

New Jersey Conservation Foundation

A nature preserve in central New Jersey's Sourland Mountains is growing, thanks to the recent addition of 151 acres in East Amwell Township, Hunterdon County.

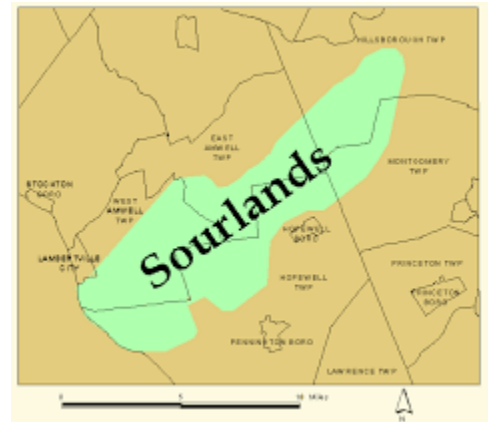


This beautiful parcel was purchased from landowner John Higgins, with whom they've worked for years to preserve land in the Sourlands region. The gently sloping property contains farm fields and woodlands, with panoramic views of the surrounding mountains and countryside. It's now open to the public for various activities including hiking, horseback riding, bird watching and nature

observation. We plan to create a trail system on the property while continuing to lease the fields to a local farmer.

In 2015 and 2016, NJ Conservation Foundation assisted Somerset County in purchasing 78 neighboring acres in Hillsborough Township from Mr. Higgins. The East Amwell and Hillsborough properties will now be managed as a single preserve. When added to other previously preserved properties, the preserve now totals 758 acres. The latest purchase was made possible by generous funding from partners: East Amwell Township, Hunterdon County, the New Jersey Green Acres Program, Raritan Headwaters, The 1772 Foundation, Hunterdon Land Trust, and an anonymous donor. New Jersey Conservation Foundation is planning to preserve additional land owned by John Higgins to add to the new preserve.

The Sourland Mountains region is located midway between New York and Philadelphia, and contains central New Jersey's largest unbroken forest, with over 20,000 contiguous acres. The forests and wetlands of the Sourlands protect headwater streams flowing to the Millstone, Raritan and Delaware rivers, and the Delaware & Raritan Canal. These forests provide habitat to many threatened and endangered animal species including barred owl, bobcat, Cooper's hawk, and wood turtle. The area also supports a large population of forest interior birds such as scarlet tanagers, Kentucky warblers and red-shouldered hawks. In addition, the region serves as a stopover for migratory birds that travel between South America and the boreal forests of Canada, and those that travel from Central America to New Jersey to breed.



The origin of the name "Sourlands" is a bit of a mystery. One theory is that it's derived from "sorrel-land," which describes the reddishbrown soil. Another is that it was named for the Sauerland region in Germany. A third possibility is that early Dutch settlers called it "sauer landt" because the rocky soil is sour, or difficult to farm.

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