

2014 Election

Every year, the Sourland Conservancy poses a few questions to municipal candidates in the Sourlands. The questionnaire below was sent to the following 2014 candidates. The candidates' responses can be found following the Questionnaire.

Hopewell Township:

Vanessa Sandom (D)

Kevin Kuchinski (D)

Ron Cefalone (R)

Tim Shaub (R)

Hopewell Borough:

Charles Schuyler Morehouse (R)

Robert Lewis (R)

Roxanne Louise Klett (R)

Montgomery Township:

Rich Smith (R)

Wilbert Donnay (D)

Hillsborough Township:

Gloria McCauley (R)

Douglas Tomson (R)

John Beggiato (D)

Thuy Anh Le (D)

East Amwell:

John "Andy" Reid(R)

Ann del Campo (R)

D. Dart Sageser (D)

Charles Van Horn (D)

Lambertville:

Elizabeth Asaro (D)

Elaine Warner(D)

West Amwell:

John C. Dale (R)

Dear Candidate:

The Sourland Conservancy has been working since 1986 to protect the ecological integrity, historic resources and special character of the Sourland Mountain region. We are the only grass-roots organization focusing on this mission. The Sourland Conservancy works to support our seven municipalities (Townships of East Amwell, Hillsborough, Hopewell, Montgomery and West Amwell and also Lambertville City and Hopewell Borough) in developing ordinances and policies to protect the portions which lie within the Sourland Mountain. You can find a great deal of information about the special character of the Sourlands and about the Conservancy's education and advocacy efforts on our website, www.sourland.org. We have recently created a video about the Sourlands. We have also published several books, a map, and a stewardship handbook mailed to every Sourland household. All of our members as well as regional media, similar environmental organizations, and government officials receive our semi-annual newsletter.

We have developed a questionnaire so that our members may know where all our county and municipal elected representatives stand on issues of significance to our mission. We will publish our questions and the names of all candidates in the upcoming Autumn 2014 issue of the Sourland Journal newsletter. We will publish all responses received prior to the November 4 election on our website and encourage our members to read them.

Please send all responses, ideally by Tuesday, October 1, by email to director@sourland.org or by regular mail to Sourland Conservancy, 83 Princeton Avenue, Suite 1A, Hopewell, NJ 08525. We will make sure every response appears unedited (no more than 150 words on any one question please) on our website.

QUESTIONS

1. Do you feel the current level of Open Space funding in your county or municipality should (a) be increased; (b) stay the same; or (c) be decreased? How is this funding derived - from Open Space tax, from capital funds, or other?
2. 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 town or county.
3. The current overpopulation of white-tailed deer poses a serious threat to the Sourland ecosystem. We have developed a Comprehensive Deer Management Plan for the Sourlands (see www.sourland.org) aimed at reducing the population of the deer to a level that would support a healthy forest. We plan to work with other environmental organizations to advocate for State legalization of commercial deer hunting in the Sourland forest. What is your position on commercial deer hunting?
4. What are some of the ways you would try, if elected, to support the protection of the ecology, history, and special character of the Sourland region?

Thank you for your participation.

Candidates' Responses:

Tim Shaub (R) – Hopewell Township

1. I believe the level of open space funding should remain the same as it is currently. There must be a balance between the amount we tax our citizens and our ability to maintain the open space we already have. If we raise taxes to fund more open space, we risk overburdening our seniors on fixed incomes and losing the resources needed to maintain what we already have. The current administration either doesn't have the resources or has not made the maintenance of our open space a priority.
2. I am currently a member of the Hopewell Valley Historical Society and my wife is a past vice president. I am also an elder and trustee of the 177 year old First Presbyterian Church of Titusville and member of the 175th committee where I restored both cemeteries while protecting the ravine wetlands. Since our church is located between the Delaware Raritan Canal and the Delaware River, the Session (church elders) take very seriously the impact on these very sensitive ecosystems when conducting restorations.
3. I have been a licensed hunter for over thirty years and am also concerned about overpopulation of deer throughout New Jersey. I agree that the Sourland Mountain area is especially affected by this. I have read and agree with most of the Sourland Conservancy's Comprehensive Deer Management Plan. However, I would need more information about the plan for commercial deer hunting. Some commercial deer hunting plans have not worked well and certainly, I would object to any plan which would violate the tenets of the Lacey Act.
4. If elected, every policy, mandate, and law would be required to adhere to strict environmental and ecological guidelines to ensure the safety of all of Hopewell Township. As I mentioned earlier, I am a proponent of historical preservation and any impact upon our landmarks would also require strict review. As a retired New Jersey State Trooper working out of the Flemington Station, I have a great affinity to the Sourland Mountains. The Lindbergh estate (Highfields) is part of our history and is one of the State's first preserved lands. Any adverse impact upon this area would prompt me to immediate action.

Charles Van Horn (D), East Amwell Township

1. In the late 1990's the voters of East Amwell overwhelmingly approved municipal Open Space tax to be used for the acquisition of farmland for preservation purposes, as well as

the acquisition, development and maintenance of lands for recreation and conservation purposes. East Amwell has been a leader in farmland and open space preservation for nearly 3 decades, resulting in over 40% of our township being preserved. Voters overwhelmingly approved referendums for an Open Space tax, which seems to be about the right amount for current needs. Our funds are matched at the county and state levels. We have been successful in recent years in attracting foundation funding and partnering with local non-profit organizations to fund open space.

2. I have been a long time advocate for conservation and open space preservation. Concerned with maintaining safe drinking water supplies on the Sourland Mountain, good septic systems and healthy living conditions for all residents, I joined the East Amwell Board of Health in 2010. By continuing to combine our resources, we can preserve more farmland and open space while supporting local, sustainable agriculture and maintaining the quality of our natural resources. I serve as the Township Committee liaison to the East Amwell Historical Preservation Committee.
3. I support deer management plans that educate the public on the need for site-specific management and encourage safe humane hunting to thin the herds, increasing the limits and culling does combined with allowing hunters to sell venison (after processing by FDA certified butchers) or donating the meat to local food banks would be important considerations in any commercial deer hunting legislation.
4. I would continue to support 15 acre zoning in the Sourlands as a way to preserve our valuable water supply and to maintain a healthy supply of water for all residents. I believe it is essential to preserve our history through the preservation of documents, pictures and structures that are unique to the Sourlands. I will support education programs to inform residents of the unique nation of the Sourlands and the valuable resources available to all residents.

Ron Cefalone (R) – Hopewell Township

1. Yes, I feel the level the open space should be increased. Whenever we have the opportunity to preserve in a smart way we should do just that. It will be there for many years to come and have benefits for individuals and families in both an active and passive manner. The funding should stay the course with a dedicated open space fund with an emphasis on partnering with other non-profits and government entities to pool resources for larger parcels.

2. Presently at my home I'm a big fan of blue bird boxes with *the right planning and foresight, you can create an environment that will help bluebirds thrive and encourages population growth*. I'm presently the Director of Recreation for The Arc Mercer an organization that works with people who are developmentally disabled and in a few months we are launching a program to create several blue bird boxes to be placed at various group homes of our residential consumers.
3. Commercial deer hunting is a must. Presently in Hopewell Township you have an abundance of hunters. We need to take advantage and recruit these hunters to help thin the herd on public property. We must also target deer of all age- all sex regarding this harvest. This is an opportunity to educate young people and have them work towards an important goal with a purpose. These problems are consistent throughout New Jersey. This can be a tool for non-profits like yours to be an advocacy group to recruit young people and tell your stories inside the classrooms of local middle and high schools. These young hunters have their hunting licenses, they just need the direction from your group's leadership to help with this important effort.
4. When elected I would like to be your voice within our recreation commission to help advocate for the important issues facing the Sourlands. Together we can help grow and educate people to understand the importance of a smart plan to preserve open space and properly care for the resources that we presently have.

Thuy Anh Le (D) and John Beggiato (D) – Hillsborough Township

1. In Hillsborough, the Open Space Trust Fund is derived from a separate open space tax. Thuy Anh Le and John Beggiato believe that the amount of funding derived from this tax is appropriate for the preservation of open space in partnership with NJ Conservancy Foundation, D&R Greenway, and Somerset County. It is important for voters to approve Public Question 2 in this November's ballot to continue the funding for open space preservation. The state can then dedicate 4% of the money collected from the Corporation Business Tax to Open Space, Farmland, and Historic Preservation.
2. In 2010, John Beggiato and Thuy Anh Le were founding members of BoroGreen, a non-profit created to promote a more sustainable community, both environmentally and economically. Thuy Anh and John believe in the preservation of open space is vital in maintaining the rural character of Hillsborough and the Sourlands. In 2013, they were two of nine people that founded the Friends of Hillsborough Open Space (FOHOS) who successfully fought against the diversion of the Open Space Trust Fund for undefined purposes. This diversion would adversely impact the ability of the Hillsborough Open Space Advisory Committee to effectively purchase and preserve open space. FOHOS was grateful to the Board of Trustees of the Sourland Conservancy for their Challenge Match

of \$1000. We were able to create signs and palm cards, and host a public forum to educate the public about the Hillsborough Open Space referendum and to advocate for its defeat.

3. Thuy Anh Le and John Beggiato are in favor of legalizing limited commercial deer hunting programs in the Sourlands (deer management zones 12 and 41) to effectively reduce the whitetailed deer population. There is legislation currently proposed in the State Assembly (A3039) to remove the ban on the commercial harvesting of venison. The commercial hunting could be instrumental in the farm-to-table movement, promoting locally harvested venison along with other produce from local farms. If gone unchecked, the health of the forest will rapidly decline, impacting all wildlife and any commercial value the Sourlands have to offer the local economy of Hillsborough and the surrounding communities.
4. John Beggiato and Thuy Anh Le believe that it is imperative that the community understands the benefits the Sourlands region has to offer. Effective educational programs through library workshops, the Sourland Conservancy, and other organizations are some ways the community can become informed in what this precious region has to offer. In addition, the many recreational opportunities such as geocaching, hiking, mountain biking, hunting, and bird watching must be responsibly promoted. The Hillsborough Open Space Advisory Committee, working with partners such as NJ Conservancy Foundation, the D&R Greenway, and Somerset County, should continue to make every effort to preserve contiguous land to strengthen the ecology for many generations to enjoy.

Ann del Campo (R) – East Amwell Township

1. I believe that the voters of East Amwell originally approved the Open Space Tax funding and I know from meetings at the Hunterdon County Board of Agriculture and other organizations, that other funds are being appropriated for Farmland Preservation. There are other community organizations that support Open Space and provide funding. In talking with residents of East Amwell there is widespread support for continued Open Space provisions and that as your responsible elected official, I will find new venues to fund these opportunities without increasing our taxes.
2. Our farm, Stonybrook Meadows, is in the Sourland Area and is a living example of sustainability, environmental consciousness, and education for the public on our Sourland Heritage. Through the direct marketing of our farm fresh products we offer the opportunity to have first-hand experience with habitats, wildlife (salamanders), permaculture techniques, and a deeper understanding of many of the values supported by the Sourland Council. We have preserved our Open Space here and DO NOT use any

chemicals on the land (even lawn chemicals can compact your soil). We look forward to a closer relationship with our farm and the Sourland Council, and our special East Amwell Community.

3. We live next door to a preserved Hunt & Swim Club. We know the concerns of overpopulation of deer, continued feeding by deer of native species in our forests, and of the abundance of repopulating invasive species of vegetation. We also know the smell of decaying deer by our farmhouse, and the early morning explosions of gunfire. We support commercial deer hunting and have worked with the hunters near us to exercise caution and safety. There are many paths forward to work together here.

4. We will continue our pursuit of information that we have in our farm market on Sourland trails, the Sourland Regional Map & Habitat and East Amwell. I believe that our farm and an extension of our garden to include the indigenous species of the Sourland planted by our community will expand. I believe I have extensive knowledge as a farmer and a scientist to make learning fun. I believe when you work with the land, you learn to respect Nature. That is what we teach here, that is what we will bring forward for East Amwell, and that is what our special heritage here in the Sourlands will continue to teach us as we face continued environmental issues throughout the world. I am not a politician. I am a concerned Farmer and long-time East Amwell resident who wants to engage our community with more knowledge.

Wilbert Donnay (D) - Montgomery Township

1. Montgomery has an open space levy of four cents per \$100 home value. This provides about \$1.25 million per year, most of which is used to make payments on land already purchased. It is an appropriate funding level that enables the town to leverage matching funds from other sources including the county, the state, preservation nonprofits and sometimes landowners. Although a good bit of land in Montgomery is already preserved, there is much more that remains vulnerable to development. Montgomery is zoned mostly for houses, and this means that almost every parcel of undeveloped land that gets developed goes from being a positive tax ratable to a negative one. Thus, open space preservation is smart from every perspective: environmental, social, and economic. The four-cent open space tax in Montgomery is a wise investment.

2. I have not been directly involved with preservation. I strongly support it because I understand and appreciate its high value to the environment, to quality of life and public health, and to taxpayers. I live very near one of the first farms that was preserved in Montgomery Township – a

magnificent historic house surrounded by rolling hills that could have been covered with McMansions, but instead are home to a thriving organic beef, pork and poultry operation.

3. I support commercial deer hunting as a way to reduce Lyme Disease, protect the forest and endangered species, and provide access to healthy, organic, local, free-range meat. Close attention to safety is imperative. I support your deer management plan, which is indeed comprehensive! I also support the commercial deer harvesting bill, A-3039, that has bipartisan sponsors in Trenton.
4. I will actively encourage preservation and good stewardship of Sourland properties in Montgomery Township. I will work to educate and inform all Montgomery residents, through the township newsletter, about the Sourlands' unique ecosystem and rich history, as well as its recreational value to hikers, bikers and birders.

KEVIN KUCHINSKI (D) – Hopewell Township

Question 1

Hopewell Township residents have repeatedly expressed the desire to acquire and preserve open space, farmland and historic structures and districts. These monies help protect our drinking water, rivers and category 1 stream corridors, preserve our quality of life, and maintain the rural character of Hopewell Township.

Funds to support open space have been raised through voter approval of special levies. Currently that levy totals three cents per one hundred dollars of assessed valuation of real property per year. With the budget crisis in Trenton, the State's Green Acres funding program has been depleted, and no new funds will be available to support the efforts of municipalities like Hopewell Township. Without an increase in funding, we will not be able to acquire any new open space, regardless of the importance this has to our residents. Therefore township residents will have the opportunity to increase the open space levy, by one cent per hundred dollars of assessed value, by voting on a *Hopewell Public Question* on November 4.

In addition, I also support the *state ballot initiative on open space (Public Question #2)* This initiative will create a permanent funding mechanism for Open Space in the state of NJ, at no incremental cost to taxpayers.

I support the increase in funding, and encourage Hopewell Township residents to vote "Yes" on *both the Hopewell Public Question and on the Public Question #2* on November 4.

Question 2

I have been a lifelong supporter of open space, wildlife habitat and protecting our natural resources. This includes being an active Board Member of the Stony Brook Millstone Watershed Association for the past 2 1/2 years, and a Watershed member prior to that. The Watershed is one of Central Jersey's leading environmental organizations, and is committed to preserving open space and taking other actions that protect our water and environment. The Watershed has helped pass a stream corridor protection ordinance and a steep slopes act in Hopewell Township, and has also partnered with other local and

regional organizations to preserve the St Michael's and Berwind properties, protect fragile ecosystems in Hopewell Township like the Sourland Mountains, and otherwise limit overdevelopment.

I also serve as president of the Honey Lake Homeowners' Association. We have successfully worked with local and state officials to formulate a plan which rehabilitates the dam and preserves Honey Lake. Honey Lake not only supports a wide range of local wildlife and flora, but also helps filter run-off and is hydrologically connected to the aquifer that supports the wells in Elm Ridge Park. An expert report commissioned by the Township committee indicates the aquifer would likely not be able to support the current home density and our well systems absent the reservoir provided by the lake. As your Township Committee member, I pledge to continue fighting for you, your water and our environment.

Question 3

I understand that deer hunting raises ethical and safety concerns with many citizens. That's why I believe a deer management program must only be implemented after careful consideration and with full community involvement.

In Hopewell Township, a questionnaire was distributed to gauge public opinion and help determine the impact of deer overpopulation. A majority of respondents indicated that deer "cause many problems and solutions are needed."

The negative impact of too many deer is evident: numerous Lyme's disease cases, deer-vehicle collisions, economic and landscape losses, forest damage and the destruction of native plants. Their overgrazing reduces biodiversity and can allow invasive species to quickly dominate, adversely impacting other native species, including insects, birds and other mammals which rely solely on native plants for their survival.

In Hopewell Township, Mayor Sandom acted responsibly by involving the community in the decision making process. This program allows responsible hunting under strict safety guidelines, and is self supporting in terms of funding. Therefore I believe it was the right decision for Hopewell Township.

Question 4

I join many Township residents in opposition to the proposed PennEast pipeline. The pipeline would clearcut through the largest contiguous forest in Central New Jersey, endangering preserved wetlands and grasslands, and threatening the diverse plant and animal species that call the Sourland region home. And most alarmingly, it would threaten our water supply, including the wells that so many Hopewell Township residents depend on for drinking water. As a private citizen, I have been urging concerned property owners to deny survey permission to PennEast. As an elected official, I would work with community and environmental groups to pass legislation that would serve to protect the region from this and other threats that pose a risk to our natural resources.

VANESSA SANDOM (D) – Hopewell Township

Question 1

Looking back to when I first organized a meeting with my neighbors to discuss what we could do about halting overly aggressive development, I would say it was my drive to preserve our open space that inspired me to enter public service in the first place. It's impossible to place a price tag on an open vista or to shady forest, but those of us who recognize the value must also bear the responsibility of its protection.

Our quality of life is enhanced by the preservation of the scenic wonder and the biodiversity of the landscape that has been entrusted to our care. Our preserved open space provides recreational opportunities for our children and seniors, all the while cleaning our air, purifying our water, protecting us from flooding, and providing us with a sense of wonder. These benefits of open space are not merely economic, but truly priceless.

As a champion of open space, I am proud to be part of a community that shares my values. I trust that the residents of Hopewell understand that a "yes" vote on our open space initiatives is the smartest investment we can make for our future.

Question 2

Hopewell Township residents place a high value on the preservation and conservation of our natural resources. That's why I am proud to have the support of the people of Hopewell Township in preserving the integrity of our Township and protecting it from over-development.

As the liaison to Hopewell Township's Environmental Commission, I led a 10 year effort to create and pass a Woodland Preservation Ordinance. As Mayor of Hopewell Township, I signed the Stream Corridor Protection Ordinance into law *in 2004*, followed by the Steep Slope Ordinance *in 2007*. These laws were enacted in order to improve and maintain the quality of the water supply, to limit land use development and protect against soil erosion and maintain the long-term natural equilibrium of the ground and surface waters in Hopewell Township and in neighboring communities. And by converting to cleaner, more sustainable energy sources with the installation of a solar array to power our municipal building *in 2008*, Hopewell Township continues to lead the region in forward thinking environmentalism.

Question 3

As the person who spearheaded the effort to create a comprehensive deer management program in 2009, I am delighted that surrounding municipalities and organizations are joining with us in helping reduce the number of deer in our region.

The Hopewell Township Committee unanimously adopted an ordinance that established the Deer Management Advisory Committee (DMAC) in June 2011. The committee's members include an ecologist, farmer, hunter, and master gardener. Its mission is to try and minimize the negative impacts of deer. In order to meet these goals, the DMAC decided to implement a management program on municipally-owned lands to help reduce the deer population.

The program is self-supporting. Rules require licensed New Jersey hunters who pass our background check to attend an orientation and safety class prior to purchasing a permit. Monies collected are used to offset program costs, and any unused funds are directed towards purchasing additional open space lands.

Question 4

I am proud of the work we have done in protecting Hopewell Township from uncontrolled over-development and in working with the community to establish preservation measures that encourage responsible growth. If my running mate, Kevin Kuchinski, and I are elected, we will work hard with our neighboring communities and environmental groups to take a regional approach to protecting the Sourlands from the threats posed by the proposed PennEast and Transco pipelines.

Committeewoman Gloria McCauley (R) and Mayor Doug Tomson (R) – Hillsborough Township

1. At this time, we believe that the Open Space Tax Fund in Hillsborough, coupled, with the Somerset County Open Space Tax and with the State ballot question passage this November, is at the correct

amount. Our open space is funded through a separate local open space tax approved by Hillsborough residents in the mid-1990s.

2. A recent inventory of the Township's farmland/open space acreage reveals over 11,000 preserved acres. This acreage represents more than 30% of Hillsborough's land area. Few towns in New Jersey have a preservation record as successful and impressive. Recently we help preserve a 237-acre PID parcel in the rural Mill Lane area. The township's initial open space trust fund investment in this property was a little over \$3 million. Even at a bargain cost per acre of \$13,500, that investment represented a sizable outlay. So Hillsborough applied to New Jersey's Green Acres Program for funding. In February 2014, we succeeded in receiving a \$1.2 million grant to support the purchase and replenish our open space trust fund.

3. Hillsborough Township has a very active Wildlife Management Program, with a 100% safety record on our open space and we will continue to operate this program.

4. As elected officials, we support a dynamic, cooperative and fiscally sound land preservation policy, conducted without partisan politics that allows Hillsborough to work with County, State and non-profit agencies today and for years to come. With that philosophy, we will remain perfectly positioned to continue to preserve land.