



Back Roads

Sourland Planning Council

www.sourland.org


Autumn 2010

The Candidates on the Sourlands *An Election Special Feature*

In this issue of *Back Roads*, we offer our readers the results of a survey we sent to all the candidates for municipal governing bodies in the five municipalities with jurisdiction over the mountain: East Amwell, West Amwell, Hillsborough, Montgomery and Hopewell. We asked the candidates three questions about their support and attitudes toward comprehensive regional planning for the mountain, Open Space, and preservation in general. Nine candidates responded to our queries; five did not; one entered the race too late to respond.

The coming election will have a critical impact on how the towns approach preservation of the Sourlands. So we are publishing an expanded election edition in order to inform our readers on these important issues.

Our thanks go out to those candidates who responded. Here are our questions:

1. Do you know about and do you support the work of the appointed representatives of the five Townships in developing a Comprehensive Management Plan for the Sourlands?
2. Do you feel the current level of Open Space funding in your municipality should (a) be increased; (b) stay the same; or (c) be decreased or partially redirected for other purposes? How is this funding derived—from an Open Space tax, from your capital funds, or other?
3. Briefly describe your attitude and past involvement with the preservation of open space, wildlife habitat, natural resources, and/or places of historical significance in your Township. 

The Candidates

See inside

East Amwell

Peter Kneski (D)

Dart Sageser (D)

West Amwell

Hillsborough

Frank Delcore (R)

Maureen E. Vella (R)

Hopewell

James Burd (R)

Montgomery

Patricia Graham (R)

Neena Singh (D)

Ed Trzaska (R)

Louise Wilson (D)

Did not respond

East Amwell

Doreen Holly (R)

Tim Mathews (R)

West Amwell

Zach Rich (R)

Hillsborough

Hopewell

Erica Kotite (D) *

Michael Markulec (R)

Michael Kosloski (D)

* Ms. Kotite entered the race after Lois Brown withdrew, too late to respond to our survey.

The Sourland Planning Council is a non-profit organization working to protect the ecological integrity, historic resources and special character of the Sourland Mountain region.

Sourland Planning Council

Meeting information

Sourland Planning Council trustees meetings are held on the first Monday of even months at the train station in Hopewell Boro. You are warmly invited.

Feb 1 Apr 5 Jun 7 Aug 2 Oct 4 Dec 6

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Tamara Garaffa, Montgomery Twp.
sourlandpc@aol.com

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East Amwell Twp.

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Peg Van Patton, Hillsborough Twp.

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Welcome Tamara Garaffa

Our New Executive Director

The Board of Trustees of the Sourland Planning Council is pleased to welcome Tamara Garaffa of Montgomery Township as our new Executive Director. Tammy graduated magna cum laude from Rutgers with a degree in Environmental Science. She worked as an environmental educator and consultant, specializing in wetland ecology, habitat assessment, and shoreline erosion control, before joining Montgomery Township as Community Information Officer. She has authored EIS and NRI reports, scientific white papers, and numerous press releases. She is already a member of SPC, as well as New Jersey Audubon, D&R Greenway, Stony Brook Millstone Watershed Association, Van Harlingen Historic Society, and Montgomery Friends of Open Space. She is a music, gardening, and birding enthusiast.

Her work experience has included staff management, volunteer coordination, goals definition, grant writing, ordinance drafting, permitting and project comment, public outreach, event planning, sales and marketing, and budget oversight. She is quite familiar with the issues affecting the Sourland region, and in the course of her work with Montgomery's Environmental Commission, she has interacted effectively with SPC over the years on issues of common interest. Tammy has also earned the respect of the environmental community beyond the borders of the Sourlands and we feel very lucky to have her on board.

Sourland Music and Arts Festival 2010

A view of the crowd



*Oral
History*

Roxanne Carkhuff Historian, Librarian, Genealogist Tom Seessel

Roxanne Carkhuff's immersion in local history and genealogy began when she was 27 and recuperating from a broken back suffered in a sledding accident on the Hopewell Valley Golf course. One of the books she read, about the history of Old York Road, mentioned her husband George's grandfather, Gabriel Carkhuff, a farmer who lived on the road between Three Bridges and Reaville around 1800. This reference sparked what has become almost a half century of dedicated pursuit of knowledge about the Sourlands region.

When the Hunterdon County Historical Society moved from the Flemington Library to its own building in 1970, Roxanne volunteered to serve as librarian. After about ten years in this capacity she became the Society's second paid employee and remained as curator until her retirement in 2007. She also served as a trustee until 2009.

According to T. J. Luce, author of *New Jersey's Sourland Mountains*, Ms. Carkhuff was "the mainstay of the library" and an important source of information for his book. She wrote a chapter for *A History of East Amwell, 1700-1800*, published in 1976 for the East Amwell Bicentennial Committee. She has also compiled a notebook, "Sourland Mountain Settlers and Their Descendants," a genealogical record of families in the region who appear in the 1850 census followed through the beginning of the 20th century.

Roxanne and her husband, George, have deep roots in the Sourlands region. The first Carkhuffs immigrated to the area from Germany in the early 18th century and became farmers. George's

father sold sweet corn—grown on his farm in the fields adjacent to what is now the park behind the Hopewell Post Office—on the porch of their home on West Prospect Street in Hopewell Boro until the 1970s.

Roxanne's mother's family immigrated ("probably from Germany," she says) sometime before 1800. In the latter part of the 19th century, her great-great grandfather, B.H. Kise, built Mercer County's first steam sawmill on land where he also had his home, on the west side of Hopewell-Wertsville Road, about a mile north of Hopewell Boro, opposite what used to be Lake's Garage. Roxanne's father's family, the Kenneys, immigrated from Ireland in the mid-19th century.

Roxanne and George have been married for more than 50 years, but like to say that they never "met." This is because when George was a child his father would send him to the store in Roxanne's family's home in Hopewell with eleven cents—a dime for a pack of Lucky Strikes for Dad and a penny for candy for George. He was about 10 and Roxanne was about 5 on the earliest of these errands they can remember, and there has never been anyone else for either person.

The home, which belonged to Roxanne's maternal grandfather, Frederick Fritz, was at 43 West Broad Street in Hopewell, later the site of Allen's Flowers and now Morpeth Gallery. After their marriage in 1958, the Carkhuffs lived on Moore's Mill-Mt. Rose Road, three houses in from Hopewell-Pennington Road.

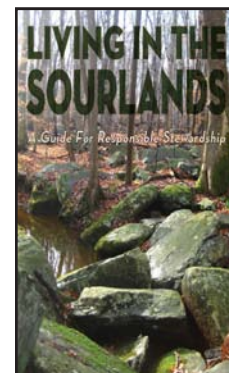
Now the Carkhuffs live on Rocktown

Hill Road on a high point in the southwestern corner of the Sourland Mountain, in West Amwell Township. They share their property with a wild turkey they have named Thomasina. During a visit for this interview in the early summer, they pointed to a spot on their property where, in a heavy rain, the water flows in one direction to the Delaware River watershed and in the other direction to the Stony Brook.

When the Carkhuffs bought the stone house 42 years ago, it was "one stone's throw from the wrecking ball." The date stone identifies the original owners as Henry and Hannah Woolever and the year of construction as 1739.

Before her sledding accident, Roxanne was a secretary/bookkeeper for the Stony Brook Millstone Watershed Association. George continued to be a farmer and also became a life insurance agent for Prudential, from which he is retired. He remains a devoted gardener in their backyard.

Despite her depth of knowledge, unique perspectives and many irreplaceable contributions to the written record of the area, Roxanne Carkhuff insists on characterizing herself simply as a self-taught librarian.



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Sourlands?***

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72, Hopewell, NJ
08525.

The Candidates The Questions The Answers

1. Do you know about and do you support the work of the appointed representatives of the five Townships in developing a Comprehensive Management Plan for the Sourlands?

Montgomery

Patricia Graham (R)

1. The Sourland Mountain Region is an extraordinary natural resource, made all the more precious because of its location in the most densely populated State in the nation. Yet the preservation and development of the region is subject to a hodgepodge of government authorities at the State, County and municipal level. I certainly support the work of the Sourlands Planning Council in developing a Comprehensive Management Plan for the region; such a plan can be a valuable resource for the Montgomery Township Committee and other local governments in continuing to work for the preservation of the Sourlands.

2. The sources of Montgomery’s open space funding have included its bonding ability, its open space tax and various State and County sources of funding. Unfortunately, the prior Democratic leadership in Montgomery nearly depleted the township’s surplus funds and ran up an enormous debt—at one time over \$63 million. The impact of these disastrous fiscal decisions on the townships ability and/or willingness to seek further bonding remains to be seen. The open space tax, however, should remain the same and I believe the township should continue to vigorously seek state and county funding for open space acquisitions.

3. One reason my family and I chose to live in Montgomery is because of the town’s rural character and beautiful natural areas, including the Sourlands. And, while I personally enjoy trail riding on horseback, I believe in wilderness preservation regardless of whether or not the areas are intended for active or passive recreation. Such preservation serves other important goals, including, for example, the preservation of threatened and endangered species.

Serving on the Somerset County Open Space Advisory Committee, I work to preserve wilderness and farmlands throughout Somerset County. I have also been an active supporter of the Republican Plan to sell Montgomery’s 270-acre “Skillman Village” site to Somerset County for a passive use park. That plan, which is expected to come to fruition this year, is in stark contrast to the Democrats’ plan to build a “village” with commercial and hundreds of high-density residential units on the site.

Montgomery

Neena Singh (D)

1. Yes! I wholeheartedly support the work to create a wide-ranging management plan, and applaud all the volunteers who are making it possible. Fifteen years ago when I moved to Montgomery these majestic mountains made me fall in love with this town and it is our duty as Montgomery residents to preserve this important natural resource we are blessed with.

2. Montgomery seems to have adequate funding for open space preservation. We have a four-cent tax that provides funds, and we work well with partner organizations so that township taxpayers get a good return on that investment. I would not support any decrease in open space funding, and believe it should be used only to preserve and protect open space.

3. I have not been personally involved in land preservation efforts. My volunteer time has been focused in other areas: primarily the schools and a community service organization I co-founded. I deeply value the historic preservation and land protection efforts of so many dedicated people in and around Montgomery. Sourland Mountains are an indispensable resource for our town. It provides a vital education for our kids. My son has been on numerous hikes there with cub scouts and with his 5th grade teacher. It has made him appreciate nature and how essential these natural resources are to our very survival. I feel we have a responsibility to preserve and nurture this complex ecosystem of forest, wetlands and grasslands. Preservation of open space and our natural resources is crucial, especially as the surrounding areas are growing and changing. The wonderful efforts of our volunteers will allow future generations to enjoy natural resources such as wilderness trails, a diverse wildlife population, indigenous plant species, healthy soil and clean air.



Red Oak Leaves • Photograms by Rachel Mackow

2. Do you feel the current level of Open Space funding in your municipality should (a) be increased; (b) stay the same; or (c) be decreased or partially redirected for other purposes? How is this funding derived- from an Open Space tax, from your capital funds, or other?

3. Briefly describe your attitude and past involvement with the preservation of open space, wildlife habitat, natural resources, and/or places of historical significance in your Township.

Montgomery

Ed Trzaska (R)

1. The Comprehensive Management Plan for the Sourlands can be a truly wonderful resource for not only the elected officials of Montgomery, but also all of our planning and zoning professionals. As an advisor to the Planning Board, I have already dealt with issues involving the Preserve this year, including its recent expansion. When researching the background materials, it became clear to me that managing the area needs a more deliberate and thorough approach. If elected, I will use the CMP as one of my core resources for developing such a plan.

2. Montgomery was one of the earliest towns in NJ to aggressively pursue open space preservation and create its own open space tax. With bipartisan support and participation, Montgomery has been remarkably successful. I am proud to say that one third of our town is preserved as either private or public open space. This record of success will benefit residents for many years to come. As such, I would keep the current open space tax as it is. Moreover, with the upcoming preservation of Skillman Village/Park, we will add another 250 acres to our town's protected land.

3. I grew-up in a nearby town that was full of open space and farmland. Sadly, this changed during the development explosion of the 1990's and it is now a much different place. I moved to Montgomery after graduate school because it reminded me of what my old hometown used to be. The beauty and openness of this area must endure for future generations. As such, preserving the rural character of Montgomery would be one of my most important tasks as an elected official—this includes protecting the Sourland Mountain Preserve and surrounding area. My wife and I hike the Preserve almost weekly, so we know firsthand what a treasure it truly is. If elected, I look forward to working with Sourland Planning Council on a regular basis.

One of the most important things we can do for the preservation of wildlife habitat and natural resources is to reduce pollution by increasing energy efficiency and clean energy production. This subject is truly a passion for me and my wife. We recently completed an energy efficiency renovation of our home, which lowered our energy consumption ⇒

Montgomery

Louise Wilson (D)

1. Absolutely. I know about this work and have long supported it. My husband and I live in the Sourlands; we raised our children here and we love the outdoors. Montgomery was an enthusiastic partner in the formation of the five-towns coalition during my years as mayor. Continued collaboration among the towns is critical to successful stewardship of the Sourlands.

2. I think Montgomery's open space funding is adequate. It should not be decreased or redirected for any other purpose. Montgomery has a 4-cent open space tax that generates about \$1.6 million a year. The township leverages these dollars quite successfully for county, state and non-profit funds to support preservation, land purchases and stewardship.

3. For the past nine years I have been actively involved in preserving and protecting land, habitat, clean water and historic sites. I am proud of my record, but even more proud of the outstanding volunteers that made much of this work possible. During my years of leadership in Montgomery, we preserved more than 1400 acres of open space, with township open space dollars attracting more matching funds than ever before through partnerships with Montgomery Friends of Open Space, the D&R Greenway, private landowners, Somerset County and the state Green Acres program.

During those same years, Montgomery adopted a variety of cutting-edge environmental protection policies and ordinances, including stream corridor protection, non-point source pollution, native plant requirements for planning and zoning board applicants, IPM and green manure programs in public works, salt brining (requiring much less salt) for ice prevention & snow removal, energy audits, green purchasing, municipal and business recycling, a developer-funded tree bank, and a partnership with Montgomery Farmers Market. These community achievements culminated in Montgomery being one of the first towns certified under the Sustainable Jersey program.

by 40%. I am also leading an initiative with my homeowners association to explore the possibility of putting solar panels on our buildings.

The Candidates The Questions The Answers

1. Do you know about and do you support the work of the appointed representatives of the five Townships in developing a Comprehensive Management Plan for the Sourlands?

East Amwell

Peter Kneski (D)

1. As the current mayor and member of the East Amwell Township Committee, I and the other committee members support the work to preserve the ecological and environmentally sensitive Sourland Mountain area, both through the diligent efforts of the Sourland Planning Council and our local land management ordinance. I congratulate the Council in spearheading the development of a draft Comprehensive Management Plan and wholeheartedly support the creation of a Sourland Municipal Alliance to review the draft and work with the participating communities in realizing the Plan’s goals. We must all work together in order to preserve the natural resources and critical wildlife habitat of the Sourlands.

2. Open Space within East Amwell Township is funded through an Open Space tax which has been supported by local residents for 15 years. A local ballot measure to establish the Open Space Tax was overwhelmingly approved in 1995, and a second ballot question to increase the tax was passed in 1998. Over 60% of East Amwell voters further supported state Open Space bond questions in both 2007 and 2009. The Township residents, through elected officials, support the continued preservation of open space to maintain not only the character of our community, but also to avoid uncontrolled tax increases which result from the demand for additional municipal and educational services from expanded residential and commercial development.

3. I am a strong proponent of conservation and open space preservation. As the Mayor and a member of the East Amwell Township Committee, I continue the long tradition of advocating for increased resources from all levels of government to expand Open Space and Farmland Preservations programs for our community. These programs have preserved more than 38% of our township and are the vital components to ensuring that the community’s fabric and heritage is maintained for years to come.

East Amwell

Dart Sageser (D)

1. As a member of the East Amwell Environmental Commission for the past several years, the work of the Sourland Planning Council and the mission to preserve the defining features of this delicate resource has been a major component of our educational agenda as well as our deliberative process. Conservation, sustainability and balance must be key components of all our choices. The Sourlands are perhaps one of the rarest and delicate natural resources remaining in New Jersey and only through the collaborative efforts of the five-town Alliance can we hope to sustain its role in our habitat and its balancing influence on our daily lives. A Comprehensive Management Plan is a fundamental first step. We all share its benefits whether we live on the mountain, hike its woodlands, feed its songbirds, drink from its aquifer or just unwind as we drive through its quiet beauty. We must all share the commitment to developing a strong stewardship plan.

2. East Amwell has strongly supported, through bond approval and dedicated funding for preservation, open space funding that has contributed to the preservation of nearly 38% of the land in the Township. Local funding has been the seed component that has leveraged a much larger funding commitment from the County and State. Adequate funding is important, however broad based community support, focused planning and committed leadership are also critical. Educating local land owners as to the value and benefits of farm preservation or sustaining land use policies in the Sourlands is just as important.

In a state renown for growth and development, East Amwell has demonstrated that more growth and more development are not the path to lower taxes and a more livable community. East Amwell has found a good balance of funding and commitment for a sustainable open space policy, but this balance requires continuing, but subtle adjustment and a sensitive ear to the community’s priorities. Current funding levels appear to be in reasonable balance with those priorities.

2. Do you feel the current level of Open Space funding in your municipality should (a) be increased; (b) stay the same; or (c) be decreased or partially redirected for other purposes? How is this funding derived—from an Open Space tax, from your capital funds, or other?

3. Briefly describe your attitude and past involvement with the preservation of open space, wildlife habitat, natural resources, and/or places of historical significance in your Township.

Hillsborough

Maureen E. Vella (R)

1. Yes, the continued work of the Sourland Planning Council representatives is very important to the sustainable future of the Sourlands region. The Comprehensive Management Plan for the Sourlands came out of a smart growth grant issued to the Sourland Planning Council from the Office of Smart Growth. It set the stage for the development of a build-out analysis, a natural resource inventory, a comparison of zoning among the towns in the Sourlands and the development of the vision and plan for the Sourlands. It also provides the foundation for the designation of the Sourland mountain region as a Special Resource area under the State Plan, a designation which I fully support and I actively encourage other municipalities to do the same.

2. The support for the acquisition and preservation of key properties within the Sourlands region for their ecological, geological or scenic values which add to the contribution of the Sourlands as a Special Resource Area within the State of New Jersey is critical. Open Space funding can and has come from a number of sources including Hillsborough's Open Space Trust Fund, Somerset County, and other Trusts and Foundations. All sources of funds must be considered. I support such efforts and the good causes of protecting the Sourlands.

3. Every morning I wake up on my small farm in the Sourland Mountains and I am grateful for the opportunities I have been afforded to experience the wonders of nature in the Sourlands. Jim and I chose to raise our family in this corner of Hillsborough for just this reason. We raise grass fed beef cattle and our chickens produce organic eggs. I love taking walks through Otto's Farm Park early Sunday morning, especially during the fall season. In the past I have attended and opened my home for meetings for the preservation of land in the Sourlands. I have been before the Township Committee along with the residents of my neighborhood seeking preservation of land in the Sourlands. This was a rewarding experience.

Recently, my response to the changing patterns of land use and subtle but pervasive degradation of sensitive resources throughout Hillsborough, including within the ⇒

Hillsborough

Frank Delcore (R)

1. I am fully supportive of the Sourland Municipal Alliance, including the development of a Comprehensive Management Plan, both of which are vital to ensure the coordinated municipal protection of the Sourlands for the future. Hillsborough, which joined the Group in 2009, took an early step in 2003 by establishing 15 acre minimum zoning in the Sourlands area.

2. I believe strongly in the need for a robust land preservation program and Hillsborough has an excellent track record of open space and farmland preservation. Funding comes from a dedicated open space tax, government grants and non-profit conservation entities.

3. Hillsborough continues to be a leader in the protection of natural resources and habitats. The Stony Brook Millstone Watershed Association recently rated our efforts as excellent in both Forest Protection and for Stream Corridor Protection. Our commitment to the preservation of the Vanderveer-Harris House exemplifies the priority placed upon Historic preservation.



We still have maps!

(They're free.)

Look for the racks in public places around the region or contact SPC.

Hillsborough

Maureen E. Vella (R) — continued

Sourlands, have prompted a heightened level of concern. My reaction has been one of political action in a campaign where I have come to appreciate the duty and dedication that is required to run for political office. No Barred owl, Wood turtle, or Spring peeper could ever appreciate the tenacity to which I have taken on the charge, but they will be better for it as will the residents of the Township when I am able to advance the tenets of good planning in the Sourlands and surrounding environs as a member of the Township Committee.

The Candidates The Questions The Answers

Hopewell

James Burd (R)

1. I do support the views of the Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP) for the Sourland. As both Jim and Tom noted, the representatives of these five Townships which make up this Council all have presented very positive concepts on behalf of their municipalities regarding this Council. Just as important is that all are willing to compare and contrast the communities' views and take into consideration each other's positive input in order to create the CMP.

I also agree with one of the primary points of the promotion of the low population density in the Sourland which coincides with Hopewell Township's master plan regarding the Mountain Resource Conservation in which a minimum of fourteen acres is required for these established zones in order for one to build. This mutual concept between the CMP and Hopewell Township certainly promotes the conservation of groundwater.

2. Understanding the situation of the existing economy I feel that current Open Space funding in Hopewell Township, which is derived from an Open Space tax, should remain unchanged.

3. I took this opportunity to reread "Living In The Sourland" and review the very extensive Environmental Resource Inventory of Hopewell Township. It is very easy for one to take the Sourland and Open Space for granted and I commend conscientious organizations such as Sourland Mountain Municipal Alliance for continuously bringing to our attention our natural gifts and multiple means to preserve them.

Currently I am involved in the Deer Management Task Force in our Township. I feel that the application of the results and suggestions of this study have the potential to be very advantageous to citizens, the forests and to the deer themselves. This information closely parallels that of the suggestions in "Living In The Sourland" regarding deer stewardship.

I also serve on the Township's Agricultural Advisory Committee. One of the major goals of this Committee is that of the preservation of farms, another aspect of Open Space conservation.

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East Amwell

Dart Sageser (D) — continued from page 7

3. As a career-long member of Planning or Zoning Boards in three New Jersey communities I have progressed from the urban density of Fort Lee, the suburban neighborhood of Leonia to the rural community of East Amwell. Open space, wildlife and natural habitat mean different things in different settings, and each must balance their own relationship. Barbara and I chose East Amwell in large part because of our desire for a better balance. Through our involvement with Historical Preservation, the Environmental Commission and the Planning Board we have come to appreciate the wide spectrum of commitment required to maintain and enhance the unique heritage of East Amwell.

Sourland Music and Arts Festival 2010



Living with Bears

Judy Jengo

The largest land mammal in our state, black bear are native to New Jersey. They are unique to North America and are its most familiar and common bear, typically living in forests but also found in other areas.

Despite their large size, which can range up to several hundred pounds, black bear are agile tree climbers. They are also strong swimmers and can run up to 35 miles per hour (imagine having that ability—in some cases we could run to work quicker than we could drive).

Decades ago we humans nearly obliterated black bear in New Jersey by indiscriminately killing them and decimating their habitat. When bear hunts were stopped for a few decades beginning in 1971, their populations began to rebound. A few years ago the first hunt in decades was held, as will be the case again this year.

These impressive beings are very opportunistic eaters. Much of their diet consists of plants, roots, berries, nuts and insects but they will also dine on fish, birds and mammals and are known to develop a taste for the foods we enjoy.

When winter arrives, black bear become dormant in their dens, getting nourishment from body fat they accumulated by eating ravenously during summer and fall. They make their dens in sheltered spots such as caves, burrows, brush piles, and even tree holes high above the ground.

Females typically give birth to two or three blind, helpless cubs in mid-winter and nurse them in a den until spring, when the family emerges in search of food. The cubs stay with their very protective mom for up to two years. It

is believed that the average lifespan of a black bear is about 10 years but they can live upwards of 30 years in the wild.

Black bear are rarely a threat to humans but should be treated with a healthy respect for their considerable strength and their commitment to protecting their young. If they are hungry and you have food, they are not likely to consult Emily Post's rules of etiquette before appropriating that food for themselves or their cubs. They have an excellent sense of smell so if you're camping near your backpack filled with munchies, don't think they won't notice your stash, whereupon you'll find yourself too close for comfort to a being you'd rather not bump into in the night.

If we take care to follow smart practices, we can live in harmony with the creature that inspired the Teddy Bears we hugged as kids. Those warm and fuzzy bears were all about us and our needs. The real thing has its own needs in the world but is also more amazing and more interesting.

The greatest way you can contribute to humans and black bear living in harmony is to help ensure that they don't associate people with food. Bear that make this association can get too close to humans and lose their lives because of it.

- Do not feed bears, for the reasons noted above, and because it's illegal.
- Store all trash indoors till trash day or if outside, in containers with tight fitting lids and preferably in containers known to be bear-resistant.
- If feeding pets or other animals outside be sure to pick up any leftover food.



- Bird feeders can attract bear so if you're in a busy bear area ideally feed during daylight hours and at least 10 feet off the ground. Clean up spilled seeds if the birds and squirrels don't promptly do it for you.
- Clean outdoor grills after use and properly dispose of grease.
- Don't place meat or sweet foods in compost or mulch piles. Adding lime can reduce odors while helping decomposition.
- If bear are prevalent you may want to keep veggie gardens free of vegetable wastes, clean up under fruit and nut trees, use motion sensor lighting or turn on an outdoor light before taking pets out at night, and bring pets in overnight.
- If camping, hang food and items such as toothpaste, gum and soap high up and significantly away from sleeping areas.

If you encounter a bear, follow the advice provided by the NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife and other sources:

- Be calm (easier said than done, I hear you saying...).
- Make the bear aware of your presence by speaking in an assertive voice, singing, clapping your hands, or making other noises. You can make yourself look as big as possible by waving your arms, and if you're with someone else, you can stand close together with your arms raised above your head.
- Make sure the bear has an escape

continued on next page



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Living with Bears

continued from previous page

- route. If a bear enters your home, provide it with an escape route by propping doors open.
- The bear may utter huffs, popping jaw sounds by snapping its jaws and/or swat the ground. These are warning signs that you are too close. Slowly back away, avoid direct eye contact and don't run.
 - If a bear stands on its hind legs or moves closer, it may be trying to get a better view or detect scents in the air. This is usually not a threatening behavior.
 - Black bears will sometimes "bluff charge" when cornered, threatened or attempting to take food. Again, avoid

direct eye contact, slowly back away and don't run.

Years ago, before I knew all the stuff written above, I found myself only several feet away from a black bear. A friend and I had been hiking and were looking up into a tree to try to see a bird whose song was especially beautiful. Upon failing to locate the singer, I brought my gaze back down and there was the bear, right there, watching us. I debated our options and for lack of a better idea, I calmly began to chatter away as though I hadn't a care in the world. The bear looked curiously at me for a while (seemed like hours but it was just minutes) and then eventually just ambled away. I'll never forget the experience because all in all it was

remarkably peaceful. It didn't want trouble and it could tell I didn't either. That said, if a bear is with cubs, or is otherwise on edge, she might not be so mellow, so it would be wise to heed the professional advice outlined in the bullet points above.

Smokey the Bear is symbolically the guardian of our forests and just as Smokey says "Only you can prevent forest fires." Likewise we have the power to prevent most conflicts with bear, thus protecting them in the process. The Sourlands are home to this magnificent creature, where it can hopefully thrive for a long time to come with effective protection of its habitat and wise behavior on our part.