



A Field Guide to the Fernow

An Artistic Exploration of Life

on the Fernow Experimental Forest

Parsons, West Virginia

Welcome

Welcome to *A Field Guide to the Fernow: An Artistic Exploration of Life on the Fernow Experimental Forest*. Within these pages you will find visual art as well as poetry and prose depicting some of the species of flora and fauna that live within the boundaries of the Fernow Experimental Forest in Parsons, WV.

Purchased by the federal government in 1915 and established as a research forest in 1934, the Fernow lies within the 900,000-acre Monongahela National Forest in eastern West Virginia. Studies include long-term research on silviculture practices, erosion, soil and water acidification, and much more. The forest is also open to day-use hikers, hunters, bird watchers, wildflower seekers, and any interested members of the public.

Plan a visit to the Fernow today! We hope you enjoy our guide...



RUNNING PINE

Jessica Graham
Photography

Lycopodium clavatum

3rd PLACE

Visual
Art
Category
2014



GROUND PINE

Lycopodium obscurum

Cheryl Smith
Photography



CINNAMON-FERN

Osmunda cinnamomea

Cheryl Smith
Photography

3rd PLACE

Written

Art

Category

2014

A cucumbertree stands tall and straight in a forest. Growing on a favorable site, and untroubled by insect or disease, the tree is vigorous, but alone in the sense that no other cucumbertrees grow nearby.

Representing an ancient lineage, the cucumbertree has a crude seed dispersal mechanism that limits reproductive success. Its unpalatable fruits superficially resemble bumpy cucumbers when young, then turn brown at maturity. Each bump splits open to reveal, and then release, a large, red seed suspended on a short cord. Each seed waits ... and waits ... for a bird or small mammal that is unlikely to come, for hungry creatures prefer tasty, nutritious fruits and seeds of more recently evolved trees.

Cucumbertree seeds and entire fruits finally drop to the ground. Seedlings that grow near the parent tree seldom find enough light to live long, but seeds on the ground have a slim chance of ingestion and transport by a mammal. When this occurs, a lucky seed may germinate on a site with rich soil and good light. The result may be another healthy cucumbertree, tall and vigorous, but solitary in the sense that neighboring trees represent other, more prolific species.

CUCUMBERTREE

Magnolia acuminata

Jon Weems

Prose



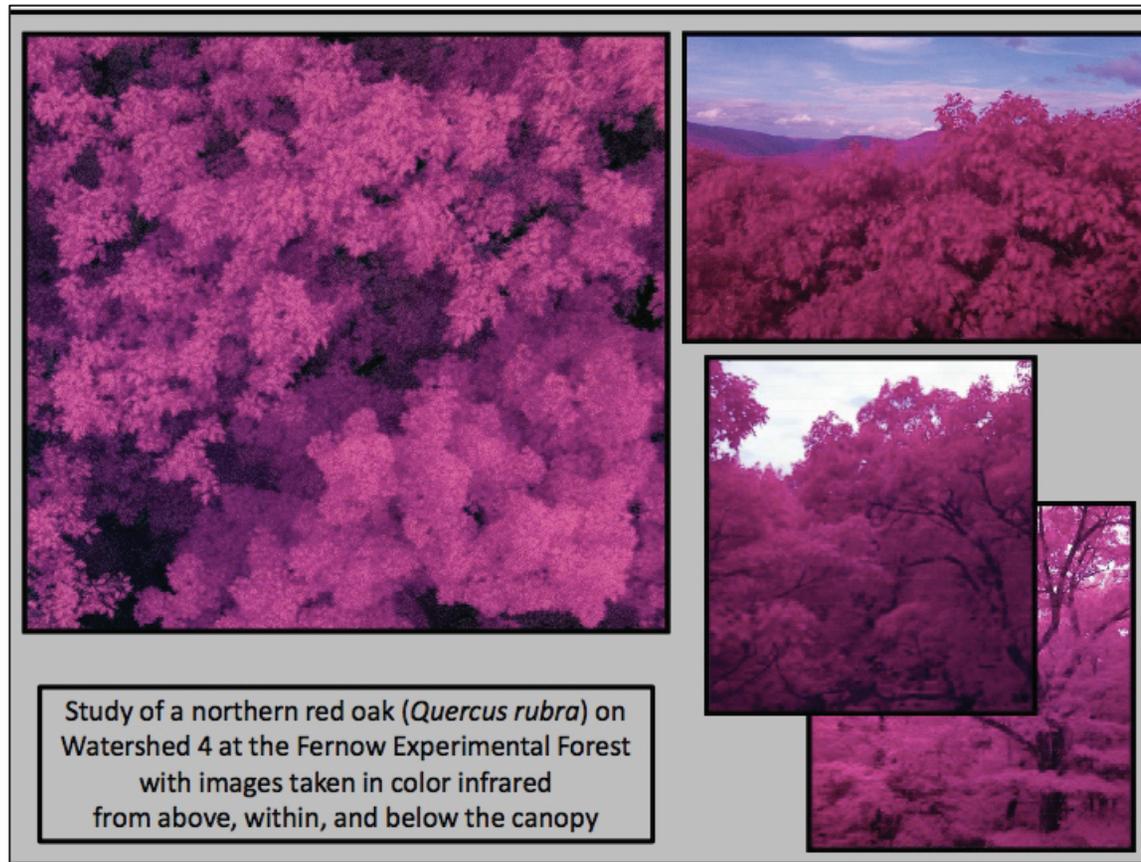
BLUE COHOSH

Caulophyllum thalictroides

Jessica Graham
Photography

Honorable
Mention

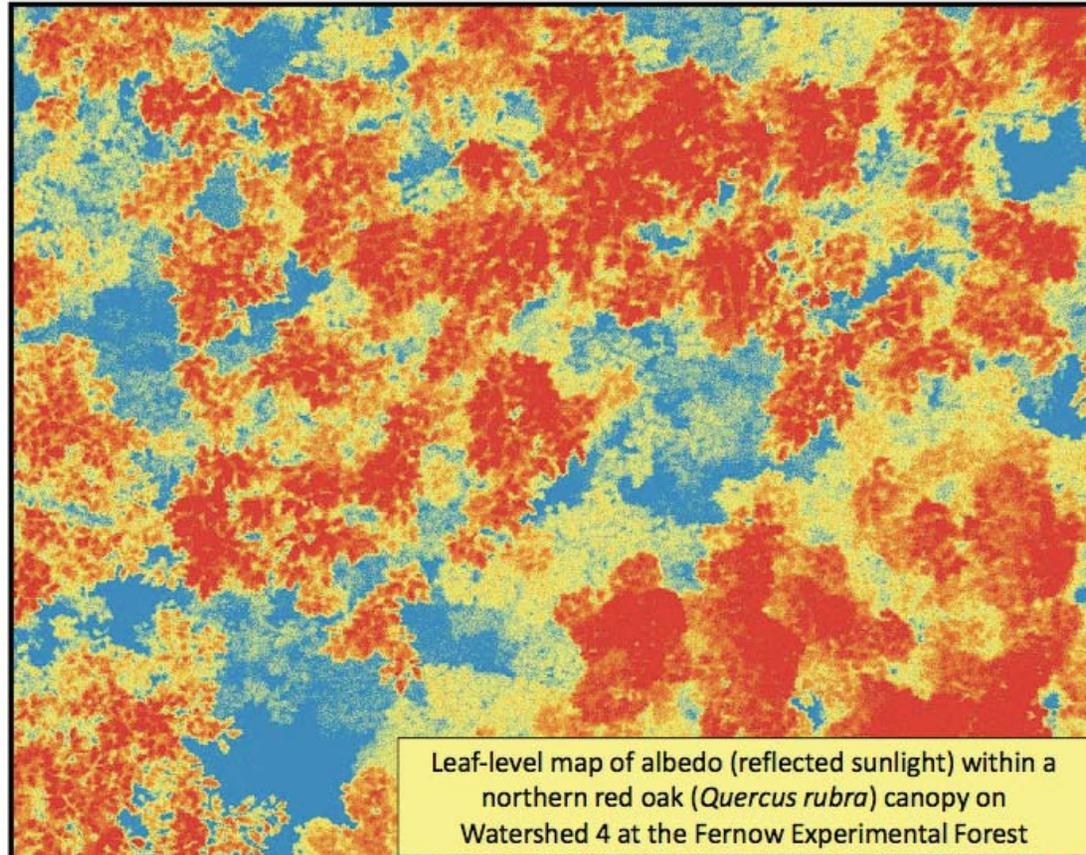
Visual
Art
Category
2014



NORTHERN RED OAK

Quercus rubra

Brenden McNeil
Infrared Photography



NORTHERN RED OAK

Quercus rubra

Brenden McNeil

Infrared Photography

**Honorable
Mention**

Written
Art
Category
2014

The black oak stood for over two hundred years. It lived through the Civil War, the invention of electricity, the car, airplane and logging drives. It stood as a silent witness to Indian hunts and the creation of the Fernow Experimental Forest. The large straight trunk soared more than 70 feet to the top of the forest canopy. Its spreading branches supported lush layers of dark green leaves that basked in full sunlight. The oak's thick bark and vigorous growth were resistant to fire, fungi and insects. No damage marred the strength and beauty of its wood. The roots reached deep into the steep rocky soil. But during the winter, the perfection of the great black oak may have been its doom. A thick snow fell deep on the strong horizontal branches. Then a freezing rain turned the snow into heavy ice. Clay soils became water logged and the oak's roots lost their grip. The heavy trunk and spreading branches tipped, ripping the roots from the soil, shattering lesser trees as it crashed to earth, leaving a large hole in the forest canopy.

BLACK OAK

Quercus velutina

Donna Weems

Prose



YELLOW BIRCH

Cheryl Smith
Photography

Betula alleghaniensis



MOUNTAIN-LAUREL

Kalmia latifolia

Cheryl Smith
Photography



INDIAN PIPE

Jessica Graham
Photography

Monotropa uniflora



DOWNY SERVICEBERRY *Amelanchier arborea*

Cheryl Smith
Photography

2nd PLACE

Written

Art

Category

2014

Bud in May, bud in May
The *Rubus allegheniensis* rises faithfully
Stowed green in thickets, not yet formed
Blackberry is slowly born

Flower in June, flower in June
New heights they raise, the ants they move
March, salute! As you walk by
Sweet flowers white, droop from the eye

Fruit in July, fruit in July
The berries red, but not quite ripe
The brambles stick and promise soon
Come end of month when aggregate fruit has bloomed

Now! We brave the briar for blackberries
Where toothed, compound leaves pull and snag
And ants swarm, running up and down the arm
Whilst one hopes a bear isn't at your back

As blackberries they coquettishly beckon
Their sweet juice ambrosia—a deadly weapon
None can resist their godly call
If the fauna don't first, I'll eat them all!

COMMON BLACKBERRY *Rubus allegheniensis*

Jessica Graham

Poetry



AMERICAN GINSENG

Panax quinquefolius

Jessica Graham
Photography



WOOD-BETONY

Pedicularis canadensis

Cheryl Smith
Photography



SKUNK CABBAGE

Cheryl Smith
Photography

Symplocarpus foetidus



PAINTED TRILLIUM

Trillium undulatum

Cheryl Smith
Photography



FALSE HELLEBORE

Veratrum viride

Cheryl Smith
Photography



FOUR-LEAVED WILD YAM *Dioscorea quaternata*

Jessica Graham
Photography



YELLOW UNICORN ENTOLOMA *Entoloma murrayi*

Jessica Graham

Photography



STRAIGHT-BRANCHED CORAL *Ramaria stricta*

Jessica Graham
Photography



GREEN STAIN

Jessica Graham
Photography

Chlorociboria aeruginascens



GREEN-FOOT FIBER HEAD *Inocybe calamistrata*

Jessica Graham

Photography



AMERICAN GIANT MILLIPEDE *Narceus americanus*

Jessica Graham

Photography

WINNER

Written
Art
Category
2014

Tiny eggs
in snow-proof
capsules encircling slender
wild cherry branches
hatch in synchrony
with emerging leaves.

Caterpillars, no wider
than a whisker's
breadth, dine in spring's
evanescent warmth.
Slender white strands
lead to a silken
tent.

Favored wild cherry and
apple trees stripped
of tender young leaves;
stark silhouettes
holding empty networks of veins,
and full white tents.

Maple and pear trees
no longer immune
leaves
a ragged appearance.

The mature caterpillar's
soft green body cloaked
in black velvet, elegant
multicolored pin stripes
blue accents
poses twig-like
on a leafless branch
or
hundreds in a wooly mass
drape over
the crotch of a tree.

Eastern tent caterpillars
seek the meal
that will bring the long sleep.
Satisfaction is a spun yellow cocoon
fastened to a fold of bark
and dreams of flying.

EASTERN TENT CATERPILLAR

Donna Weems
Poetry

Malacostoma americanum



RED ADMIRAL

Kathleen Mahony
Photography

Vanessa atalanta



DUSKY ARION

Cheryl Smith
Photography

Arion subfuscus



SPOTTED SALAMANDER *Ambystoma maculatum*

Cheryl Smith

Photography



RED-SPOTTED NEWT (EFT STAGE)

Cheryl Smith
Photography

Notophthalmus viridescens viridescens



MOUNTAIN DUSKY SALAMANDER

Jessica Graham
Photography

Desmognathus ochrophaeus

WINNER

Visual
Art
Category
2014



REDBACK SALAMANDER *Plethodon cinereus*

Kathleen Mahony

Photography



REDBACK SALAMANDER *Plethodon cinereus*

Cheryl Smith
Photography

(Lead-backed form)



SLIMY SALAMANDER *Plethodon glutinosus*

Kathleen Mahony

Photography



SLIMY SALAMANDER

Plethodon glutinosus

Christina Slover

Photography



SLIMY SALAMANDER

Plethodon glutinosus

Jessica Graham
Photography

**Honorable
Mention**

Visual
Art
Category
2014



NORTHERN RED SALAMANDER

Kathleen Mahoney
Photography

Pseudotriton ruber ruber



EASTERN AMERICAN TOAD *Bufo americanus*

Jessica Graham

Photography



GREEN FROG

Rana clamitans melanota

Cheryl Smith
Photography



RUFFED GROUSE

Bonasa umbellus

Josh Wiles
Photography



RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD

Joey Herron
Photography

Archilochus colubris



RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD

Cheryl Smith
Photography

Archilochus colubris



RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER *Melanerpes carolinus*

Josh Wiles
Photography



BLUE JAY

Kelli Baker
Photography

Cyanocitta cristata



BLUE JAY

Josh Wiles
Photography

Cyanocitta cristata



WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH

Josh Wiles
Photography

Sitta carolinensis



CANADA WARBLER

Wilsonia canadensis

Joey Herron
Photography



EASTERN TOWHEE

Pipilo erythrophthalmus

Kelli Baker
Photography



EASTERN TOWHEE

Pipilo erythrophthalmus

Cheryl Smith
Photography



NORTHERN CARDINAL *Cardinalis cardinalis*

Kelli Baker
Photography



AMERICAN GOLDFINCH

Carduelis tristis

Cheryl Smith
Photography



NORTHERN SHORT-TAILED SHREW

Kathleen Mahony
Photography

Blarina brevicauda

2nd PLACE

Visual
Art
Category
2014



FISHER

Nick Dilks
Oil Painting

Martes pennanti



WHITE-TAILED DEER

Odocoileus virginianus

Josh Wiles

Photography

Contest Judges (2014)

Visual Art:

Dr. **Dave Smaldone** is an award-winning nature photographer, has led local nature photography workshops, and is actively involved in the Morgantown Photography Club. By day, he is a professor in the Recreation, Parks, & Tourism Resources Program at West Virginia University.

Erin Smaldone is the Volunteer Coordinator/Education Director at the West Virginia Botanic Garden. She has degrees in ecology and environmental education, is actively involved in the Morgantown Photography Club, and has been photographing nature for nearly 20 years.

Written Art:

Rebecca Doverspike holds an MFA in creative writing from West Virginia University, where she teaches poetry, nonfiction, and composition. She writes essays and poetry.

Jesse Kalvitis is an avid gardener, and recently completed an MFA from West Virginia University. She writes essays on nature and culture in Appalachia.

Steering Committee

Mary Beth Adams has worked for US Forest Service Research and Development since 1989. She serves as a Research Soil Scientist located at the Timber and Watershed Laboratory in Parsons, West Virginia. Her research has focused on sustaining forest productivity through understanding soil processes, particularly nutrient cycling.

Katie Fallon is the author of the nonfiction book *Cerulean Blues: A Personal Search for a Vanishing Songbird*. An active environmental educator and wildlife rehabilitator, Katie is a founder of the nonprofit Avian Conservation Center of Appalachia. She has taught writing at Virginia Tech and West Virginia University.

Bill Peterjohn teaches biology at West Virginia University. He has conducted research for over 20 years at the Fernow Experimental Forest, and is trying to understand how acid rain affects water quality, soil fertility, and the growth of forest trees.

Additional Resources

Fernow Experimental Forest:

<http://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/ef/locations/wv/fernow/>

The National Science Foundation's Long-Term Research in Environmental Biology Program (LTREB) at the Fernow Experimental Forest:

<http://www.as.wvu.edu/fernow/index.html>

List of flora and fauna found on the Fernow:

http://www.fs.fed.us/ne/newtown_square/publications/technical_reports/pdfs/2002/gtrne291.pdf

Hubbard Brook Research Foundation: <http://hubbardbrookfoundation.org>

Ecological Reflections Network: <http://www.ecologicalreflections.com>

Acknowledgements

- Thank you to the artists for submitting their inspiring work.
- Thank you Hubbard Brook Research Foundation for supporting our contest.
- Thank you US Forest Service, National Science Foundation, and West Virginia University.
- Thank you judges and steering committee.

The Future

We plan to continue building our *Field Guide to the Fernow* until all species that reside within the forest are represented. We hope you will consider contributing your written and visual art to the guide in the future. Look to the LTREB website for announcements about upcoming contests and calls for submissions!



THANK YOU!

For more information contact Katie Fallon: Katie.Fallon@mail.wvu.edu