

SOUTH MOUNTAIN CONSERVATION LANDSCAPE 2013 ACCOMPLISHMENTS



SOUTH MOUNTAIN
PARTNERSHIP

About the Partnership

The South Mountain Partnership is a landscape-scale conservation project managed as a public-private partnership between the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy.

The Partnership has grown into a coalition of citizens, businesses, non-profits, academic institutions, and local, state, and federal government agencies and officials.

The Partnership envisions a future landscape of conserved resources and vibrant communities sharing a common sense of place and collaborating on well-planned growth and sustainable economic development.

About the Landscape

The South Mountain landscape covers portions of Adams, Cumberland, Franklin and York counties.

The South Mountain ridgeline represents the northern terminus of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The Landscape is defined by this ridgeline and the surrounding valleys and communities within south-central Pennsylvania.

Since 2009, the South Mountain Partnership has been conserving landscape resources to enrich the quality of life and sense of place of the South Mountain region's citizens and communities.

2013 TOP TEN PARTNERSHIP ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The South Mountain Mobile Phone App is launched.

The South Mountain Partnership introduced the South Mountain Mobile Phone App at its spring 2013 Partnership meeting. The phone app, featuring the natural, historic, cultural, and recreational resources of the region, was designed to highlight all that makes the South Mountain landscape unique and special. Users can access information about and get directions to more than 75 destinations, or explore five preset thematic tours throughout Adams, Cumberland, Franklin, and York counties. The South Mountain Mobile Phone App can be downloaded on your smartphone by searching for "South Mountain PA" on Google Play or the iTunes store.



The Partnership hosts a successful Go Local for Health regional summit.

The Partnership convened a second "Go Local for Health" regional summit, around the theme of "Improving Connections to Make Health a Community Conversation." Held at the Rhodes Grove Camp and Conference Center in Chambersburg, the conference attracted more than 80 participants, built collaboration between diverse stakeholders, and opened dialogue with leading healthcare sector organizations operating within the region.

The White Rocks Acquisition project receives recognition. The White Rocks Acquisition in Monroe and South Middleton townships was a \$3.2 million, 850-acre land conservation project that closed in 2011 thanks in part to the dedicated collaboration among DCNR, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, the Central Pennsylvania Conservancy, the Cumberland County Planning Department, the National Park Service and many other partners – a collaboration that helped to coalesce the Partnership. Partnership staff nominated this project for recognition as part of the Keystone Fund's 20th Anniversary celebration in the early months of 2013, and the project was identified as the top conservation project in the 20-year history of the fund, an honor that only serves to demonstrate the power of the Partnership.

The South Mountain Speakers Series continues to grow. Thanks to the efforts of a steering committee comprised of a diverse range of partners, the Partnership hosted another successful season of its South Mountain Speakers Series in 2013. With four events focusing on diverse topics including vernal pools, rhyolite geology, native pollinators, and conservation law history, the 2013 season attracted over 250 attendees.

2013 ACCOMPLISHMENTS, CONTINUED

Partners complete projects on-the-ground thanks to the Mini-Grant Program. Projects funded in the 2012 funding round of the Partnership's Mini-Grant Program were completed in 2013. Notable successes included the launching of the Goddard Leadership Legacy Institute, a week-long residence-based summer program for youth built around principles of leadership and environmental education, and an update of *Simply Moving*, a pocket-sized booklet that serves as a guide to the public parks, trails, and other recreational facilities of Cumberland and Perry counties.

The Partnership continues to catalyze action through a 2013 Mini-Grant Funding Round. 2013 marked the fifth year of the Partnership's Mini-Grant Program; an impressive group of applications were submitted for consideration in this round, and following a rigorous review process by the review committee, eight projects were awarded funding totaling approximately \$35,000. All eight of these projects are scheduled to be completed by the end of 2014.

The Leadership Committee continues to strengthen. The Partnership's Leadership Committee – a 14-member advisory board that provides strategic direction and programmatic support – continued to mature in 2013. Notable highlights included the continuation of regular monthly meetings, a more rigorous accounting of meeting minutes, the formalization of Committee Roles and Responsibilities, and the compilation of committee member bios.

Impressive partner engagement continues. 2013 marked the first year in which the Partnership attempted to quantify the amount of partner time contributed in collaborations advancing the mission and goals of the Partnership. Starting in April, a system for a conservative accounting of partner time indicated that in the nine months between April and December, over 540 hours of partner time was contributed to the Partnership. This is an impressive amount – over 60 hours a month – and demonstrates the energy and enthusiasm within the landscape to see the mission of the Partnership implemented. More formally, the Partnership held two well-attended partner meetings (spring and fall) in addition to its annual "Power of the Partnership" celebration (the 2012 celebration was hosted in late January of 2013).

The Gettysburg Wine and Fruit Trail expands its focus. Since first joining with the Partnership in 2011, the Gettysburg Wine and Fruit Trail has been an active partner. In 2013, the Wine and Fruit Trail, which is steadily growing into a premier agri-tourism destination in southern Pennsylvania, expanded its geographic focus to encompass the four-county footprint of the South Mountain landscape. This success story demonstrates the capacity for the Partnership's vision to support innovative economic growth around the unique resources of the region.

The Partnership invests in solidifying its strategic foundation. Based on the strength of the Leadership Committee, the Partnership has invested significant time into clarifying and solidifying its strategic foundation, including a review of vision, mission, goals and strategy of the Partnership. This conversation has positioned the Partnership to finalize this foundation in early 2014 and launch into a new year with focused energy.



A hiker enjoys a view during a hike through the 850-acre White Rocks acquisition.



Panelists take questions during the Partnership's Go Local for Health regional summit.



Students enjoy the Ironmaster's Mansion at Pine Grove Furnace State Park as part of the inaugural Goddard Leadership Legacy Institute, funded in part by a mini-grant.

More Information

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