



Back Roads

Sourland Planning Council

www.sourland.org

Spring 2006

Toward A "Smart Future"

Phase II of Smart Growth Begins

Phase I of the Smart Growth project for which the Sourland Planning Council received \$80,000 from the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (NJDCA) is now complete. The final report of all the information gathered during the course of this project has been printed in a limited edition book which has been distributed to the municipalities and counties, as well as other participants. All of the same reports, along with maps and other graphics, are also available on our SPC website at www.sourland.org. We are very excited about the enormous amount of information which has now been assembled documenting the special character of the Sourlands. In future newsletters we will summarize the various reports that are in the book.

The Council has now signed a contract with the State for an additional \$100,000 to build upon this information in Phase II of the process called "Smart Future." As the only organization specifically

and exclusively dedicated to Sourland Mountain issues, the SPC will manage the funds. The seven municipalities, three counties, and three nonprofit organizations, as well as several State agencies, will be invited to appoint members to a steering committee which will approve the overall plan and all expenditures of grant funds. The tasks enumerated in the grant agreement are: (1) Selection of Steering Committee and Planning Consultant(s); (2) Data Collection and Analysis; (3) Regional and Community Visioning Sessions; (4) Preparation of a Draft Comprehensive Management Plan. The result of this process will be a set of policy recommendations for land use, conservation, and open space that will be presented to the planning boards and governing bodies of the towns and counties for their consideration.

This kind of regional planning will require a great deal of public involvement and input so that the

end product is consistent with the community values of each of the participants, as well as providing for the long term protection of the unique character of the Sourlands.

Thanks to NJDCA for their generous support of this important work.

Visit Our Website www.sourland.org

It features

- ❖ A virtual tour of the Sourlands
- ❖ Maps of the Sourlands
- ❖ A calendar of events
- ❖ News and information about the organization and our planning initiatives
- ❖ A history of the Sourlands
- ❖ Links to related organizations
- ❖ The full Sourlands Smart Growth Phase I Report

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

Meeting information

Please come

The Sourland Planning Council trustees will meet during 2006 on the dates listed below. We hold our meetings at the historic Hopewell Railroad Station on Railroad Avenue, just off North Greenwood Avenue in Hopewell Boro, at 7:30 p.m. They are the first Tuesday of every other month, except for August. Note that this is a change from 2005. You are warmly invited to join us.

Apr 4 Jun 6 Oct 3 (Annual meeting & elections) Dec 6

Officers and Trustees of the Sourland Planning Council

2005 - 2006

Elected at the annual meeting on Oct. 6, 2005.

Officers

President: Andrea Bonette,
Montgomery Twp.

Vice President: Steven Sacks-Wilner,
Montgomery Twp.

Treasurer: Cliff Wilson,
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Secretary: Tom Kilbourne,
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Steven Davison, Hopewell Twp.

Richard Greene, Hopewell Borough

Jerry Haimowitz, Raritan Borough

Robert Harris, Hopewell Twp.

Judy Jengo, Hopewell Borough

Patricia Sziber, Hopewell Twp.

Catherine Urbanski, West Amwell Twp.

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President's Message

As a nonprofit organization, the Sourland Planning Council cannot endorse candidates running for election. We can, however, support policies that we believe will enhance our mission of protecting the fragile environment of the Sourland Mountain. It is with hopeful enthusiasm that I have read the final recommendations of Governor Corzine's Transition Team Environmental Policy Group. The report can be read in its entirety at <http://www.state.nj.us/governor/home/pdf/environment.pdf>.

Four subcommittees—Air, Water, Communities, and Natural Resources—have developed a plan to continue and expand upon the environmental achievements of previous administrations of both political parties. Recommendations which could specifically benefit the Sourlands are:

- ❖ Update the 1996 Water Supply Master Plan.
- ❖ Strengthen all of the State's water rules.
- ❖ Oppose budget cuts at the Department of Environmental Protection, even in the light of New Jersey's current fiscal problems.
- ❖ Immediately repeal the notorious "Fast Track" legislation which allows developers to push projects through local approvals processes without sufficient time for thorough consideration of impacts.
- ❖ Strongly support the Highlands and the Pinelands, which by association must have a positive effect on the Sourlands as well.
- ❖ Adopt long-delayed scientific recommendations that would add protection of habitat to existing protections for the critters that live there.
- ❖ Reward woodland owners by allowing them to qualify for favorable property tax treatment for conservation and habitat protection, rather than only for logging their forests.

We plan to work with the municipalities, counties, and nonprofit organizations with a presence in the Sourlands to support State proposals that would protect our Mountain.

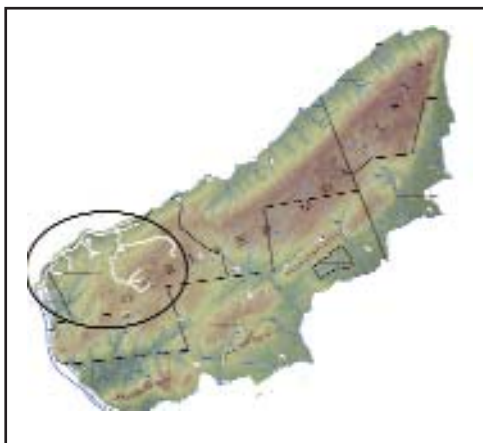
Andrea Bonette, President
Sourland Planning Council

Alexauken Creek Watershed Protection Plan

West Amwell Township has received a grant to develop a protection plan for the Alexauken Creek watershed and the Sourland Planning Council is a partner in the project. SPC trustee Jerry Haimowitz attended a kickoff meeting held November 10, 2005 at the West Amwell Twp municipal building on behalf of the Sourland Planning Council, as did trustee Cathy Urbanski, who attended officially as a member of the West Amwell Environmental Commission.

Alexauken Creek flows from the top of the Sourland ridge north towards Mount Airy, then hooks southwest to flow along Creek Road into Lambertville - roughly six miles of still-pristine waterway. (See the map.) The Alexauken Creek Watershed drains 15.12 square miles, mostly in West Amwell, but also including Delaware, Lambertville and East Amwell. The main stem is about five miles long and drains about 40% farm land, 39% forest, 13% developed land, 6% wetlands and 2% barren lands and open water. The Alexauken has been designated a Category One stream by NJDEP, which affords it extra protections.

The grant comes from New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's 319(h) program, which provides funds for nonpoint source pollution control projects. Under federal guidelines, each state may pass through a portion of 319(h)



Alexauken Creek

funds to other entities to reduce water quality impairment and, for the past few years, New Jersey's Nonpoint Source Program has targeted these grants on the development of watershed restoration and protection plans.

The purpose of the project is to develop a plan that will recommend specific measures for protecting, maintaining and, where possible, improving the water quality and ecological integrity of the streams within the watershed. The project will run from August 2005 to August 2008.

Princeton Hydro LLC is coordinating the work for the Township. Princeton Hydro is a consulting firm specializing in water and wetland resource management. Chris Krupka of Princeton Hydro is the project's manager and point of contact. At the meeting, Chris emphasized that active participation of all partners is critical to the success of the project. The other partners, in addition to SPC, are: West Amwell Township

(the grantee), the City of Lambertville, Hunterdon County Planning Board, Hunterdon Land Trust Alliance, Delaware Riverkeeper Network, The Regional Planning Partnership, and Stony Brook - Millstone Watershed Association.

In the first year of the study, the Delaware Riverkeeper will be developing a visual watershed assessment technique. This will be done by a small group of experts training and managing a team of lay volunteers who will walk the watershed and report what they find on standardized forms that Delaware Riverkeeper is developing. The first training was held February 25, the second on March 11. Volunteers will then pair up and be assigned about a one-mile stream segment to walk for a one-time survey in February and March.

To learn more about this project contact Faith Zerbe, Monitoring Coordinator at the Delaware Riverkeeper 215-369-1188 or faith@delawareriverkeeper.org.

A second initial task involves compiling and synthesizing existing GIS (Graphical Information System) and other watershed data of the sort found in SPC's Smart Growth Report.

Anyone interested in participating should contact Chris Krupka at: 908 237-5660 or ckrupka@princetonhydro.com

**Become
a member!**

Sourland Planning Council

Join or renew your membership in a grassroots community of individuals interested in preserving and protecting the precious natural resources of the Sourland Mountain region. Our goal? Save the Sourlands!

Membership and dues information are on the enclosed envelope. What do you get? *Back Roads* newsletter and other mailings to keep you informed and interested in efforts to Save the Sourlands. A good feeling, too!

Want to know more? See our Web site at

www.sourland.org

or call Andrea Bonette at (609) 466-0641.



Poet's Corner

We begin a new feature with this issue of Back Roads. *Poet's Corner* will feature work by residents and friends of the Sourlands that evokes the beauty and character of the region. We are proud to inaugurate the *Poet's Corner* with this piece by SPC trustee Dick Greene.

We invite submissions. Please send them to Steven Davison at steven.davison@verizon.net.

First Notes

Though winter is with us still,
the birds have begun to sing
to the cues of spring,
first a cardinal, then a wren,
and now this morning in early March,
as a chill dawn pinks the sky,
the wistful fluting of a mourning dove
which, after winter's longeurs,
when few but crows were heard,
now finds itself bestirred
to loose its song.

~ Dick Greene

Join to support the Sourland Planning Council

– or renew now

(Our year runs from Jan. 1 through Dec. 31).

Please help us protect the Sourland Mountain Region by contributing as generously as you can.

The SPC is run by volunteers but has reached a level of activity that requires professional staff to meet our goals. We are now raising funds to support such a position. If you want to give something extra for the **professionalization and growth** of our programs, please consider the “Other” option below. Your larger contribution can make a vital difference. And thank you!

Fill out and mail to: Sourland Planning Council, P.O. Box 72, Hopewell NJ 08525-0072.



Support Levels: Renewal or New Family: \$25
 Individual: \$15 Senior (62 and older): \$10
 Patron: \$50 Other _____
 Matching grant available through employer.

Name: _____

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Phone number: _____ Date today: _____

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(SPC promises to never sell, rent, distribute or lend your name or e-mail address without your permission)

I want to receive your newsletter electronically (*thereby conserving precious resources*)

I want to receive periodic electronic bulletins about news, events, regulations, projects or policies affecting the Sourlands.

Want to know more? Visit our Web site at www.sourland.org or contact President Andrea Bonette at (609) 466-0641 or abonette@patmedia.net.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Do we sound busy? You bet we are! And all of our efforts are conducted entirely by volunteers! To continue our efforts, we need volunteers for tasks large and small, routine and specialized. If you would like to know how you could make a difference, please contact President Andrea Bonette at abonette@patmedia.net and tell her about your ideas, skills and interests. We need some elbow grease, too. Help us **SAVE THE SOURLANDS.**

News About the Sourlands

Regional News

Stormwater study. Princeton Hydro, an environmental consulting firm, has received a regional grant to study stormwater across the entire Sourland Mountain region. The goal is to find ways to conserve the water that falls on the Mountain so that it can recharge local water supplies and at the same time maintain the purity of the headwater streams that begin in the Sourlands. The major streams include Alexauken Creek and the Stony Brook in West Amwell, Back Brook in East Amwell, Roaring Brook-Cruser Brook in Hillsborough, Cat Tail Brook-Rock Brook in Montgomery, and Rocky Brook-Bedens Brook in Hopewell. The Alexauken flows into the Delaware; Back Brook flows into the South Branch of the Raritan; and the other streams feed the Millstone River.

Progress at the 3M Quarry. The 3M quarry at Belle Mead has been working to control the environmental problems caused by their mineral fines—the rock dust left over from the quarrying process. Throughout the life of the quarry, these fines have been heaped on the slopes outside the quarry pit, where they now form an enormous pile. Rain washes the fines into Roaring Brook, the upper forks of Cruser Brook and the headwaters of Back Brook, causing the water to appear milky gray.

On November 1, 3M announced completion of a new fines erosion control system, although significant damage was done by 14 inches of rain in October. The system will become fully effective only when the vegetation planted to stabilize the fines pile becomes established. 3M will monitor the system until

October 31, 2006, to determine whether it has eliminated the pollution problems.

To enhance erosion control, 3M plans to completely cap the existing fines pile and place all new fines inside the quarry pit. The company also has begun studying additional water purification options in case the current plans do not provide adequate pollution control. Plant manager Keith Jacobs says the company will keep making improvements until the pollution problem is resolved. If you have comments or questions, contact Jerry Haimowitz at 908-429-1717 or jhaimowitz@yahoo.com. Jerry is a Sourland Planning Council trustee and a member of the 3M Technical Advisory Committee.

Local News

Hopewell Boro hosted another of our sold-out bus tours of the Sourlands last fall. Boro resident and Council trustee Judy Jengo organized the two-hour-long tour. This is a great way to get to know the Sourlands, and it's only \$15 (for the bus), so look for notices about the next one. So far, we've begun the tours from Montgomery, East Amwell, and Hillsborough townships, so the next one might start in West Amwell.

Hopewell Boro has been active on several other fronts, as well. It adopted a stormwater management plan, became a designated Tree City USA community, and received a Green Acres grant award as a partner in the open space preservation efforts of the beautiful St. Michaels property on Carter Road.

And the Sourland Planning Council owes a special thanks to Hopewell

Boro for opening its historic train station as a meeting place for the SPC trustees.

West Amwell township has passed a Stormwater Management Plan and a new Stream Corridor Ordinance that much more effectively protects our streams from erosion and the destructive encroachment of development. The township formed a community forestry committee and began work on a 319(h) grant to prepare a watershed protection plan for Alexauken Creek, which flows from the top of the ridge north towards Mount Airy, then hooks southwest to flow along Creek Road into Lambertville—roughly five miles of still-pristine waterway.

In **East Amwell** township, the D&R Greenway, with support from the New Jersey Green Acres program, has purchased a heavily wooded fifteen-acre property on Mountain Road from an owner who cherished his unspoiled woods and wanted to preserve it. D&R is in the process of assembling another 50 acres of conservation easements from adjoining landowners that will permanently protect a significant swath of Sourland ridge.

Lambertville became the first New Jersey municipality to adopt a stormwater management plan as an element of its Master Plan. These plans were state-mandated. The city council has also voted against the use of city funds to support a threatened lawsuit by Hunterdon County against the state's Highlands preservation act. In December 2004, the City Council and the Planning Board passed resolutions to support the designation of the Sourland Mountain Region as a special resource area.

continued >>>

News About the Sourlands (continued)

Hillsborough Township recently voted to extend the Special Resource Area (SRA) identification to include the GSA depot. Says Planning Board chair Marian Fenwick-Freeman, "given the proximity of the GSA depot to the Sourlands, it made sense to treat them as a single environmental resource". In other news, in partnership with several non-profit organizations, including SPC and the township of Hillsborough, Duke Farms has created a coalition focused on creating a link between the 2700 acre Duke Estate in Hillsborough and the Sourland

Mountains. Such a corridor can provide a valuable service in preventing the Estate from becoming an ecologic island.

Montgomery Township is on the verge of acquiring the 268-acre site of the former North Princeton Developmental Center, off Route 601 in Skillman. The Township will purchase the abandoned institution from the State of New Jersey for \$5.95 million, with closing expected this spring.

The first order of business is to make the site safe and clean up environmental contamination.

Montgomery has contracted with Weston Solutions to complete due diligence before the sale, and then perform the environmental remediation.

About 140 acres will be preserved as open space and parkland. The remainder will be redeveloped for mixed use, with specifics yet to be decided. Many dilapidated structures will be demolished, but the Township plans to restore and renovate at least some of the buildings, with a particular eye toward preserving those with the most historical significance that are suitable for adaptive re-use.

"We cannot solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them."

~ Albert Einstein

Sourlands Store

New Jersey's Sourland Mountain \$20.00
Softcover, 162 pages, by T.J. Luce

Plush Red-breasted grosbeak with green Save the Sourlands sash \$8.00
Squeeze it and it sings!

Save the Sourlands.org \$1.00
bumper sticker



To order, call or email Andrea Bonette at (609) 466-0641 - abonette@patmedia.net.

Thanks to our supporters who have joined a growing community who support the Sourlands and the work of the Sourland Planning Council. The following people pledged or renewed their support in 2005.

- | | | | | |
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Sourland Planning Council



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