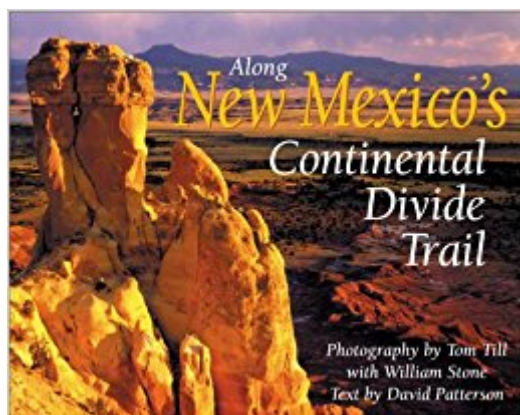


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Along New Mexico's Continental Divide Trail



Synopsis

The Continental Divide Trail stretches across five states from Canada to Mexico--and the segment that winds through New Mexico is incredibly diverse, beautiful, and remote. In an engaging style well-known to his readers, David D. Patterson writes of his experiences hiking and mountain biking his way across the 750 miles of the trail that winds through this beautiful state. Photographer Tom Till captures the incredible diversity of New Mexico's landscapes, including lush national forests, broad deserts, and rugged volcanic bluffs.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

and as those of us of a certain age know, there seems to be far more inspirations than time left. This book was published in 2001. David Patterson was 29 at the time, and already held, for me, one of the most desirable of life achievements, the Triple Crown of hiking. He had hiked the entirety of the three major north-south trails in the United States: the Appalachian, the Pacific Crest and the Continental Divide. He has hiked some 10,000 miles overall. This book contains a mere fraction of those miles, about 800, all in New Mexico. And the book is not a comprehensive account of those 800 miles; rather Patterson presents snippets of his adventure, just a sampling of his experiences. He starts in the boot heel in

April. Then and now, security can be a concern, as this area is a major conduit for the drug trade. At one point he is stopped by the Border Patrol. One of the key points that he makes, early on, is the "inchoate" nature of the trail: meaning that much of it still has not been firmly established, due to private land "rights." Even at the very beginning, he is actually 20 miles to the east of the Continental Divide due to those aforementioned rights. There are three other major sections that he describes: (my beloved) Gila Wilderness, the area around Mt. Taylor, and from Cuba (yes, NM) through Georgia Keefe's Ghost ranch, to the Colorado border. There is a lot of glorious "elbow room" along the way, meaning vast open spaces, sometimes TOO vast if you are carrying all of your food, and much of your water on your back. There are the "trail angels" along the way who simply help out in the adventure, sometimes for vicarious reasons. And I liked the section where he wrote of his experiences around Pie Town. The "inspirational" part of the book are the photographs. Tom Till and William Stone teamed up on the imaging project, permitting Patterson to eschew the camera, and, no doubt, allowing him to carry extra water. Each photo is crisp, clean, and conveys the infinite appeal of the natural world. Normally in a work containing photographs, I can usually identify two or three favorites. In this work, I cannot since they all are quite appealing. I cite a few, simply to indicate the range of the photographs. There are a couple of wooden buildings in the "ghost town" of Chloride, with sunflowers in the foreground. Adjacent is a snowy field at sunrise, with a lone ponderosa pine casting long shadows. Lichen, paintbrush and claret cup cactus blooms are representative of the flora along the way. The green, green of the forest and meadows of Tierra Amarilla, near the Colorado border, contrast with the desertscapes of the boot heel. And fittingly, there are even a few small pictures of the intrepid hiker himself, the author, one of which is him crossing a snowfield. Overall, a wonderful tribute to the natural world, along the "backbone" of New Mexico. 5-stars.

A highly recommended book. I have always enjoyed the photography of Tom Till and this book is no exception with beautiful photographs of New Mexico along the trail. William Stone's text complements the photography and provides a good overview of the trail as of the writing date of this book (2001).

a brilliant book that not only has great photos but very important info on the continental divide in new

mexico note you should also check out the companion guide

I bought this Cd with the intention of MAYE trying to ride it but, an accident has decided for me that this is impossible in my life time. I did load it up and as long as you have a lap top or photographic memory, it won't do you any good. But having a lap top computer[along with you on your trip would make this map indispensable.

I just finished reading the book "Along New Mexico's Continental Divide Trail", with text written by David Patterson. Through the well-composed description and excellent, colorful photographs, the reader can get an idea what the land along the CDT is like, and what it's like to hike it. Initially, I was captivated because I have never hiked in New Mexico. In fact, I haven't even been to the state since 1974! I just wanted to get a glimpse of the region and the trail. As it turns out, the book was so enjoyable that I have decided to hike a portion of the New Mexico CDT this spring! Although not a detailed guidebook, David's description of his hike, the people he met and the never-ending challenges of hiking in such unforgiving terrain were more than enough to help me understand the New Mexico CDT. Having thru-hiked the PCT, I know what hiking in a desert state is like. With its unique culture, topography and ambiguous CDT route, themes that David deals in, hiking in New Mexico is a whole new ball game! I could not have imagined hiking it without first reading the book. Early on David writes, "Except for the rusty barbed wire fence that marks the border between Mexico and the United States, this land knows no boundaries, natural or artificial, as far as I can see." Hiking in an environment that not long ago was home to indigenous cultures, he adds, "It's amazing how the tools, clothing and weapons of these previous cultures are merely modifications of the natural environment: rock, wood, and bone." Well said! Each region of David's route is written in much the same way I mentally categorize and remember my 1996 PCT hike. For example, the Gila National Forest is described as a place where mining camps little the landscape, high desert plants such as prickly pear thrive, but there's some shade provided by the pines and junipers.

"Bushwacking isn't necessarily my favorite pastime, but it's what we have to do to get beyond Diamond Peak." This section of David's route through the Gila had a big fire some years ago and it presents this challenge: "It's almost as if a bulldozer piled all the trees on top of each other, but then again Mother Nature's power is awesome. When the wind howls the few standing dead snags sway, and I can hear their eerie voices shrieking from the flames that licked them not long ago." Classic! In the end he pays homage to this wonderful area of the CDT. "Weathered ranchers, forest rangers, mountain men, and friendly strangers- it's nature's own character, silently revealing herself to me in

the canyons, deserts, and mountains of New Mexico, that has made my journey through the Land of Enchantment an everlasting experience." Additionally, the photographs by Tom Till and William Stone provide a great background to David Patterson's description of the New Mexico CDT.

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