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Winter 2000

## Arthur Sneller Smith The Passing of a Legend

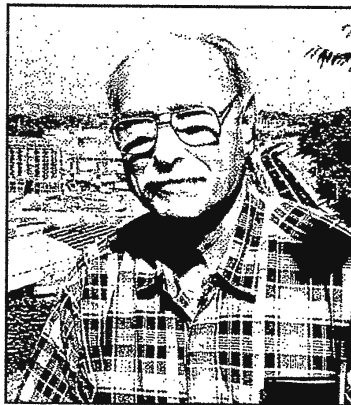
— Judy Murray

On December 20, 1999, the planet lost a devoted defender, and we lost a dear friend. Arthur Sneller Smith passed away following complications of surgery. Each of us has his or her own special memories of Arthur, and several of us who were gathered in his hospital room on his last night shared heart-warming, personal stories along with accounts of his accomplishments. We have all learned more than we knew about this multi-dimensional gentleman.

Arthur grew up on a farm in White Springs, Florida, and began botanizing at age eight! He graduated from the University of Florida, served as a Lieutenant in the U. S. Navy, and worked as a Chemical Engineer at Tennessee Eastman Company from 1945 until his retirement in 1976. He dedicated the last 23 years of his life to championing the cause for clean air and water, for healthy forests and wildlands, to the survival of endangered flora and fauna, and to instill in others a sense of wonder and a responsibility for the protection of earth's treasures.

It is fitting to recognize here some of his seemingly countless projects and awards. Arthur was a Governor's appointee to the Tennessee Solid Waste Management Board and was on the Technical Oversight Committee of the Southern Appalachian Mountain Initiative. He served as Conservation Chair for the Tennessee Chapter of the Sierra Club and co-founded the club's Southern Appalachian Highlands Ecoregion Task Force. In 1991, the Sierra Club honored him as

one of the 100 environmental heroes across the nation. The Southern Appalachian Forest Coalition gave him its Lifetime Conservation Award in 1999. The Coalition for Jobs and the Environment named its annual award in his honor. He was a member of the Stewardship Committee of the Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy and received their Stanley A. Murray Volunteer of the Year award. A self-taught botanist and birder, Arthur was honored by the Tennessee Environmental Educators' Association as Educator of the Year for his teaching expertise at our Roan Mountain Naturalist Rally field trips and numerous other naturalist events.



Kpt. Times-News File Photo

Among the groups he helped found and guide are the Southern Appalachian Forest Coalition, Coalition for Jobs and the Environment, Cherokee Forest Voices, Boone Lake Property Owners Association, Scenic Tennessee, Tennessee Citizens for Wilderness Planning, and the Tennessee Environmental Council. He was instrumental in creating the Pond Mountain and Big Laurel Branch Wilderness Areas.

Arthur was a frequent commentator on the WETS public radio program, "Environmental News," and a volunteer for the station during its annual fund-raising week. Among his other interests and talents were gourmet cooking and tending a fine vegetable garden and his collection of over 90 varieties of antique roses.

(continued on page 2)

Kingsport's City Planning Director Fred Crowell had this to say about Arthur: "I think the Kingsport community--and indeed America--has lost a marvelous, caring person who brought a passion to the environmental movement." Arthur Smith was the embodiment of what it means to "think globally and act locally." Nearly every regional environmental organization could say, "He was ours." Arthur taught us well, and his legacy will live on in each of us as we carry forward the work of conservation education and land stewardship--with a passion!

Arthur is survived by his widow Elizabeth. The family has requested that those wishing to make a memorial tribute send it to the "Arthur Smith Memorial Fund" of Cherokee Forest Voices, c/o Dean Whitworth, 698 Carlie Bunton Lane, Butler, TN. 37640.



## 1999 Roan Mountain CBC

The Roan Mountain Christmas Bird Count by the Lee & Lois Herndon Chapter of TOS was held on Dec. 19. Participants found 44 different birds.

### **1999 ROAN MOUNTAIN CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT**

- |                                 |                                |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Mallard- 5                   | 23. Tufted Titmouse- 6         |
| 2. Hooded Merganser- 9          | 24. White-breasted Nuthatch- 4 |
| 3. Turkey Vulture- 2            | 25. Brown Creeper- 3           |
| 4. Red-tailed Hawk- 5           | 26. Carolina Wren- 15          |
| 5. American Kestrel- 3          | 27. Winter Wren- 4             |
| 6. Ruffed Grouse- 2             | 28. Northern Mockingbird- 4    |
| 7. Northern Bobwhite- 8         | 29. Eastern Bluebird- 22       |
| 8. Killdeer- 1                  | 30. Golden-crowned Kinglet- 9  |
| 9. Rock Dove- 35                | 31. Starling- 34               |
| 10. Mourning Dove- 9            | 32. House Sparrow- 69          |
| 11. Eastern Screech Owl- 1      | 33. Common Grackle- 4          |
| 12. Great Horned Owl- 1         | 34. Northern Cardinal- 16      |
| 13. Barred Owl- 1               | 35. Purple Finch- 4            |
| 14. Belted Kingfisher- 4        | 36. Pine Siskin- 45            |
| 15. Pileated Woodpecker- 1      | 37. Eastern Towhee- 7          |
| 16. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker- 2 | 38. Junco- 43                  |
| 17. Hairy Woodpecker- 2         | 39. Field Sparrow- 18          |
| 18. Downy Woodpecker- 4         | 40. White-throated Sparrow- 49 |
| 19. Blue Jay- 12                | 41. Fox Sparrow- 2             |
| 20. Common Raven- 5             | 42. Swamp Sparrow- 3           |
| 21. Common Crow- 76             | 43. Song Sparrow- 84           |
| 22. Carolina Chickadee- 21      | 44. House Finch- 10            |

The following article appeared in The Johnson City Press on January 11, 2000.

## Volunteers to move portion of Appalachian Trail

By Kristen Hebestreet

Johnson City Press Outdoors Writer

Volunteers will move about three miles of the Appalachian Trail on the Roan Massif because rain and hikers are carving deep ruts in the steep, straight trail.

This well-known section of the Appalachian Trail passes through Carver's Gap near U.S. Highway 19E at the Tennessee/North Carolina border. The trail will still be near Grassy Ridge and pass over Round Bald, but the new path will zig and zag to slow the erosion, said Morgan Sommerville, Appalachian Trail Conference regional representative.

The trail has been in the same location for a long time and the water wants to follow the trail, which is a recipe for erosion," Sommerville said. "(The erosion has) been bad for decades. It was bad when it was privately owned and it's bad now. It's been such a problem, it's difficult to deal with."

The new trail design was complicated by the colonies of rare and endangered plants on the Roan Massif. It took 10 years to get the project designed and approved, Sommerville said, and it will be another five before the trail relocation is expected to be complete.

"The portion we're going to work on this year will be from the Round Bald section," he said. "We hope to get that done by the end of this summer"

The Tennessee Eastman Hiking Club, which maintains about 125 miles of the Appalachian Trail, will do most of this trail relocation project. The Eastman club, Appalachian Trail Conference, U.S. Forest Service, Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service all worked on this plan.

The balds are high mountain meadows noted for the past 200 years for their unique ecological and scenic



qualities. The Roan balds are among the oldest documented balds, with plants like the Gray's lily that are adapted only to that habitat.

The proposed trail was moved at one place to dodge a colony of spruce-fir moss spiders, which are tiny tarantula-like spiders about the size of a BB, said Nora Murdock, U.S. Fish and Wildlife

Service wildlife biologist.

Making trails through the mountain meadows can be difficult, since the swatches of grass may be six inches thick and the soil underneath those highly erodible. In some places, trail builders will put down a synthetic layer of geotextile carpet covered with gravel, which will provide a good walking surface that won't wash away, Sommerville said.

Gravel for the project may be hauled by helicopter, if any are available. Sod cut away by the new construction will be used to patch the old trail. Trail bridges and stepping stones will be placed on some of the drainages.

"It's a famous part of the trail up there, for sure," Sommerville said. "A beautiful section of the trail. It will still pass through Carver's Gap. It will take a little different route going up to the top of the mountain in order to eliminate the steep, straight-line portion that is eroding."

Old railroad timbers were used to reinforce one part of the trail on the Roan adjacent to Highway 19E, but people walked around the stairs and made new trails, then made newer trails around those, said Vern Maddux, U.S. Forest Service Nolichucky/Unaka District natural resource management team leader for the Cherokee National Forest.

# State Park Happenings

## Traditional Arts Winter Workshops:

Saturday, January 22 - Spinning Workshop

Saturday, February 12th - Flintknapping, beading, primitive looms, cordage



## Valentine Tree: February 1 - 14

Come by the Park Headquarters with your own handcrafted valentine.

Any art medium may be used. Your creation will be hung on our tree and

you will become eligible to win one of our exciting valentine prizes! Random drawing on February 14th at the Park Convention Center. Time to be announced. You do not have to be present to win.

## Annual Easter Egg Hunt and Bonnet Contest: Saturday, April 15 1:00 p.m.

At the Park Amphitheater with over 2,500 eggs, door prizes, and prize eggs hidden amongst different age groups. The most original and creative handcrafted Easter bonnets will be awarded trophies and prizes.

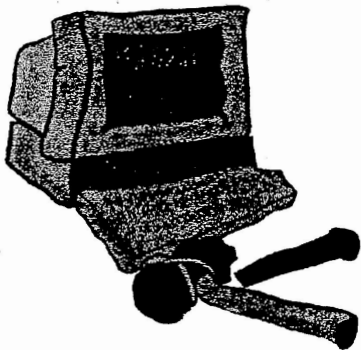
## 42nd Annual Roan Mountain Spring Naturalists' Rally: Friday - Sunday May 5 - 7

Please note that a Friday night program has been added to the spring rally this year. The dinner will also be served on Friday night, rather than Saturday. Our featured speakers this year are, Ron Austing, noted bird photographer and videographer from Indiana on Friday; and Chris McGrath with North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission on Saturday evening. Mr. Austing's program title will be, "Looking Back - That was Then; This is Now: 50 Years of Photographing Birds." On Saturday, Mr. McGrath will be presenting a program entitled, "Night Flyers," focusing primarily on the northern flying squirrel and many endangered and unique bats of our region.

## 19th Annual Junior Trout Tournament: Saturday, May 13

A full day of fishing for ages 7 - 15 years old! Marvelous prizes awarded by numbered tags on the fish. A must for lovers of this great sport.

For information on any of the above events, or for a copy of our Special Events 2000 brochure, or to be added to one of our mailing lists, please call or write: Jennifer Laughlin, Roan Mountain State Park, 1015 Hwy 143, Roan Mountain, TN, 37687. Phone: 423-772-0190 or 1-800-250-8620 Ext 108.



## WEB SITE UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Jerry Nagel and Tom Laughlin have been hard at work setting up a web site for Friends of Roan Mountain. You can check it out at

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

# MEETING OF FRIENDS

The annual meeting, open to all members of **Friends of Roan Mountain**, met on September 11, 1999, one hour prior to the Saturday night program of the Naturalists Rally. The following slate of officers was motioned and accepted:

- President: Gary Barrigar
- Vice President: Jennifer Laughlin
- Treasurer: Anne Whittemore
- Secretary: Kathy Brown

The following committees were established with chairpersons:

- Newsletter Chair: Nancy Barrigar
- Publicity Chair: Charlynn Campbell
- Web Page Design Co-Chair: Tom Laughlin & Jerry Nagel
- Naturalists Rally Chair: Gary Barrigar

On January 16, 2000, a meeting of officers and committee members was held. The following is a brief report of topics which were discussed:

Kathy Brown and Susan Allen reported on the progress toward incorporation of Friends of Roan Mountain. A charter will be filed with the assistance of Attorney John Banks of Elizabethton. When this is accomplished we will file for tax exempt status with the state of Tennessee and the federal government.

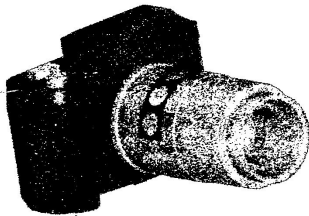
Tom Laughlin reported that one bird feeder has been erected in the park near the new office building. He will add one or more feeders later. These will be of a particular squirrel-proof design. Small, engraved signs will be placed on the feeders stating that they are provided by Friends of Roan Mountain.

Concern had been expressed that the mowing along Highway 143 is detrimental to plants. Jennifer Laughlin stated that a mowing schedule was being observed at the top of the mountain, but that the county road department would need to be contacted about the rest of the road. Charlynn Campbell will talk with the Carter County Road Department and suggest that they mow along the highway on Roan Mountain as late as possible. It was suggested that signs might be placed in these areas to inform the public these are natural areas and are purposely unmown.

Nancy Barrigar presented a prototype of a Friends of Roan Mountain brochure. The finished product should be ready for distribution before the Spring Naturalists Rally.

Jennifer Laughlin and Gary Barrigar presented information on the upcoming spring and fall rallies, respectively. Watch for details in upcoming brochures and newsletters.

The next open membership meeting will be held May 6, prior to the Saturday evening Spring Naturalists' Rally program.



**REQUEST FOR SLIDES**  
We are planning to set up a slide projector on Saturday evening at the Spring Naturalists' Rally. If you have slides of Roan Mountain flora or fauna or of Naturalist Rally hikes, etc., that you would like included, please mail copies of your slides (not the originals) to: Charlynn Campbell at 201 Ellis Hollow Road, Roan Mtn., TN 37687. We may use some of the slides later on our web page or for publicity purposes.

## Has Your Membership Expired?

If your newsletter mailing label is marked with a red dot, your membership in Friends of Roan Mountain has expired. We hope you will choose to renew. Please take a moment to complete the information below and mail it in. This will insure that you continue to receive the newsletter and updates on information concerning the organization. You will also continue support of naturalist activities on the Roan. An additional benefit is a 10% discount from our corporate sponsor, Mahoney's Outfitters in Johnson City, TN.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Check  appropriate membership category:


Individual (\$10) \_\_\_\_\_ Family (\$15) \_\_\_\_\_

Student (\$5) \_\_\_\_\_ Corporate (\$45) \_\_\_\_\_

Dues: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Contribution: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make check payable to  
Friends of Roan Mountain and return to:  
Anne Whittemore, 208 Mark Dr., Gray, TN 387615



**FRIENDS  
OF ROAN MOUNTAIN**

Qualify for 10% off  
regular prices

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F R I E N D S O F R O A N M O U N T A I N

