



Sourland Scavenger Hunt

Sourland Mountain Preserve

233 Rileyville Road (2 ½ miles north of Hopewell Train Station)

Take a walk on the main (Service Road) trail and try to find the natural treasures described below. If you need a little help, peek at the photo key.

____ **Nest:** Many rare and endangered birds, resident and migrant, depend on the Sourland Region for food and shelter: Kentucky Warblers, Cooper's hawks, Barred Owls, vireos, and Scarlet Tanager.

____ **Hugging Trees:** Sometimes two different trees may grow together. These may be of the same species or even trees of two different genera or families. These consist of two basic forms: two trees that have become grafted together, or two trees that are not grafted together but are physically touching or entangled

____ **Cleft Boulder:** The Sourland Preserve is a second-generation oak forest. The original forest was cut down when the area was an active quarry. Diabase boulders were used to produce railroad ballast, concrete aggregate, and Belgian blocks for road beds. When the quarrying stopped, the area was reclaimed by nature. Explorers can still find cleft boulders and further evidence of these old quarries.

____ **Pileated Woodpecker Hole:** A large black, white, and red bird called a pileated woodpecker cuts rectangular "windows" into trees seeking grubs and other insect food. Woodpecker holes serve as great housing for other forest creatures as well.

____ **Poison Ivy:** Poison ivy takes many forms, from small groundcover to massive "hairy" vine, climbing a tree with its tiny rootlets. Poison ivy is most common where some disturbance in the forest has admitted extra sun, and often where soil has been bared.

____ **Skunk Cabbage:** The large, tropical-looking leaves growing from the forest floor belong to skunk cabbage, a plant that grows in wet soils, like swamps and stream edges. The big leaves get more and more tattered looking as the season progresses. Skunk cabbage retreats to its massive underground roots as the dry heat of summer progresses.

____ **Mayapples:** These forest herbs have vertical stems and horizontal leaves which look a bit like propeller blades, or, more poetically, like umbrellas. Mayapple plants with two leaves forking from one stem bear a fruit in the middle of the "Y" of the stem. All parts are poisonous except the perfectly ripe fruit.

____ **Wild Grapes:** These woody vines can grow over 30 feet tall. There are several species in New Jersey. Though most are not edible to humans, they very important for wildlife. Many birds nest in wild grape tangles including Northern Cardinal, Brown Thrasher, Gray Catbird, and Northern Mockingbird.

____ **Diabase Boulders:** Formed almost 200 million years ago, the rocks of the Sourlands are called diabase or "trap rock." These large rounded boulders give the Sourlands a lot of its wild character, offering protection to plants and animals. Diabase landscapes are difficult to farm or build houses.