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“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

– Margaret Mead

CAROLINA KIDS’ CONSERVANCY

– Mark Hufford
Executive Director CKC

Several years ago I had just finished presenting a wildlife program to 150 third-graders near Columbia, South Carolina, when a little girl approached me with her hand outstretched. With the rest of her classmates, she had just been introduced to several "Animal Ambassadors" - wild animals who have been permanently wounded by human-caused hazards and who can never live in the wild again. These animal teachers, with my help, show children firsthand the beauty and wonders of native creatures, as well as teaching them about animal lifestyles and about the many problems humans create for local wildlife.

“Here,” she said “This is for the animals.”

In her hand was 85 cents (her lunch money), which she wanted me to use to help take care of the animals. An afternoon of hunger was nothing, she told me, compared to the suffering these animals had gone through. The hawk had been shot, the turtle run over by a lawnmower, the opossum illegally raised as a "pet," and the screech owl hit by a car. What was a little hunger?

Although I gave her back her lunch money, this little girl got me thinking. If this caring gesture is typical of the depth of feeling this next generation has for wild animals, isn't it up to adults to help these children express their concern? Isn't there something we can do to help them learn not just about wildlife problems, but about ways to channel their compassion into creative solutions?

Over the last three years, I've discovered that the answer is "yes." With the help of a couple dozen wildlife rehabilitators, environmental educators, habitat conservationists, and wildlife enthusiasts, we've created the beginnings of a dynamic, nonprofit organization that teaches children, supports rehabilitators, and channels compassionate energy into environmental solutions. It's called the Carolina Kids' Conservancy.

The first couple years of any nonprofit group's existence are heavily laden with organizational work, but I'm proud to say we're now beginning to see the fruits of our labor. We've presented live animal programs in more than 100 schools to more than 50,000 children.

We've presented programs, also, to more than 75 civic groups. We've supported rehabilitators with supplies, financial assistance, and training. But most inspiring, we've begun to see what can happen when children discover the connection between existing wildlife hazards and the need to conserve critical habitat.

Last year our Board voted to partner with the National Audubon Society in our first organized conservation project. We'd heard about the plight of the Francis Beidler Forest in Harleyville, SC, and knew it was something kids could understand. This 10,000-acre sanctuary harbors the world's largest stand of virgin cypress-tupelo swamp, with many trees over 1,500 years old. Of course, the flora and fauna in the sanctuary include many endangered species and exhibit tremendous biodiversity. Apparently none of that matters to the adults who are planning to build a stock car race track less than 200 yards from the sanctuary.

The children were indignant. How could adults be so stupid? They decided to do what they could to help Audubon expand the sanctuary. In January, they presented a check for more than \$2,200 to create the first Carolina Kids Preserve. The money came from more than 900 children holding bake sales, donating allowances, washing windows, mowing lawns, and holding all manner of fundraisers. Not a bad start.

So what does all this have to do with Roan Mountain? Quite simply, Roan Mountain is next on the kid's list. The organization's second year-long project will raise money for the Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy's land acquisition fund. The money will create a Carolina Kid's Preserve on Grassy Ridge to be managed in perpetuity by the SAHC.

Want to get involved? Now's the time. The Carolina Kids' Conservancy, now with more than 1,100 members, has issued a challenge to adults to bolster their conservation fundraising efforts with matching pledges. You can make a matching pledge in any amount simply by calling 828-894-2161. Next spring a dedication ceremony on Grassy Ridge will showcase their efforts and your support.

Often the wisdom of children cuts through the mixed messages that stir in the adult mind and puts things in proper perspective. The North Carolina state curriculum says second graders are supposed to learn that all living creatures need food, water, and shelter in order to survive. Our wildlife programs exhibit live animals, but also reinforce the state curriculum; so we always ask second graders to raise their hands and tell us one of those three things that creatures need to survive. Several times we've called on children and gotten a very succinct response. What do wild animals need to survive?

"Love." Its awfully hard to disagree.

You can meet some of the Kids' Conservancy's animal ambassadors on May 2 at 7:00 p.m. as part of the Spring Naturalists' Rally. CKC Director Mark Hufford will present a wildlife program at Cloudland High School and answer questions about the Kids' Conservancy.

We wish to gratefully acknowledge a generous donation to Friends of Roan Mountain from member, Aubrie Abernethy, given in honor of John and Carolyn Martin and their love for Roan Mountain.

The Aftermath of the Flood of '98

– Gary Barrigar

1998 will be long remembered as the year of the great flood. According to comparison studies conducted by the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the water level in the town of Roan Mountain exceeded that of the great “May Flood” of 1901. In that flood, according to Jennifer Laughlin in her superb book, Roan Mountain: A Passage of Time, “...for many years afterward they told tales of pigs and cattle washing away, of neighbors going downstream on the roofs of their homes, never to be seen again, and of everything communities and families had worked for being totally destroyed.”

Seven people died and hundreds were left homeless in the January flood this year that resulted from a warm rain falling on several feet of snow. We read in the paper and witnessed on TV about heroic rescues and the touching stories of the flood victims. The outpouring of assistance and money to help victims of the flood shows the heartfelt concern the people in our community and the country have.

Now as the communities of Carter County get back to normal, we naturalists are beginning to look at the effect of the “January Flood” on the natural environment. The flood itself left portions of some streams out of their banks flowing over fields and roads and through yards and houses while their natural streambeds were filled in with debris. In other areas streambeds were stripped to bedrock. Trees and debris and even parts of houses were trapped against bridges and culverts. With more rain predicted and the ground already saturated, there was much concern about further flooding. As flood relief funds became

available, crews began the work of “preventing” future floods.

I first became aware of the work being done when I witnessed mud flowing down the Doe River when it should have been much clearer. I traced the mud to Laurel Fork Creek in Hampton. Several pieces of heavy machinery were in the stream dredging out all the rocks and gravel and piling them on the sides of the stream. All the natural features of the streambed were removed.

I knew that such wholesale channelization would not necessarily be effective in preventing future flood damage, and it would destroy the habitat of fish and other aquatic organisms. The workers on site informed me that they were doing their work as instructed.

When I read in the paper and saw on TV that extensive stream restoration work was being done in a number of sites in the flooded portion of the county, I feared the worst. Would the work of man create even bigger problems than the flood itself? An Associated Press article originating in Nashville and carried in the Johnson City Press stated that “Bulldozers cleaning up after deadly floods in Carter County wrecked parts of popular East Tennessee trout streams and the damage could increase flooding downstream.” The article also stated that the Corp of Engineers and EPA officials were concerned about the work being excessive.

On a cold, snowy day in March, as I worked with numerous volunteers planting native trees in the some very carefully restored riparian zones of Hampton Creek and the Doe River under the direction of the Natural Resources

Conservation Service, I began to feel that the issue is much more complex than it first appeared. In the press, at times, issues may be oversimplified in order to make a story readable. A number of agencies and private individuals have been involved in the work, and, while in some areas, the work has been destructive and could even create more flooding in the future, other restoration work was done responsibly and will benefit aquatic organisms as well as prevent future flooding. The Natural Resources Conservation Service's Emergency Watershed Protection plan is, I believe, one of the latter (The NRCS is working in the upper Doe River watershed). According to project engineer, Alan Morrow, the plan consists of three phases:

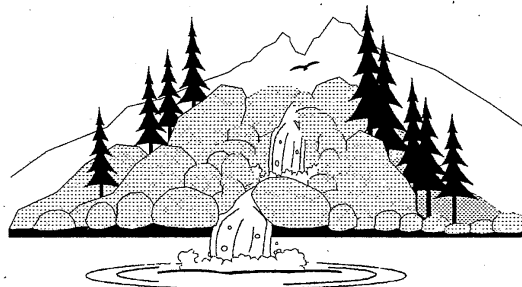
1. Provide immediate protection of property and lives by removing rock deposit and debris from culverts and bridges to prevent more damage.
2. Provide streambank stabilization by placing riprap (large rocks) and gabions (wire baskets filled with rock) in stream area near roads, bridges and structures.
3. Provide further streambank stabilization by planting trees and placement of boulders back in streams

to slow water flow (which protects downstream areas) and create aquatic habitats for fish and other organisms.

Numbers 1 and 2 have been completed and over 5,000 trees have been planted. By the end of May, with the advice of University of Tennessee Research Associate, Jim Habera, temporary rock used to divert stream flow will be removed and boulders will be placed in the stream at 50 sites.

But according to Morrow, "If there is not some type of long term watershed maintenance plan in place as a result of this flood, we are failing in our job." He feels that Carter County should establish a Watershed Board to monitor and provide solutions to potential problems throughout the county. Morrow feels that the flooding on the Doe River could be repeated on Stoney Creek if proper measures are not taken. Careful planning would not only diminish the cost in dollars and human lives caused by future floods, but would prevent the destruction of aquatic habitats as well.

Gary Barrigar teaches Ecology, Chemistry, and Physics at Elizabethton High School. He is the current director of the Fall Naturalists' Rally.



Roan Mountain State Park Update

Jennifer Laughlin
Park Interpretive Specialist

Life is really bustling at Roan Mountain State Park as employees and volunteers are working to ready the park and its' facilities for the upcoming spring and summer season. The job has not been an easy one, but has progressed in a positive direction, thanks to the many volunteers who have shared their time with us.

Based from Charleston, South Carolina, Americorps has been with us for an ongoing two months. They are dedicated to helping non profit organizations, especially through disaster related situations. Their group has helped with general flood and snow clean up and is now in the process of clearing all of the park trails of downed trees and debris. Over half of the trails were nearly impassable, making this an enormous job. With many thanks to them, we will be able to enjoy the Spring Naturalists' Rally on the trails within the State Park.

Facilities within the park are growing and changing rapidly. The campground is back to normal. It opened, as scheduled, on April 15th. There are now thirty cabins available year round, as our ten new ones opened in July of 1997. The ten new cabins boast an extra half bath, two full beds in the loft, and the well sought after serenity of a stay in the mountains.

Especially exciting is the upcoming construction of a new lodge/recreational building. This new facility will house the parks' administrative offices, have a meeting area, and a recreational area. Construction is expected to begin around May 1st, with the projected completion date not yet known. This will be a wonderful addition to the State Park and, of course, the future meeting place for the spring and fall Naturalists' Rallies! Be sure to mark your calendars for the upcoming Special Events for 1998:

Spring Naturalists' Rally	May 2 & 3, 1998
Junior Trout Tournament	May 9, 1998
Annual Rhododendron Festival	June 20 & 21, 1998
Young People's Talent Search	June 19 & 20, 1998
Miller Homestead Saturdays	June 13, July 11, and August 8, 1998
4th of July Festivities	July 4, 1998
Roan Mountains' Price is Right	July 11, 1998
Roan Mountain Butterfly Count	July 18, 1998
Fall Naturalists' Rally	Sept 11-13, 1998

If you are interested in more information on these events, please call the park at 423-772-3303 for a brochure.



WOOD WARBLERS

- Gary Wallace

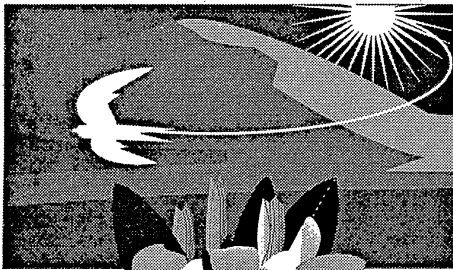
Wood Warblers are found only in the Americas. About 160 species have been identified of which 44 visit the United States. There are about twice as many warblers in the eastern part of the United States as compared to the western states. Tennessee has about 37 species of migrant or resident warblers. With few exceptions they live in woodland habitats, but during migration they may be found almost anywhere. They are highly migratory with thousands of miles frequently separating their summer and winter homes.

Warblers are among the last of the spring migrants to arrive in Tennessee. Their coming caps the climax of the spring migration. They spend the summer or breeding season in North America feeding almost exclusively upon insects. By the time the first hard frost occurs in the fall, the majority of the warblers have migrated to the south. They migrate by night and frequently fall victim to tower-kills and other migration accidents. When migrating, the warblers are usually found in mixed flocks composed of a number of species. During the day, these mixed flocks travel slowly through the woods feeding from tree to tree.

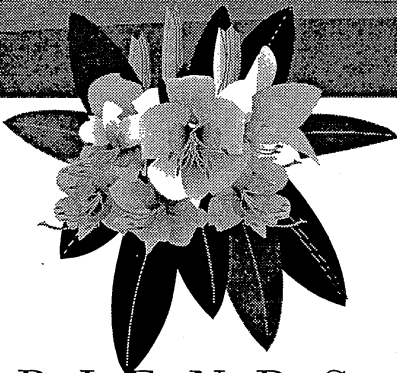
Warblers find their insect food in a variety of ways. Some species flit actively from branch to branch, finding insects exposed on limbs and leaves; others are gleaners, exploring the underside of leaves and bark crevices. Some species have good vocal ability, but most warblers have a weak voice.

When the warblers return in the spring, it is a sure sign that warm weather is not far away. It is time to pick up the binoculars and enter the woods. There we will hear faint voices saying "seeps" and discover the trees are full of flitting birds. Who can say what rare and unusual warbler species we may find this spring in Tennessee. Maybe the rare species you have been looking for or maybe a totally unexpected species.

Dr. Gary O. Wallace is Professor of Biology at Milligan College. He serves as Treasurer for Friends of Roan Mountain.



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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

