

Dangerous PCT keeping rescue crews busy

By Dan White, Outside

The Pacific Crest Trail doles out hazards in cruel ways. Thousands of hikers on the 2,650-mile trek face perils including rattlesnakes, exposure, corneal flash burns from snow glare, and heatstroke. But 2017 is shaping up to be one of the most frightening years in the national scenic trail's history, thanks to the massive snowpack in the Sierra Nevada combined with the trail's unprecedented popularity.

Just a couple of months into hiking season, thru-hikers are posting stories of near-death experiences.

Jack Haskel, spokesman for the Pacific Crest Trail Association, is fielding calls and hearing stories "every week, if not every day" involving avalanches, falls on slippery slopes, exposure, and dunkings in chin-high creeks. "There was a pretty serious incident in which a hiker fell and punctured a lung," he says.

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