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March 5, 2003

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**AMC Receives William Penn Foundation Grant
To Protect Pennsylvania Highlands**

PHILADELPHIA, P.A. — The Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) has received a two-year grant of \$165,000 from the William Penn Foundation to fund efforts to protect the more than one-half million acres of open space in the Pennsylvania Highlands.

The U.S. Forest Service has already recognized the Pennsylvania Highlands, the rolling hills at the northern edge of the Appalachian Mountains that separate Philadelphia and the Lehigh Valley, as a critical resource area. Pennsylvania Highlands advocates note that open space is being lost to sprawl spurred by Pennsylvania's remarkable rate of new development.

"These efforts will protect critical land and water resources in the greater Philadelphia area," said Diane Schrauth, a program officer with William Penn.

"We are extremely grateful to the William Penn Foundation for this significant grant, which could not have come at a more appropriate time," said AMC Mid-Atlantic Regional Conservation Director, Jad Daley. "From 1992 to 1997, Pennsylvania had the second largest area of rural land converted for development in the nation — more than one million acres total during that five-year period," said Daley. "Urban greenbelts like the Pennsylvania Highlands have been the hardest hit. The Pennsylvania Highlands, in particular, are a critical source of clean drinking water, wildlife, and outdoor recreation for millions of people."

The William Penn Foundation grant will enable the AMC to help local groups and all levels of government to protect the region's threatened open spaces of this rapidly shrinking greenbelt.

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The project will include GIS mapping to identify critical areas for protection, as well as community organizing and advocacy to secure the state and federal funds needed to permanently protect threatened areas from development.

The announcement comes on the heels of the recent decision by the Pennsylvania Forest Stewardship Committee to designate the Pennsylvania Highlands as a Forest Legacy Area. This new designation will provide eligibility for federal matching funding through the federal Forest Legacy Program to support projects in the Highlands region that protect forestlands threatened by sprawl. Importantly, amid devastating environmental cutbacks, the Forest Legacy Program received an additional \$21 million in President Bush's proposed budget, released January 31.

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Founded in 1876, the Appalachian Mountain Club is the oldest conservation and recreation organization in the United States. With more than 93,000 members in the Northeast and beyond, the nonprofit AMC promotes the protection, enjoyment, and wise use of the mountains, rivers and trails of the Appalachian region.



The William Penn Foundation promotes understanding of and action on important issues facing the Philadelphia region, in order to advance dynamic and diverse communities that provide meaningful opportunity, and to improve the region's quality of life. Through its grantmaking and other efforts, the Foundation fosters rich cultural expression, strengthens children's futures, and deepens our connections to nature and community.