

Blue Ridge- Ancient and Majestic – Magnificent Words and Images

Blue Ridge – Ancient and Majestic brings together Jerry Greer's photography and Charles Maynard's essays in a collaboration which reveals the timeless Blue Ridge in new and fresh ways. Greer's lens focuses on the natural wonders of the region, while Maynard's pen celebrates the cultural and natural history.

By whatever appellation— America's First Frontier, The Nation's Back Porch, Ancient and Majestic, America's Favorite Drive, Shaconage—the Blue Ridge stand as eastern America's largest collection of protected land, providing a haven for an incredible diversity of life both plant and animal.

The words "Blue Ridge" can be used in various ways. Geographically, the term "Blue Ridge" applies to the eastern range of mountains that runs from Georgia into Maryland. Geologically, the Blue Ridge province is a large teardrop or inverted comma about 550 miles in length and nearly 100 miles in width at its southern terminus, tapering off to about 10 to 20 miles in width in the north. The Blue Ridge Mountains stretch from Georgia through North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania.

Humans first came to the Blue Ridge over twelve thousand years ago and have formed cultures that have survived a challenging environment and have celebrated the uniqueness of mountain life in song and story. The wondrous beauty of these eastern mountains attracts both eager visitors and happy inhabitants. This popularity creates a number of challenges, from air quality to over- development.

Jerry D. Greer, Photographer, was introduced to the wonders of the wilderness at an early age. Growing up in the Blue Ridge Mountains bestowed in him a desire to protect and conserve their ever vanishing ecosystems. By choice, he works almost exclusively in the southern Appalachian region and Jerry's love for his native mountains fuels his conservation and photographic endeavors. He uses his personal connections with wild places, together with a very contemplative eye, to create his beautiful and evocative imagery. His internationally acclaimed and award winning images have been published in numerous books, calendars, magazines, and conservation and advertising campaigns. Some of his clients include The Conservation Fund, Blue Ridge Country, WNC Magazine, Backpacker, Royal Robbins, LL Bean, The Lyndhurst Foundation, Wild South, Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy and The Southern Environmental Law Center; among others. Jerry is author and photographer of seven books and one yearly wall calendar. He serves on the board for the Friends of Roan Mountain and is the founding partner of Mountain Trail Press. He lives in Johnson City, Tennessee with his wife, Abbey and their daughter, Serén.

Charles W. Maynard, Author, knows the people and places of the Blue Ridge through his career as a United Methodist minister, an author, and a storyteller. His love of the region is evidenced by the many books and articles he has written about the land and its people. Charles was the first Executive Director of Friends of Great Smoky Mountains National Park, and later served as the Director of Advancement for the International Storytelling Center in Jonesborough, Tennessee. Charles is currently the Director of

Development for Camp and Retreat Ministries in the Holston Conference of the United Methodist Church. He serves on the Board for the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, Discover Life in America, and the Richard Haiman National Parks Foundation. Charles has traveled extensively with his wife, Janice, and their two daughters, Caroline and Anna. He is the proud grandfather of Anastasia, Ainsley, and Allie.

Blue Ridge – Ancient and Majestic presents stunning images of life in these eternal mountains. On Friday evening, May 7, 2010, Jerry and Charles will present their new book to the 52nd Spring Naturalists Rally at the Roan Mountain State Park Conference Center. This FSC Certified “green” printed book will be available at the rally and, of course, autographed by Jerry and Charles!

What Is Killing The Bats? When Will It Get To Your State?

-- Carol Zokaite

February 25, 2010 marks a year since White Nose Syndrome was found in a Virginia cave. Named “**White Nose Syndrome**” (WNS) because of the tell-tale white fungus observed on the noses of infected bats, the syndrome has killed over a million bats in the last 4 year. WNS affects insect eating bats in the eastern U.S. as they hibernate in caves and mines. Bats are losing their fat reserves long before the winter is over and dying of starvation.

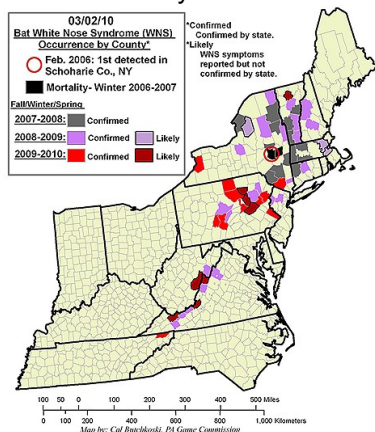


Bland, Rockingham and Smyth. By early March of 2010 WNS had been found in 3 more counties, Craig, Tazewell and Highland with sightings in several additional caves. We fear WNS is already in many other caves in Virginia. Additionally, WNS was found in the largest bat hibernacula in the Virginias, a cave in Pendleton County, West Virginia. Unfortunately WNS was also found this winter in a Tennessee cave, just over the state line from Bristol, VA.

Other signs of White-nose Syndrome in bats include; bats flying outside during the day, dead or dying bats on the ground or on buildings during the winter, bats not arousing at all after being disturbed and bats clustered in the winter in sections of caves or mines not normally used for winter roosts, especially near the entrance

WNS doesn't only affect bats – it impacts our whole ecosystem. Bats are an essential, beneficial part of the ecosystem. Consuming over half their body weight in insects each night, bats reduce the need for insecticides and are the major predator of night-flying insects. Bats in the U.S. eat thousands of tons of insects nightly. Decimation of bat populations will cause a substantial ecological ripple effect, with far-reaching consequences.

White Nose Syndrome was first discovered in New York



State in 2006. Since that time the Syndrome has spread across the New England states and south through Pennsylvania and the Virginias into Tennessee. In the winter of 2009 WNS was found in five different caves in Virginia, affecting five different counties, Bath, Giles,

Many caves have been closed to caving. In general people are asked not to enter bat caves, especially those where WNS has been found. If you are thinking about a caving trip you are asked to honor all cave closures and advisories for private and government land, and follow strict cleaning and decontamination procedures for cave clothing and equipment.

For more information on White Nose Syndrome visit www.caves.org/WNS or the Virginia DCR web site http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural_heritage/karsthome.shtml or goggle VA Karst Program.

Carol Zokaite is the National Coordinator for Project Underground, a national education program on caves and karst awareness. Carol will present *Bats and Caves: How Do They Affect Us?* at the Spring Naturalists' Rally on Saturday, May 8, at 7:30 p.m. in the Roan Mountain State Convention Center

Snow for the 3rd Winter Rally

--David Hall



Rocks along the Doe River were dusted with white for 2010's Winter Naturalists' Rally, and the hardy hikers loved it as the snowflakes continued to fall during the afternoon. Tim McDowell, who had brought in a large cache of winter twigs for his morning talk on winter tree and shrub identification, led a hike on the Park's Blue-2 Trail. Here the hikers saw both red and sugar maples growing together and felt the sharp sugar maple buds as opposed to the more rounded leaf buds of the reds. Hemlocks showed the ravages of the woolly adelgid, but will get at least a mild reprieve from the recent single digit

temperatures and the abundant moisture from the December/January snows.

Jeremy Stout and Bob Whittemore led a second group of hikers up the snow covered trail to the old Peg Leg iron mine near the Park's visitor center. Here Jeremy recounted the rough & dangerous life of the miner—stories handed down from his great grand uncle; the gneiss rock surrounding the prized magnetite was brittle and often fell on the miners as they loaded an ore cart inside the mine. At the turn of the last century his uncle drove a covered “hack” for the wealthy patrons of General Wilder's Cloudland Hotel from the old Roan Mountain rail station. His pistol often deterred thoughts of robbery from the poor miners. Ore was taken out of the Peg Leg off and on until the end of the 1920's.

Botanist Jamey Donaldson presented beautiful slides of Round Bald, Jane Bald, and Grassy Ridge; he spoke of the balds' origins, ancient browsing herbivores, and their present day restoration and maintenance. Successive shots of the invasive Canada blackberries being browsed back by his herd of Angora goats were a pleasure to see, the grasses and sedges greener and higher from soil nutrients recycled via the goats after munching the woody invaders. (See the Friends' Baa-tany Goat Project at <http://www.friendsofroanmtn.org/goat%20project/goat%20project.html> .) We also saw shots of the green alder communities, a Pleistocene relic, as well as Greenland sandwort, Roan rattlesnake root, Carolina saxifrage, rare plants endemic to the grassy bald areas. These and others, including the beautiful Gray's lily, are not only being threatened by an invasion of woody plants, but by ever increasing numbers of hikers and campers.

Kerry Wood, trails ranger of the Cherokee National Forest, had solutions and helpful guides to mitigate the ecological disturbance from backcountry campers in his presentation of “Leave No Trace”. His slides of good and destructive hiking and camping habits, from waste disposal to respect for wildlife to “leave what you find”, were a welcome sight, and for many of us, a gentle reminder.

Though the snow still lingers at the top of the Roan at this writing, the weather is beginning to turn; crowns of distant maples are beginning to show red as buds swell; pastures are once again turning green. Can't wait to celebrate the peak of all this change at the Spring Naturalists' Rally on May 7-9.

In Memoriam

Friends of Roan Mountain notes with sadness the passing of member, Hank Gamble - aviator, environmentalist, father and husband - on March 20, 2010. Hank, who loved the Appalachian Mountains, was the recipient of a Volunteer Service Award by the Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy. His exemplary career as a charter and corporate pilot led him to have many adventures. In lieu of flowers, the family request donations may be sent to the Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy, 34 Wall Street Suite 502, Asheville, NC 28801.

The FORM Board Makes Changes to By-laws

The Friends of Roan Mountain Board of Directors recently voted to make some much needed changes to the By-laws. While a number of these changes will streamline the operation of the organization, the following will better reflect the changing mission of FORM and better meet the needs of the membership.

The original purposes were:

To support the Roan Mountain Naturalists' Rallies and other naturalist and environmental education activities on Roan Mountain and to support Roan Mountain State Park in its naturalist and environmental mission."

The new By-laws add:

To support scientific studies and efforts by other organizations and agencies involved in protecting and preserving Roan Mountain.

Board members are elected at our annual membership meeting, held during the Fall Naturalists' Rally, to serve a two-year term. The original By-laws stated that **"A nominating committee selected by the Board shall solicit nominations from the members and prepare a slate of candidates to be voted on by the members.** The new By-laws add, **"This slate will be made available to the membership in the FORM Newsletter and/or other means preceding the annual meeting."**

The original By-laws stated that **"officers will be a President, Vice-President, Secretary and a Treasurer. These officers will be selected by the Board from the Board by simple majority vote."** The new bylaws add that **"That election will be held at the first Board meeting after the annual membership meeting."**

The complete By-laws are available upon request to any FORM member. Any member is welcome submit items for the Board's consideration and/or to attend board meetings. You may do so by contacting the Board's president, Bob Whittemore at (423) 477-2235 or robert_whittemore@yahoo.com.

SUPPORT YOUR FRIENDS!



One of the ways you can support the mission of FORM is to participate in the raffles held at the Spring and Fall Rallies. We gratefully accept donations of nature-related items (hiking/camping gear, artwork, plants, note cards, books, mugs, etc.). We've also raffled items such as local honey, homemade apple butter and native plants. Tickets are \$1.00 each, and all proceeds go to our grant fund which supports research and conservation efforts on Roan Mountain. You can also purchase attractive and eco-friendly stainless steel water bottles with the Friends' logo.





Second Annual "Xtreme Roan Adventures" Kids Naturalists' Rally -- July 31

Last summer's first annual Kids Naturalists' Rally - *Xtreme Roan Adventures*, directed by Larry McDaniel, was a huge success! Over 200 participants were joined by more than a dozen trip leaders plus volunteers from Friends of Roan Mountain for an exciting day experiencing the biodiversity and beauty of the Roan. Visit the home page of our website, <http://www.friendsofroanmtn.org/>, for links to photos and audio interviews.

This year there is an exciting lineup of nature activities for kids of all ages. The one-day event will offer a variety of outdoor activities including nature walks (animal tracking, stream ecology, beginners birding, salamander bioblitz, etc.), an Appalachian Trail hike across open mountain summit, fossils, games and crafts. You will not want to miss the keynote speaker this year - Doug Elliott! Doug is a storyteller, naturalist and herbalist! "He performs a lively collection of traditional tales, ancient legends, inspiring stories, folklore and outrageous personal narratives. He flavors them with regional dialects, lively harmonica riffs, facts stranger than fiction and more than a few belly laughs". (<http://www.dougelliott.com/>)

Space is limited, so register early! The registration deadline is July 24. Please mail registration along with payment (members may attend free) of \$2.00 per participant to: Xtreme Roan Adventures, P.O. Box 276, Piney Flats, TN 37686. For more information contact Larry McDaniel at Larry@PorchLightInsects.com, (423)773-9234 or Ken Turner at Ken@MountainTips.com, (423)538-3419.



Ranger Marty Silver and his captivated young audience.

Roan Mountain State Park Dedicates a Monarch Butterfly Waystation



Roan Mountain State Park's Miller Homestead was officially dedicated as Monarch Waystation #3251 during the 2009 Fall Naturalists' Rally. To help make the occasion especially noteworthy, world-renowned scientist, Dr. Lincoln Brower, was on hand to nail the waystation sign in place. Dr. Brower, a research biologist at Sweet Briar College has dedicated more than 50 years to studying and protecting the monarch butterfly. His presentation at the rally, *The Grand Saga of the Monarch Butterfly*, thoroughly engaged the audience in the biology and conservation of monarchs.

Traveling hundreds to thousands of miles, from as far north as Canada, monarch butterflies migrate to overwintering sites in the forested highlands of Michoacán, Mexico. The peak of the monarch migration in our region occurs from mid-September through the early days of October.

Watch at the University of Kansas, encourages the establishment of monarch habitat by schools, municipalities, parks and private citizens to support the butterflies on their long annual migration. Monarch butterflies have two main requirements when it comes to food plants. Milkweed is the only plant on which monarch caterpillars feed. Then as adults, they need butterfly-friendly flowers for nectar. The Miller Farmstead has an abundance of both.

Friends of Roan Mountain has donated to the Park two posters depicting the life cycle of the monarch butterfly. One will be placed at the Homestead while the other will be posted at the new nature display at the Park's Visitor Center. Additionally, Monarch Waystation brochures will be available to visitors at the Miller Homestead display, courtesy of FORM.





Roan Mountain Naturalists' Rallies

Spring	First Friday - Sunday in May	May 7-9, 2010
Youth	Summer Saturday TBA - check website	July 31, 2010
Fall	Friday - Sunday in September after Labor Day	Sept. 10-12, 2010
Winter	Saturday in February nearest Valentine's Day	Feb. 12, 2011



Reservations are required for the catered meals at the rally. The deadline to reserve dinners and lunch at the Spring Rally is Tuesday, May 4th!

Please pay in advance and make all checks payable to: Friends of Roan Mountain
Return to: Anne Whittemore, 208 Mark Drive,
Gray, TN 37615 (423), 477-2235

You can find a reservation form online at
<http://www.friendsofroanmtn.org/>
Click link to 52nd Annual Roan Mountain Spring Rally



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Printed on recycled paper

