



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Appalachian Trail Conservancy Launches Collaborative Conservation Program in Pennsylvania

BOILING SPRINGS, Pa. (Sept. 11, 2025) – The Appalachian Trail Conservancy is launching a conservation collaborative that will equip Pennsylvania towns to lead local conservation projects within the Appalachian Trail landscape.

The Appalachian Trail Community Conservation Collaborative (ATCCC) aims to support communities in protecting their local environment, culture, and history; preparing for environmental risks; and strengthening their economies by providing technical assistance, planning tools, and assistance in applying for state and federal funding. The goal is to center local voices and leadership, including those from historically disadvantaged or underrepresented communities, in informing sustainable conservation efforts throughout the Appalachian Trail Landscape in Pennsylvania.

“The Appalachian Trail Community Conservation Collaborative will help communities develop their own priorities while leveraging other resources,” **says Katie Hess, director of Pennsylvania Landscape Conservation.** “This is a timely opportunity to strengthen community assets, enhance quality of life, and form environmental management goals.”

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy will gather 15 teams from different towns, boroughs, or townships consisting of local government officials, nonprofits, businesses, and community advocates. Each town will launch a community-led conservation project and receive tailored technical support to implement their projects, including design support, data analysis, and identification of funding sources.

This new conservation collaborative is being presented in partnership with the South Mountain Partnership, the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and an Advisory Committee with representatives from local government, non-profits, state agencies, and groups including the Southern Appalachian Woodland Network in PA, WeConservePA, Trust for Public Land, Department of Community and Economic Development, PA Creative Industries/Council on the Arts,

Appalachian Trail Landscape Partnership, Chesapeake Conservation Partnership, and Schuylkill Highlands Conservation Landscape.

"Our state's AT corridor is rich with irreplaceable treasures that people rely on, like woods, wildlife and numerous endangered species, and drinking water sources," **Hess says**. "We want to see engaged and empowered Pennsylvanian communities leading stewardship efforts that create jobs and build local pride. Together, we can ensure that the Trail continues to connect not just landscapes, but people, economies, and shared futures."

There is no cost to participate in the ATCCC. Eligible communities must be within the Appalachian Trail Landscape in Pennsylvania and meeting team representation and commitment requirements. For community-based teams interested in joining the ATCCC, the ATC will host informational webinars on October 1 and 15 to answer questions about the Collaborative and help communities apply. Visit www.tinyurl.com/atccollab to learn more.

About the Appalachian Trail Conservancy

Founded in 1925, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy works to manage and protect the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. As the only nonprofit devoted exclusively to the entirety of the Trail and its landscape, the ATC works to keep its natural beauty healthy, resilient and connected so that everyone can experience its transformative power for generations to come. Together with our supporters, partners, and thousands of volunteers, we keep the Trail alive.

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