuable, information about the trail. Having hiked the CDT in Wyoming and Colorado using the old guidebooks, I can attest to the usefulness of more recent trail information. For that reason, I'm glad I bought it. In summary, this book is a great book for sitting on your couch, looking at the pictures of Montana's CDT, and dreaming about that trip you're planning. But in the final analysis, I can't imagine actually lugging the thing along the trail, especially given what I feel are its deficiencies in trail description. When I hit the trail in Montana next summer, I will photocopy some of the relatively up-to-date information provided to supplement my old guidebook. The book WILL have some practical use for me. I don't suggest you not buy it; I

simply suggest the older, smaller, humbler, and better written Jim Wolf guidebooks be the ones you carry on the trail.

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