



SOUTH MOUNTAIN
PARTNERSHIP

GeoTrail

Site Nomination Guidelines

Travel across the South Mountain region and you will find an abundance of cultural and natural treasures from farms and farm markets, wineries, historic sites, forestlands, unique water features, and bustling recreation assets.

The South Mountain Partnership and Capital RC&D are working to inventory and connect these sites by creating the South Mountain GeoTrail: a collection of geocache sites that help both residents and visitors to explore the area and learn more about its unique attractions.

The goal of this project is to assist in marketing tourism opportunities in and around the South Mountain Conservation Landscape and its communities in the four-county region. We want to showcase the best agricultural, natural and heritage sites the region has to offer, and we need your help to do it!

No one knows the South Mountain region better than the people who live and work here, so we're asking you to nominate potential geocache sites for the trail.

Whether you're an experienced geocacher or brand new to the sport, you can help us find and celebrate the best of the best in the South Mountain region.

South Mountain Towns and Roads



Legend

- South Mountain Geographical Boundary
- South Mountain Region





SOUTH MOUNTAIN
P A R T N E R S H I P

What is Geocaching?

This adventure sport/hobby is a great family activity and getting started is easy! All you need is a handheld GPS receiver (new ones are available for as little as \$80) or GPS-enabled mobile phone and internet access.

Download the GPS coordinates for a cache site, and use your GPS device to track it down. A typical cache consists of a waterproof container, a log book, and trinkets. Signing the log book proves you found it, and the trinkets are trade items; take an item, then replace it with an item of equal value.

Once the log book is signed and trinkets exchanged, the container is put back in exactly the same place it was found, to await the next finder. You can read more about geocaching at www.geocaching.com.

Site Nomination Guidelines

Geocaching is just like real estate - location, location, location! We are looking for cache sites that showcase the wonderful attractions of the South Mountain region. We are especially interested in sites that highlight an Agricultural feature (e.g. farms and farm markets), Natural Area (parks and trails), or Heritage site (cultural and/or historic).

It may or may not be possible to actually place a geocache at the attraction selected. However, there may be a good location for a cache nearby, which will bring people close to the attraction on the way to or from finding the cache.

Some sites will be more difficult to reach than others, and that's ok. We plan to select sites with a range of difficulty levels, from those that are a gentle stroll from the car or bike, to those that require a significant investment of time and are more physically challenging.

Caution

Please do not nominate a cache site that is on sensitive ecological, archaeological, or historical locations.

In most cases these areas are highly sensitive to the extra traffic that would be caused by vehicles and humans. The extra traffic coming to a cache location may be enough to damage the resource, create an environmental problem, or a safety hazard.

If you want to suggest a cache near one of these areas please choose a spot that is a safe enough distance from the site to ensure that the site will not be impacted by people searching for the cache.

When you nominate a cache site, take the time to rate it using the Difficulty & Terrain Rating Scale found at the geocaching.com website.

Please consider whether suitable parking and facilities, such as restrooms, are available near the site. Where appropriate, higher consideration will be given to "experiential" or "visitor-ready" sites and those offering other local attractions nearby, such as restaurants and shops.

Make sure you are aware of any rules or special considerations for the area you are nominating as a cache site.

Ultimately, you'll want to choose a site that is unique in some way. The big reward for geocachers, other than finding the cache itself, is the location. A prime camping spot, great viewpoint, an unusual location, a spot along a scenic hiking trail or near a historic site are all good sites to nominate.

Geocache Site Checklist

- 1 How easy will it be to get to the site?** - If it is only a short distance from the highway, there's a strong chance someone may "plunder" it. Try to find a site that will take a bit of time to get to, preferably on foot.
- 2 Is there a good spot to hide the cache at the site?** - If it is too visible, or too close to busy roads, trails, etc. there's a good chance someone may accidentally stumble upon it and vandalize or remove the cache.
- 3 Will it be on private or public land?** - The South Mountain Partnership will need to obtain permission of the landowner, or managing agency if it is public land.
- 4 Will it cause unnecessary concern?** - Please use common sense. Do not nominate a site in any location where a cache might be confused with something more dangerous.
- 5 Does the site meet requirements to be listed on the geocaching.com website?** - Make sure to review the guidelines for listing a geocache on this web site during your research. www.geocaching.com/about/guidelines.aspx.
- 6 Does the cache location represent your county and the South Mountain GeoTrail Project well?** Remember the goal of this project is to introduce this unique landscape to the rest of the world. Cache locations should bring visitors to areas that show off something about your local community. Interesting spots could include historical sites, scenic vistas, recreational parks, hiking trails, unique attractions or other assets of your county that would interest visitors.



How to Nominate a Site

If you want to nominate a cache site, all you have to do is fill out the nomination form at:

www.surveymonkey.com/s/QV5X336

If you already have a cache site, and you'd like it to be part of this project, simply fill out the same form. The deadline for nominations is **Monday, June 7, 2010**.

We will be happy to answer any questions you have about completing the form.

If your cache site is selected to be part of the South Mountain GeoTrail, and you're interested in becoming the steward for that site, then Capital RC&D will give you all of the information that you need to set up and take care of the geocache. This includes:

- Providing the cache container itself
- Providing all of the materials needed to stock the cache, such as a logbook, self-inking stamp, South Mountain GeoTrail trading cards, and more
- Instructions on hiding the cache at the site
- Instructions on registering the cache site at geocaching.com
- Guidelines for maintaining the cache and the area around it
- Extra help if you need it at any stage along the way - we will gladly help you through the process!

If you have a question about the site nomination process or about the South Mountain GeoTrail Project, contact:

Susan Parry, Capital RC&D Coordinator, directly at 717-241-4361 (office), 717-580-1302 (cell phone) or via email at susan.parry@pa.usda.gov

No matter what your previous experience level with geocaching, you can help make the South Mountain GeoTrail a success. Fill out the online Geocache Site Nomination form and share your favorite spot with the world!

The Capital Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Area Council is a regional non-profit organization working with the [South Mountain Partnership](#) to protect, preserve and enhance the South Mountain Landscape in Central Pennsylvania. This project has been made possible through a grant from the South Mountain Partnership and the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR).



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