The Sourland Conservancy is the only nonprofit organization working solely to protect, promote and preserve the unique character of the Sourland Mountain region.
Message from the President
By Dante DiPirro

Spring is here and the Sourland region is getting ready to explode with buds, flowers and wildlife! You can enjoy it by joining us for a stewardship project, guided hike, nature walk, seminar or other sponsored activity, or take advantage of our free hiking and biking maps and head out to enjoy the sights on your own.

Spring time also means that our big annual festival is just around the corner. On June 22nd we'll hold the Sourland Mountain Festival (reserve your tickets now at www.sourland.org/sourland-mountain-festival). We've changed the name from music festival to mountain festival to reflect our mission of protecting the Sourland Mountain. Come listen to great bands in the beautiful Sourlands and learn about the region and our efforts to protect it.

We continue to work hard externally and internally to protect the Sourlands. This week our active opposition to the proposed PennEast Pipeline received good news when a federal appeals court granted New Jersey a stay that halts construction of the pipeline while it considers issues surrounding the company's attempt to take property in which the state has an interest. This month we proudly unveiled a new web site showcasing the Sourlands, our work to protect it, and the ways you can help us and enjoy the region. In addition, we are in the process of developing a five-year strategic plan that will help us maximize our effectiveness.

Please renew your membership with the Sourland Conservancy today to stay part of our community, protect the region, and enjoy all it has to offer!

Meet Our New Trustees!

Tatiana Fulmer - Tatiana was born and raised on Sourland Mountain and is mother to a future social justice eco-warrior. She has a passion for Theatre and has directed and stage managed at Hopewell Valley Children’s Theatre for 7 years. She now works at the BSB Gallery in Trenton and free lances as a Social Media Brand Manager. She is involved in social justice, cultural inclusion, and historic preservation initiatives in the area including Stoutsburg-Sourland African American Museum, Hopewell Valley Heritage Weekend and Hope Rises Up.

Scot Allen - Scot is a resident of Belle Mead where he and his wife reside and their two boys who are enrolled in the Montgomery School District. Scot is currently an executive at Verizon where he has held several roles in Sales, Solutions and Marketing over his nineteen years with the company.

Dan Pace - Dan is a retired professional planner who for 17 years managed the Mercer County Farmland Preservation Program. A resident of Pennington Borough since 1977, Dan is active in the Station at Pennington Home Owners Association, the Hopewell Valley Historical Society, the Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space, the Pennington Borough Open Space Committee, and the Hopewell Valley Open Space Advisory Committee.
When I photographed the song sparrow, it was quietly perched in its favorite scrubby habitat. I took the photograph in autumn, a time of year when birds are mostly quiet. Birds sing in spring and early summer for two primary reasons—to attract a mate and to tell other males of the same species to stay out of their territory. By mid-summer most birds have found their mates and their babies have fledged. Therefore, male birds become less concerned about keeping other males out of their territory, so there is less reason to sing. Claiming a territory and trying to attract a mate are male activities, so while female songbirds do sing, singing is principally a male activity.

Nearly all birds make some sort of vocalization. Songbirds vocalize with songs and calls, but many birds only call. Calls are brief sounds with a simple acoustic structure; peeps, chirps, squawks, honks and caws are calls, not songs. Calls are important forms of communication and are often used to warn other birds of a nearby danger. Calls are also a way of keeping a flock or a family in touch with each other.

I once witnessed a flock of ten thousand sand hill cranes landing after a long flight. As soon as they landed nearly every bird began calling, creating an amazing amount of noise. Sand hill cranes travel in great masses but, within the mass, they try but don’t always succeed, to keep the family together. The memorable din that I heard was the effort by the cranes to reunite family members that had separated during their long migratory flight.

Some people think that birds sing for pleasure, or to express happiness, but ornithologists deny that there is emotion involved. Nor is there scientific backing for your belief that the cardinal that sings outside your bedroom window at four in the morning is doing it because it wants to annoy you.

I get great joy from walking in the woods in spring and hearing birds sing. I especially enjoy the flute-like song of the wood thrush or the entwined and descending song of the veery. I love to hear the ovenbirds and the orioles. Like other birders I also rely on bird songs to locate and identify birds. All bird songs may sound pretty much alike to the novice, but with a little study it becomes clear that each species has its own distinctive song.

These songs are not instinctual; baby songbirds learn their songs from their parents. Recently I had a delightful time listening to a baby white-throated sparrow trying to master all the parts to its complicated song. The baby started like an old pro but quickly got a little lost in the notes and just stopped before the full song was completed. Further, there are often regional variations in the songs of birds of the same species.

Birders refer to the practice of knowing a bird’s species by identifying its song as “birding by ear.” Some birders often don’t even try to see a bird that they have heard and identified. For someone starting to bird by ear there is an extensive list of mnemonic devices to help. Maids, maids, maids, put on your tea kettle, ettle, ettle is how many birders identify the song sparrow’s song. Some of these mnemonics can be great fun. Goldfinches sing potato chip, potato chip, potato chip, as they fly. Red-eyed vireos taunt the listener by asking a question and then answering it, where are you, here I am, where are you, here I am, even though it is almost impossible to see this little grey bird singing from behind the tree foliage. The song of the olive-sided flycatcher calls out for quick three beers. The rufous-sided towhee is in league with the song sparrow by instructing its listeners to drink- your-tea-ee-ee.

For some birds a mnemonic device is unnecessary because their songs sound like something else. Red-breasted grosbeaks sound like a robin that has had singing lessons while a scarlet tanager sounds like a robin with a sore throat. A field sparrow’s song is a series of notes that increase in frequency much like the rhythm of a ping-pong ball dropped on a table. A cardinal has many calls and songs, one of which sounds like someone whistling for a dog. For some other birds it is easy to tell their species because they sing their name. A black-capped chickadee sings chick-a-dee-dee, and an eastern phoebe sings fee-bee, while the wood pewee sings pee-o-ooee.

In her 1962 book, Silent Spring, Rachel Carson forecast a spring without birds singing or other insects making noises because herbicides and pesticides that were commonly used at the time might kill all wildlife. Use of those deadly chemicals is still far too widespread but I am happy that it has not yet silenced the birds.
**Grants Update**

By Caroline Katmann, Executive Director

The Sourland Conservancy is very thankful for the support of its members, event participants and sponsors, business partners and grantors! Please see pages six and seven of this newsletter for a list of Sourland Conservancy supporters.

In 2018, grant awards supported a wide variety of Sourland Conservancy programs:

- Simcha Rudolph Charitable Trust Grant – Foraging Forest and Chestnut Tree Project.
- The Bunbury Fund – Strategic Planning Process.
- Jeanne LaPlaca Fund – Part-time Administrative Assistant salary.
- George H. and Estelle M. Sands Foundation Grant – General Operating Support.
- The Watershed Institute Grant – Stream Monitoring Program in the Sourlands.
- Roots For Rivers Grant from The Nature Conservancy and The Watershed Institute – Stream Buffer Restoration along Moores Creek in Hopewell Township.
- Franklin Parker Conservation Excellence Grant from New Jersey Conservation Foundation: Habitat Restoration and Sourland Stewardship Training at Baldpate.
- NJ Historic Trust Grant – Renovations to the historic Mt. Zion AME Church in Skillman, the site of the Stoutsburg Sourland African American Museum.
- Mercer County History Regrant from Mercer County Cultural & Heritage Commission – Cultural Landscape at the Cedar Ridge Preserve in the Sourlands.
- Church & Dwight Grant – History and Nature Programs for community groups in conjunction with the Stoutsburg Sourland African American Museum.
- Pennington Day Grant - Create Pollinator Pocket Gardens with Hopewell Elementary School.
- Hopewell Harvest Fair Grant - Provide materials to make Native Seed Bon Bons on MLK Day of Service.

During 2018, grant periods ended for our Somerset County Historic Preservation Grant and our New Jersey Historic Trust Grant; both of these grants supported the development of the Stoutsburg Sourland African American Museum.

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**Singing the Sourlands**

~Lois Marie Harrod

After this brutal winter, how can we not welcome spring to the Sourlands, spring and its brevity? Though we shout with the medieval poet, “Svmer is icumen in/ Lhude sing cuceu,” we also know “its moment passes.” So go now for a walk with these lines in your pocket from Juditha Dowd’s book Mango in Winter. She reminds us how green “wakes us” and how quickly the sun “roar[s] over the grass.”

**from Green Shadows**

As the fawn tries its legs, the doe lowers her head again, drinks deeply of the millrun.

Their bodies must see a new communion in interstices of air and bower

where the geese so recently mated (a fox keeping track of the hatchlings)

—the wild calling, unstoppable wings—
circled and gone, creation sated.

And now it is green that wakes us, quarrels tamed by spring’s waning audacity

so that even the trees have been hushed.
We hear the sun roar over the grass,

mark its ladders—trellis and truss—
each rung kindled as its moment passes.

A Note on Deer: Like many conservationists and poets, I am aware that deer are destroying the Sourland forests, and that if these forests are to continue to exist, the deer population must be managed. LHM

Juditha Dowd’s poems can be found in The Florida Review, Poet Lore, Spillway, Cider Press Review, Kestrel, Poetry Daily and elsewhere. She has authored a full-length collection, Mango in Winter, as well as three chapbooks. Her mixed-genre verse narrative Audubon’s Sparrow will be published by Rose Metal Press in 2020.

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**THE POET’S CORNER**
Interview with David Voorhees

By Andrea Bonette

Some young people flounder for years trying to figure out what their skills and passions are, while others early on have a very clear idea about what they want to do with their lives. David Voorhees is definitely one of the latter. As a boy growing up in Spring Lake, New Jersey, by sixth grade he had developed a strong interest in science, and by eighth grade had set his sights on being a nuclear physicist. At about the same time David also discovered he had a real facility in music. His passion for environmental stewardship came later.

David’s career foundation was formed during his years at Rutgers University, where he majored in physics and graduated in 1973. While he did not quite attain his early goal of nuclear physicist for much of his early career, he did work at Princeton’s Plasma Physics Laboratory with physicists studying low wavelength lasers. It was a real team effort. One of the many brilliant scientists at the lab proposed a concept for an X-ray laser, for example, and then an international team of scientists and students tested the theories with carefully planned experiments. Later David was assigned to work with the team analyzing, storing and delivering the tritium fuel that went into the fusion test reactor. Temperatures close to that of the sun were achieved for a brief period. After funding for the laboratory was greatly decreased and staffing was reduced David went to work as a project manager on new kinds of scientific equipment in private industry.

His interest in music started with piano lessons early on. He discovered that although he could not read music well, he could reproduce a piano melody after listening to it carefully once or twice. By 1964, around the time the Beatles were becoming famous, David switched to the guitar, first teaching himself and playing by ear, later taking lessons. In 1969, the summer after he graduated from high school, he went to Woodstock for the now legendary three days of amazing musical performances. To this day he enjoys playing guitar with several different bands. If you have attended the Sourland Conservancy’s annual holiday party you have heard David play. Recently he has been learning to play the Chinese guzheng.

David Park includes a beautiful bridge. Here is what David had to say about it: “While clearing the back 2 acres, I accumulated nearly 200 cedars that had been shaded by the ash over the years and fallen. I used over 50 of them for the deer fence posts and braces. I was fascinated by several 35-foot long cedar timbers with a natural arc. In the summer of 2016, while my son was visiting, we designed the span across a small brook using the two longest and sturdiest for the base and in two weeks had the basic structure that eventually became the bridge today.”

When I asked David what “stewardship” means to him, this was his reply:

“To me stewardship has been about putting my environment, my land, my space and way of living into perspective. It is important to establish a harmony and balance between the land and local wildlife. By removing invasive species and adding new plants and trees and caring for the space around me I have helped to create an esthetically pleasing space that is beneficial to all kinds of flora and fauna in my entire neighborhood.”

David’s enthusiasm for stewardship extends beyond his own land to include volunteering at Duke Farms in Hillsborough and a restoration site at Baldpate Mountain. And he has offered to share his “Park” with serious learners who want to enhance their own knowledge of stewardship techniques and styles. Stewardship is contagious!
Thank You to our 2018 Donors

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Sourland Conservancy
Keana Werlen chose to intern at the Sourland Conservancy because she loves the outdoors. She thinks that the internship is a unique opportunity to interact with her community in ways that will allow her to explore and protect the environment.

Preet Patel hopes to learn more about our local ecosystem and habitats and develop ways to preserve this land for future generations.
The Sourland Conservancy is very grateful for the generous support of our Business Partners:

- the bent spoon
- SOURLAND CYCLES
- THE RYLAND INN
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The Sourland Conservancy is an environmental organization dedicated to preserving the natural beauty and unique ecosystem of the Sourland Mountains in New Jersey. They host various events such as the Sourland Spectacular and Sourland Mountain Festival, which bring together artists, craftspeople, and local community members to celebrate the area's rich heritage and natural resources. The conservancy also works to educate the public about the importance of conservation and sustainable living.
Hiking the Sourlands: Spring/Summer 2019

Each hike is free and limited to 15 participants unless noted. For more information and to register, visit our Facebook page or subscribe to our eNewsletter at www.sourland.org

Saturday, March 16, 10am-12pm, Member Hike - Trees in Winter: Do you love trees but have trouble identifying them in winter? Join Sourland Conservancy Trustee, Chris Berry, on a late winter walk where he will share many ways to identify trees and shrubs. This hike is for MEMBERS ONLY - a special thank you from the Sourland Conservancy for your support.

Saturday, April 13, 10am-12pm, Location TBD, Connecting Kids with Nature: Connect your children with nature on this creative family hike led by Nicole Langdo, founder of Painted Oak Nature School, a progressive nature-based preschool and kindergarten located in the Hopewell Valley. Bugs and critters, flowers and rocks, fairies and elves: imagine what can be discovered in a morning outdoors? Suitable for children ages 3 and up, accompanied by parent or guardian.

Saturday, April 20, 10am-12pm, Rockhopper Trail, The Cultural Landscape of the Sourlands: Come and explore the complex landscape history of the dramatic Rock Hopper Preserve with local archaeologist, Ian Burrow. We will find old quarries, abandoned historic roads, a stone bridge, massive stone walls, and the sites of early homesteads.

Saturday, May 4, 8-10:30am, Omick Woods, Birding in the Sourlands: Omick Woods is one of the newer trails in East Amwell Township. We'll hike the main loop, approx. 1.5 miles through woodlands with a couple of easy stream crossings. Expect to see early-arriving neotropical migratory birds and beautiful spring wildflowers along the way. Leader Juanita Hummel serves on the board of the Washington Crossing Audubon Soc. and is a volunteer with NJ Audubon.

Saturday, May 11, 10am-12pm, St. Michael’s Farm Preserve (Aunt Molly Road), Spring Returns to the Sourlands: Walk to see nature returning to the Sourlands. In early May the song birds are returning from Central and South America and the lovely spring ephemeral wildflowers are blooming everywhere. The trees are leafing out and in many cases in flower. The Sassafras and Spicebush are perfuming the air. The earth is being reborn; let's be there!

Saturday, May 25, 10am-12pm, Goat Hill, History of a Delaware River Bluff: From Washington's Visit to the Present: Join Tom Ogren, author of The Story of Goat Hill, on a two-mile hike atop a high bluff overlooking the Delaware River. The hike features a visit to the popular "Goat Hill overlook" which offers a spectacular panoramic view of the river valley. Another popular stop over will be "Washington's Rock."

Saturday, June 8, 10am-12pm, Somerset County Sourland Mountain Preserve, Geology of the Sourlands: Explore the rocks, boulders and soils. Learn about the history and formation of the mountain on this challenging, long hike to Devil's Half Acre and Roaring Rocks. Led by David Harper, author of the book, "Roadside Geology of New Jersey."

Saturday, June 15, 8-11am. Stoutsburg Cemetery, Mt. Zion AME Church, Pennington African Cemetery, African American Heritage Sites in the Sourlands: Start your morning with Tatiana Fulmer, Sourland Conservancy Trustee, as she brings to light the history and contributions of African Americans within the Sourland region. Participants will be guided through three significant locations. Learn about each site during a short walk around the grounds.

Saturday, August 17, 10am-12pm, Hunterdon County Sourland Mountain Preserve, Mushroom Walk: If you’re having trouble telling the difference between Hen of the Woods and Chanterelles, this is the foray for you! Experience the wonder of wild mushrooms with local expert, Nina Burghardt, of the New Jersey Mycological Association.

Thank you for supporting our mission to protect and preserve the unique character of the Sourland Mountain region!

Membership:  __ Individual $35  __ Family $50  __ Premium Family $100  __ Sponsor $250  __ Premium Sponsor $500  __ Robert Garrett Society $1,000  __ Other

Name:_________________________________________________________________      __ Renewal   __ New Membership
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We will not provide your e-mail address to any person or organization without your permission.

__ Please do not publish my name.
__ Please contact me about volunteer opportunities with the Sourland Conservancy.
Celebrate Earth Day
Volunteers Needed for Tree Planting

Are you looking for a fun, meaningful way to celebrate Earth Day? Help the Sourland Conservancy and its project partners, Mercer County Park Commission and AmeriCorps NJ Watershed Program, plant 1800 native trees and shrubs to restore habitat and protect the clean water in the Sourlands. No experience necessary-beginners welcome! Tools, refreshments and training provided.

For more information visit www.sourland.org/roots-for-river-reforestation.

To volunteer, visit www.tiny.cc/RootsForRivers.

The Roots for Rivers Reforestation Grant and Technical Assistance Program is funded by The Nature Conservancy in partnership with The Watershed Institute and Sustainable New Jersey. This program is part of The Nature Conservancy’s ongoing efforts to plant 100,000 trees in New Jersey by 2020.

Sourland Cuisine: Venison Gyros

Recipe By: Chef Stubb's

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 1/2 tablespoons ground cumin
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic
- 2 teaspoons dried marjoram
- 1 tablespoon dried rosemary
- 1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
- 1 tablespoon dried oregano
- 3 pounds venison, cut into 1/4 thick strips
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1 (12 ounce) package pita breads, warmed

Directions

1. Whisk together the olive oil, cumin, garlic, marjoram, rosemary, oregano, red wine vinegar, salt, and pepper in a large glass or ceramic bowl. Add the venison strips and toss to evenly coat. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and marinate in the refrigerator at least 2 hours.

2. Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat. Cook the venison strips, a half-pound at a time, until the venison has browned on the outside and is no longer pink on the inside, about 8 minutes. Pile the meat onto warmed pitas to serve.

Send your favorite venison recipe to lcleveland@sourland.org!