Fast Facts

Counties
Berks, Carbon, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Fulton, Lebanon, Lehigh, Monroe, Northampton, Perry, and Schuylkill.

National and International Significance
- Critical habitat linkage in the Appalachian Forest
- Global Important Bird Area for the Cerulean Warbler
- Migration corridor used by tens of thousands of hawks, eagles, and falcons.
- Hawk Mountain Sanctuary
- 160 miles of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail
- Susquehanna and Delaware rivers
- Cherry Valley National Refuge
- Delaware Gap National Recreation Area
- Three military facilities: Fort Indiantown Gap, Letterkenny Army Depot, and Carlisle Army War College

What is a Conservation Landscape?
The Conservation Landscape Initiative is a place-based strategy for natural resource stewardship and advocacy in key landscapes across our state where there are strong natural assets and local readiness and support for land conservation, locally-driven planning, and community economic revitalization efforts.

Vision
To preserve, in perpetuity, this critical linkage of the Appalachian Mountain ecosystem, stretching across Pennsylvania from the Delaware Water Gap to the Maryland border, including the abundant, unfragmented forest for wildlife; fresh air; a safe, unobstructed passage for resident and migratory wildlife; headwater sources of clean and plentiful water for surrounding communities; a wild, scenic Appalachian Trail system experience; outdoor recreational opportunities; and wild areas to enrich the human mind and spirit.

Region
The Kittatinny Ridge extends 185 miles, marking the entrance into the Ridge and Valley region. It is known in eastern Pennsylvania as Kittatinny or Blue Mountain, in central Pennsylvania as Blue, First or North Mountain, and in Franklin County as Front Mountain or The Tuscaroras. “Kittatinny” means ‘the endless mountain’ as known by the Lenni-Lenape tribe of Native Americans that inhabited this region.

The Kittatinny is a critical natural asset in Pennsylvania. It is one of the most climate resilient landscapes, provides clean drinking water for thousands of people, offers extensive hunting and fishing opportunities, and shelters many endangered and threatened species. The natural system services, recreational revenue, air filtration, and open space and water real estate values are worth billions annually to the local economies, in addition to the eco-tourism income from the many visitors to the region’s parks, trails, and game lands.

Our Goals
Conserve Land
Permanently protect over 700 of the highest priority parcels, nearly 100,000 acres of the Kittatinny Ridge.

Conserve Native Habitat and Wildlife
Conserve the mosaic of habitats that support species diversity.

Share Conservation Research
Promote the scientific study of the Ridge and facilitate the exchange of information regarding habitats, wildlife, conservation management activities, history and human communities.

Provide Clean and Plentiful Water
Permanently protect the abundant and magnificent water resources, providing exceptional quality of life for residents, recreational opportunities for outdoor enthusiasts, unparalleled natural beauty, thriving ecosystems, agricultural prominence and economic prosperity.

Protect Ridge and Trail Landscapes Through Municipal Action
Inform municipal partners about the significance of the Kittatinny Ridge, why these treasured landscapes need to be protected, and how they can protect them with planning and zoning tools.

Community Engagement
Raise awareness about the strong connections among environmental stewardship, community character, quality of life, and economic development.
Key Initiatives

Protecting Land
Most of the Ridge’s critical functions and wildlife are dependent on having the vast majority of the Ridge remain forested. Forests protect headwater streams, provide habitat, prevent erosion, and create scenic beauty, especially during the fall. Forests play a key role in air quality and are a major source of carbon sequestration and oxygen, purifying the air of pollutants. Coalition partners are working toward a permanently protected greenway along the Kittatinny.

Preserving the Recreational Experience
The Kittatinny Ridge is a place to reconnect with nature in all seasons. It has something for everyone and hundreds of thousands take advantage of this spectacular natural and recreational resource each year.

Appalachian National Scenic Trail and Tuscarora Trail
The Appalachian Trail follows the ridge for 160 miles from the Delaware Water Gap in the north to the eastern part of Cumberland County. The Tuscarora Trail begins where the A.T. turns south, near Carlisle, and follows the Kittatinny Corridor eventually rejoining the Appalachian Trail in Virginia.

Bird Watching
Songbirds, hummingbirds, and even butterflies also follow the Ridge during their migrations, attracting visitors during the spring and fall to state parks, game lands, and other natural areas. During the summer months, the vast forests of the Ridge host a variety of nesting songbirds, some of which are very difficult to find elsewhere in the region.

Hunting and Fishing
The ridge is a primary destination for many hunters, as it is the first substantial block of forest land available to people traveling from the southeast part of the state, where land open to hunting is at a premium. The forests here are home to many “big woods” species favored by hunters, including wild turkey and black bear. The vast network of State Game and private properties provide ample opportunities for hunting throughout the Ridge corridor.

Safeguarding Military Facilities
Three military facilities are located on the Kittatinny Ridge, essential military readiness in the U.S.: Fort Indiantown Gap, Letterkenny Army Depot, and Carlisle Army War College. Conserving the natural integrity of the Kittatinny is critical to their respective military operations, including night flying; training on utility and cargo helicopters; manufacturing, refurbishing, maintaining, and storing components for the military’s tactical missile air defense systems; and producing graduates who are skilled critical thinkers and complex problem solvers. In addition Fort Indiantown Gap personnel steward the property with care to protect rare, threatened and endangered species, including the Regal Fritillary butterfly.

Return on Environment and Municipal Outreach
A Return on Environment report is being completed for each county on the Ridge, providing government officials with the economic value of their natural resources, recreation, air filtration, and real estate premiums due to proximity to open space. This information helps officials manage their natural assets and understand the cost of their consumption. ROE averages $1 billion annually per county.

136 municipalities along the Ridge play a pivotal role in determining the future of their communities and the entire landscape. The Coalition provides technical assistance to help officials manage growth; conserve the resources they hold most dear; and comply with the Appalachian Trail Act, which requires that all 58 A.T. municipalities include a portion of the Appalachian Trail to “preserve the natural, scenic, historic and aesthetic values of the trail and to conserve and maintain it as a public natural resource.”

Partnership
The Kittatinny Coalition is an alliance of organizations, agencies, and academic institutions working with municipal officials and private landowners to conserve the natural, scenic, cultural, and aesthetic resources of the Kittatinny Ridge.

More Information
For more information on the Kittatinny Ridge Conservation Landscape, contact:

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