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Fall 2007

Sharing Our Stories, Preserving The History

For almost half a century we've been gathering to study and enjoy the beauty and diversity of Roan Mountain during the spring and fall of the year. This September marks the 45th anniversary of the Fall Naturalists' Rally. Next May will be the 50th anniversary of the Spring Rally which began as the Carter County Wildflower Tour and Bird Walks.

In 1997 Friends of Roan Mountain was established in an effort to insure that the rallies would continue to thrive. The membership, which currently numbers 187, includes many couples and families. So the actual number of "friends" is much greater.

In recent years, the Naturalists' Rallies have expanded to include not one but two evening dinners and programs. We've moved from the old Cloudland Elementary School to the convention center which is generously provided by Roan Mountain State Park. Saturday lunch-time workshops are now offered as well as Sunday afternoon trips.

The rallies keep changing and growing, but the most important elements remain the same – a beautiful setting, fascinating natural history, knowledgeable leaders and warm, friendly people having a good time!

In past newsletters we have attempted to give you some of the history of the rallies and acquaint you with a few of the individuals who were instrumental in the early years. You may read past articles in the newsletter archives on our website:

<http://www.etsu.edu/biology/roan-mtn/newsletterarticles/newsletterarticles.htm>

It is a welcome sign of the success of the rallies that new faces appear each year. Encountering new folks with shared interests in the natural world is one of the pleasure of these events. Another delight is reconnecting with those who travel year after year to the mountain

for this gathering of nature enthusiasts. Newcomers and old-timers alike contribute to this unique experience of the Roan Mountain Naturalists' Rallies. Sitting around at lunch or dinner recounting the finds of the day is a perennial pastime at the rallies.

This year we are initiating an effort to share our stories and preserve the history of the rallies. Many of the newcomers never met Freddie Behrend who started it all. The early custom of partaking of New Jersey Tea is a thing of the past. But some of you can share those stories with us. Hiking with Tom Gray, Lee Herndon, John Warden or Arthur Smith is, regrettably, an opportunity of the past. Some of you have memories of these excellent naturalists and others not mentioned here. We don't want to lose those stories. We are asking you to share your memories. What stands out in your mind? What experience do you treasure?

On Saturday afternoon at the upcoming fall rally, tape recorders will be set up at the convention center. Will you take a few moments to come by and preserve the history? Share a favorite memory about the early days of the rally. But this is not only for the long-time participants. Perhaps something fun or poignant occurred just last year. Anyone who has a story to tell is welcome - even if it is something that just happened that morning!

Now, if you are shy about speaking into a tape recorder, you are urged to write down the memory you would like to share. The tapes will then be transcribed and the stories compiled and then placed on our website.

Help us honor our past and keep the tradition alive, won't you?



The Spirit of the Appalachian Mountains

— Harold Jerrell

Listen and you can almost hear it, “The Spirit of the Appalachian Mountains”. The mountains that make up our southern Appalachians contain some of the most magnificent scenery in America.

As a young boy growing up in southwest Virginia, I spent most of my free time walking and exploring the ridges and valleys around my home. Within one year of graduating from The University of Tennessee, with a Bachelor of Science in Forestry, I was asked if I would be interested in a position with the Virginia Department of Forestry. For over ten years, my job responsibilities took me to locations that few people would ever visit. I used my wife’s first paycheck to purchase a 35mm camera and from that moment on, I have made an effort to capture the many moods of nature and wildlife.



Photo by Harold Jerrell

White Rocks near Ewing, VA is part of the Cumberland Gap National Historical Park. The mountain and rocks are in the park while the foreground is owned privately. The sun had just risen lighting the mountain but not yet reaching the ridge and foreground. The White Rocks were an important landmark for early settlers traveling west on the Wilderness Road. It was one days journey from this point to Cumberland Gap. Today it is about a 10-15 minute drive.

The diversity of plant and animal species found in the southern Appalachian Mountains is unequalled. Within five miles of my home, there are 10 biologically important caves, 17 rare animals and 16 rare plants. Some of these plants and animals are not found anywhere else in the world.

“The Spirit of the Appalachian Mountains” will take us on a digital photo journey. We begin by exploring light, the essence of photography. Walk along the Appalachian Trail at sunrise, listen to a mountain stream as it meanders quietly beneath a canopy of trees, look from ridge tops and see autumn fog as it blankets valleys below. All bring about a feeling of oneness with nature. Witness the spectacular change in colors as plant life completes another cycle and prepares for a winter’s rest.

Hear the first sounds of the spring peeper as he informs us that spring has arrived and new life will soon begin. Trailing arbutus blossoms signal that the resurrection of plant life has begun and will be followed by an all out display of glory as spring bursts forth.

The lazy days of summer soon follow and wildlife gives birth to its young. "Buddy" a ruffed grouse, provides insight into one of nature's magnificent birds. Watch him as he struts to attract a mate or walks along a mountain stream. Listen to the wind as it whispers among the pine needles on a never-ending journey.

Soon the Appalachian mountaintops begin to produce clues that another change is about to take place as the lazy days of summer slowly give way to fall. Winter snows will soon blanket barren fields. The purity of fresh fallen snow and a turquoise colored sky signify that winter has arrived.

"The Spirit of the Appalachian Mountains" showcases the beauty of our region and instills within us an awareness to protect our natural and cultural resources for the present as well as for the future. Perhaps Ansel Adams said it best when he stated, "Guard it well, for it is far more precious than money...once destroyed, nature's beauty cannot be repurchased at any price."

Harold Jerrell will be the featured speaker on Friday evening, September 7, at 7:30 p.m. at our Fall Naturalists' Rally. Harold is the Agricultural Extension Agent for Lee County, Virginia. His award-winning photographs have been featured on the cover of the Virginia Wildlife Magazine. You can view a sampling of Harold's beautiful photographs on our website.

Report of the JULY 2007 Roan Mtn., TN/NC Butterfly Count

The areas covered included : around the Visitors Center in the state park, Hampton Creek Cove State Natural Area, the Rhododendron Gardens, Hummingbird Hill, the wetland under the sewage treatment plant in the park, and a nice field of clover by the road in the village of Roan Mtn.

There were 14 participants in 1 party for 7 hrs afield between 10am and 6:30 pm (arithmetic affected by lunch at Mad Martha's Restaurant :-)). Participants included Bob Baldwin, Nancy Baldwin, Gil Derouen, Diane Draper, Don Holt, Dave Kirschke, Len Kirschke, Pat Kirschke, Larry McDaniel, Joe McGuinness, Mary Stewart, Bob Stidham, Shirley Stidham, and Kim Stroud.

Weather was partly to mostly cloudy, calm, and cool (58 - 75 degrees F) The cool temps probably depressed butterfly activity some, especially at high elevations. The Aphrodite Fritillaries at the Rhododendron gardens weren't present in large numbers as hoped for, but were active enough for a fun afternoon of practice in field identifications trying to distinguish between them and the Great Spangled Fritillaries.

Pipevine Swallowtail - 113
Eastern Tiger Swallowtail - 6
Cabbage White - 19
Clouded Sulphur - 8
Orange Sulphur - 29
Eastern Tailed-Blue - 25
Great Spangled Fritillary - 5
Aphrodite Fritillary - 28
undetermined Speyeria species - 10
Meadow Fritillary - 15
Pearl Crescent - 37
Question Mark - 1
undetermined Polygonia species - 1
Mourning Cloak - 1
Red Admiral - 9



Common Buckeye - 9
Common Wood Nymph - 11
Monarch - 3
Silver-spotted Skipper - 26
Hoary Edge - 1
Clouded Skipper - 2
Least Skipper - 2
Northern Broken-Dash - 1
Sachem - 5
Dun Skipper - 1

23 total species
368 total individuals

submitted by Don Holt, compiler

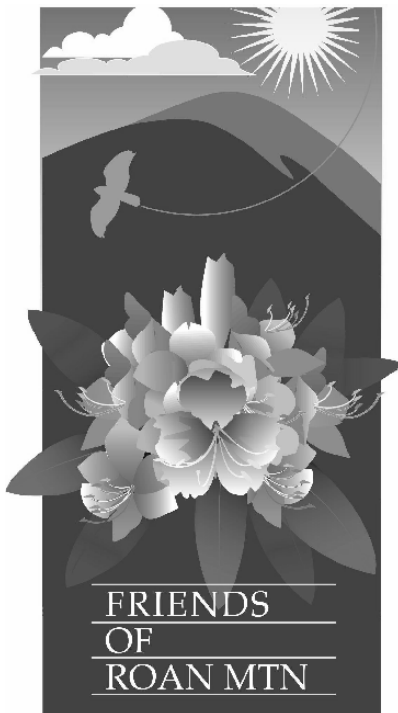
Please Help Anne!

Anne Whittemore, treasurer of Friends of Roan Mountain, does a tremendous amount of work for the Naturalists' Rallies. She keeps track of the membership roll, recording contact information and mailing renewal reminders and membership cards. She oversees the collection of fees for the programs and hikes. One of her most difficult tasks is taking care of the reservations for the dinners and lunches served at the rallies. We are greatly indebted to Anne for her willingness to do this job!!

Please help make Anne's work easier by mailing your reservation for meals along with the appropriate check. The deadline for receipt of meal reservations is **Wednesday, September 5**. Remember there is limited space in the convention center for dinners. So mail your reservations as soon as possible. Reservation forms are found on your brochure or you may download a reservation form at our website (<http://www.etsu.edu/biology/roan-mtn/>). And say thank-you to Anne when you see her!



If the sight of the blue skies fills you with joy, if a blade of grass springing up in the fields has power to move you, if the simple things of nature have a message that you understand, rejoice, for your soul is alive. ~Eleonora Duse



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