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Fall 2006

Photographer or Conservationist?

— Jerry Greer

For the past few years, my friend and colleague, David Ramsey has talked about Rocky Fork and how beautiful it is. He has asked me numerous times to go for hikes there, but I seemed to always be working on more important things -- well, what I thought was more important anyway. Finally, a few weeks ago I decided it was time to go for that hike into the Rocky Fork Tract.

As David and I started up the road I felt that deep down connection elevating my soul. As we walked up the road we could see a red logging truck sitting next to a very large pile of nice sized logs. Instead of my connection weakening it only grew in strength! Something was really drawing me in to this wild land. It was as though Rocky Fork was pleading for our help.



David and I headed up the road thinking that we could make it to the cut before darkness came. We had been told that the cut was about 4 or 5 miles into the backcountry. Pressing on we walked for another couple of hours with the intention of photographing the scarred landscape. It was a great hike, all the way up the road David would explain every detail. It was great hiking into a place of this wildness with someone that had grown-up playing in and learning everything about a location. It was like hiking with a Rocky Fork encyclopedia!

Needless to say, the evening came way too quickly, and we had to turn around before making it to the cut. I was somewhat

disappointed in not making it, but the disappointment only strengthened my need to help save this wild land. We knew that there was a possible sale to a developer for we had heard many reports from the locals. We also knew that they had moved four logging companies into the backcountry. We felt time was of the essence!

From that first hike a few weeks ago I've made no less than seven return trips into the Rocky Fork Tract. Every day that storms are in the weather forecast I head there to photograph. The rain makes the moss-covered boulders and tumbling cascades of Rocky Fork even more beautiful. It also makes for a muddy stream! I want to make beautiful photographs but I also want those photographs to illustrate how damaging bad logging practices can be for a once pristine stream ecosystem.

The logging continues today and bids are coming in for the purchase but David and I are working vigorously along with the Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy, Southern Appalachian Forest Coalition, Open Spaces Institute, The Conservation Fund, SouthWings, Southern Environmental Law Center, Appalachian Trail Conservancy and with others that will be joining to help save this wondrous 10,000-acre wild land tract.

When I sit on the bank of Rocky Fork I think of a paragraph that Harry Ellis wrote in Garden In The Sky, "...To be truly content, we must be attuned to the influences of nature. We must know the sunrises and sunsets, starry nights and full moons, must hear the sounds of rushing streams and singing birds, and thrill to

the splendor of the changing seasons. Those who live with the beauties and mysteries of the earth are never quite alone, or bored, or weary of life. As I thought about these things in the fading sunset, I began to understand why so many people have come under the spell and mystique of the mountain."

What a powerful paragraph! This one paragraph has changed my life's work as a

nature photographer. Every time I would think of this passage I seem to always ask myself, "Am I a photographer or a conservationist?" I can now truthfully answer my own question – "I am both!"



Jerry Greer's work has been published nationwide in books, magazines, calendars and advertising campaigns. He is the author of 4 photographic books and presently produces 2 annual calendar titles. Jerry leads photography tours and workshops and is founder and CEO of Mountain Trail Press. Jerry lives in Johnson City, Tennessee with his wife, Angela, and their dog, Mystique. Jerry will present "Blue Ridge Mountains - Ancient and Majestic" at the Friday evening program of our Fall Rally. Visit his website at <http://www.jerrygreerphotography.com/>.



Meet Andrea Wilson, artist!

During the past two years, I have purchased the beautiful watercolor note cards of Artist Andrea Wilson while attending the Wilderness Wildlife Week each January in Pigeon Forge. I've contributed the cards to the Friends of Roan Mountain for the Rally raffles, usually two to a package.

A watercolor enthusiast myself, I absolutely love her detailed ink and watercolor prints with emphasis on detail and color. Andrea has painted for over 30 years, and finds that the area where she lives, on the edge of the Greenbrier entrance to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, offers a continual evolution of creative ideas. From her web site: "The variety and intensity of color in a dying leaf or the graceful line of a stem, the personality of a dancing blossom - these are nature's gifts that are all worthy of recording."

One of her techniques which I found beautiful and unique is the symmetry of butterflies forming pleasing patterns and color creations. Her work becomes lyrical as fantasy enters her creativity. Without a doubt, Andrea pours her soul into to work.

One of her favorite paintings is of the Cardinal Flower. She says: "I've lived with this flower all my life. I began the sketch in late summer when the flower blooms around my home. I took living specimens to my drawing board, plus 60 or more digital images of the various details I knew I wanted to incorporate. I finished the final painting in December. I often wonder why I start some of my paintings that are so complex, but it's always worth the effort when the final painting is completed."

Andrea has donated a matted print of the Cardinal Flower to the Friends of Roan Mountain and it will be presented either for auction or for the raffle at this fall's coming Rally on September 7-9, 2006.

I invite you to check out Andrea's web site to view her other creations: www.AndreaWilsonArtist.com. Andrea is the winner of the Second Place prize in the 2006 Spring Wildflower Pilgrimage Art Competition. Her orange flame azalea print is pictured on her web site.



Cardinal Flowers. Used by permission. Copyright 2003-2006 Andrea Wilson.

– Anne Whittemore

HOW I PHOTOGRAPH CLOSE-UPS

- David Duhl

When I find a subject to photograph this time of year, I'm usually looking to the sky for sunrises and sunsets, to the water for waterfalls and fog covered lakes, and to the land for fall colors. Sometimes, I look a little closer and, when I do, I find the patterns of nature calling to me. And, sometimes I look a lot closer. It's this topic I want to talk about.



When I look through my viewfinder at the smaller subjects of nature, I can get excited and forget all that I know about making an effective photograph. That is: Composition, lighting, and background. If I can keep my wits about me, then I'd be on my way to making a personally rewarding photograph. And to do this, I'll need some special approaches and some special equipment.

I'm going to keep in mind that two things happen when I increase the magnification, and both of them are bad. First, by magnifying the image, I'm also magnifying the movement; the subject's movement and my movement. So I'm going to wait patiently until I'm positive there's a lull in the breeze and I'm going to make several images to be sure I'm right. I'm also going to use a good tripod and cable release to minimize any camera movement.

I'm also going to keep in mind that the more I magnify the image, the less apparent depth of field I will have. For my scenic photography, I'm thinking about depth of field in feet, but in close-up photography I'm thinking about it in inches or parts of an inch. I'm going to make sure the pollen on a flower and the petals of the flower are both in focus. To do this, I'm going to stop down as much as my lens will allow. It's true this will result in a longer shutter speed, but if I want everything in focus, then that's what I'm going to do.

I have several pieces of equipment I can turn to make close-up images. For close-ups, I use a 200mm macro lens as my workhorse. In many cases, that's all I need. And I can use it to focus close and at infinity, which gives me great flexibility in how far away I can be from the subject.

If I want to take a giant step forward, I'll add an extension tube. These come in three lengths and allow you to move closer than the minimum focusing distance the prime lens will allow, resulting in a larger image. The shorter the prime lens or the longer the extension tube, the more magnification you get. The trade-off is you lose a little bit of light and you cannot focus at infinity, so you are limited to how far away from the subject you must be.

If I want magnification, I'll use a 1.4x teleconverter. These are made by the lens manufacturer (which I would always recommend) to work seamlessly with the prime lens. Without moving a single step, my image is 40% larger, and unlike the extension tube, I have the same mobility as using the prime lens alone. The quality is excellent, but I lose one stop of light and it's the most expensive close-up accessory.

Fortunately, there is a cost-effective alternative, and that's a diopter. Now, I'm not talking about the diopter you may be using in the eyepiece to correct for your changing eyesight; I'm talking about a clear filter you screw on the front of your lens. And I don't mean the kind salesmen try to sell you because it's cheap, I mean the kind they want to sell you because it's good. Diopters come in various strengths and, like the extension tube, you're committed to close-ups if you use them. But, boy can it magnify an image! I think of it as reading glasses for your lens. There's no light loss, they're light, and they're reasonably inexpensive. Canon makes an excellent series of them and so does Nikon, or I should say so did Nikon. It doesn't matter what camera make you have, they both work very well on any brand of lens. You can buy the Canon one new or the Nikon one on e-Bay® or a used camera store if you're lucky. This is by far my first choice.

Close-up photography opens a whole new world you may never have thought about photographing. I hope you enjoy the adventure.

David Duhl is a nature photographer living in Nashville. David will be the Saturday evening Rally speaker. Some of his work may be viewed at www.davidduhl.com and at www.agpix.com/duhl.

FYI...

For more information on the upcoming Naturalists' Rally and Friends of Roan Mountain, visit our web site at <http://www.etsu.edu/biology/roan-mtn/> where you can also find a photo gallery, species databases, and archives of past newsletters. You can print a reservation form for the Fall Rally for mailing. Please help us by honoring the deadline for meal reservations which is Wed., Sept. 6. Call Anne Whittemore for assistance at 423 477-2235.

In Memoriam

**Randy Rogers
Sept. 24, 1958 - Aug. 4, 2006**

Randy Rogers, a friend of Roan Mountain and a true amateur naturalist, lost his battle with cancer early on the morning of Aug. 4th. Randy, as a hike-leader for our rallies, impressed us with his easy, friendly manner and his breadth of knowledge of the natural world. His particular love of butterflies and wild flowers was evident as he strolled along sharing information about their remarkable natural history. Our condolences are extended to his wife, Mitsi, and his family. Memorial gifts may be made by going to www.canceroutreach.com and clicking on Family Resources tab, Foundation Outreach.



Fall Rally 2004
Making a plaster cast of a deer print

Report of the 2006 Roan Mountain Butterfly Count

The 2006 Butterfly Count on Roan Mountain was held Saturday, July 15, 2006 from 10 am to 6 pm. The weather was challenging, with very little sunshine, temperatures from the mid 60's to the low 80's, and occasional rain. Nonetheless, our hardy band of intrepid counters persevered to find 144 individual butterflies of 19 different species.

The people who participated were Rob Biller, Dianne Draper, Don Holt, April Mattes (Dianne's sister visiting from California), Brookie Potter, Jean Potter, and Kim Stroud. The places they searched included Ripshin Lake, Roan Mtn. State Park, Hampton Creek Cove State Natural Area (with additional help there from a herd of bait-dropping horses and a pack of butterfly hounds), Twin Springs Recreation Area in Cherokee National Forest, Carver's Gap and the Rhododendron Gardens. Also, Rob Biller searched along the Appalachian Trail from Carver's Gap to Grassy Ridge.

The hoped-for show of Aphrodite Fritillaries in the Rhododendron Gardens did not pan out, due to clouds and drizzle. Our only Aphrodite was found at Hampton Creek Cove, while none of the other large Fritillaries seen there would slow down enough for a positive identification to species.

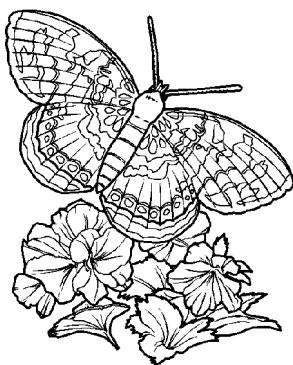
The most commonly encountered species on the count was the Silver-spotted Skipper, followed by Eastern Tiger Swallowtail. Common Wood-Nymphs made a good showing as well. (To my eye, the Common Wood-Nymphs we saw were darker brown than most of the individuals that I am accustomed to seeing, and with a more orangey hue to the yellow forewing patches.)

Also, Monarchs were evident in fair numbers despite poor weather, a hopeful sign for this much beloved species. And for comparison the group was fortunate enough to get a good viewing of the look-a-like Viceroy. (Saw that, nothing to it...next step, grass skippers! :-)

At Twin Springs we searched for and found caterpillars. Under the leaves of Dutchman's Pipe (*Aristolochia macrophylla*) we found 11 Pipevine Swallowtail larvae. And an organized search of Black Cohosh (*Cimicifuga racemosa*) flower spikes revealed 41 green and white Summer Azure larvae, and 47 dark purple Appalachian Azure larvae. I feel quite certain the green and white Summer Azure larvae were undercounted on the white flowers and buds. We finished our "caterpillar crawl" just in time to beat a hasty retreat to our cars before the looming rain shower arrived.

Next year the annual Butterfly Count on Roan Mountain TN / NC will be, as usual, on the third Saturday in July. That will be July 21, 2007. What surprises does it hold in store for us? Plan on being there!

Pipevine Swallowtail - 12
Eastern Tiger Swallowtail - 16
Cabbage White - 14
Clouded Sulphur - 01
Orange Sulphur - 05
Eastern Tailed-Blue - 12
Summer Azure - 05
Variegated Fritillary - 01
Aphrodite Fritillary - 01
Meadow Fritillary - 01
Pearl Crescent - 10
Common Buckeye - 02
Red-spotted Purple - 01



Viceroy - 01
Common Wood-Nymph - 15
Monarch - 06
Silver-spotted Skipper - 25
Common Sootywing - 02
unidentified Sulphur sp. - 01
unidentified Swallowtail sp. - 03
unidentified Fritillary sp. - 09
unidentified Grass Skipper - 01
(the only grass skipper found, therefore countable as an additional species)
TOTAL - Adult butterflies =
144 individuals, 19 species

*Don Holt, compiler
Johnson City, TN*

Progress Report

Friends of Roan Mountain has been working along with staff members of Roan Mountain State Park to develop the Tom Gray Trail as an interpretive nature trail. The trail, named for one of the early leaders of the Spring Wildflower Tours (see the Spring 2003 newsletter at <http://www.etsu.edu/biology/roan-mtn/newsletterarticles/newsletterarticles.htm>), begins at the Doe River near the campground picnic shelter. The interpretive trail will feature numbered posts and a corresponding brochure noting ecological features along its path. Many thanks go to Pat Gagan, Wes Williams, Gary Barrigar and Jerry Nagel for their efforts on this project. If all goes well, you may be able to see the final results at the fall rally.

For more information about other projects and plans of Friends of Roan Mountain, join us for the annual meeting at the Fall Rally on Saturday, Sept. 9th at 5:45 p.m.



The question is not what you look at, but what you see.

It is only necessary to behold the least fact or phenomenon, however familiar, from a point a hair's breadth aside from our habitual path or routine, to be overcome, enchanted by its beauty and significance ... To perceive freshly, with fresh senses is to be inspired.

— Henry David Thoreau



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