



Keystone

Recreation, Park & Conservation Fund

White Rocks

An Epic Conservation Story

Standing on the white rocky cliffs along the Appalachian Trail, one is well rewarded for the mostly uphill hike to get there: a breathtaking panoramic view of farms and forest. Once threatened by development, 850 acres of forested ridgeline are now perma-



nently protected, safeguarding an unbroken forest habitat, amazing geological formations and a place to take in stunning views.


The conservation of White Rocks was an epic endeavor—spanning two decades and requiring dedication, collaboration and of course funding.

In the early 1990s, the National Park Service acquired four parcels (300 acres) in order to protect the Appalachian National Scenic Trail corridor but five parcels totaling 850 acres remained unprotected.

In 2006, a 274-house development was proposed on these five parcels, endangering the views along the Appalachian Trail and the unbroken forest habitat.

Residents and trail lovers opposed the development and various nonprofit organizations and government agencies banded together to work for a conservation solution. Extensive negotiations ensued with the willing landowner and a deal was made. But even with strong public support, the \$3.2 million price tag for the land exceeded the fiscal capacity of the partners.

The Keystone Recreation, Park & Conservation Fund made it possible for the partners to leverage the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund, as well as private donations, to buy the land.

The five parcels, transferred to the National Park Service in 2011 preserve the Appalachian Trail experience, safeguard the drinking water of surrounding communities and ensure migratory pathways for wildlife. They also connect with 700 acres of Pennsylvania State Game Lands. Located just 20 miles from Harrisburg, the protected lands provide bountiful and readily accessible recreational opportunities for hikers, birders, rock-climbers and other outdoor enthusiasts. 

Project Spotlight

Keystone investment: \$1.6M

Total project cost: \$3.2M

Project leader:

Appalachian Trail Conservancy /
Central Pennsylvania Conservancy

Key local partners:

National Park Service, DCNR's Bureaus of Recreation and Conservation and Forestry and the Cumberland County Planning Department

County: Cumberland

Fun fact: The white, quartzite rocks are about 550 million years old - likely formed along the coast of a shallow bit of ocean about 15 degrees south of the equator.



The Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund was established in 1993 with overwhelming bipartisan support both in the General Assembly and through a voter referendum. A portion of the state Realty Transfer Tax has been dedicated to the Keystone Fund for more than two decades. Each dollar of Keystone Fund investment typically leverages three dollars or more in direct local investments in our parks, trails, community green spaces and libraries.

Read more about the Keystone Fund at KeystoneFund.org