Our Sourland Stewards Program is Thriving!

By Laurie Cleveland

Sourland Conservancy staff and volunteers have been very busy this summer eradicating invasive plants, learning about meadow restoration and working with Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space and Mercer County Parks to plan a woodland restoration project at Baldpate.

Hopewell Boy Scout Troop 71 reinforced the natural deer barriers at Hopewell Borough Park using last year’s Christmas trees. They also removed autumn olive on the D&R Greenway Cedar Ridge preserve.

Forty-three FaithJustice confirmation candidates from St. Charles Borromeo in Skillman each volunteered 3 hours eradicating invasive autumn olive, honeysuckle and Callery pear in Hopewell Borough Park to support the American Woodcock Habitat Restoration Project.

Our very active Sourland Stewards Facebook group has grown to 260 members who ask and answer questions, post photos and stories and notify each other of upcoming seminars and native plant sales. Members range from novice to naturalist - including specialists in botany, birding, ecology, entomology and more - learning from each other.

The Conservancy is excited to expand our stewardship efforts with our upcoming Sourland Stewardship Leaders Training. In this three-part course, participants will immerse in a hands-on stewardship project at Baldpate Mountain. They will learn ecological restoration fundamentals including site analysis, goal articulation, implementation, and monitoring, and help return a natural area to diversity and function, and interact with professionals in the field as well as a community of fellow stewards.

The Sourland Conservancy is offering this free program to dedicated participants with the aim of developing a select group of experienced stewardship volunteers who can lead future projects in the Sourlands. If you're committed to being a caretaker of the natural world, this course is for you!

The class will be taught by our Naturalist Advisor, Jared Rosenbaum of Wild Ridge Plants, and will also feature Jenn Rogers, County Naturalist, Mercer County, and Dr. Michael Van Clef, Director of Stewardship at Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space. Sourland Stewardship Leaders Training is partially funded by a 2017 New Jersey Conservation Foundation Franklin Parker Conservation Excellence Grant. For more information, including dates and registration, please visit the Events page at www.facebook.com/sourlandconservancy/.
Message from the President
By Joanna Flori

During 2016 we celebrated our 30th anniversary with a number of exciting events. In 2017, continuing our momentum, we celebrate our volunteers. We have had very successful activities this year and that would not be the case without our volunteers, who give us their energy, their ideas and their enthusiasm. Thank you!

2017 events included:
• 2nd Annual Gospel Brunch
• Spring and Summer Hiking the Sourlands series
• 14th Annual Sourland Music Festival (over 70 volunteers helped with the event)
• 2nd Annual Camp Meeting Revival
• 6th Annual Sourland Spectacular (over 60 volunteers helped with this event)
• Fall Train Station Series
• Sourland Stewardshops
• Sourland Habitat Restoration Projects
• Bird Box-building Workshop
• Film Premiere of The Deer Stand
• Poetry Walk
• Launch of our Just A Walk series

This autumn, thanks to partial funding from a New Jersey Conservation Foundation Franklin Parker Conservation Excellence Grant, we are offering a Sourland Stewardship Leaders Train-

Welcome to our Autumn 2017 Interns
The Conservancy is fortunate to have the assistance of two interns from Hillsborough High School’s REACH program, Ashley Yang and Lucas Norfleet.

Ashley Yang & Lucas Norfleet.
Executive Director’s Report: Caroline Katmann

Sourland Trail Map Atlas – Coming Soon!

You may have seen the Sourland Conservancy’s beautiful maps for every preserve and park with trails in the Sourland Mountain region. These maps were created by Sourland Conservancy trustee and GIS analyst, Kevin Burkman. They may be viewed at http://sourland.org/sourland-trail-maps/. The Conservancy now has the opportunity to print a Sourland Trail Map Atlas, thanks to a generous grant from Bristol-Myers Squibb. The Atlas will contain a map for each Sourland trail with additional information about the trails such as descriptions of trail conditions, trail highlights, length of trails, parking instructions, and so on. The final phase of the trail map project will be to create an interactive Sourland trail map application for smart phones.

We hope that our trail maps will get folks out into the Sourlands to reconnect with nature and appreciate the region’s beauty and importance.

November Events and Educational Programs

November 2 – Bird Banding – Hannah Suthers, biologist.
November 16 – African-American History in the Sourlands - Elaine Buck, Beverly Mills and John Buck, Stoutsbury Sourland African American Museum and Stoutsbury Cemetery Association
November 30 – Turtle Talk – Harriet Forrester, founder of Turtle Rescue of New Jersey.
November 4 - Poetry Walk with Hella and Scott McVay, creators of the Poetry Trail at D&R Greenway.
November 18; April/May date TBD - Sourland Stewardship Leaders Training (participants must attend all three classes before leading future Sourland Stewardship projects) – Jared Rosenbaum, naturalist; Michael Van Clef, Stewardship Director, Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space; Jenn Rogers, Mercer County Naturalist.

Subscribe to our eNewsletter at www.sourland.org for program details and registration information.

The Story of Goat Hill

The Legend
Goat Hill, which lies at the far western edge of the Sourlands, is part of a high bluff overlooking the Delaware River just south of Lambertville. The Goat Hill area is best known for its “overlooks,” one of which was supposedly taken advantage of by General George Washington in December, 1776 just before the Battle of Trenton. Legend has it that the then owner of Goat Hill, Cornelius Coryell, escorted General Washington to a rock outcropping to view the Pennsylvania side of the Delaware to ensure that Continental Army boats to be used down river for the December 26 crossing were well hidden from Tory sympathizers.

It is possible that Martin Coryell heard the account directly from Cornelius since he was 16 years old when Cornelius died or he could have heard the story from his wife.

Emanuel Coryell, Cornelius' father, was the first Coryell to own Goat Hill. He was the first settler in today's Lambertville who was given a license to operate a ferry across the Delaware River by King George II in 1733. Coryell was a land baron of his time acquiring well over 1,000 acres extending south of his ferry. After Emanuel's death, one of his five children, Cornelius, inherited the Goat Hill portion of his estate in 1760. Cornelius Coryell, who married his wife Sadie in 1859, lived on Goat Hill for over 70 years until his death in 1831 at age 99! He and his wife raised nine children at their Goat Hill homestead.

Continued on page 7.
Seeing the Sourlands
Why is it Important?

by Jim Amon

I am studying moss in preparation for a future Seeing the Sourlands essay and I came across a comment that has triggered several questions for me. The author of a book on mosses points out that nearly none of the mosses have common names and, as a consequence, almost no-one really sees them. Sure, everyone with a little curiosity about the natural world sees that some boulders or stumps or bare hillocks have moss growing on them. But who notices that there are distinctly different types of moss? How many people can actually describe a moss?

Do people not see the plants in the Sourland forest if they do not know their names? Is it all just a sort of green screen? If that is true, so what? Why should we know what the plants are called and how they function in the landscape?

I have struggled with these questions for a while because I lead several nature walks a year and I often encounter people who don't have the slightest idea of what is in the woods we are traversing. Ultimately, I can only say that it matters to me. It enriches my life to see a multi-stemmed shrub with white speckles on its dark bark, leaves that that are about three inches long, wedge shaped and with smooth edges—arranged alternately on the stem, and to know that it is Spicebush. I am enriched to know that Wood Thrushes often nest in Spicebush and that the presence of this plant in this location means that the soil is moist and that the canopy above it is a bit open, not a dense shade like in the middle of a Beech thicket. To further know that in summer there may be a caterpillar of a beautiful dark butterfly (appropriately named a Spicebush Swallowtail) nesting on the underside of one of its leaves heightens my awareness—always a good thing. And finally, to know that if I pick a Spicebush leaf, crush it and smell it I will experience an aroma that for me is the essence of a forest in summer.

Because I know the names of most of the plants in the Sourlands and because I understand the dynamics of the forest and its basic structure I feel at home there, just as I feel at home when I am walking down the street in my neighborhood and see my neighbors, their pets and their houses. That feeling of being at home gives me a sense that my world is whole, that I am not an unattached visitor but instead a part of what surrounds me.

Photo by Jim Amon

THE POET'S CORNER

The Mystery

Where is Mary Oliver
or Pattiann Rogers
or Mary Leck
when the mystery tightens?
the rains came again and again
drenching everything
the streams roaring
night fell
rain ceased
discreet points of light appeared
in the woods
in the leaves
by the stream
here and there
Pulsing
everywhere
I ran for my wife
to see what she thought
being so close to the Earth
and flowers as she is,
brought a flashlight, too.
the lights were a meter
apart or so
throbbing brightly
Hella says they are tiny
put your hand close
to the light and
it quits
only to resume
its beaconing
when you retreat
where are Mary or Pattiann or Mary
as the mystery deepens?

9.30.09

Mary Leck says
the light points are larvae of fireflies.

The Mystery is written by Scott McVay and appears in his book, “Whales Sing and Other Exuberances.” Along with his wife Hella, Scott is a dedicated member of the Sourland Conservancy. The poem, The Mystery, suggests the unfolding wonders of the Sourlands over time. Two of the women poets noted are close to and observant of the Earth, Mary Oliver and Pattiann Rogers. Biologist Mary Leck, who explained "the mystery," helped to create the Abbott Marshlands.
John Buck Interview September 2017

By Andrea Bonette

Our conversation began with a photo of John’s relatives, all looking very young and stylishly dressed, seated around a table at the Apollo Theater in Harlem, soon after the end of World War II. Many of them - and their families - had ties to the Sourlands. One was Albert Witcher, who married John’s aunt and moved into a house formerly owned by the Bergen family on Rileyville Road near Minnietown Lane in Hopewell Township. Albert was related to the Grover family of Camp Meeting Avenue in Skillman, where a park is named after one of them, Bessie Grover. John’s maternal uncle, Earl Nevius, was the first black postmaster in Hopewell Borough. Also in the group was Bob True, whose parents donated the land on Hollow Road for the AME Church in 1899. These surnames are familiar with more recent area residents because many of their descendants still live in the Sourland region.

John Buck’s great-grandfather was Tom Nevius who worked for many years as a basket weaver for the peach industry in the Sourlands. (I asked John about the name “Nevius,” a traditional Dutch name; he said the family was doing further genealogical research but had not yet identified the Nevius ancestor who originally came to America. History tells us that a significant proportion of slave owners in New Jersey were of Dutch heritage.) Tom’s son Elmer Nevius married Cora Bergen Nevius and lived on Minnietown Lane. Their daughter Peggy Nevius married Joseph Buck; they eventually separated so in 1960 Peggy brought her eight-year-old son John and his siblings home to live with her father in Hopewell Borough.

I have been stressing these family names because their members - and many more like them - came to the Sourlands as slaves, or runaway slaves on the Underground Railroad, and later as freedmen or indentured servants throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Some lived in Hopewell Borough, starting back when it was called “Columbia,” which has traditionally been a tolerant community where people of diverse races and ethnicities live and work side by side. Many more spread out through an area roughly bounded by Hollow Road, Route 518, Rileyville Road, and Minnietown Lane, Zion, and Long Hill Roads on the north.

John Buck as a young teenager was fairly oblivious to all this history until a minor accident at Boy Scout Camp off Province Line Road literally knocked him off his feet. He was running through the woods and a field of tall grass when he tripped over a rock. Wondering why a rock of such size came to be in what seemed to be a roughly cultivated field, he examined it and discovered it was a gravestone. What was actually quite a significant cemetery had been allowed to become overgrown after the death of its caretaker. Soon John’s Uncle Earl stepped up to the task of maintenance and John was willing to help him. He learned that it was called the “Stoutsburg Cemetery” and that it had been started in 1850 around the time New Jersey law began to prohibit slavery. Negros were segregated in death, not allowed to be interred in white cemeteries, so the Moore family allotted a section of their farm for them to bury their dead. In 1868 the local African American community bought an additional acre from Randolph Stout, owner of the historic Hunt House just up the hill. Now there are at least 200 gravestones, as shown by not only many headstones but also ground-penetrating radar surveys showing “anomalies” of uneven ground surface indicating burial spots. A survey of the plots will be displayed at the Sourland African American Museum (SSAAM) when it opens on Hollow Road in Skillman.

The first burial was in 1857 when Moses Blew buried his 94-year-old mother. William Stives has a headstone there, installed in his honor by his descendants. Stives, an African American Revolutionary War soldier crossed the Delaware River with George Washington - who personally signed his discharge papers! Stives first came to the area foraging for food for Washington’s army. He later married an “Indian Squaw” and became an early member of the Old School Baptist Church, which is still on Broad Street in Hopewell. Stive’s grandson, a Civil War veteran, has an appropriate headstone there honoring his military service, as well. The cemetery is very much still in continuous use; the most recent burial there was in 2017.

Over the years John Buck, at first vice president and then president of the Stoutsburg Cemetery board, with his wife Elaine, developed a growing interest in not only the Stoutsburg Cemetery but extending to the surrounding area. They learned that because of the peach blight early in the twentieth century which decimated the once-thriving peach industry, many African American families had moved away from the Sourlands to Pennington and other nearby communities in search of work. And at a certain point they discovered, along with their friend Beverly Mills of Pennington, that the Sourland Conservancy shared many of their interests in the area’s history. The Conservancy had obtained a grant several years ago to stabilize the church building on Hollow road which had not had an active congregation for thirty years or more. Indeed, the founder of the Sourland Conservancy (known then as the Sourland Citizens Planning Council) Robert “Bob Garrett”, was honored in a memorial service in the very same AME Church. Elaine, John, and Bev Mills started thinking about making it into a museum about African American history in this part of New Jersey.

The Sourland Conservancy is delighted to be working with this group of dedicated citizens, to ensure that another important part of Sourland history is preserved for future generations.
Maple-leaf (or Maple-leaved) Viburnum (Vibernum acerifolium) is spectacular in fall, with colors ranging from pale to deep pinks and magentas, even showing tinges of blues and purples.

The combination of shortening day lengths, longer nights, and cool temperatures is the signal to plants that it is time to prepare for winter. They gradually stop producing chlorophyll, which is responsible for the green color visible in the leaves during the growing season, revealing the colors of other chemical compounds present, like the yellows of xanthophylls, oranges of carotenes, and browns of tannins.

Warm sunny fall days enable deciduous trees and shrubs to continue to photosynthesize and produce sugars in their leaves during the day. Some of the sugars combine with minerals obtained from the soil to manufacture anthocyanins, the chemicals that cause the red, blue and purple colors in the leaves. Cool night-time temperatures dipping to the low to mid 40s signal the plant to stop nutrients from moving into the trees’ circulatory system as the leaves prepare to detach from the plant. These chemical compounds are trapped in the leaves, resulting in the colorful fall display.

Fleshy, dark blue, berry-like fruits called drupes accompany the colorful leaves. Each drupe contains a single seed enclosed by a stony casing or pit, like a peach. For many birds and other animals, the fleshy fruit is an enticement to dine in the coming weeks. Maple-leaf Viburnum and many other plants have evolved to produce such fruits in order to enlist animals as partners in dispersing their seeds. The animal consumes the fruit, passing the seed through its digestive system, and depositing the seed accompanied by other nutrients. (The seeds are distributed with organic fertilizer!) White-throated Sparrows, Cardinals, and Hermit Thrush as well as chipmunks and squirrels are among those who consume the fruits.

In the April and May, tiny but dazzling blue Spring Azure butterflies may lay eggs on the flower buds of this and many other species of viburnums, dogwoods and other shrubs. After hatching from the eggs, their caterpillars feed on the flower buds. That is, they do if they manage to avoid being eaten by a predator like a bird, a spider, an ant or other parasitic insect. Caterpillars are an especially important source of food for many birds.

Plenty of flowers survive the feeding frenzy to provide a beautiful summer display. Several species of native bees, flies and other insects visit the flowers for nectar, providing essential pollination services that result in the fall fruits.

Why do Spring Azure caterpillars favor eating the flower buds rather than the leaves of their preferred food plants? Probably because most plants produce chemicals in their leaves to protect them from being eaten by herbivores. In many plants, the concentration of these chemicals is lower in the flowers than in other parts of the plant, so it’s easier for a potential consumer to acclimate to eating them. In the case of Maple-leaf Viburnum, there’s an additional deterrent to eating the leaves. They are covered with tiny hairs, which makes the leaves less appealing as a meal, but they are soft as velvet to a human touch, especially when they are newly emerged. You owe it to yourself to touch a few Maple-leaf Viburnum leaves!

Maple-leaf Viburnum is a great alternative to the non-native, invasive Burning Bush (Euonymus alatus), which is often planted in formal landscapes for its fall foliage. Maple-leaf Viburnum offers a much more attractive, nuanced display, and more importantly, it provides food and shelter for the insects, birds and other animals that share its territory.

Maple-leaf Viburnum is a woodland understory shrub native to the eastern United States, and Quebec and Ontario provinces. It is common in the Sourlands, so go for a walk in the woods near you to see if you can spot it. Then think about adding it to your own landscape to guarantee a view of this gorgeous shrub.

Mary Anne Borge is a naturalist and instructor at Bowman’s Hill Wildflower Preserve. Enjoy Mary Anne’s blog, the-natural-web.org. Mary Anne is a major contributor of fascinating articles and beautiful photographs to our Facebook group page, Sourland Stewards.
The Story of Goat Hill

Continued from page 3.

The Quarry
Beginning in the late 19th century, a part of Goat Hill facing the Delaware River was used as a quarry for at least 40 years. The Goat Hill Quarry was referred to in a State geological report in 1888 and was still operating until 1930 when the land was sold to an individual. Photographs of the quarry operation appeared in postcards from the early 20th century. They showed a large expanse of exposed rock facing the Delaware River and quarry equipment.

According to the 1888 New Jersey State Annual Geological Report, the quarry produced Belgian blocks rather than crushed stone perhaps due to the very hard diabase rock and machinery available at the time. (The term "Belgian blocks" was used to describe blocks of stone similar in size to the real Belgian blocks that were placed in the keels of sailing ships coming from Europe to America to stabilize ships with little cargo.) The hardness of the rock and a diminishing market for Belgian blocks may explain why the quarry operation ended without defacing a lot more of Goat Hill.

The location of Goat Hill was well suited for transporting the quarried rock since railroad tracks skirted the base of Goat Hill along the Delaware and Raritan Canal. Quarry companies took advantage of gravity in getting the rock down to waiting railroad cars of the Pennsylvania Railroad, Belvidere Division at the base of Goat Hill. In 1892, some 300 rail cars were filled with rock in the months of July and August according to Lambertville's Beacon newspaper.

Historic and present day references to "Goat Hill" refer to the entire ridge extending from the Goat Hill summit at the southern end north toward Lambertville. The name "Goat Hill" first appeared on an 1851 map of Hunterdon County and on a US Geological Survey map marking the summit in 1906.

The Scout Camp
Goat Hill was acquired in 1948 by Col. Kenneth MacIntosh, a World War I and II veteran. Sixteen years later Col. McIntosh donated the land to the Boy Scout's George Washington Council in 1964. The site at that time included MacIntosh's rustic stone cottage overlooking the Delaware River and an access drive which was later used by the boy scouts. Nearly 20 years after the donation, the Council in 1983, facing financial difficulties, decided to sell the land for $605,000 to a subsidiary of the Silvi Concrete Products Company.

The George Washington Scout Reservation was well used by the scouts. A large open field near the parking area was used for camp-outs. A network of trails was created which still exist. The scouts also constructed a lodge opposite the parking area with funding provided by James Kerney, Jr., publisher of The Trenton Times. A camp "ranger" lived in McIntosh's stone cottage located at the overlook. The cottage and the Scout lodge fell into disrepair over the years and were demolished in 2009.

The Battle of Goat Hill
Goat Hill was acquired by the Silvi Concrete Products Company in 1983 to operate a quarry. In 1984, the company attempted to gain acceptance for the proposed use from West Amwell Township and sought a zoning change from the permitted residential use to allow it. In the face of strong opposition mounted by organized residents, the Township Committee voted against allowing a quarry.

Not ready to give up, the concrete company then tried to obtain a use variance from the Township's zoning board. The board denied the sought-after variance taking the position that such a drastic change in use from residential required a zoning ordinance revision which could only be done by the Township Committee. The board's denial of the variance led to prolonged litigation. West Amwell prevailed at the first trial, but the judge's decision was appealed. A court battle ensued for several more years ending with the Appellate Court ruling in favor of West Amwell.

The Preservation of Goat Hill
The Green Acres Program in the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection had good reason to acquire the Goat Hill property: its acquisition would preserve the unique geographical setting of a bluff overlooking the Delaware River, save a mature hardwood forest, provide trails for hiking and, in recognition of a widely-accepted legend, preserve an historic site.

After extended negotiations with the Silvi Concrete Products Company, the Green Acres Program was able to acquire 213 acres in May, 2009 for $4.5 million. Earlier in 2005, Green Acres acquired an adjacent 54 acres in anticipation of acquiring the larger parcel. The combined 267 acres, which constitutes what is unofficially called Goat Hill Overlook State Park, was dedicated by state and local officials at the main overlook on October 14, 2009.

Saving the Sourlands Along the Delaware
Goat Hill is one of two high points in the Sourlands overlooking the Delaware River. The other is Baldpate Mountain just to the south in Hopewell Township. Baldpate Mt. is the slightly higher of the two, 479 feet in elevation v. 457 feet in elevation for Goat Hill. Goat Hill and Baldpate Mountain have a lot in common. Both were purchased by quarry companies in the 1980's to produce crushed stone, but ran into fierce public opposition to zoning changes which would have allowed a quarry use. And both were preserved as open space with total or partial funding provided by the State's Green Acres Program. Thanks to local residents and Green Acres funds, the public can forever hike the trails on and enjoy the views from Goat Hill and Baldpate Mountain.

Tom Ogren, Lambertville

(For more information about the history of Baldpate Mountain, see the fohvos.org website. A more detailed version of this history with maps and photographs will soon be available on the sourland.org website.)
**INGREDIENTS**
- 1 ½ cups extra-virgin olive oil
- ¼ cup soy sauce
- ½ cup red wine vinegar
- ½ cup freshly squeezed lemon juice
- ¼ cup Worcestershire sauce
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled and crushed
- 1 ½ teaspoons roughly chopped fresh parsley
- 2 tablespoons dry mustard
- 2 ¼ teaspoons kosher salt, plus more as needed
- 1 teaspoon black pepper, plus more as needed
- 2 pounds venison loin or leg, cut into 6 steaks

**PREPARATION**
1. Combine all ingredients except venison in a large bowl. Submerge venison in the marinade, cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate at least 8 hours and up to 12 hours.
2. Heat broiler, stovetop grill pan or grill. Remove venison from marinade and season with salt and pepper. Working in batches if necessary, place steaks under the broiler or on the grilling surface and cook, flipping once, until medium-rare, 4 to 5 minutes per side. Allow venison to rest for 5 minutes before serving.

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

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*Sourland Cuisine: Marinated Venison Steaks*

*The Sourland Conservancy is very grateful for the generous support of our Business Partners:*

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