South Mountain Partnership receives funding to complete a Cultural Landscape Assessment. DCNR’s support of the South Mountain Partnership’s Cultural Heritage Plan has leveraged additional resources to complete a cultural landscape assessment of Michaux State Forest. With a $20,000 grant from the Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission in 2014 matching DCNR’s support, this assessment will explore how society has consciously and unconsciously impacted natural systems through time, and how such interactions have shaped the cultural and natural legacies of the Forest. By identifying and documenting prevailing historical themes related to the Forest's ecological and cultural resources, the assessment will empower Forest managers in efforts to preserve, manage, and interpret these historical resources. This project will expand collaborations around preserving and promoting the natural and historical elements that converge in making this region so unique.

Redesigned South Mountain Partnership website launched. The South Mountain Partnership’s web presence has been outdated and fragmented for the past two years. Working with a Chambersburg-based web design company, the South Mountain Partnership redesigned a new website to communicate the important work that we and our partners are pursuing. This fresh, clean platform allows us to confidently tell our story and connect partners, potential partners, and the broader public to our mission of conserving all which makes this landscape unique and special. Be sure to check out the website at www.southmountainpartnership.org!

Partnership catalyzes South Mountain Fruit Belt Economic Impact Study. In 2013, the Partnership engaged with Dickinson College students to explore the economic significance of the South Mountain Fruit Belt; surprisingly little data or information existed, despite the Fruit Belt’s obvious role as an important economic driver. With the Partnership having catalyzed this conversation, the Adams County Office of Planning and Development released an RFP in fall 2014 for a comprehensive Economic Impact Study of the Fruit Belt. The project will assess the direct, indirect, and induced economic impact of the fruit industry, and will serve to generate local government support and enhance compatible economic development opportunities.

Mini-Grant Program application revamped, and the 2014 round of grants awarded. The Partnership overhauled its Mini-Grant process and application in 2014. A pre-application form was introduced to streamline the process, and a more strategic scoring framework was applied to the final application. The program continued to attract significant interest and we were excited to receive a strong round of applications through the 2014 funding round. Follow-
ing a rigorous review process, we have awarded over $42,000 across 6 projects, to be completed in 2015.

**Key trail projects within the South Mountain landscape receive funding.** The South Mountain landscape boasts impressive recreational resources, and the Partnership prioritizes expanding these resources in strategic ways. Two high priority trail projects received major grants in 2014: the Gettysburg Inner Loop project ($1,766,434) received funding to advance its mission to connect key destinations via safe on- and off-road bicycle routes within and around the borough of Gettysburg; and Cumberland Valley Rail Trail ($650,000) received funding to advance its efforts to extend the rail trail north toward Carlisle. These are high priority trails within the South Mountain landscape, and the Partnership funded early stages of these projects to help position the organizations to secure these large grants.

**The South Mountain Speakers Series celebrates its Fifth Anniversary.** The 2014 Season marked the 5th Anniversary of the South Mountain Speakers Series. Thanks to the planning efforts an engaged steering committee, this celebratory season featured four events and attracted over 200 attendees. Topics included Joseph Rothrock and his legacy on Pennsylvania’s forests, African-American burial grounds within the local landscape, an emerging Fruit Belt cider industry, and the impacts of a changing global climate on the local landscape. Special thanks to the Cumberland Valley Visitors Bureau for joining in sponsoring this special Fifth Season!

**Partners complete on-the-ground projects thanks to Mini-Grant Program.** Projects funded in the 2013 Mini-Grant round were completed in 2014. The Partnership’s Mini-Grant Program catalyzed the completion of eight important projects that have advanced the conservation and preservation of Landscape Resources throughout the South Mountain landscape. Notable successes included the expansion of The LEAF Project, an innovative adolescent program built around leadership and agriculture; completion of a critical trout habitat enhancement project on the Conococheague Creek; re-capping of the iconic furnace stack at Pine Grove Furnace State Park; and the installation of new benches along Children’s Lake in Boiling Springs. More information on all Mini-Grant projects: www.southmountainpartnership.org.

**Impressive partner engagement continues.** The “Power” of the Partnership resides in the diverse partners that join us to invest in realizing a positive, sustainable future for the South Mountain landscape. A conservative tracking of volunteered partner time contributed to the Partnership suggests impressive engagement: for the 2014 calendar year, partners contributed over 900 hours of time to Partnership-led activities, which translates to over 80 hours a month. There is no better demonstration of the energy within the landscape to see the mission of the Partnership implemented.

**Partnership invests in organizational capacity.** The Partnership has invested significant time in solidifying its organizational foundation over the last two years, and this work came to fruition in many ways in 2014. In early 2014, the Partnership completed a process that solidified the strategic foundation of the Partnership. The Partnership produced an updated version of its general informational brochure. In late 2014, the Partnership introduced a Partner Support Letter, which for the first time formalized the mechanism for clarifying and identifying partners of the South Mountain Partnership.

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**The iconic furnace stack at Pine Grove Furnace State Park was re-capped to prevent deterioration.**

**A stretch of the Conococheague Creek in Michaux State Forest, where habitat structures were installed to improve trout habitat.**

**The lasting legacy of Joseph Rothrock, the Father of Pennsylvania Forestry, was the topic of one of the 2014 South Mountain Speakers Series events, which celebrated the fifth season of the Series.**

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**More Information**

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