



The South Mountain Partnership works best as a network of people and organizations working toward common goals.

Our common goal? Making the future of our region better.

The Latest South Mountain Partnership News

Mini-Grant Pre-Applications Deadline April 30!



Pre-applications are DUE April 30!

Our Mini-Grant Program provides funding, on a competitive basis, to projects that sustain the South Mountain landscape's sense of place by protecting and promoting the region's landscape resources. Our Mini-Grants are single-year grants for projects or work from September 2024 - December 2025, ranging from \$2,500 to \$15,000. Eligible applicants include municipalities, municipal agencies, counties, academic institutions, and authorized 501(c)(3) non-profits.

[LEARN MORE AND APPLY HERE](#)

Spring Meeting and Science Summit



Spring Meeting



*Thank you to
our generous
Sponsors!*



Thank you to the event sponsors that allow us to hold these events and invest in local food, music, and more; [Cumberland Valley Economic Development Corporation and Visitors Bureau](#), [Jared Abell, Realtor](#), [Franklin County Visitors Bureau](#), and [Advancing Science at Gettysburg College](#). Over 100 attendees gathered throughout the day to enjoy engaging presentations, new research from local scholars, and connections with partners new and old.

Key Takeaways:

- 1) Natural Heritage Inventory Update: Through coordination from the South Mountain Partnership, Adams, Cumberland, Franklin, and York counties will receive an update to their Natural Heritage Inventory. The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy will be doing the work. **[Your role as SMP Partner: Suggest locations of quality habitat and wildlife through this form to inform where WPC visits to survey; local contacts/landowner information is very valuable and we ask that you include this information if able.](#)**
- 2) Cumberland County Comprehensive Plan Update: redevelopment and revitalization will be key to successful implementation of the updated plan. **Your role as SMP Partner: Please help to build support by speaking out in support of land preservation and trails to county and municipal officials and staff; also by attending key municipal and county public meetings, writing letters, and consider joining the [Cumberland Conservation Collaborative](#).**
- 3) PA Highlands: The [federal Highlands Act](#) was recently reauthorized and expanded and some great changes were made! This is a huge opportunity for the South Mountain region, as these federal funds can be used to match state funds in many cases. Municipalities must voluntarily opt into the Highlands. **Your role as SMP Partner: We will have further steps to get involved soon, stay tuned!!**
- 4) State of the Region Implementation: The first Action Plan project has been started with the Natural Heritage Inventory updates for Adams, Cumberland, Franklin, and York counties. We gathered your feedback as we set out on the next Action Plan project: convening a regional trail coalition.
- 5) Our South Mountain Science Summit featured the investment of our Research Corps grants in local students creating ground breaking research on regional sites that will impact land management for generations to come. Many of the Science Summit Presentations can be found on our website [here](#).

[CLICK HERE TO SEE THE FULL EVENT WRAP UP](#)

South Mountain Partnership in the News!

Our very own Katie Hess, Director, and Julia Chain, Program Manager, were featured in an article written by the Gettysburg Connection! Learn more about how South Mountain Partnership protects natural resources and supports community partners in the full article [HERE](#).



South Mountain Partnership was also featured on one of the first episodes of "FCVB TV" a new weekly publication from the Franklin County Visitor's Bureau. [Watch our segment here](#). Don't forget to check back for new episodes!

SMP Mini-Grant Success Story



A South Mountain Partnership Mini-Grant recipient, Shippensburg University's Center for Land Use and Sustainability is a student-led initiative to engage in food waste reduction strategies and improve Shippensburg University's overall carbon footprint. The program focused on both education and action by tackling food waste reduction and improving soil health at the campus farm through composting. They partnered with local organizations including Shippensburg Produce and Outreach (SPO) where food was donated, local municipalities, the school district, and community residents. Funds were used to launch the composting and waste recycling program through purchase of compost supplies and educational signage and supporting student time.

The result? This project has resulted in more than 20 public programs and events. Educational resources, hand-outs, stickers, posters, coloring and activity sheets, and digital signage materials have also been produced. An outdoor message center was installed at the campus farm highlighting information about events, harvest schedules, composting, and acknowledging donors. In the 2023 season alone, more than 1,500 lbs. of produce were donated to Shippensburg Produce and Outreach or made available in their Fountain Fridays market.



Become a Partner

We are always looking to work with organizations in the community who share our goals! By becoming an official “Partner”, you can help support our vision and mission of the Partnership by attending meetings/events, keeping us informed of your organization’s related activities and increasing access to the natural, cultural and recreational resources of our region to all! Becoming a partner is easy and free! Find more information [here](#).

Partner News

Michaux State Forest

Michaux State Forest is working to improve recreational experiences in the Mountain Creek watershed by designing a trail system that protects our natural resources, is enjoyed by a wide range of recreation users and can be promoted, maintained, and enforced. The district held two trail design meetings in March and are using the feedback from the meetings and previous public input to design a more sustainable trail system. Currently, the Mountain Creek watershed has been impacted by trails created by forest visitors. These trails are unmarked (do not have blazes), are not promoted on DCNR maps, and are not maintained by DCNR.



These illegally built trails can be created from repeated use of a route or the intentional building of a trail, often without consideration for impacts to the resource, trail surface stability, level of difficulty, or safety. These trails have several negative impacts on the forest's natural resources and forest visitors including:

- Damage to sensitive habitats.
- Loss of backcountry and wilderness opportunities.
- Conflicts between recreation users.
- Navigation challenges and poor experiences for forest users.
- Safety concerns (including the challenges of finding injured folks on unmarked, unmapped illegal trails).

The new trail system will seek to balance recreation with the protection of natural resources while minimizing trail conflicts and preserving the rugged character that many forest visitors enjoy about the trails in Michaux State Forest. While the trail system is being designed, we are continuing to work on the Hearth Tender

Trail system near Pine Grove Furnace State Park. This trail system was designed in partnership with the Susquehanna Area Mountain Biking Association and provides beginner to moderate biking and hiking opportunities. The first workday of the year was April 20th.

Historic Preservation Survey

One of our 2023 SMP Mini-Grant recipients is looking for your feedback! Support Shippensburg University's Center for Land Use and Sustainability's work in the South Mountain today by sharing your input on a 15-question historic preservation resources survey in the link [HERE](#).

The goal of the survey is to gauge understanding of tools for historic preservation, familiarity with local historic resources, and to inform content for a series of workshops to be held this year. Results from this survey will be used to develop a community action guide to historic preservation.

Screening of the film *Common Ground*

Saturday, April 27, 7pm at the Luhrs Performing Arts Center, Shippensburg University

Common Ground is the highly anticipated sequel to the juggernaut success documentary, Kiss the Ground, which touched over 1 billion people globally and inspired the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to put \$20 billion toward soil health. The film reveals how unjust practices forged our current farm system in which farmers of all colors are literally dying to feed us. The film profiles a hopeful and uplifting movement of black, white, and indigenous farmers who are using alternative "regenerative" models of agriculture that could balance the climate, save our health, and stabilize America's economy – before it's too late. [See trailer here.](#)

The screening will be followed by a talkback facilitated by an expert panel and moderated by ABC27 Chief Meteorologist and farmer, Eric Finkenbinder. Representatives from agencies and organizations

representing different aspects of the local farming community will host information tables before and after the screening. [Tickets are available online only here.](#) Adults-\$11; students w/ID-\$5.50.

More Partner News of Note:

- **Share your feedback on beavers in the South Mountain:** Want to see more beavers throughout the South Mountain? A group of Gettysburg College Seniors in the Environmental Studies Department want your feedback! These students are currently exploring various aspects of beaver reintroduction to Michaux State Forest. Your input is important! Complete the survey in the link [HERE](#). The survey is anonymous and takes less than five minutes.
- **York County Planning Commission's Long Range Transportation Plan:** The York County Planning Commission has kicked off updates to the Long Range Transportation Plan (GOYORK2050) and Open Space and Trails Plan components of the County Comprehensive Plan. Opportunities for public involvement will be available as the updates progress. [Learn more here.](#)
- **Oil Creek Restoration:** York County Rail Trail Authority will begin restoration of Oil Creek, a tributary of Codorus Creek and part of the Susquehanna Watershed, in May 2024, followed by construction of a 1-mile extension of the Hanover Trolley Trail in Heidelberg Twp., York County, PA later this spring.

Employment and Funding Opportunities

Employment Opportunities

- **Board Members (Volunteer):** The Appalachian Trail Museum has two 2-year board positions that are vacant they are looking to fill. They are hoping to fill them at the Annual Meeting (April 14-26, 2024) and are asking for anyone who is interested to email Julie Queen, Museum Manager, and AT Museum President Larry Luxenberg with a brief letter of interest and a resume.
- **Director of Regional and Local Partnerships and Programs Center for Civic Learning in Action:** This position at Dickinson College will: Build and sustain Dickinson's network of community partners and enrich faculty, staff, and student engagement; Partner to provide coherent leadership and vision to the Center for Civic Learning in Action; and Collaborate across the College to develop faculty programs to support the expansion of Civic Learning in the Dickinson curriculum.
- **Engineer in Training:** The Civil Engineer – EIT will assist the York County Conservation District's Professional Engineer (PE) and E&S Program Manager and in administering the District's post construction stormwater management, erosion and sediment control, watershed, and agricultural BMP engineering design programs.

- **Governor's Science and Technology Fellowship**: The Governor's Science and Technology Fellowship is seeking talented, passionate individuals who want to explore careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and have a drive to help make Pennsylvania a better place to live. This fellowship is open to recent college graduates with advanced degrees. The fellowship is a one-year program designed to attract master's or doctorate-level candidates into STEM careers in state agencies. Throughout the program, fellows will participate in leadership development training and have opportunities to attend events with the private and public sector leaders.

Find a complete list of [Job Opportunities](#) and how to apply.

Funding Opportunities

- **Community Change Grant Equitable Resilience Technical Assistance (CCERTA) Program**: The Community Change Grant Equitable Resilience Technical Assistance (CCERTA) program will help eligible entities develop applications to be submitted for grants under the Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights (OEJECR) Community Change Grants Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). The Community Change Grants will invest approximately \$2 billion dollars in Inflation Reduction Act funds for environmental and climate justice activities to benefit disadvantaged communities through projects that reduce pollution, increase community climate resilience, and build community capacity to respond to environmental and climate justice challenges. Find more information [HERE](#).
- **2024-2025 Cumberland County Countywide Action Plan- Clean Water Grant Program**: Clean Water Cumberland is now accepting applications for the Clean Water Grant Program (CWGP). The CWGP provides financial support for "shovel-ready" initiatives that aim to enhance local water quality in Cumberland County. **Electronic applications are due by June 14th, 2024.**

Find our listing of [Regional Funding Opportunities](#) on our website, and suggest funds we should add.

Events

- **Go Green in the City | April 27 @ 10 a.m. | York Downtown, Inc.**: The 2024 event will take place in Downtown York, Saturday, April 27, 2024, from 10am-3pm. This fun, family-friendly festival celebrates green, healthy, and local living and will feature more than 60 vendors, live music, food, children's activities and much more. Go Green in the City has drawn more than 6,500 attendees during past events, and we can't wait to welcome everyone back in 2024.
- **Wood Crafters Expo and Food Truck Festival | April 27 @ 10 a.m. | Penn National**: The FREE Wood Crafters Expo will feature local artists who are making items from our Champion Black Oak Tree. The Black Oak Tree was designated in 1990 by the Pennsylvania Forestry Association to be a PA Champion as the oldest, tallest & widest in the state of Pennsylvania when it was nominated by Joe Bones & Ken Swisher. In January of 2017, the Champion Black Oak tree that grew on Penn National's property since 1841 was felled in a storm. Patti Nitterhouse (developer of Penn National Golf Course

Community) saved and kiln-dried the lumber and has given slabs to many local wood crafters to create beautiful works of art to honor its majesty.

- [Mount Tabor Preservation Project Walking Tour | May 11 @ 1PM Mount Holly Springs](#)
- [The Elements of the Forest | May 4 @11AM | Strawberry Hill Nature Preserve](#) Earth, air, fire, & water. The four elements manifest in rural forested areas in a variety of ways. Join Strawberry Hill as they explore practical exercises in determining which element brings the most healing, grounding, stabilizing energy
- [YoCo Connect Live at Ruins Hall | May 21 @ 5 p.m. | York County Economic Alliance:](#) Stop by Ruins Hall in Glen Rock from 5-7pm for a networking mixer. This event will take place outdoors. Rain date is May 28, 2024. Enjoy appetizers, beverages, and door prizes while networking with other YoCo attendees.

View these events and MANY MORE on our [Partner Events calendar](#)! You can add your events directly onto our calendar or email them to jchain@appalachiantrail.org.

Social Media Catchup

Click to explore our social media channels. Follow us for the latest news, upcoming events, and more!



Our Home | Our Landscape | Our Future

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. We believe in the power of this common ground to build conversation around the future of this landscape - and our future while living within this landscape.

Learn more at southmountainpartnership.org



**SOUTH MOUNTAIN
PARTNERSHIP**
CONSERVATION NETWORK

The South Mountain Partnership [SMP] is managed as a public-private partnership by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. SMP is financed in part by a grant from the Community Conservation Partnerships Program, the Environmental Stewardship Fund, under the administration of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation.



Unsubscribe [here](#).