Most readers of this newsletter know by now that the overpopulation of white-tailed deer poses an existential threat to the Sourland forest. With no predators other than human hunters – and drivers of automobiles – the deer population is limited mostly by the availability of food. Since deer feed on the forest understory, this is very, very bad for the plants of the forest, including the trees. When a mature tree dies, there is no sapling to take its place, and a hole is created in the forest. Invasive plants – many of which are unpalatable to the deer – take over. Thus progresses the death of a forest, slowly but surely.

The problem is hardly unique to the Sourlands; the entire Eastern Forest of the United States is threatened. However, our small, fragile woodland in the middle of highly developed New Jersey will be among the first to succumb if aggressive measures are not taken to control deer populations.

We don’t want the Sourlands to be the canary in the coal mine. So what is to be done? A brief look at history makes the answer obvious.

When Europeans arrived in North America, the deer population in New Jersey was approximately 10 per square mile. By 1900, overhunting (including unregulated commercial hunting) had reduced the population to near extinction. Around that time, New Jersey adopted laws and regulations based on the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, which led to a strong rebound in the deer population. By 1972, the statewide population of deer had returned to the pre-Columbian level, but because of development, the deer were concentrated in much less space.

The deer population continued to rise. The statewide population peaked in the 1990’s at more than triple the pre-Columbian level, when the State altered hunting regulations to curb the population. While the statewide population has declined to about 150% of the pre-Columbian total, the population in the Sourlands remains preposterously high – approximately 134 per square mile in 2013. So there are 13 times as many deer in the Sourlands today as there were when Europeans arrived in North America.

The answer suggested by history is to reintroduce limited commercial deer hunting in areas where recreational hunting alone cannot keep the population of deer to levels consistent with a healthy ecosystem – places such as the Sourlands. The mechanism for this would be the issuance of a limited number of “Commercial Deer Harvester Licenses” (CDHL) and the legalization of the sale of venison from commercially licensed hunters. (For the broad outlines of such a plan, please see the paper by Kurt C. Vercauteren of the USDA National Wildlife Research Center, et. al. on our website.)

The benefits of this plan would be many, including:

- A healthier forest with a more balanced ecosystem
- Reduction in deer-related automobile accidents
- Reduction in cases of Lyme disease
- Availability of venison for consumers. (Venison is delicious, free-range, healthy, organic, low-fat, local, sustainable and Jersey Fresh! See sidebar.)

A CDHL program would need to be carefully designed and monitored to prevent overhunting, to protect the interests of recreational hunters, and to assure food safety. Licensing fees from the CDHL would fund the necessary state oversight.

The absurdity of the existing regulatory situation is evident. Some municipalities, including Princeton, pay firms employing sharpshooters to cull the herd. The costs amount to hundreds of dollars per deer; Princeton has spent about $2 million on its program since its inception in 2000. But hunters will actually pay for the privilege of culling the herd, if they are legally allowed to sell the meat.

Thankfully, the days are long past when wildlife was viewed strictly as a resource for commercial exploitation. However, the 19th century principles upon which our current regulations rest did envision a time when overpopulation of some game species would create grave environmental problems and substantial risks to human health and safety. Let’s remember that game is a resource, and recognize that the overabundance of a resource should be a good thing. Have you ever heard a businessperson complain about having too many resources? It’s time to update state regulations so that the overabundance of this particular resource becomes an asset, not an expensive and dangerous liability.

In many ways, venison is the perfect meat. It is abundant, organic, free-range, healthy, low-fat and truly delicious. Venison is packed with vitamins and nutrients, and has less fat than skinless chicken breast. Unlike farmed products, local venison has an extremely small carbon footprint and so is highly sustainable.

Unfortunately, local venison is not commercially available in New Jersey (see accompanying article). Until state regulations are changed, the only way to get NJ venison is to hunt deer, or to know a deer hunter – and even the latter is a gray area in the regulations, which prohibit the sale or transfer of game.

The Sourland Conservancy is working to put together a program to connect hunters with non-hunters who want venison. Working with some partners, we designed a nifty program called the Venison Connection – you can read about it at www.venisonconnection.org -- but the program is on hold because its legality has been called into question.

In the meantime, we will continue to do whatever we can to encourage the consumption of local venison.

My own journey to venison consumption began as a desire to “walk the walk.” As president of the Sourland Conservancy, I had begun touting venison consumption as one way to help control the population of deer, although it had been many years since I had sampled venison, and I did not have particularly fond memories of it. At the annual Sourland Conservancy holiday party in December, several venison dishes were served, and I was thrilled to find that they were, in fact, truly delicious.

Shortly thereafter, I ordered a small freezer (from Amazon.com via the Sourland Conservancy web site, of course). I put out the word that I was interested in acquiring some venison, and was introduced to a prolific hunter who agreed to harvest a doe for me. He told me when he would be hunting, and we agreed to meet afterward at the premises of a game butcher. He arrived at the appointed hour with a doe for me. (Always get a doe rather than a buck – better eating and better to control the deer population!) We filled out the paperwork, and left the doe in the refrigerated drop-off locker. A few days later, I received a call from the butcher saying my order was ready. I gave away half of the meat to a friend, and put the rest in my new freezer. Since then, my wife and I have had several venison meals, mostly great, though one was admittedly only so-so.

We had a dinner party this weekend and served two of the delicious venison dishes we had first tried at the holiday party – fried venison medallions and venison chili. Both were outstanding, and our guests were delighted. Next up: venison burgers on the grill!

Be sure to check out the great venison recipe appearing in each issue of The Sourland Journal!
Message from the President

Although the winter of 2013-2014 was extremely cold and snowy, it was also a very productive and successful season for the Sourland Conservancy! Here are a few highlights:

- Five outstanding individuals joined our Board of Trustees – Jared Flesher, Cyndi Goldsmith, Tim Johnson, Gary Johnston and Sandy Simpson – each bringing his/her talents, skills and passion for the Sourlands to forward our great mission. Read about our new trustees in this issue of The Sourland Journal.
- The Sourland Conservancy supported the newly formed Friends of Hillsborough Open Space in its successful effort last November to defeat a Hillsborough Township referendum that would have diverted Open Space tax money away from the preservation of open space. This was a great victory for the residents of Hillsborough who demonstrated the value they place on open space preservation in their Township.
- The Sourlands Comprehensive Deer Management Plan was completed in 2013 and can be found on our website. The Sourland Conservancy sponsored and hosted several education and outreach programs regarding deer management in the Sourlands from presentations to municipals Environmental and Open Space Committees to an extremely well attended Deer Management Symposium for hunters and landowners in the Sourlands. Read about these programs and our next steps regarding deer management on the front page of this issue.
- The Hunter Connection website, www.hunterconnection.org, is up and running! Visit this website if you are a hunter looking for additional land to hunt or if you are a landowner who would like to acquire a hunter for your property. Make your arrangements now, in plenty of time before next deer hunting season!
- We are proud to announce the title of the Sourland Conservancy’s documentary film, and the date of its International Premiere (cue trumpet fanfare). The Sourlands: A New Jersey Treasure will premiere on Sunday, May 18th at the Off-Broadstreet Theatre in Hopewell, NJ. Please visit our website for details about this gala event and instructions for registration. We will also send an announcement via our eNewsletter; if you are not signed up to receive our eNewsletter, please do so at www.sourland.org.

Thanks to our 2013 donors, listed in this issue! We would not be able to carry out our mission to Save the Sourlands without the generosity and dedicated support of our donors; it is their love for the Sourlands that enables us to carry out our advocacy efforts and educational programs.

Your correspondence is important to us!

Please remember that the Sourland Conservancy has a new address:
83 Princeton Ave., Suite 1A
Hopewell, NJ 08525-2020

Sourland Alliance

by Caroline Katmann

The Sourland Alliance was established by resolution in the Townships of East Amwell, Hillsborough, Montgomery and West Amwell in 2009, based on a recommendation in the “Sourland Mountain Comprehensive Management Plan” of October 2012 (Prepared for the, then called, Sourland Planning Council by Banisch Associates, Inc., Conservation Resources, Inc., and the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association). The mission of the Sourland Alliance is to protect the fragile resources and wildlife habitat of the Sourland Mountain Region through inter-municipal cooperation. The Alliance seeks to promote regional, long-range environmental planning and regulation to ensure a sustainable future for the Sourland Region.

How is this mission accomplished? Each of the participating municipalities listed above has two representatives to the Alliance, appointed by action of their municipal government. These representatives explore their municipalities’ ordinances and regulations in light of best environmental practices for the protection of the Mountain and make recommendations to their respective town planning and regulatory agencies. The Alliance is a very cooperative, motivated, and dynamic volunteer group, which brings together townships with diverse interests in a mutual effort to protect the Sourland Mountain. The Sourland Alliance representatives are:

East Amwell: Tracy Carluccio, Don O’Reilly
Hillsborough: Peg Van Patton, Louise Wilkens
Hopewell: Jim Andrews, Tom Kilbourne
Montgomery: Sarah Roberts (Chair), Allan Bien
West Amwell: temporarily vacant*

Continued on the next page.
The formation of the Sourland Alliance has been a joint effort of the host communities with input from nonprofit partners such as the Sourland Conservancy and the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association. The Alliance operates on the belief that working through effective alliances, municipalities can better coordinate their efforts, combine their purchasing power for the broadest possible blanket of preservation, and benefit from each other’s experiences and work efforts.

The Sourland Alliance’s first great achievement occurred in 2011, with the endorsement of the Sourland Mountain Comprehensive Management Plan by each of the five townships. The Plan created a blueprint for cooperative cross-municipality management of the fragile and irreplaceable Sourland region. The Sourland Mountain Comprehensive Management Plan (both Part I and Part II) are available at www.sourlandalliance.com and www.sourland.org (the Sourland Conservancy’s website).

The Sourland Alliance completed a Municipal Ordinance Chart in 2012, which listed important environmental ordinances in the five municipalities. During this year, the Chart project and the creation of a Sourlands Open Space Map by a GIS analyst (coming to the website soon!), were funded through a generous grant from the Bunbury Company, located in Hopewell, New Jersey.

In 2013, the Sourland Alliance began researching solar ordinances in the Sourland Municipalities in light of best practices for solar installations. This research will culminate in 2014 with a Model Solar Ordinance that will be presented to each Sourland municipality for consideration or comparison to existing solar ordinances.

The Sourland Alliance is truly appreciative of the strong commitment demonstrated by the towns of East Amwell, Hillsborough, Hopewell, Montgomery and West Amwell to protect the ecological integrity of the Sourland region and work toward a sustainable future!

*If you live in West Amwell and would like more information about becoming a Sourland Alliance representative for West Amwell, please contact the Sourland Alliance at kops-and-robs@comcast.net.

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**COMMENT**

1. **The Answer is Obvious**  
   *by Cliff Wilson, President*  
   Recreational hunting alone cannot keep the population of deer to levels consistent with a healthy ecosystem

2. **Message From the President**  
   *by Cliff Wilson, President*  
   A few important announcements!

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**REGULAR FEATURES**

3. **Venison for Denizens of the Sourlands**  
   *by Cliff Wilson*  
   …organic, free-range, healthy, low-fat and delicious...

4. **What Is Here – An Introduction**  
   *by Michael Heffler*  
   A bird’s eye view exposes a “Mohawk of green” that provides a wonderful place to eat and nest

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**NEWS**

10. **Welcome to Our New Trustees**  
    *by Caroline Katmann*  
    …five outstanding individuals…

11. **Historic Sites Inventory Project**  
    *by Marcia Maguire*  
    The Sourland region, as a whole, is host to numerous bridges

12. **The Sourlands: A New Jersey Treasure**  
    *by Caroline Katmann*  
    Get your name up on the “silver screen!”

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**Venison Chili**  
*submitted by Scott McKane*  
Jalapeno peppers - not optional, according to this chef

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I recently had the opportunity and privilege of working on a documentary film on the Sourlands. I decided to get involved with this project because I live in the Sourlands, although I wasn’t aware of that when I moved to Lambertville. It appears I’m not alone. When I mention the Sourlands to people I meet or cycle with they often say either: “What are the Sourlands?” or “Where are the Sourlands?”

While we all know how to get home, how to get to our jobs, how to get to the places we buy food and get entertained, what do we really know about what’s “here,” where we live?

“What is here?” has two meanings. The first is a question about the stories of the place we live. The Sourlandshas history; it has influenced the birth of our country. It has a geology that makes it distinctive from its surrounding. It has birds and animals that can’t survive without a large forest, and it has a range of recreational opportunities that make it very attractive. This place is rich with stories.

The second is more personal. What is here is strongly influenced by what we pay attention to. When we’re open to something new, new information or new experience, it can lead to a greater understanding and appreciation; a richer life.

The Sourlands contain the largest contiguous forest between New York City and Philadelphia. That makes it home to songbirds, wildlife and plant life that you don’t find in the suburbs or urban areas.

George Washington slept here, in the Holcombe House down the hill from where I live, and other places nearby. He was here for several months and that time was well spent. In the Sourlands with his generals, Washington planned the Battle of Monmouth, one of the battles that turned the Revolutionary War in our favor.

Being 50 miles from both New York City and Philadelphia, while remaining a relatively sparsely populated forest, makes this place somewhat remarkable. An accident of geology millions of years ago, has kept the Sourlands different enough from its surroundings that it has created a refuge.

New Jersey is the most densely populated state in the U.S. There are three regions in New Jersey that haven’t been urbanized, suburbanized or molded to tourism. The best known is the Pine Barrens in South Central Jersey that the writer John McPhee publicized with his book by that name. Former Governor Brendan Byrne gave the Pine Barrens a special designation to protect the area, because of that book. The Pine Barrens are composed largely of sand, pine trees and blueberry and cranberry bogs. It is an exceptionally flat landscape.

Secondly, there are the Highlands in Northwestern Jersey. The Highlands include the portion of the Appalachian Trail that crosses NJ and the Delaware Water Gap. It has forests and an aquifer that supplies much of the drinking water to New Jersey. It also has been designated a protected area to maintain the water supply. The Highlands has forests and hills, including the highest elevation point in the state.

Finally, there’s the Sourlands, the largest contiguous forest between New York and Philadelphia. Sourland Mountain is a ridge, one of several ridgelines in central New Jersey. The diabase rock that covers the ridge formed prior to the dinosaurs. The diabase was formed when there was only a single landmass on Earth, before the continents separated into their current configuration. Because of the rock the land was difficult to plow and there were no big farms that could later be converted into suburban tracts. Unlike the Pine Barrens and Highlands, the Sourlands have no designation as a protected area.

Nonetheless, songbirds migrating from Central America to Canada every year need the Sourlands as a critical stopover on their journey. A bird’s eye view exposes a Mohawk of green that provides a wonderful place to eat and nest. There are also wood turtles, salamanders and other reptiles and amphibians that depend on this contiguous forest.

The Sourlands have history, an area-defining geology, rare wildlife and plants and a forest that provides refuge for wildlife. It is also a refuge for people. You can be 50 miles from either New York City or Philadelphia and yet have the feeling that you are away from it all.

The Sourlands are between Princeton and Lambertville. They include Hopewell, east and west Amwell, Lambertville, parts of Montgomery and parts of Hillsborough. If you take the Sourlands to their western boundary at Lambertville, then move slowly south down the Delaware River, you’ll find melodious creeks feeding the Delaware River and high cliffs that keep the area sparsely populated and replete with natural beauty.

What is here? A place where songbirds travel thousands of miles to feed and nest. A place with a history that changed the fortunes of the United States. A place with people who have changed the way we see the world. A place where people cycle, hike, go bouldering, horseback ride, go birding, paint, and photograph A place that you can discover and, in doing so, learn more about who you are by discovering where you are. By grounding you in its beauty, the Sourlands can provide a clearer lens to view the rest of the world.

What is here?
Introduction
by Michael Heffler
Executive Director’s Report
“The Best Kept Secret in the Sourlands”
by Caroline Katmann

"Remember me as you pass by
As you are now, so once was I
As I am now so you must be
Prepare for death and follow me.”

From the barely legible tombstone of
Mary Terhune, Stoutsburg Cemetery,
Province Line Rd., Hopewell, NJ

This interview took place with Beverly Mills and Elaine Buck, both members of the Stoutsburg Cemetery Association Board, on a winter afternoon over a delicious lunch in Hopewell, NJ. In most cases, the interviewees’ responses have been summarized and combined; occasionally, exact quotations have been provided.

What is the most important thing that you want people to know about African American History in the Sourlands?

There is a history here of an entire group of people that is the best kept secret in the Sourlands. The African American community was a diverse group of people, most of whom were forced into labor, and shaped the economy of this region. What happened to African Americans here is a microcosm of what happened in the South. Some were free, many were enslaved but were still able to build thriving communities that in many respects were ahead of their time. These people were laborers in practically every aspect of this area’s industry. They worked the farms, worked in factories that produced pottery and Belgium Block, were blacksmiths, caretakers of homes, nannies for children, basket makers, cooks, shoemakers, laundry workers and more. They even made brandy and moonshine!

We don’t usually think of New Jersey, a northern state, as a “slave state.” How ever slavery was present in New Jersey since the colony’s beginning in the 17th century. In its earliest constitution, New Jersey specified slaves as “possible members of the settler’s family” and offered concessions to colonists who owned slaves as enticements to settle in the colony:
- To every colonist that should go out with the first governor, 75 acres of land for every slave.
- To every settler before January 1, 1665, 60 acres for every slave.
- To every settler in the year following, 45 acres for every slave.
- To every settler in the third year, 30 acres for every slave.

Between 1721 and 1769 New Jersey allowed duty free importation of slaves which attracted many slave smugglers to the state. Abolition came gradually to New Jersey and by 1804 the Legislature passed an “Act for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery,” which essentially freed children who were born after July 4th of that year at the age of 21 for females and 25 for males. In subsequent years, NJ continued passing legislation toward the gradual decline of slavery until 1846 when it was permanently abolished in the state - though leaving the remaining slaves as “apprentices for life.” It was not until the ratification of the 13th Amendment in 1865, that all residents were finally declared free!

What is the mission of the Stoutsburg Cemetery Association?

We want the Cemetery to continue to be a burial ground – not exclusively for African Americans but for all descendants of those who were originally buried there.

From the Stoutsburg Cemetery website (www.stoutsburgcemetery.com): The Stoutsburg Cemetery, also known as Moore’s Farm Burial Ground, has been the final resting place of African Americans for close to three hundred years. It is also the burial ground for numerous Black veterans who served in wars dating back to the American Revolution. Some of our oldest grave sites unfortunately have sunk below the surface. One of those is that of Private William Stives (1760-1839) who fought in the American Revolution with the 3rd New Jersey Regiment and wintered in Valley Forge, PA with General George Washington. We believe Private Stives is buried in Stoutsburg but we have not been able to verify this definitively. It has also been said he may be buried in the Old School Baptist Church Cemetery and we have been looking for a record of this. His descendant, Jonathan Stives, also rests in Stoutsburg along with countless other war veterans. Jonathan fought in the Civil War with the 3rd NJ Calvary which was commanded by General George Armstrong Custer. Both Stives veterans returned to the Sourland Mountain after serving in their respective wars and spent their remaining days there. Though these men have been cited, they are merely a couple of examples of extraordinarily accomplished African Americans who are resting on this idyllic hill. We believe Stoutsburg is the final resting place for many by providing them with peace and dignity, something many did not find in their day-to-day lives.

Why is it important for the Stoutsburg Cemetery to continue?

Elaine: Originally black people had no burial ground because they couldn’t be buried with white people. Thank goodness someone started the “bone heap” - that’s how they buried African Americans in the cemetery, originally. There are many unmarked graves; so many that we had to have the ground surveyed.

Continued on page 6.
“The Best Kept Secret in the Sourlands”

Continued from page 5.

Beverly: They were segregated, even in death.

How and why did you first get involved in the Stoutsburg Cemetery Association?

Bever’s uncle, Fred Clark from Pennington, first got her involved when she was in her 20’s. He basically said, “It’s your turn; you’re doing it now.” Elaine’s husband, John Buck, was similarly “drafted” by his uncle, Earle Nevius, to be president of the Stoutsburg Cemetery Association. John’s family goes back to Jonathan Stives (see above) and John’s great-grandfather, Tom Nevius, was a basket maker on Minnietown Road.

Will you pass down responsibility for the Stoutsburg Cemetery Association to your children?

Bev laughs, “If they want it, I hope so.”

Elaine said, “My sons Aaron & Jason will get ‘drafted’ like my husband John did. In the 1930s and ‘40s, the Cemetery was overgrown and neglected. We don’t want that to ever happen again.”

Tell me about your ancestors in the Sourlands?

Elaine’s great-grandparents George and Ada Hightower, Aunt Jenny Terry, Aunt Mary Barksdale, and Uncle Will Waldron were childhood slaves (sharecroppers); they often told stories of their life in the south; Elaine was taught to sing hymns and slave songs by her grandparents. They came to Hopewell Borough from Danville, VA to find work.

My grandmother, Hester Coleman, wife of Robert Coleman, also came from Danville, VA (Pittsylvania County), to take care of her Uncle Caleb (Uncie) and Aunt (Auntie) Cornelia Womack; they would have frequent visits on Columbia Avenue from their nephew Roy Campenella, baseball legend (Catcher for the Brooklyn Dodgers #39). After Roy’s nearfatal car accident in January 1958 which left him paralyzed, Elaine remembers as a little girl pushing him around the house in a wooden wheel chair and making him laugh.

On her maternal side, Bev has been able to trace her ancestor to Friday Truehart who was captured in Africa and brought to Charleston, South Carolina on a slave ship. He was purchased by the Reverend Oliver Hart who decided to name him Friday (after the character in Robinson Crusoe) and True because of his honesty, loyalty and fine character. It was customary for slaves to take on their masters’ names so Friday True became Friday Truehart. When Hart became pastor of the Old School Baptist Church in Hopewell, Friday came with him and lived his remaining years here in a cabin on Mountain Church Road which is still standing as a part of a modern home.

Will people go today in the Sourlands to see historic places that were a part of African-American history here?

Here are a few:

• Minnietown Road – this area was home to many African Americans. Many of these residents were known as “Minnie Dots” because of their interracial marriages.

• AME Church on Hollow Road - (the existing church was moved to Hollow Road in Skillman in 1900; it was built with timber from the original church, which was built in 1850 higher up on the mountain in Zion. The church relocated after the peach industry collapsed and the congregants who worked in the peach industry moved further down the mountain.)

• Camp Meeting Avenue – Camp Meetings were held across from the Bessie Grover Park (named after a prominent black woman from Skillman) and around the corner from the African Methodist Episcopal Church which was relocated to Hollow Road. These church “meetings” were huge revivals attended by both blacks and whites on the last two Sundays in July and the first two Sundays of August during the early 1900’s. These revivals were known for greatermoms and sometimes up to three preachers would come to speak before a huge crowd of people from different ethnic backgrounds. People would come in their Sunday best and eat wonderful homemade country food.

What can be done to educate more people about this history and keep it alive?

Continue what we are currently doing: researching, writing, lecturing and basically continuing to pass down our history not only to our descendants but to the people of this area who have an interest in our region’s history.

Elaine Buck and Beverly Mills will present “A Proud Heritage: African American Presence in Hopewell Valley and Sourland Mountain” at the Sourland Conservancy’s Train Station Series on Friday, April 11, 2014, 7 PM at the Hopewell Train Station, One Railroad Place, Hopewell, NJ. The presentation will focus on African American history in the Region from the late 17th Century through today and will include a display of artifacts as well as a taste of traditional African American food and song from the Sourlands. Advance registration is not required; doors open at 6:40 PM; $5 suggested donation.

Friday Truehart’s Cabin in the Sourlands

Peach Basket made in the Sourlands
The Sourland Conservancy’s Signature Events

The 11th Annual Sourland Music Festival
Saturday, July 19 (raindate: Sunday, July 20), 4-10 p.m. There are many exciting surprises in store for this year’s festival-goers! This popular community event features great regional music and vendors and takes place at the Hillsborough Country Club’s polo field, 146 Wertsville Road, Hillsborough, NJ 08844. Additional details and online registration available soon at the following websites: www.sourlandmusicfest.org and www.sourland.org.

The Third Annual Sourland Spectacular Cycling Event
Saturday, September 6 (rain or shine). Cycle the scenic hills of the Sourlands and feast on a gourmet lunch at the finish! Rides being at 7 a.m. at the Otto Kaufman Community Center, 356 Skillman Road, Skillman, NJ 08558. Additional details and online registration available soon at www.sourland.org/spectacular and www.sourland.org.

For information about these and other Sourland Conservancy events, news and announcements, sign up to receive our eNewsletters at www.sourland.org!

Donor Perfect – Our New Fundraising Software
by Joanna Fiori

The Sourland Conservancy has completed the migration of its Member Data Base to Donor Perfect, a robust system used and recognized by over 10,000 small and mid-sized nonprofits.

The new system will help us:
• maintain contact information;
• streamline mass mailings and newsletters;
• move to a quarterly member renewal cycle;
• manage volunteer interest and activities;
• manage events, such as:
  o Spring and Fall Bus Tours
  o July Sourland Music Festival
  o September Sourland Spectacular cycling event
  o Hopewell Train Station Series
• Scale as our organization and activities expand;
• And, report on and analyze fundraising results and trends

The system allows us more streamlined integration between:
• The Sourland Conservancy website and our member data base;
• Our data base and our Constant Contact email distribution system;
• Our website and our bank;
• And, in the future, Donor Perfect will connect to QuickBooks, our general ledger system.

With Donor Perfect when a member enters a donation on our website, it flows to our data base and to our bank account. This eliminates double data entry and frees up valuable time, allowing us to direct our time and focus to our priority projects.

Bear Aware
by Andrea Bonette

In recent years the black bear population in New Jersey has expanded to the point where the majority live in the northern counties, but at least some can be found in each of our twenty-one counties, including the Sourland sections of Hunterdon, Somerset, and Mercer. Our New Jersey black bears do not really hibernate in wintertime - they just go into a state of torpor during which their metabolism slows down significantly. As spring brings warmer weather the bears emerge from this state feeling very hungry indeed. So right now there is a possibility that you may have a visit from one of them.

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection offers a wealth of information about these animals. In general, their policy is to educate the public to co-exist safely with the majority of local bears who are minding their own business and merely trying to survive. Only “problem bears” which demonstrably pose a safety hazard will be relocated or, in the worst case, euthanized. The toll-free hotline for reporting bear sightings, especially nuisance behavior or damage, is 1-877- WARNDEP (1-877-927-6337).

The website, www.state.nj.us/dep/bearfacts, offers advice on how homeowners can avoid attracting bears, bear safety tips, and black bear facts for kids. Also available is a DVD, “Living with New Jersey Black Bears.” Especially for children is a “word-search” puzzle, a wild animal track recognition guide, and a crossword puzzle, as well as an attractive activity book; each of these can be downloaded or ordered by mail along with other items on the bear publications list from Michelle.Smith@dep.state.nj.us.

Their recommendations for dealing with an unexpected bear encounter instruct you NOT to run. Rather you should make your presence known with a lot of noise (singing, clapping your hands, banging pots or other noisy objects), and make yourself look bigger by waving your arms. If you are with others, stand close to them to present a large visual object. Slowly back away without making direct eye contact. Be prepared by checking out the full list of instructions on the DEP website listed above.
The Sourland Conservancy would like to thank all of its donors for partnering with us to educate and advocate for the protection of the Sourlands! This year we have created “The Robert Garrett Society” to recognized a special group of dedicated supporters and to honor Robert Garrett, the founder of the “Sourland Regional Citizens Planning Council,” which became the “Sourland Planning Council,” which is now the “Sourland Conservancy!” Although Mr. Garrett is now deceased, his hopes and dreams still resonate with those of us who care deeply about this organization and its mission: “In our state especially-New Jersey- the voice of local citizens, if well focused and reasonable, can make all the difference.” (“The Sourland Legacy – A Report by the Sourland Regional Citizens Planning Council,” 1989)

Interestingly, Mr. Garrett lays out a few goals at the end of “The Sourland Legacy,” that inspire us to action because we feel compelled to finish the good work he and a few people sitting around a dining room table somewhere in the Sourlands began almost thirty years ago:

“…in developing a trail system… to determine possible trail alignments and to work with landowners and government agencies on actually building the trails and later maintaining them.

“…providing continuing support to municipal boards on improving zoning and subdivision regulations.

“…determining the qualifications of the Sourlands for designation on the National and New Jersey Registers of Historic Places.

“…there are literally dozens of organizations with a stake in the future of the Sourlands… the coordination of their efforts on the mountain’s behalf is crucial.

“…there’s a continuing need for leadership in ongoing organizational work – citizen education, working with the press, fundraising, and the like.”

My favorite part of “The Sourland Legacy” is the last paragraph, which presents a description of the members of the “council” at that time. In my opinion, it still accurately describes the amazing individuals who make up the Sourland Conservancy today – our Board of Trustees, our members and our supporters at all levels:

“They are a diverse lot – lawyers and teachers and artists and executives and writers and physicians and office workers and service people and farmers and retirees. Some are mild mannered, some are feisty; all are committed, and want you with them: they are your neighbors, after all.”

The Sourland Conservancy has received 141 anonymous gifts.

Matching Gifts
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Sourland Conservancy Donors

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The Sourland Conservancy

Thank you for your ongoing support and your commitment to saving the Sourlands for future generations!
The Eastern Bluebird, also a member of the thrush family, is distinguished by its brown-speckled breast. The Veery is another species within this group that may be more difficult to sort out from other songs. The Wood Thrush is rusty brown on its back and has prominent dark speckling on the breast; the Veery is a more tawny brown and its speckles are less distinct. Both are a bit smaller than the robin. They nest in deciduous woodlands, the Wood Thrush on the lower branches of saplings and shrubs, the Veery near or even on the ground. Their nestling habit renders them vulnerable to disturbance and predators. These two species whose breeding success is an indicator of forest health and are reason to work hard to protect the integrity of the forest. Bird census data indicates that both of these thrush species currently occur in relatively good breeding numbers in preserved forest areas of the Sourlands where there is healthy understory, which is critical.

Two thrush species that breed further north use the Sourlands as a migration stopover on their way to northern New Jersey and beyond. The Hermit Thrush and the Swainson’s Thrush both prefer to occur in relatively good breeding numbers in preserved forest areas of the Sourlands where there is healthy understory, which is critical.

The flute-like song of the Wood Thrush is one of the most easily recognized bird songs. The veery’s downward-scaling “veer” may be a little more difficult to sort out from other songs. The Wood Thrush is rusty brown on its back and has prominent dark speckling on the breast; the Veery is a more tawny brown and its speckles are less distinct. Both are a bit smaller than the robin. They nest in deciduous woodlands, the Wood Thrush on the lower branches of saplings and shrubs, the Veery near or even on the ground. Their nestling habit renders them vulnerable to disturbance and predators. These two species whose breeding success is an indicator of forest health and are reason to work hard to protect the integrity of the forest. Bird census data indicates that both of these thrush species currently occur in relatively good breeding numbers in preserved forest areas of the Sourlands where there is healthy understory, which is critical.
Five outstanding individuals joined the Sourland Conservancy Board of Trustees in 2014. For this article, the new trustees were asked to contribute a short bio and a statement explaining their reason for serving on the Board.

**Jared Flesher**

“I’m a strong believer in civic engagement and residents looking out for the best interests of the places they are from. I love the Sourlands and hope to be able to do my part to help preserve everything that makes them special.”

Jared Flesher is an award-winning reporter, photojournalist, and documentary filmmaker. He is also the editor of Edible Jersey magazine.

Jared’s most recent documentary, “Sourlands”, won the “Emerging Filmmaker” award at the 2013 Princeton Environmental Film Festival, and has been an official selection of a dozen festivals, including the Environmental Film Festival in the Nation’s Capital, Colorado Environmental Film Festival, Reel Earth Film Festival, and Montclair Film Festival. “Sourlands” is distributed nationally by Collective Eye Films.


Jared graduated magna cum laude from the University of Richmond with a degree in journalism. In college, he served as the editor-in-chief of the campus newspaper, The Collegian.

**Cynthia Martin Goldsmith**

“I see the Sourlands as a beautiful, culturally and environmentally intact region that deserves our attention, conservation, and preservation, and I am pleased to have been accepted as a New Trustee of the Sourlands Conservancy.”

I grew up in an early housing development in Hillsborough Township that bordered the Raritan River and open farm fields and wooded areas. I spent my childhood exploring every nook and cranny of the outdoors within 3 miles of my home. My father loved nature and we took many scenic car drives through New Jersey, stopping to explore trails or follow streams. I loved horses and rode at small stables whenever I could.

I hold a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Environmental Design from Parsons School of Design of the New School for Social Research, and a Master of Science in Historic Preservation from the Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture and Planning. I have worked for Heritage Studies, the NJ State Historic Preservation Office, Louis Berger and Associates, and Richard Grubb and Associates as an Architectural Historian and Historic Preservation Specialist. I worked as the Executive Director of the New Jersey Museum of Agriculture for a few years, and was a Trustee and Development Director at Howell Living History Farm from 1985 to 2005. For the last 8-1/2 years, I have worked as an Environmental Specialist for the NJ Department of Transportation.

Historic architecture, cultural anthropology, agricultural retention; and the conservation of open space, wetlands and woodlands have been part of my life for over 35 years. I began my career working on restoration and rehabilitation of historic structures with architects in Philadelphia and New York. I organized the historical survey of Allentown, NJ, which placed it on the National Register of Historic Places. I moved to Rocky Hill, NJ, restored a Victorian house, and sat on the Planning Board for five years. I then bought a 36 acre run-down farm on Pleasant Valley Road in Hopewell Township and lovingly restored it and returned it to its agricultural purpose.

I have owned this working farm at the top of Baldpate Mountain in Hopewell Township for 29 years, breeding sheep and horses. I have recently purchased a second horse farm in East Amwell, which my children operate. Last year, I sold 14 acres of my farmland on Baldpate Mountain (a building lot) to Green Acres to append to the Baldpate Mountain Park managed by Mercer County. In addition, I helped draft an Open Space/Agricultural Retention/Historic Preservation Easement on the remaining 21-1/2 acres of my property with the Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space and the Delaware and Raritan Greenway Land Trust.

**Timothy K. Johnson**

“Living at the base of Sourland Mountain in Hillsborough, I have always been a supporter of the organization and its goals of ecological and environmental sustenance. This preserve acts as an anchor point for an amazing rural landscape of farms, woodlands and waterways in which we are lucky enough to reside and go about our daily activities. In a state whose real estate rivals the most valuable in the nation, The Sourland Mountain region shines as an example of the importance of environmental stewardship and the need to preserve natural resources.”

I was born and raised in New Jersey, residing in western Hillsborough with my wife and 2 college age children for the past 16 years. Certified in Historic Preservation from Drew University, I own and operate Renaissance Restoration, concentrating on the rehabilitation of older homes and outbuildings in the surrounding area.

I have been a member of the Hillsborough Historic Preservation Committee for 12 years and have spearheaded multiple preservation initiatives in town which have received County awards. I was also a founding member of the 1759 Vought House, in Clinton, a non-profit organization dedicated to the salvation of the only remaining Loyalist homestead in NJ.

**Gary Johnston**

“Through the years, I have tried to get involved in a few of the local non-profits, and through these associations, I crossed path with Jen Bryson, and her long passion with The Sourlands. It’s through her wisdom, that we eventually talked about my coming on board as a trustee at a time in my life that the love for this area crisscrossed with a continuing desire to give something back to some of the local treasures that I love. It is with pleasure that I have accepted this opportunity to help do what I can to help protect a magnificent part of our area, and indeed the wilder state of NJ.”

I was born and raised in Houston, Texas. I left Houston to attend Princeton University where I majored in Biology. I returned to Texas and worked in the Chemical business after school, met and married my wife Rosanne DioDio, a Brooklyn native in Texas with her NY based company.

We left Texas to live in Chicago, and eventually moved back to Princeton, NJ continuing in the Chemical and Fragrance Business, before I left to work with American Express as a Financial Advisor. As I worked with Amex, meeting their many parameters along the line, they offered me my own Financial Planning franchise, which I took out on my own in Princeton, NJ. Our company was sold by American Express to become the current Ameriprise Financial, where we are now part of a financial group that includes the largest financial planning business in the United States.

Both of my two daughters were born in NJ, and we have made our home in West Windsor, NJ. Our daughters both went through the West Windsor Plainsboro School District and we call this area our home. They are both married and live in NJ, and in Germantown, MD with their husbands.(and many pets) We both love NJ and through my hobby of photography, we have had the opportunity to the see many beautiful areas of this state, and indeed the entire Eastern Region of the US. My wife, who is also a biology major, and I have recently fallen in love with the National Parks and are in the process of making up for lost time in our quest to see as many of these parks as we can, continuing our love of the outdoors and beautiful scenery that these magnificent parks provide to us.

**Sandy Simpson**

“I welcome the opportunity to join the Sourlands Board, to interact with the dedicated, knowledgeable individuals who share my passion for protecting this unique region. I look forward to supporting current initiatives to help increase public awareness and appreciation of the Sourlands.”

Continued on page 9.
A New Jersey native, my family moved to Neshanic area in late ‘60s when Hillsborough was much more rural. At that time, I did not fully appreciate all the open spaces and active farmland in the area. After graduating from Douglass College (Rutgers), I was hired by Merck & Co as a microbiologist to provide customer support and evaluate new applications for a line of industrial biocides. My subsequent positions were in the International Regulatory Affairs organization at Merck, with responsibilities related to the development and registration of new medicines in a variety of therapeutic areas. My long tenure at Merck afforded me the opportunity to interact with colleagues and government regulators in many countries. In late 2011, I elected to take early retirement from Merck to have the opportunity (and time!) to pursue different interests and activities. I completed the Rutgers Environmental Stewards training program held at Duke Farms in 2012. In addition, I volunteer at Duke Farms in Hillsborough, assisting the staff with visitor services, educational programs and special events. These activities appeal to my interests in conservation, environmental issues and preservation/restoration activities. My husband and I are also active members of the Duke Farms Community Garden, now in its 4th season. Since 1985, I have been fortunate to reside in the Sourlands with my partner (now husband) Ken. I treasure this unique environment, with its natural beauty, tranquility and access to a wide variety of plants and wildlife. We enjoying hiking and bicycling the area’s back roads and trail systems in the Sourlands parks. Our other interests include kayaking and travel to new places.

Preliminary Inventory of Historic Sites in the Sourland Mountain Region

by Marcia Maguire

As with other parts of New Jersey, the kinds of historic structures that remain today in the Sourlands reflect the type of life and society of the past and encompass bridges, churches, schools, taverns, inns, hotels, houses, and farm buildings. The relatively remote and isolated situation of the Sourlands granted it a significant part in American history in three different periods: during the Revolutionary War (its strategic geographical position was utilized by Washington on at least two occasions to score two decisive victories over the British); during the Civil War (it served as a vital stop on the Underground Railroad), and during Prohibition (it served as the location for numerous distilleries). During this time span, the Sourland Mountain saw a variety of economic enterprises of varying success. These enterprises supported a steady, relatively sizeable population, and consisted mainly of agriculture, timbering, and pottery. Modern industry and transportation began to have a negative impact on the region in the late third of the 1800s and, a process of decline, which culminated in the peach blight in 1900, gradually choked the thriving economies of the earlier years. The area, now home to a new influx of poorer inhabitants, reverted in large part to its original forested habitat.

The Sourland region, as a whole, is host to numerous bridges, since it provides the headwaters for many creeks and streams that feed into larger rivers that lie at its base. While a number of them are of historical interest, there are many “stringer” bridges that were built in the 1920s and 1930s. These, according to the NJDOT, are of “no historical interest.” The introduction of the railroads, like the Reading and the Eastern & Amboy, while providing an additional nail to the coffin of agriculture on the mountain, did produce some noteworthy trestle bridges.

There are numerous existing buildings that have served as inns, hotels and taverns in the past. In addition to their primary functions of providing food, drink and sleeping accommodations to both residents and transients, these buildings also served as community centers, for the administration of justice, the assessment of taxes, the distribution of mail, and the meetings of freeholders. In short, they fulfilled major social functions in the historical mountain community. One such building is the historic Peacock’s General Store. Until it burned down in February 2014, Peacock’s remained a part of the social fabric of Sourland residents and visitors – especially cyclists to whom Peacock’s was the traditional rest stop for all rides in the Sourlands!

Similarly, there are many examples of historic churches of varying Protestant sects and professions of varying degrees of refinement and architectural embellishment scattered throughout the regions. In the early part of the 20th century, the Sourland churches suffered a decline, but since then, some have made an impressive comeback. Also numerous are the early mountain schools. These were located within walking distance of the community, generally spaced to fall within a two-mile walk.

As might be expected, the historic dwellings reflect the economic realities of life on the mountain and range from the relatively fancy edifices erected by the more successful land owners to the simpler dwellings inhabited by other classes. Once again, the types of homes reflect the decline of agriculture in the area, as subsistence farming of food crops precluded the planting of cover crops that would replenish the soil. The excessive timbering led to the devastating erosion of soil. The remaining farms structures reflect, to a certain extent, the ethnic origins of their builders.

At the moment, the preliminary inventory has been drawn up from a few published sources. For the bridges, these sources include, T.L. Luce, “New Jersey’s Sourland Mountain”, Bridgehunter.com, and the DOT’s study of bridges in NJ, “Our Projects and the Environment.” For the buildings, we have relied on NHR/DEP online listing of National and NJ Register of Historic Places, Luce’s book, and Ursula Brecknill’s two books (Montgomery Township, An Historical Community 1702… and Hillsborough, An Architectural History). It is very obvious that these sources do not cover all the historically noteworthy sites in the area. If you know of any historical structure that you think may be easily overlooked, email the information to director@sourland.org so that our inventory will be as complete as possible. A current inventory will be developed by a committee and published on our website.

Welcome to Our New Trustees

Continued from page 9.
Sourland Cuisine: Venison Chili Recipe
Contributed by Scott McKane, Hillsborough

One pound of chopped (hamburger) venison
1 large onion
2 tbsp. oil
1 (15 oz.) can black beans – drained
1 (15 oz.) can red beans – drained
3 (15 oz.) cans tomato sauce
1 (28 oz.) can diced or crushed tomatoes
1 bouillon cube
3 tbsp. chili powder (more if you like it hot)
2 tbsp. Jalapeno peppers, seeded and diced (well, not really – add even more if you like it hot)
1 small can diced green chilies
Shredded cheddar cheese
Sour cream
Green onions

Cook the chopped venison, onion, garlic and jalapeno peppers in hot oil until the meat is no longer pink; drain. Add remaining ingredients except the cheddar, sour cream and green onion. Simmer uncovered about 40 minutes. To serve, top each bowl of chili with a sprinkle of cheese, a dollop of sour cream, and green onion. Makes 6 servings.

The Sourlands: A New Jersey Treasure – a New Documentary Film
produced by the Sourland Conservancy

Don’t worry, there is still time to get your name up on the “silver screen” and support the Sourland Conservancy’s education and outreach program!

The Sourland Conservancy’s new documentary film, “The Sourlands: A New Jersey Treasure,” will premiere on May 18th at the Off-Broadstreet Theatre in Hopewell! (Stay tuned for details and registration information at www.sourland.org and in our eNewsletter.) This film will be used to inform and inspire Sourland residents, visitors and enthusiasts in order to generate an appreciation for this critical resource in our own backyards. Our hope is that this appreciation will evolve into action to protect the Mountain.

“The Sourlands: A New Jersey Treasure” will be shown in a variety of venues in and around the Sourlands, including schools, libraries, chambers of commerce, cycling clubs, meetings of local boards and commissions, senior centers, scout group meetings, and more! If your group is interested in a showing of the film to be followed by a panel discussion involving Sourland Conservancy trustees and members, please contact us at director@sourland.org.

To get your name listed in the film credits and to help fund the final production stages and outreach efforts involving our documentary film, please send your tax deductible donation to the Sourland Conservancy, 83 Princeton Ave., Suite 1A, Hopewell, NJ 08525 or donate online at www.sourland.org.

If we receive your donation before April 15, at the levels shown below, credits will be listed in the film and you will receive the tickets. After April 15, you will be eligible for free tickets at the following donation amount levels:

- $250.00 Level, “Walk-On” (admission for 2 to the Premiere)
- $500.00 Level, “Cameo” (admission for 2; listed in group credits at finish)
- $1000.00 Level, “Best Supporting” (admission for 4; listed in group credits at finish)
- $2500.00 Level, “Leading Actor” (admission for 4; listed individually in credits at finish)
- $5000.00 Level, “The Producer” (admission for 4; listed individually in credits at start and finish)

Thank you!
Sourlands: A Threatened Treasure
Bus Tour of the Eastern Sourland Mountain Region

Sunday, May 4th, 2014
12:00 to 3:00 (check-in starting at 11:30 a.m.)

Experience the magic and rich history of the Sourlands, an unspoiled landscape of forested ridges, pastoral farms, and a special refuge for heroes, patriots, artists and, yes, even ghosts!

Learn the legends and lore of your own backyard paradise, home to numerous unique animals and plants. And learn about the Sourlands' unique environment and heritage -- and how to keep this special place special for future generations.

The bus tour includes an inside tour of Highfields, the famed Lindbergh home.

Tour sponsored by the Sourland Conservancy and Van Harlingen Historical Society

Meet at Princeton Elks Lodge, 354 Route 518, Blawenburg, NJ

Registration Deadline April 11, 2014

Online registration only. Please register and pay in advance at: https://co.clickandpledge.com/advanced/default.aspx?wid=71531

$20.00 (SC and VHHS Members)
$25.00 (nonmembers)

For more information contact Marcia Maguire, Sourland Conservancy.
Tel: 609-466-0701 (after March 24th, only).
Sourland Conservancy presents:
“The Train Station Series” – A Sourland Mountain-inspired program of educational and cultural events
Spring/Summer 2014

April 11 - "A Proud Heritage: African American Presence in Hopewell Valley and Sourland Mountain" presented by Beverly Mills and Elaine Buck of the Stoutsburg Cemetery Association. Learn about African American history in the region from the late 17th Century through today. This fascinating presentation will include a display of artifacts as well as a taste of traditional African American food and song from the Sourlands.

May 4 - "Sourlands Eastern Region Bus Tour" – May 4th is the Van Harlingen Society’s May in Montgomery Day (www.vanharlingen.org). This year’s event is a “Sourlands Celebration,” and the Sourland Conservancy is joining in the fun by cosponsoring a Bus Tour of the Eastern Sourland Region from 12 -3. The cost for this event is $20.00 for Sourland Conservancy and Van Harlingen Society members and $25.00 for nonmembers. Online registration only for this event and you must register by April 11th at: https://co.clickandpledge.com/advanced/default.aspx?wid=71531

June 5 - "Field Biologist: The film, the man and the work" presented by Tyler Christensen (naturalist) and Jared Flesher (documentary filmmaker and editor of "Edible Jersey"). This talk focuses on Tyler's research in the Nicoyan Peninsula Avian Research Center in Costa Rica, as it relates to birds in the Sourlands, with film clips from Jared's upcoming documentary film on the subject, "Field Biologist."

June 12 - "Wildflowers of the Sourlands" presented by Rachel Mackow, photographer, writer and naturalist. This program focuses on uncommon and rare plants that are found in the Sourlands, as well as plants that are unique to the Sourlands and those that are more abundant.

September 14 - "Swallow Hill Alpaca Farm Field Trip" presented by Patricia and John Flanagan, owners. Back by popular demand, this hands-on farm visit (meet at 583 Montgomery Road, Hillsborough, NJ 08844 at 2 PM) will educate visitors about alpacas and their fiber, through a presentation, barn tour, weaving demonstrations and hands-on weaving experiences.

Sourland Conservancy’s “Train Station Series”
Hopewell Train Station; 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm
Suggested donation $5.00 - Advance registration not required.
Doors Open at 6:40 - First come, first seated.
Contact director@sourland.org for additional information.
Also, visit the Events page at www.sourland.org