



Keystone Recreation, Park & Conservation Fund

Musser Gap

Protecting Wildlife and Water

Golden eagles fly high above Musser Gap on the western slope of Tussey Mountain making their way back to Canada during their annual spring migration.

In fact, more golden eagles migrate along Tussey Mountain each spring than any other location east of the Mississippi River.

Yet the critical habitat that Musser Gap provides the eagles and other migratory birds was almost lost.

The 423-acre property located in Centre County had been slated for residential development until ClearWater Conservancy stepped in.

Working with numerous partners and with support from the Keystone Recreation, Park & Conservation Fund, ClearWater Conservancy purchased the land for preservation.

In doing so they not only protected an important habitat for golden eagles and other wildlife, but also helped to safeguard the drinking water for more than 40,000 residents in State College's Centre Region.

Water from Musser Gap feeds into the Spring Creek Watershed, making the Gap a primary contributor to groundwater recharge in the Watershed. The residential development and septic system proposed for Musser Gap was of particular concern after site-specific testing showed that the transit time for pollutants entering the drinking water system from the Gap is only two weeks.

In addition to funding from the Keystone Recreation, Park & Conservation Fund, the acquisition was made possible with support from the Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry; the State College Borough Water Authority; Ferguson, College, Harris, Halfmoon and Patton townships; State College Borough, the Sierra Club's Huplits Foundation, and Altrusa International of Centre County. 



Don Bryant

Project Spotlight

Keystone investment: \$806,000

Total project cost: \$2.2M

Project leader:

ClearWater Conservancy

Key local partners:

State College Borough, Ferguson Township, College Township, Harris Township, Halfmoon Township and Patton Township

County: Centre

Fun fact: ClearWater reconveyed the property to the DCNR Bureau of Forestry and the property now serves as a gateway to the Rothrock State Forest.



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