



BY JORDAN BOWMAN, ATC DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

Uniting to Preserve the South Mountain Range

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Stretching from the Potomac River to Boiling Springs, Pennsylvania, the South Mountain Range is home to 60 miles of the Appalachian Trail (A.T.) and a diversity of landscapes, environments and historic communities. The Pennsylvania portion of this unique range is promoted and protected by the South Mountain Partnership, an alliance between the ATC, the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and dozens of businesses, non-profits, academic institutions, and local, state and federal government agencies and officials. These entities work together to promote and preserve this irreplaceable landscape for future generations.

“The South Mountain landscape is our home,” said Katie Hess, Director of South Mountain Partnership. “And despite the different opinions, perspectives and worldviews that each of us carry, we all share a common trait: we call the South Mountain landscape home. The Partnership believes in the power of this common ground to build conversation around the future of this landscape, and our future while living within this landscape.”



Individuals from a variety of professions and backgrounds participate in Partnership meetings, ensuring that the South Mountain area is preserved and the needs of local communities are considered.

Every year, the Partnership focuses on a wide range of conservation projects and initiatives. Some of these include a mini-grant program for local governments and organizations to improve local environmental programs; regional forums to learn and network with individuals and groups interested in becoming more involved with environmental work; a conservation speaker series at educational events; and additional conservation initiatives such as a regional water workshops, a Research Corp and Science Summit, cultural landscape assessments, and a rail-trail feasibility study. All of these initiatives serve the Partnership’s goals of greater environmental protections for the South Mountain area and better opportunities for people to enjoy the benefits of preserved public lands.

One specific benefit that the Partnership has focused on protecting is clean water sources. Since 2018, the Partnership has worked with the Chesapeake Bay Trust to bring attention to the importance of preserving the water quality and water sources throughout the region, which are vital for nearby communities and help keep the Chesapeake Bay clean. Through this initiative, the Partnership will help local communities improve water quality and spearhead a wide-reaching public information campaign to ensure South Mountain’s water sources provide clean, fresh water on the A.T. and far beyond.



The Partnership’s work to preserve water quality is essential for the health of South Mountain communities and the ecosystems surrounding the Trail.

“Preserving water quality is something everyone can benefit and get behind, and it is vital for protecting the Appalachian Trail landscape and the communities surrounding it,” said Hess. “It’s part of our core programs that bring partners together to focus the region’s collective resources and energy on advancing the conservation of our beautiful landscape and its resources.”

For more information about the South Mountain Partnership and how you can get involved, visit www.southmountainpartnership.org.

Projects like this are only made possible through the dedication of our members and donors! By giving a gift to the Trail today, you are ensuring that the unique A.T. experience is preserved and protected forever and for all.

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The Appalachian Trail Conservancy’s mission is to protect, manage, and advocate for the Appalachian National Scenic Trail.

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy is a 501(c)(3) organization. Our CFC number: 12230. Our Tax ID number: 526046689.

799 Washington Street, PO Box 807 | Harpers Ferry, WV 25425 | P: 304.535.6331 | info@appalachiantrail.org



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