

IN THE SOURLANDS

Mapping the Sourlands

by Caroline Katmann

“Do you have any trail maps?” This is the most common question asked of us by visitors to the Sourland Conservancy’s table at various events throughout the year. And, although there are many places to find maps of various trails in the Sourlands (a list of a few is provided at the end of this article), there is no ONE place to find ALL of the trails in the Sourlands. Soon there will be...

The Sourland Conservancy embarked on a Sourland mapping project almost two years ago, led by Kevin Burkman, GIS Analyst, of Skillman, NJ. Mr. Burkman created a series of maps that quantify the preservation status of all parcels of land within the Sourland region. These maps are the predecessors of soon-to-be-released Sourland trail maps and are available on our website, www.sourland.org.

To create the preservation status maps, data regarding land preservation status was obtained from various public and private entities. The New Jersey Division of Taxation’s MOD-IV dataset was used as the foundation for the project. The dataset is generally used for storage and maintenance of property tax data and was modified to facilitate the preservation status of all parcels of land within the Sourland region border. Open space and parcel data obtained in the form of GIS datasets (shapefiles & attribute tables), paper maps, and block/lot data from the state of New Jersey and all municipalities and preservation/open space organizations within the Sourland region were used to determine the preservation status of all parcels as of January 2013. The following four preservation status maps and a final report were completed in July 2014:

- Preserved: Land that is preserved through public parkland and preserves, privately owned land, and/or with open space and farmland easements.
- Developed: Land that cannot be further developed or preserved, or is considered to be “built-out” (urban, retail, industrial areas).
- Not Preserved I: Land that is currently not preserved but can be subdivided/developed or preserved.
- Not Preserved II: Land that is not preserved and cannot be subdivided, but may be developed or preserved.

The Resources/Map page on www.sourland.org contains all of the abovementioned preservation status maps and the complete final report analysis. On this page, you will also find other interesting and useful Sourland maps, such as a cycling map, maps of proposed PennEast pipeline routes, and various Sourland habitat maps (forest, bedrock, soil, topography and more!).

Using these maps as a basis, Mr. Burkman is currently creating (1) a map showing the location of every trail within the Sourland region and (2) individual maps of each trail. These maps will

be available on our website within the next few months. The third phase of this project will be to create an electronic, interactive version of the Sourland trail map.

While you are waiting for our exciting new trail maps to make their appearance, visit our website to enjoy the fascinating facts provided by our existing Sourland maps, such as the following preserved land percentages within the Sourland municipalities:

(Please note that all township acreage figures reflect township land within the Sourland region boundary, and not the township as a whole. Additionally, percent calculations for preservation status in each township represent the percentage for that particular township, and not for the entire Sourlands region.)

- Total land acreage in the Sourland region: 53,992. Total Preserved acreage in Sourlands region: 22,076 (41%)
- Total acreage of East Amwell Township: 9,709. Total Preserved acreage in East Amwell Township: 4,327 (45%)
- Total acreage in Hillsborough Township: 8,087. Total Preserved acreage in Hillsborough Township: 4,273 (53%).
- Total acreage in Hopewell Township: 18,105. Total Preserved acreage in Hopewell Township: 7,085 (39%).
- Total Acreage in Lambertville Borough: 351. Total Preserved acreage in Lambertville Borough: 49 (14%)
- Total acreage in Montgomery Township: 4,881. Total Preserved acreage in Montgomery Township: 1,830 (37%)
- Total acreage in West Amwell Township: 12,438. Total Preserved acreage in West Amwell Township: 4,451 (36%)

Other resources for maps of trails in the Sourlands include www.njtrails.org; drgreenway.org; thewatershed.org; and www.fohvos.org.

Hope to see you on a Sourland trail soon!

Caroline Katmann is the Executive Director of the Sourland Conservancy. The Conservancy's mission is to protect the ecological integrity, historic resources and special character of the Sourland Mountain region through education and advocacy.