



Sourlands Journal

www.sourland.org

Newsletter of the Sourland Planning Council

Spring 2013

THE ADVOCATE

The Sourland Planning Council At Work

In its ongoing effort to protect the Sourlands and secure the health of the Sourland forest, the Sourland Planning Council is currently working on five projects and initiatives:

1. Comprehensive Deer Management Plan for the Sourlands. This effort includes:

- A large survey of Sourland residents about the impact of the deer population.
- Gathering government data about deer impacts, including Lyme disease and automobile accidents.
- Baseline measurements of the flora affected by the overpopulation of deer.
- Identifying and mapping Sourland tracts that are currently hunted or could be hunted.
- Pilot projects using Quality Deer Management principles to reduce the deer population while also addressing issues important to hunters.
- A pilot project that will allow participating hunters to supply free venison to food banks and soup kitchens by paying for butchering.
- A final report that will pull all this information together in a plan to reduce the impact of deer on the Sourland forest and on human

health and safety.

In working on this project, we have come to understand that some solutions may require legislation at the state level. This report will provide important groundwork for possible political efforts next year.

2. Opposition to the Proposed Pennytown/Marshall's Corner "Redevelopment" Plan in Hopewell Township – Plans are in flux, but call for building hundreds of units of housing, along with commercial and recreational buildings, on an environmentally constrained site in the Sourlands that has no public water or sewer service. We feel this is unsustainable. We are also concerned that the Township could waive requirements that the developer preserve up to 1,500 acres of land elsewhere in Hopewell as a prerequisite for high-development density at Pennytown/Marshall's Corner.

3. Open Space Map of the Sourlands. Though quite a few organizations, both public and private, are working to preserve land in the Sourlands, none has a comprehensive picture of preservation activities throughout the area. SPC intern Kevin Burkman is using his GIS skills to produce a map delineating all

properties in the Sourlands, with the preservation status of each. This will allow SPC, the Sourland Alliance, and the various land trusts to see the big picture when setting priorities and considering properties for preservation.

4. Map of Sourland Trails. Kevin is also working on maps of all the hiking trails in the Sourlands. The eventual goal is to have an area on our web site where people can find everything needed to choose and plan a hike anywhere in the Sourlands.

5. Sourland Video Series. SPC has hired Jared Flesher, the filmmaker who last year produced the feature-length documentary *Sourlands: Stories from the Fight for Sustainability*, to produce a series of four short videos about the Sourlands. The themes of the videos will be:

- Introduction—What is special and important about the Sourland region?
- The Sourlands ecosystem, geology and water.
- Culture, history and recreational opportunities in the Sourlands.
- Threats to the Sourlands and what is being done to preserve and protect the area.

continued on page 3

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 trustee’s meetings are held on the first Monday of even months at the train station in Hopewell Boro. You are warmly invited.

February 4 April 1 June 3 August 5
October 7 December 2

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Message from the President

The Sourland Planning Council is considering changing its name, and we want to know what you think.

The organization was formed in 1986 as the Sourland Regional Citizen’s Planning Council. That was quite a mouthful so, about 10 years ago, it was shortened to the current name.

There are several problems with this name. The word “council” usually connotes a governmental entity, which we are not. The word creates confusion among the public, who may think it odd to make voluntary donations to a “council” and that becoming a “member” of the council entails some commitment to attend meetings. (Actually, like many non-profit organizations, SPC considers anyone who donates at a certain annual level a “member.”)

The word “planning” is a bit problematic, too. While planning remains an important part of our mission, we also do lots of other things – stewardship, advocacy, education and outreach principal among them.

The downside of changing our name is that we would forfeit some of the “brand” recognition we have managed to build over the years. It would also render obsolete a variety of printed material – brochures, stationery, etc. – some of which we would continue to use during a transitional period.

If we decide to make a change, what should the new name be? My own preference is “Save the Sourlands,” an active construction that encompasses all that we do. Also, this is a slogan we have used over the years, so it will not be entirely unfamiliar to people. We already have some banners and bumper stickers bearing this text, and we own the internet domain name SavetheSourlands.org, which points to our web site.

To express your opinion about whether we should change our name, and, if so, what the new name should be, please visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/K6HL3ZP> or scan this QR code:



The Board of Trustees will consider the survey results when deciding whether to make a change.

SPC usually deals with issues specific to the Sourlands; we don’t often talk about broader environmental issues. Our stewardship guide, *Living in the Sourlands*, discusses wildlife habitat, invasive species, the deer problem, etc., but does not touch upon more universal environmental stewardship practices, such as recycling, energy conservation, etc.

Of course, these things are at least as important in the Sourlands as anywhere. The violent storms of the past few years, driven by our changing climate, have taken a huge toll on the Sourland forest. I am deeply concerned about the forest’s ability to recover, given the deer-ravaged understory and the propensity of invasives to dominate wherever a break in the canopy occurs.


continued on next page

THE ADVOCATE

The Sourland Planning Council At Work


continued from page 1

Each segment will be approximately 10-12 minutes long. The videos will be available on the internet and on DVD. They will be suitable for broadcast on public television, though we have to wait until they're finished before we can try to interest local stations in showing them.

These five projects are in addition to our regular activities, including our semiannual newsletters, semimonthly e-bulletins, occasional bus tours, and our major annual events, the Sourland Music Festival (July 20) and the Sourland Spectacular bicycle rally (September 7). We've taken on a lot, but we can achieve all these goals with the active support of our members. Please give generously when you renew your membership, and consider volunteering to help with our events and special projects. Contact me via e-mail at president@sourland.org. 

continued from page 2

It is important for all of us to take steps to limit the emission of carbon and greenhouse gasses. Here's a recommendation that is super easy to implement and will save you money as well: install LED light bulbs throughout your home.

LED bulbs have come down in price to about \$10 apiece, which is very inexpensive given that they last for 20 years and use one eighth the energy of incandescent bulbs. LED bulbs use only a third of the energy of compact fluorescents! You can choose the hue of light you prefer, from cool blue/white to pure white to warm red/white. Some are dimmable—make sure to check the package if you need this feature. 

IN THIS ISSUE

COMMENT

1 **The Advocate: SPC At Work**
by Cliff Wilson, President of SPC | A look at the five main projects we currently are pursuing.

2 **President's Message: Should we change our name?**

by Cliff Wilson, President of SPC | Some pros and cons for changing our name.

7 **Cycling and Open Space—A Natural Alignment**

by Michael Heffler | Gibraltar There is a natural alignment between open space and the enjoyment of cycling.

REGULAR FEATURES

4 **The State of the Mountain: Executive Director Report**

by Caroline Katmann, Executive Director | Together we can “fix” things.

8 **The Sourland Interview: Hanah Bonsey Suthers**

by Tom Seessel | Observing birds up close in the Sourlands.

8 **The Poet's Corner: Jim Haba: Down**

“If I could choose the failures that came my way . . .”

5 **On the Mountain: The Importance of an Unbroken Forest**

by Pat Sziber | Fragmentation of woodlands is a major cause of songbird decline.

NEWS

6 **Costa Rica Connection—A Field Report**

Filmmaker Jared Flesher reports from the forests of Central America on the plight of North American songbirds.

8 **Sourlands, A Threatened Treasure—Bus Tour**

Saturday, May 4 | The next Sourland Bus Tour explores the western Sourland region.

9 **“Vernal Pools of the Sourlands” Presentation a Big Success**

Friday, March 1 | John H. Heilferty of the NJ DEP spoke on these precious features of the Sourlands.

9 **10th Anniversary Sourland Music Festival July 20**

Saturday, July 20 | Great music, great fun for the whole family, and a chance to volunteer.

11 **Welcome, Two New Trustees**

We welcome our two newest trustees, Marcia Maguire and Michael Heffler.

12 **Venison—A Recipe**

For people who are not sure they will like deer meat.



State of the Mountain

Caroline Katmann, Executive Director

Together We Can “Fix” Things

I think you must feel the same way sometimes. You register for an environmental conference with excitement about the educational and networking opportunities; you leave the conference overwhelmed by feelings of inadequacy about your ability to save our planet from complete and total annihilation! This is how I felt recently after participating in ANJEC’s 17th Annual NJ Land Conservation Rally. Not that the conference wasn’t extremely well-planned, with phenomenal speakers and exhibitors—just the opposite, in fact. So, why was I all gloom and doom following the conference? Here are just a few of New Jersey’s environmental challenges that the conference addressed :

- NJ’s Green Acres fund is out of money.
- The Pine Barrens desperately need ecological burning.
- 16% of the state’s 2100+ native plant species are at risk for extinction; 39% are imperiled; at least 32 plant species have already been extirpated.
- Increasing threats to NJ’s Highlands region by fragmentation from development.
- Climate change is stressing our natural systems.

The list goes on and on . . . and I wanted to “fix” it all, right away.

Not long after the conference, on a brisk March morning, while running in the beautiful Sourlands and ticking off in my head all of the things that need “fixing” (oh no, just heard another one this morning: “Horseshoe crabs begin breeding in late May, but many prime

nesting sites on Delaware Bayshore beaches were destroyed by Superstorm Sandy. The top layer of soft sand was swept away by wind and storm surge, exposing hard rubble and mucky salt marsh remnants not suitable for digging holes and burying eggs.” Michele Byers, *The State We’re In*, March 15, 2013), I remembered that, although there are very serious threats to the ecology of our planet, country, state, and the forest in our own backyards, there are also many very smart, fearless, and diligent people working to “fix” things. Many of them were at the ANJEC conference presenting on their efforts. Many are right here in the Sourlands.

For every threat to New Jersey’s environment, a group of people somewhere is working on a solution and reaching out for partners.

I thought about a recent hike during a Raritan Piedmont Wildlife Habitat Partnership meeting to the Hollystone Tract on Baldpate Mountain to see the 40-acre forest restoration effort led by Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space. I was amazed to learn of the valiant efforts to counteract the soil and plant degradation on the site from hundreds of years of agricultural use—uncompacting the soil, adding wood chips to “cool down” the soil and lower the nitrate levels, fencing and planting of over 6,000 native trees and shrubs, and more.

I thought about a distinguished, articulate, silver-haired citizen of Hopewell Township who stood up in front of an

intimidating group of engineers, geologists, lawyers, and township officials to talk about the precious bobcat she has seen in the Pennytown/Marshall’s Corner redevelopment area, the lack of respect the township’s concept P/MC plan demonstrates for our planet’s most precious resource—water—and to challenge Hopewell Township Planning Board to search their souls and consider carefully before making a go/no go decision on P/MC, because the results of their decision would be their legacy.

I thought about the Sourland Planning Council, whose dedicated and tenacious trustees and members successfully stopped Gibraltar Quarry from clear cutting 20 acres of Sourland forest to build a solar array.

I thought about the brave souls in a nearby New Jersey town who, for the past 10 years have closed down a road in their town that separates wooded uplands from two vernal pools so that salamanders may cross safely to lay their eggs.

When I got back to the house, energized by my run and my thoughts, I searched my conference notes to find that for every threat to NJ’s environment that I encountered at the conference, a group of people somewhere was working on a solution and reaching out for partners. Probably like you, this is the reason I joined SPC—each of us on our own cannot save the Sourlands, or the Pine Barrens, or the Highlands, but together, one challenge at a time (OK, sometimes 3 or 4 at a time!), we can “fix” things.

continued on page 10

REGULAR FEATURE

On the Mountain

Pat Sziber

Profiles of the Creatures & Features We Protect

~ The Importance of an Unbroken Forest ~


A naturalist with a special interest in birds came upon an overgrown field in the heart of the Sourland ridge, a site proposed for a reforestation project. To get a better sense of the landscape, when she got to her home computer she pulled up an aerial image of the area and immediately picked out the eight-acre gap in the forest.

In early spring, a pair of Kentucky warblers arrived in central New Jersey from their wintering home in Mexico. Looking down from about 1,000 feet they saw, as in the aerial photo, the rich greens of budding trees stretching below them, dappled with scattered patches of farms, abandoned fields and homesteads. They are birds of the forest, so they settled in an area of oaks and hickories filled in with dense undergrowth, where they built their nest in a shrub close to the ground, and mated. The site they chose was about 200 feet from an overgrown field, not unlike the one inspected by the naturalist.

At the same time, a pair of brown-headed cowbirds, who had arrived in the Sourlands a bit earlier, settled in a row of cedars at the edge of the same old field. They, too, mated but did not bother to build a nest. The cowbird is a notorious nest parasite that lays its eggs in the nests of vulnerable songbird species such as the Kentucky warbler. The unsuspecting warblers incubated both clutches of eggs and did not recognize that some of the baby birds were not their own. The baby warblers were out-begged by the larger,

more aggressive cowbird chicks, which flourished while the warbler's babies weakened and perished. The Kentucky warblers were helpless to intervene; parent cowbirds are known to retaliate for removal of their own eggs by destroying the host's eggs and nest.


Fragmentation of woodlands is a major cause of the decline of songbird populations. Cowbirds are what are known as an "edge species." They do not penetrate into the heart of the forest. Among the dangers of fragmented woodland are predators such as domestic cats, raccoons, foxes, rats, gray squirrels, and other animals that are associated with human habitation. Blue jays, common grackles, and American crows do not parasitize nests but can be egg predators.

We can mitigate these threats to interior forest birds by filling in the gaps that invite such dangers. Several projects aim to do exactly that in the Sourlands. The Raritan-Piedmont Wildlife Habitat Partnership has identified the Sourland Mountain forest as a priority forest area and, together with other granters, has provided generous funding for reforestation projects in the region. Thousands of native trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants have been planted and deer fencing installed. Over time and with attentive stewardship these young woodlands will blend with the mature forest surrounding them and no longer be a patch on an aerial image. 



Kentucky warbler

SPC Trustee to Receive Environmental Award

SPC Trustee Tracy Carluccio is the recipient of the New Jersey Environmental Federation's Grassroots Leadership Award for her tenacity in opposing fracking (fighting natural gas extraction and development) and her work to protect the New Jersey Highlands as a member of the Highlands Council since 2004. Tracy is Deputy Director of the Delaware Riverkeeper Network. Tracy will be presented with the award at the NJ Environmental Federation's 27th Annual Conference at Georgian Court University on April 6, 2013. Congratulations, Tracy! 

Costa Rica Connections

A Field Report from Filmmaker Jared Flescher

The Nicoya Peninsula of Costa Rica is located 2,200 miles from the Sourland Mountain of New Jersey. As I sit and type, pausing to watch tiny hummingbirds race among tropical flowers, the Internet informs me that the temperature at home is 20 degrees Fahrenheit. Behind my computer screen, green hills rise and drop as sharply as the teeth of a saw. From those hills ring the prehistoric-sounding grunts of howler monkeys. Somewhere close, Long-tailed Manakins are dueting: “Toledo, Toledo.”

For the past seven weeks, I’ve been filming a documentary, *Field Biologist*, up and down the peninsula and on the Costa Rican mainland. *Field Biologist* is not exactly a sequel to *Sourlands*, my most recent documentary about our home in Central New Jersey, but it is a continuation of the ecological story.

This adventure began as an invitation from Tyler Christensen, an assistant naturalist at the Mercer County Park Commission who knows as much about the birds of the Sourlands as anyone you’ll meet. Tyler was headed down to Costa Rica for the winter to conduct research on migratory songbirds, and he suggested I come along. I hemmed and hawed, then said yes. Joining us is Tyler’s research partner Sean Graesser, another Hopewell native.

One of the connections between Costa Rica and the Sourlands is birds. At our three research stations on the Nicoya Peninsula, we’ve banded Kentucky Warblers, Ovenbirds, and Wood Thrushes, just to name a few familiar faces. These birds all migrate

north from the tropics each spring to sing in the Sourlands and raise their young. Without healthy habitat at each end of the journey, these birds will cease to exist.

One of the goals of Tyler and Sean’s research is to identify which tropical habitats can best support populations of particular species of migratory songbirds. If any of these species get in trouble, research like this can be a valuable tool for conservation efforts. And unfortunately, conservation efforts may become all too necessary. Over the past 50 years, many migratory songbird populations are down by 50 percent.

Habitat destruction and invasive species are two leading causes of this decline.

Tyler and Sean are two more examples of

Sourlandians working hard to make a positive difference in the natural world. In *Field Biologist*, you’ll see them tromping through knee-deep mud and waist-high water, deep forest and sandy beach, joyfully pursuing their life’s work. And you’ll meet the amazing biodiversity of Costa Rica, from dancing manakins to endangered sea turtles. This will be a documentary about passion, hope, and some really cool-looking animals. I believe storytelling is one way to get more people engaged in solving what are, admittedly, some daunting ecological challenges.

I still have a lot of work ahead of me before I finish *Field Biologist*, and there are other film projects I’m working on simultaneously, including a series of short videos for the Sourland Planning Council that delve deeper into the

One of the connections between Costa Rica and the Sourlands is birds.

Sourlands—A Threatened Treasure

Bus Tour of the Western Sourland Region

When: Saturday, May 4th, 2013
9 a.m. till approx. noon
(check-in starting at 8:30 a.m.)


Where: Meet at East Amwell Township Municipal Building, 1070 Rte 202/31, Ringoes, NJ


Experience the magic and rich history of the Sourlands, an unspoiled landscape of forested ridges, pastoral farms, and a special refuge for heroes, patriots, artists and, yes, even ghosts!

Learn the legends and lore of your own backyard paradise, home to numerous unique animals and plants. And learn about the Sourlands’ unique environment and heritage—and how to keep this special place special for future generations.

Tour sponsored by the Sourland Planning Council.

Tour: \$20 (includes \$5 admission to Holcombe-Jimison Farmstead). Please register and pay in advance.

For more information or to register please contact Marcia Maguire, Sourland Planning Council, 609-466-0701, or sourlandsbustour@aol.com 

character, ecology, and history of the Sourlands. I feel privileged to be able to do this work, and I look forward to sharing it with you in the months and years ahead. 

Filmmaker Jared Flescher is raising money for the production of Field Biologist by pre-selling DVDs on the crowd-funding website Kickstarter.com. Learn more (and watch the trailer) at www.fieldbiologist-movie.com.

THE POET'S CORNER

Sourland Stories in Six Words

Thank you for sending in your Sourland Stories. They have all been posted on our facebook page and the votes are in! Here are the top three *Sourland Stories in Six Words*, determined by SPC's trustees: Congratulations to the winners and thank you all for submitting your stories!

First Place: Daniel Harris

Walking over this boulder: buried leviathan.

Second Place: Peg Van Patton

Yes! Jeepers, creepers, peepers, leapers . . . Sweet.

Third Place: Jennifer Bryson

The peepers tell me it's spring!

Cycling and Open Space— A Natural Alignment

Michael Heffler

Until recently, if someone had asked me, "Do you enjoy the open space around here?" I would have said, "I don't know." As much as I appreciated seeing the farms, the woods, and the fields, they were just there. (You would think that someone who has led rides with titles like "More animals than cars" would know more about these scenic vistas, open fields, and forests.) But they aren't "just there." Open space organizations work hard to make sure that this area retains its beauty and rural character.

Knowledge helps us appreciate our blessings and act wisely. I have never heard a cyclist say: "If only there was more traffic where we cycle!" More open space creates better cycling.

I've cycled in France, Italy, the Berkshires, and Oregon in the last few years. Each time I have come home, I have realized that our area is just as beautiful as these romantic and far-away places. We can help keep it this way.

Some of the world's problems don't impact us directly and some do. We don't always know what we can do to solve some difficult problems like a broken tax system or climate change. But keeping our area beautiful, for ourselves and our children, is a problem with a ready solution, much like taking care of our health and the health of our families. With some action and forethought, we can all contribute to preserving open space.

Jim Haba**DOWN**

If I could choose the failures that came my way,
I would have the loss upon loss
lead down to something,
like this fallen gray leaf,
thin, curled, a broken shell,
now slowly lifted between stiff iris spears
just breaking through the dry crust,
and I would ride there for a day or two,
quietly, every moment feeling below me
the gorgeous, ungainly blossoms
buried, aching tubers are dreaming into life.

~ Jim Haba ~

Jim Haba taught literature for more than thirty-five years in New Jersey state universities (Rutgers and Rowan), retiring in 2003. From 1986 through 2008 he also developed and directed the Geraldine R. Dodge Poetry Program, which included the first twelve biennial Dodge Poetry Festivals and the comprehensive Dodge Poetry-in-the-Schools Program for New Jersey teachers and high school students. He and his wife, Erica Barton Haba, live near the Sourland Mountain Preserve in Hillsborough, where he writes and they both work as visual artists in their shared studio. He has published two chapbooks of his own poems (www.jimhaba.com).

This means supporting the local organizations whose staff and volunteers steward the open space and keep our area beautiful. Their work benefits everyone, but it's mostly invisible to us. When open space gets developed we notice. And developed land tends to stay developed.

There is a natural alignment between open space and the enjoyment of cycling. Giving your support to the local open space organizations is a great way to make sure you continue to live in a place where you want to keep pedaling. Support your local open space organizations. See you on the road!

Hannah Bonsey Suthers: Observing Birds Up Close in the Sourlands

Tom Seessel

At dawn each Sunday from early Spring to late Fall, Hannah Suthers leads a group of volunteers into the heart of the Sourlands to survey birds and record their characteristics. She has been doing this in the same 80 acres of former farm hayfields for 35 years. Since the late 1970s, the site of her work—in Hopewell Township, near the Lindbergh estate—has been officially known as the Featherbed Lane Banding Station.

Ms. Suthers, 81 and a great-grandmother, began observing birds in the Sourlands soon after moving to Hopewell in the late 1960s. She can often be seen riding her horse on Featherbed Lane and its adjoining woods, peering through binoculars to spot birds.

Ms. Suthers, a retired Princeton biology research assistant, and her helpers and apprentices capture the birds in mist nets and register their age, sex, size, weight, breeding or molting condition and, for ageing some species, the color of their eyes and tongues. The birds are then banded and released.

Banding data are reported to the United States Geological Survey Bird Banding Laboratory, which serves as headquarters for this and other banding stations. Banding and habitat data are sent to the Institute for Bird Populations' international project that models effects of landscape and habitat on individual bird species' distribution, abundance, and demographic rates. The Sourlands station has also cooperated with regional projects on Lyme Disease vectors in bird ticks, a national avian flu study, and international connectivity between breeding and winter grounds.

Data gathered at the Featherbed Lane Banding Station have helped distinguish between male and female catbirds. Ms. Suthers says that it took 24 years of observations to be able to crack this code. Ms. Suthers and coauthors have published 17 papers on their work at the station in professional journals on topics such as ornithological research methodologies and ageing and sexing various species for demographic purposes, including warblers, catbirds, sparrows, veery, wood thrush, starlings, and other songbirds. When asked a few years ago to describe the pleasure she derives from her work, Ms. Suthers replied she loves seeing birds' "subtle beauty, up close in the hand."

Jared Rosenbaum's 2007 article on Ms. Suthers in *Back Roads*, the former name of this newsletter, noted that "Transformation in the land is the ever-shifting context for Suthers' work here." The Featherbed Lane Banding Station website, <http://hopewell-birds.freehostia.com/>, makes a similar point: "The juxtaposition and interaction of 80 acres of old fields flanked by over 800 acres of woods . . . creates a diverse habitat that supports 74 species of breeding birds and provides food and resting area for 51 additional species of migratory birds."

Of the birds caught at the station, about twenty percent have already been banded, thus providing a growing body of data to help understand which birds go where and how long they survive. The Fall 2012 birding season at the station, detailed in a report by Ms. Suthers on the Washington Crossing Audubon Society website, resulted in 472 "banding encounters." Species included



26 neotropical migrants, 11 temperate migrants, 4 overwintering migrants, and 8 residents. The report went on to say that migrating "returns of note were a 9-year old Black-capped chickadee recaptured for the third time."

The banding station receives partial financial support from the Washington Crossing Audubon Society, and utilizes preserved public open space acquired by the D&R Greenway Land Trust, named Sommer Park. Ms. Suthers is certified as an avian rehabilitator by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection: orphaned songbirds are brought to her home for hand-raising and rehabilitation back to the wild. She accepts some injured songbirds and refers those who need veterinarian care to the Mercer County Wildlife Center.

During Ms. Suthers' four decades observing birds, plants and other species in the Sourlands, development has spread towards the region from Philadelphia in the southwest and New York in the northeast, laying waste to forests and wildlife habitats. But, so far, the Sourlands remain an "ecological island

continued on page 11

EDUCATION

NEWS

“Vernal Pools of the Sourlands” Presentation a Huge Success!

If you ever had any doubt that a discussion about spotted salamanders and wood frogs could be humorous, sexy, and inspiring, attend one of John H. Heilferty’s Vernal Pool Talks! A riveted audience packed the Hopewell Train Station on the evening of March 1, 2013 for a talk and slide presentation by John H. Heilferty of the NJ Department of Environmental Protection. In his animated and passionate style, Mr. Heilferty fascinated his audience with facts about the physical, hydrological, and biological characters of vernal pools.

Vernal pools are remarkable and very special wetland features best known as prolific breeding grounds for amphibians. Mr. Heilferty discussed which amphibians native to the Sourlands have evolved with reproductive strategies that take advantage of the temporary ponded nature of vernal pools. A few representative amphibian species were on hand to take questions!

Mr. Heilferty is a Supervising Environmental Specialist in the NJ DEP Division of Land Use Regulation, where his focus is on endangered and threatened species and vernal pool conservation. He is a Lower Makefield Township resident in Bucks County, PA, where he also serves as the Preserve Manager of Lower Makefield Township’s “Five Mile Woods Preserve,” a 300-acre nature preserve featuring several vernal pools.

This event was free to Sourland Planning Council members and the public, as part of SPC’s education and outreach program. For more =>

Announcing the 10th Anniversary Sourland Music Festival! July 20, Hillsborough Country

The Sourland Planning Council Music Fest Committee is gearing up for the 10th Annual Sourland Music Festival! Scheduled for July 20th (rain date: July 21st) from 4-11 pm, the Music Fest will once again take place on the beautiful polo fields of the Hillsborough Country Club on Wertsville Road.

SPC’s Music Fest Committee’s goal for the 10th Annual Sourland Music Festival is to organize a great night of music and community in the Sourland hills. We will achieve that goal by attracting the best musicians in the area, provide a larger variety of food and beverages, conduct a raffle of a few big-ticket items, attract more local crafters to set up their wares, and add a Children’s Tent with fun and educational activities for kids.

We can achieve our goals with your help. Here is a list of the Music Festival subcommittees with some examples of their responsibilities, so that you can begin to think about how you would like to become involved:



Spotted Salamander

information about the Sourland Planning Council and to sign up to receive email notifications of SPC sponsored events and activities, visit www.sourland.org. 

- *Public Relations Committee* – Get the word out to the media.
- *Raffle Committee* – Acquire a few large items to raffle; sell raffle tickets at the festival.
- *Corporate Fundraising* – Assist the Executive Director with acquisition of corporate sponsors.
- *Program Ads* – Seek out small businesses who would like to buy ads in the music fest program (i.e., realtors, “green” companies, professional, etc.).
- *Poster Committee* – Acquire printer, design poster, display posters in storefronts, libraries, etc. around the Sourlands; create sandwich boards for busy intersections, lawn signs, electronic signs, street banners.
- *Vendor Committee* – Seek out food and drink vendors; get local artisans/farmers to show/sell their wares. Seek out local businesses to purchase a table at the festival.
- *Children’s Tent Committee* – Decide on activities, acquire materials, staff the tent on festival day or find volunteers to do so.
- *Festival Day Volunteer Committee* – Parking, admission, SPC tent, security.
- *Music Committee* – Make sure musicians reach out to their fan base, help with musician’s tent backstage, stage & sound.

For details about volunteering, band submissions, sponsorship, and general information about the festival, please visit www.sourlandmusicfest.org. 

Together We Can “Fix” Things Caroline Katmann, Executive Director

continued from page 5

Here are some of the ways the above-mentioned challenges are being addressed:

- **NJ’s Green Acre Fund** – NJ Keep It Green is a coalition of more than 175 organizations committed to the preservation and protection of NJ’s natural areas, waterways and history. Visit www.njkeepitgreen.org to join and sign on to NJ Keep It Green’s Sustainable Funding Campaign to secure a long-term and dedicated source of funding for preservation and stewardship. Legislation Affecting land Conservation: Sales Tax Dedication (SCR 138/ACR 179); Bond Act (S2530/A3663); Water User Surcharge (SCR 44/ACR137)
- **Prescribed Burn Program in NJ** – Support S368/A329, which will allow ecological burning to create an open canopy, which benefits diversity and reduces the risk of uncontrollable wildfires. Contact the Pinelands Preservation Alliance for info.
- **NJ Native Plant Protection Act** – Through this act endangered and threatened plant species would have legal protections similar to those already in place for wildlife. To support this effort or for additional details, visit: www.pinelandsalliance.org/protection/hotissues/ecological/rareplant-protection/

- **The NJ Highlands Coalition** is a nonprofit organization made up of groups and individuals committed to helping preserve the Highlands. Visit: www.njhighlandscoalition.org.
- For information related to using nature to reduce climate and disaster risks contact The Nature Conservancy at www.nature.org.

An Upcoming Challenge in the Sourlands—Sound Solar Laws

The Sourland Planning Council came face to face with this issue during its confrontation with Gibraltar Quarry regarding Gibraltar’s unsound plans to build a solar array at the expense of the Sourland forest.

This quote from the NJ Department of Environmental Protection’s website should guide municipalities’ decisions regarding placement of solar arrays (emphasis added): “The Division supports the development of renewable energy projects in an effort to limit dependence on nonrenewable energy sources. *It is recommended and encouraged that construction of these projects be sited within developed areas of the State wherever possible to limit impact to the State’s natural environment.*”

Sourland Planning Council supports solar energy but not at the expense of the forest. There are many appropriate locations for solar arrays in our area—parking lots, rooftops of existing buildings, and landfills for example. Aptly put by the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions in its white paper on *Solar Siting and Sustainable Land Use*: . . . “Sacrificing thousands of acres of productive, open land to vast,

ground-mounted solar arrays is neither necessary nor prudent in America’s most densely populated state.” (www.anjec.org) The purpose of ANJEC’s white paper is to provide municipalities with information and tools to develop sound solar ordinances. It is a must-read for anyone involved in the decision making process for solar ordinances.

SPC Honorary Trustee Chris Sturm has also given sage advice on this topic in her July 6, 2011 article “New Jersey’s Solar Ambitions Raise Difficult Land-Use Issues.” (njfuture.org) In the article, Ms. Sturm states: “. . . establishing a hierarchy of state incentives that gives priority to rooftop installations over ground-mounted projects would encourage a proven source of solar energy that has minimal impact on land consumption. Discouraging utility-scale solar development on farmland would ensure that agriculture retains its role as a thriving contributor to the Garden State’s economy, environment and quality of life. Enacting and enforcing regulations that mitigate any negative impacts from solar development, such as visual impairment or noise from inverters that link solar panels to the electricity grid, would protect residents from unwanted intrusion on their neighborhoods.”

Members of SPC’s sister organization, the Sourland Alliance, have made Solar Ordinances a priority undertaking for that organization in 2013. They are preparing to support the municipalities they represent in developing and/or refining their solar ordinances in ways that protect the health of the Sourland forest, water, and wildlife, while meeting the needs of their residents. You can find your town’s solar *continued =>*

NEWS

Welcome New Trustees

New Trustees Bring Many Skills and Talents to SPC's Board


The Sourland Planning is pleased to introduce our two newest trustees. Marcia McGuire and Michael Heffler began serving on SPC's Board of Trustees on January 1, 2013.

Marcia received an Honors BA in Islamic Studies from the University of Toronto and a MA/PhD in Near Eastern Studies from Princeton University. During this period, she traveled to and studied in a number of Middle Eastern countries, including Egypt, Lebanon, Iran, and Afghanistan. Most recently, Marcia worked for the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection for eleven years in various offices including policy/planning and legal affairs.

Marcia explains her motives for becoming a Trustee this way, "Having enjoyed the aesthetic and recreational benefits of residing near the Sourland Mountain for many years, I felt that as a member of the board, I could actively participate in the preservation of this unique tract of land and, in the process, learn more about it. In addition to supporting direct actions to prevent the degradation of the Sourlands habitat, as a board member I hope to disseminate information that would offer a wider audience knowledge of and access to the uniqueness of this area, thus promoting support for its preservation."


continued from page 10

ordinances easily, if they exist, by searching your town's website (look for "codes") or by visiting ecode360.com.

Together, we can assist our municipalities in their efforts to develop sound solar ordinances before there is a need to "fix" a problem. 

Michael Heffler spent over 30 years working in the technology sector. The past ten+ years he worked at Cisco Systems where he had a number of entrepreneurial roles including working with a team of former McKinsey consultants developing a vertical marketing organization. He developed the Sustainability Solutions for Cisco during this period. Recently, Michael has started a program to align the two 800-member local cycling clubs with the local open space organizations around Hunterdon and Bucks Counties. One of Michael's cycling stories can be found in this issue of the Sourland Journal.

Michael explained his decision to accept the nomination to SPC's Board of Trustees this way: "After helping to organize the first Sourland Spectacular, I was positively delighted to be asked to join the Board of the Sourland Planning Council. As a cyclist who enjoys riding in this beautiful area, I have come to appreciate the efforts and accomplishments of the Sourland Planning Council and the other organizations focused on preserving and stewarding open space and farmland. Having grown up in NYC and its suburbs where every piece of land was developed, living in an area where there is appreciation for and efforts to protect open space is keenly important to me. I am eager to add my efforts to this important work."

As you can see, we are fortunate to have Marcia and Michael on the Board of Trustees. Their many skills and talents will greatly advance our efforts to "Save the Sourlands." 

Hannah Suthers

Tom Seessel

continued from page 8

in Central New Jersey", as depicted in a New Jersey Smart Growth program report in 2004. As a result, Ms. Suthers continues to find most of the species that were here 30-40 years ago, but because sprawl has begun to impinge on the Sourlands, their numbers are diminishing.

Ms. Suthers grew up in Hawaii and has been a nursery school teacher in California and Michigan and an Episcopal Church missionary in Brazil. She received MS equivalent degrees in biology and theology from Oberlin College in 1998. She was a riding coach and judge for the Mercer County 4-H Club for many years, when her daughter was a teenage member.

At 76, Ms. Suthers published her first novel, set in the fourth century Roman Empire, *Not By Force but by Good Will: The Odyssey of a Runaway Slave at the Time of Constantine the Great*. Begun when Ms. Suthers was a high school student in Hawaii, the novel was a finalist in USA Book News National Best Books 2007 Awards.

For a 2006 article, a *New York Times* reporter asked Ms. Suthers why she has devoted so much of her life to studying birds. Her characteristically direct and simple response was "I want to do something useful for birds. To help save them, you need information, and you need land." 



Spring 2013

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Venison for People Who Are Not Sure They Will Like It

Ingredients:

4 venison tenderloins	5-6 pieces of bacon, cut up
1 medium onion, chopped finely	Flour, milk, and pepper Egg noodles

Instructions:

1. Marinate the tenderloins in milk for at least 24 hours (to tenderize).
2. Cook the bacon and onion pieces in the frying pan on medium high heat, stirring frequently so as not to burn, until they are dark brown. Remove the onions and bacon from the pan; keep warm.
3. Coat the tenderloins with the flour/pepper mixture.
4. Cook the tenderloins in the same frying pan over medium heat until done. Remove from the pan; keep warm.
5. Add flour to the pan drippings to make pan gravy. Return the onion and bacon bits to gravy.
6. Serve with egg noodles covered with pan gravy. Place the remaining gravy into a gravy mote for use with the tenderloins.

Save the Date: Second Annual Sourland Spectacular

Join fellow cyclists on September 7, 2013 for the 2nd Annual Sourland Spectacular bike rally. The Sourland Mountains are a magnet for cyclists from throughout New Jersey and beyond. They come for the low traffic roads, lovely woods, scenic vistas, mountain streams, and postcard-perfect farms.

Routes will range from 20 to 63 miles (metric century) and the ride will be supported with food at rest stops and a sumptuous lunch at the end. See the website for more details:

www.sourland.org/spectacular.

Enjoy!

Contributed by Darlis
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