



South Mountain Conservancy

South Mountain Reservation Advocacy and Stewardship

June 2, 2026

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Reservation's Fairy Trail and River Trail to be Closed Starting June 15th

Starting on June 15th and continuing through the third week of August, major renovations to the Rahway Fairy Trail and River Trail in South Mountain Reservation will take place as part of a major \$1.2 million project funded by a NJ Green Acres grant and Essex County's Open Space Trust Fund. During this time, the Locust Grove parking lot will be closed, the Fairy Trail will be inaccessible and parts of the River Trail will be off limits.

Planned by the County Parks Department in consultation with the South Mountain Conservancy, this project will enhance the experience of Fairy Trail visitors. It will improve the Locust Grove parking area with a delineated turnaround area and a sidewalk to allow safe passage from Glen Avenue. On the trail itself, there will be improved paths and drainage, rustic benches, and a six-sided shelter at the high point of the trail. In preparation for this work, some 100 fairy houses have already been moved off the trail to protected areas. More information on the nationally publicized Fairy Trail can be found on the Conservancy's [website](#).

The work on the River Trail will encompass its entire length from Locust Grove to South Orange Avenue and allow better access for medical and fire emergency vehicles. It is part of a long-term safety plan involving multiple woods roads throughout the reservation developed by the Conservancy.

During the 90-days of construction, access to trailheads from Locust Grove (besides the Rahway and River Trails) should still be possible, although construction equipment will be parked there. In addition, when specific parts of the River Trail will be closed off, signs will be posted indicating alternative routes.

The project will be overseen by the Essex County Parks and Public Works Departments along with the Conservancy. Design work was developed by Suburban Consulting Engineers of Flanders, NJ, and construction will be done by Picerno-Giordano Construction of Kenilworth, NJ.

PRESS RELEASE: JUNE 2, 2026, CLOSING OF SMR FAIRY TRAIL AND RIVER TRAIL STARTING JULY 15TH



Rustic bench ready to go on the Fairy Trail. Sitting, from left: Penni Malakates, SMC operations director, and Beth Kelly, Fairy Trail program coordinator.