

A Song for the Asking
The Electronic Newsletter of
EarthSong Photography
and

EarthSong Photography Workshops: Walking in Beauty

August 31, 2011

Volume IX, Number 3

Hello to All:

In This Issue

City Boy Meets Country...A Wilderness Love Story	Page 1
Falling Up...The Smokies Approach Autumn	Page 16
Steps Revisited: Taking the First Ones	Page 20
As for EarthSong/Walking in Beauty	Page 23

City Boy Meets Country...A Wilderness Love Story

Let's begin this story with a little modern humor. Every minute, America loses more than three acres of forests, farms, historic sites, meadows and woods; net result more than 4,000 acres per day, nearly 1.5 million acres every year. For those of you given to statistical comparison that's not quite three times the size of

Great Smoky Mountains National Park, annually.

Living in the land of the free apparently confers upon us the freedom to destroy all that we have been given. What more could we ask?

There have, of course, been those who have seen and appreciated their freedom in a somewhat different light.

For them, being free confers not only a minimum of restriction,

but lays out, as well, the strictures of responsibility, the obligation to care for and to preserve. **Bob Marshall** was one of them.

I have been bumping into Bob Marshall's life recently with a little more frequency than usual, so it began to seem like time I knew something more about him and the all-too-brief allotment of years he was given in the incarnation by which he was familiar to me.

What I had previously known was precious little enough and did not extend



Going to Wilmington Flume

beyond the facts that he was one of the founding fathers of the **Wilderness Society** and in his honor was named the second largest wilderness area found in the Lower Forty-Eight, affectionately known as “**The Bob**”, and more formally as the **Bob Marshall Wilderness** in Montana’s **Flathead** and **Lewis and Clark National Forests**.

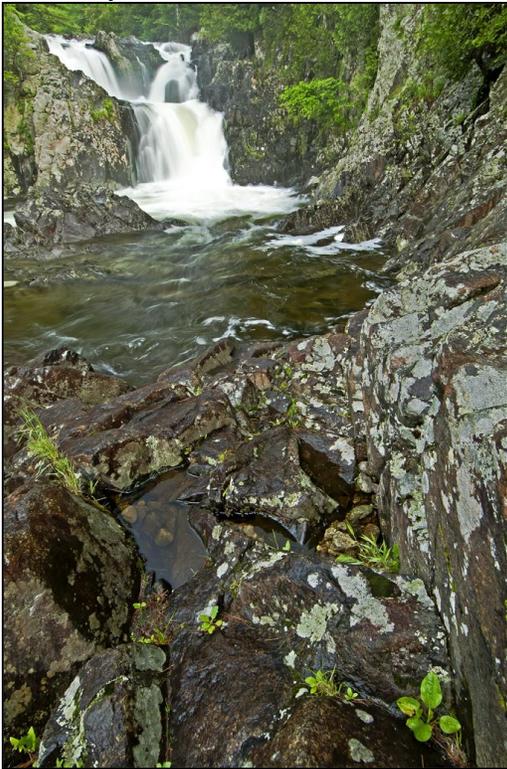
What I learned were the trappings and accoutrements of the life of a truly sensitive and beautiful soul, whose love of wilderness and the natural world was so unrestrained that it, indeed, defined the very essence of who he was, how he saw himself in the world, and how he lived his life, day in and out, for every day that he was given.

You may be wondering at this point why I continue to allude to an apparent brevity in Marshall’s years; Bob Marshall, you see, died of a presumable heart failure while on a midnight train from Washington, D.C. to New York City on November 11, 1939. He was 38 years old.



Reflection on Chapel Pond

Robert Marshall was born on January 2, 1901, right at the inception of what would prove to be a year of significant events; and, perhaps, it is somehow fitting that the other end of the same year should have given us the birth of **Eliot Porter** on December 6. In hindsight, the juxtaposition of occurrences in 1901 reveals an odd humor in the fabric of the universe: the bookend births of these two great proponents of and protagonists for wilderness protection enfolded the beginning of oil drilling in the Middle East, the discovery of oil in Texas, and the initiation to automobile license plate requirements in New York. The era of “Big Oil” was coming in earnest. One of the shadow sides of black gold was also becoming apparent: the first “getaway” car was used in a Paris jewel robbery. Perhaps the oddball celestial humor was in celebration of the birth of Walt Disney, or the fact that the first espresso coffee



The Split Rock

machine has just been invented. In some ways, 1901 was a heroic cycle of days: a 25 year-old Army nurse, **Clara Maas**, willingly allowed herself to die in order to prove that the viral disease, yellow fever, is contracted from a mosquito. Can you

understand the enormity of such a self-sacrifice?

Quite likely, the crowning political event of 1901 was the assassination of **President William McKinley** and the swearing in to that office of his young vice-president, **Theodore Roosevelt**, who would become a wilderness warrior in his own right.

At the beginning of his life it would have been difficult to imagine what lay ahead for Bob Marshall. He was a city boy; as city boy as one can be: born into a wealthy, city family, the son of a noted Constitutional attorney and politically connected figure, **Louis Marshall**, whose own father had been a Jewish immigrant from Bavaria. Bob's mother, **Florence Lowenstein Marshall**, though a college graduate, chose to devote herself to her family and to educational and social welfare causes she came to embrace. To her family she seemed to be possessed of a staunch Victorian reserve, which Bob, though he loved her dearly, came to feel as a somewhat stifling influence.



A Puddle into Upper Saranac

The path of Bob's deep love of the out-of-doors runs directly backward to his father's feet. In 1894, the State of New York found itself in the midst of trying to amend its constitution, and Louis Marshall was a delegate from his hometown, Syracuse. Among the more contentious issues up for consideration was a proposed amendment that the state's forest lands in the Adirondack



Upon Further Reflection

and Catskill Mountains henceforth remain "forever wild" and preserved from development, including any further logging. Oddly enough, the proposal was the child of New York City business interests that saw the continued deforestation of

these lands as a real threat to the city's drinking water and fire protection. Louis Marshall agreed with their purposes, and labored diligently for passage of the amendment. It succeeded, and the **Adirondack Forest Preserve**, parent of the Adirondack Park, became a reality; and for the remainder of his life, no one worked more conscientiously than Marshall to see that the Adirondacks stayed wild.

In 1900, a pivotal event occurred in the Marshall family that was to have a lasting impact on the yet-unborn-Bob when his father, in concert with a group of several friends, purchased an available tract of several acres on Lower Saranac Lake. When Bob was six-months-old he was taken to the property for the first time. He would, thereafter, spend at least part of every summer there for the next twenty-five years, and as often, otherwise, as he could.

Although not what you would consider a gifted athlete, Bob participated as a child on a variety of school athletic teams including basketball and baseball, developing a deep interest in the latter that he would carry throughout his life, often sharing important game results and statistics with his father, who was also a fan. He was, by all accounts, quiet and shy, though not withdrawn, and in possession of an impish and curious, but benign, sense of humor.

From birth, things Adirondack were simply a part of his life, so being exposed to the Upstate out-of-doors became as much a part of his early experience as being in the City; but it was when he was eleven that there occurred perhaps a life altering event: he contracted pneumonia, and while in recovery was read a youth's book entitled ***Pioneer Boys of the Great Northwest***, about two young men who, along with their fathers, join **Lewis and Clark's Corps of Discovery** on their journey across the continent. Such was the impact of this non-descript volume on the mind of a budding romantic that he reread it as often as three times a year until he completed high school. **Meriwether Lewis** and **William Clark** would be two of his lifelong heroes.

Three years later Bob, at the age of fourteen; his younger brother **George**, then twelve; and the family's friend and Adirondack guide, **Herb Clark**, would climb his first Adirondack peak, the 3352' Mount Ampersand. It was an addicting experience, and Marshall simply could not seem to get enough of it. Within six years, by the end of the summer of 1921, the three had climbed every peak in the Adirondacks thought to be above 4,000'. Bob was just twenty. As it would later be discovered, there were actually four additional tops that went above the mark, making the total **forty-six**; and though it has also been found that four of the



South From Whiteface

peaks originally placed within the group actually fall slightly short of the four-thousand-foot mark, their position has become so entrenched that they continue to be listed as part of the total, and the sacred number remains. By the summer of



1924 the newly minted four-thousand-footers had been scaled, and it was commonly acknowledged that Bob, George, and Herb were the first (of European descent) to have ever climbed all forty-six of the revered High Peaks of the Adirondacks. By this point Bob had graduated from high school and was on the path that he had known he would travel since he

Wood, Water, Wonder?

was a teenager. His love of the outdoors was so overarching that he could in no way imagine, nor consider, an avocation that would require of him residence in a city or work behind a desk.

Following a year at Columbia University he had transferred to the New York State College of Forestry at Syracuse University where he was diligently in pursuit of a degree in forestry. For being a city boy, it does not seem that there could have been two entities more suited to each other than Marshall and forestry. He was in his element and perfectly content about it; and although he was initially somewhat withdrawn, he soon came out of his shell so that by the time he graduated *magna cum laude* in 1924 he was a member of the Forestry Honor Society (Alpha Xi Sigma), secretary of the class, associate editor of the yearbook, and a member of the cross-country team.

Not finding the work he wanted as a forester after graduation, he took a summer position as a field assistant at a Forest Service Experiment Station in Carson, Washington and enrolled in the graduate program in forestry at Harvard University. He was awarded his Masters degree there in 1925. He had become deeply intrigued by the idea of the Alaskan wilderness, but the Forest Service was unable to grant him an immediate permanent position there, so instead he accepted an assignment at the Northern Rocky Mountain Experiment Station in Missoula, Montana, where he worked from 1925-1928.

In all of these endeavors, wherever he went, Marshall gained a reputation as a hiker without peer. It was not unusual for him to hike thirty, forty, even forty-five miles, or more, in a day; and hiking was mostly how he spent all of his free time. If being a wealthy city boy had left him with any shortcomings as far as his chosen career was concerned, it was in the sphere of tool handling; and though he was quite willing to work with whatever tool was needed until he was competent, he did not seem to master their use easily, which was often a source of

tongue-in-cheek humor and kidding that he accepted good-naturedly.

It was the three years that he was posted to Montana, during which he had such direct and first-hand experience observing for the first time the working conditions under which the loggers and firefighters labored, that his personal political and economic philosophies began to form and gel regarding work issues and natural resource use. The romantic came face-to-face with the work-a-day world, and in the romantic's estimation the work-a-day world came up somewhat short in the humanity department. It is not terribly unusual for this to occur with regularity in the everyday world of the romantic, though without their input it's highly questionable as to whether life among the mass of humans would be worth very much.

In the summer of 1926 an acute ulcer cut short Bob's hiking and work plans as well. During a period of recuperation in New York he contemplated returning to school to complete his Ph.D.; however his boss back



West Fork of AuSable at Jay in Montana, **Bob Weidman**, urged postponing his studies until he could gain a little more practical experience as a forester. This threat to his health is the first indication we have of a chink in the armor of the hiking man, but upon returning to the Rockies, Marshall threw himself back into his work, and into his hiking, with typical dedication, corresponding, as usual, with his father regarding on-going preservation activities in the Adirondacks. During this time, in 1927, he learned of yet another proposed New York constitutional amendment that would allow for a road, among other structures, to be built to the top of Whiteface Mountain, the first of the High Peaks he had scaled as a teenager. In spite of Louis Marshall's opposition, the road was approved and built. The primary lesson that Bob took away was that there was no effective organization extant that could work to counter the efforts of the developers; and, in the absence of such an organization, developers always had the upper hand.

During his "Rockies" period Marshall also managed to do a great deal of writing, the most important piece of which was an article for the Forest Service's *Service Bulletin*. It concerned the subject of wilderness preservation, a topic that in the 1920's was becoming increasingly controversial among the community of foresters and the forestry establishment. The seemingly sudden move on the part of the Forest Service to embrace wilderness values – which was a new position on its part – and the predictable backlash from the logging industry and the fraternity of purely utilitarian foresters, was centered around two aspects: first, there was a growing interest among the general public in outdoor recreation. This

probably reflects the swelling populations of America's cities, since rural and agricultural folks live in "outdoor recreation" every day; and, if so, it might also serve as an indication of the need on the part of folks pressed into city life to escape, whenever they could, from the cacophony of urban existence. The second reason for the Forest Service' inter-familial stress was the desire on its part to prevent the upstart National Park Service from acquiring jurisdiction over several large pieces of "their" land. In the '20's the NPS had expanded quickly, since its creation in 1916, and there were several



Middle Saranac Drainage

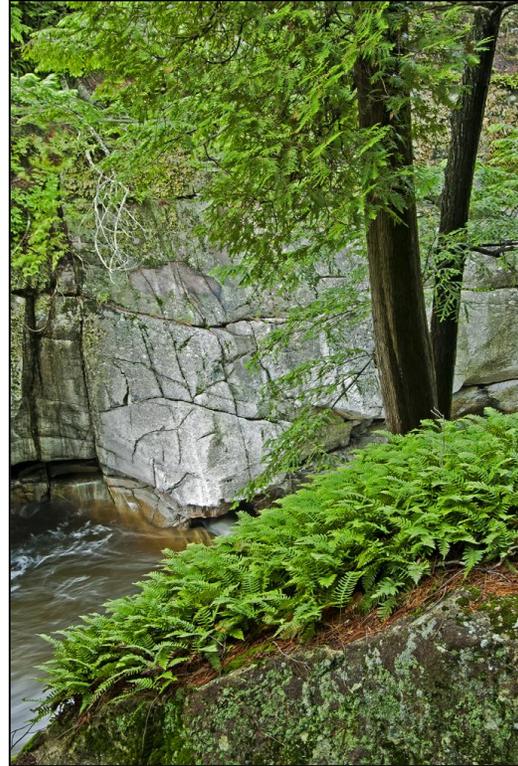
notable Forest Service tracts that were proposed for inclusion in the park system. The Forest Service push to make wilderness out of some of its land is seen as an attempt to create a blue-collar alternative to the national parks, whose adornments were said by some to be beyond the means of the average person, and, thus, that the parks, as a result, were elitist in their very nature, pun intended. The roadless areas of the national forests were unmolested – by structures, by regulations, or by crowds.

Bob's article, entitled "**Wilderness as a Minority Right**", was a response to an earlier article which had declared that wilderness preservation was bad policy because so few people actually had any interest in experiencing wilderness, and setting it aside was, therefore, not fair to the majority. The son of a noted Constitutional scholar went to great lengths to point out the history, in our democracy, of the championing of the rights of the minority by those Founding Fathers who had understood the perils involved in abrogating a responsibility to the few for the untrammled will of the many. Where would art galleries, libraries, museums, or hunting season be without this notion? Marshall went on to mention the many great thinkers in our society who took inspiration from wilderness, concluding by asserting that it was a "wilderness lover" who scribed that people are "endowed by their creator" with certain inalienable rights among which are "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness", and that, for some, the full enjoyment of those rights is possible only when wilderness can be a part of their experience. Some have said that this piece is the most articulate response to the "wilderness as elitism" argument that has yet been written.

I have reached a point in my life where it is reasonable to question whether I will ever have the chance to spend time in the great outback of Alaska's Kobuk Valley National Park or Noatak National Preserve, but I am thrilled beyond words to know that they are there and, as yet, uncrossed by roads, and unmarred by the

specious interests of unbridled commercialism, and I fervently pray that it may always be so.

By the spring of 1928, Bob Marshall was ready to pick back up with the educational pursuits he had laid aside, and he determined that Johns Hopkins University was the best place for him to go for his doctoral studies in plant physiology. Beginning in September, he went about his studies with characteristic zeal and by the end of spring 1929 had completed all of the classwork required and was preparing to undertake one of the great adventures for which he had so long yearned. With the stated purpose of doing research on the certain aspects of tree growth at the timber line, Bob had planned to spend most of the summer in the lower peaks of the Brooks Range along Alaska's Arctic Divide; but, as he confessed, the real reason was to explore Lewis and Clark-style in what was, basically, unexplored land.



Ferns into the Flume

From late-July until nearly the end of August, Bob and **Al Retzlaf**, to whom he had been introduced through the Alaska School of Mines, crossed the drainages of the North Fork of the Koyukuk River and clambered northward toward the Arctic Circle, turning southward only when several bone-drenching days of rain forced them to retreat. Their base of operations for this exploit had been the town – used in the very loosest sense of that word – of Wiseman, Alaska, population 100+/-, mostly minus, whose citizens were about evenly divided between Eskimo Alaskans and prospectors of one sort or another. Bob would return to Wiseman almost exactly a year later to spend twelve-and-a-half months exploring and gathering material for the book he intended to do on the area and its people. ***Arctic Village*** was published in 1933 and became a Literary Guild selection and Bob's best known literary effort. All of the book's royalties were shared with the people of Wiseman.

In the meanwhile the world of forestry had continued to find itself embroiled in controversy. The new hot-button issue was deforestation, or how to best manage – or not – those public forests and influence private forestry for the good of the nation. For many years there had been Cassandras of the woods who warned that forests were being destroyed at an irreplaceable rate by fire and poor lumbering practices. The forestry house was divided on how to answer this threat. Some said strict federal regulation of the industry was necessary – requiring of lumbermen that they practice forestry so as to better reduce the peril of fire and promote sustainability. Others thought the better idea was a cooperative approach to

industry that would emphasize joint fire-management programs and monetary,



read “tax”, incentives to encourage best sustainability practices. With Congressional passage of the Clarke-McNary Act in 1924 the issue seemed to have been settled in favor of the “be friends with industry” elements within the Service; but only four years later **Major George P. Ahern**, a long-time forester, published, on his own, a small volume

I Toad Them I was Here

which challenged the notion that the predicted flowering of beneficial forestry results was occurring at all. Instead, said Ahern, “fire damage was increasingly excessive, due in great part to irresponsible lumbering methods”, “virgin forests were being destroyed at a rate that would eliminate them altogether in twenty to thirty years”, and “private timber companies were still doing nothing to ensure on-going crops of trees.” This work by a career soldier and veteran civil servant was a stinging indictment of the country’s private lumbering sector and offers a clear insight into why the work of Marshall, and those who believed as he did, was so critical during the time it was undertaken.

Not long after Bob’s return East from his self-described wonderful experience in Alaska, on October 23, 1929, the stock market took a decidedly downhill turn, and over the next few days the crash became full-blown, with the saga of the Great Depression spilling out in its aftermath.

In the wake of the crash Bob’s worst fears about the state of his profession and American corporatism in general seemed to be justified. Massive layoffs and shutdowns put thousands of loggers and sawmill men out of work. Deplorable working conditions became even more so, while millions of denuded forest acres painted a picture of what happens when profits are the only motive that drives enterprise. It was enough to bend, if not break, the heart of any sentient being, and, for Bob, foresters seemed merely complicit. Yet even as the bad seemed to get worse, there were some who felt the acute need to respond, to attempt to make things better. In January, 1930 Marshall was invited to meet with several like-minded folks. Their host on the occasion was Gifford Pinchot, who, though no longer directly involved as a forester, was still, in the mind of the average person, the human embodiment of the American conservation ethic. Bob came away from the encounter energized, and the group began formulation of a plan to send out a statement to foresters across the country. The 1500-word letter met with a mixed response as might have been expected, but it served the purpose of introducing Marshall to two contacts and future allies, Pinchot and Raphael Zon,

a fellow forest scientist and eventual good friend.

A month later, *Scientific Monthly* published an article Bob had written entitled “**The Problem of the Wilderness**”, which expanded on the themes laid out in the earlier “Wilderness as a Minority Right.” This more recent piece is



today held among those who study environmental history as precedent-setting. When I first read it forty years ago as an environmental law student, I remember thinking how obvious it all was; of course wilderness was necessary, of course it should be preserved, of course it didn't matter that many people would never avail themselves of the opportunity to

A Misty Connery Pond Mornin' to Ya' experience it – they certainly could if they chose to, and if they did, to most of them, the benefits would be patent; end of discussion. Yes, I can be rather simple-minded when it comes to wilderness; Bob Marshall was much more clear-headed.

He was also appalled that in 1930 there should be fewer than twenty wilderness areas of one million acres (about twice the size of GSMNP) in the entire country, because it was clear to him how quickly it was all disappearing and would continue to disappear as long as development were allowed to proceed unabated and be driven solely by the desire to profit monetarily.

Perhaps the most significant feature to come out of the article was Marshall's call for a national group of like-minded souls to advocate for wilderness preservation. The invitation's words, like seeds, in fact, did fall on a few fertile ears, and over the next several years would germinate and sprout into a flowering that would eventually have major significance in the world of preservation.

Meanwhile there was a depression on, and the country seemed sometimes like it was at war with itself over the nature of its very soul. For Marshall, it was a matter of what was more important: corporations and their profits, or people and

In the wilderness, with its entire freedom from the manifestations of human will, that perfect objectivity which is essential for pure esthetic rapture can probably be achieved more readily than among any other forms of beauty

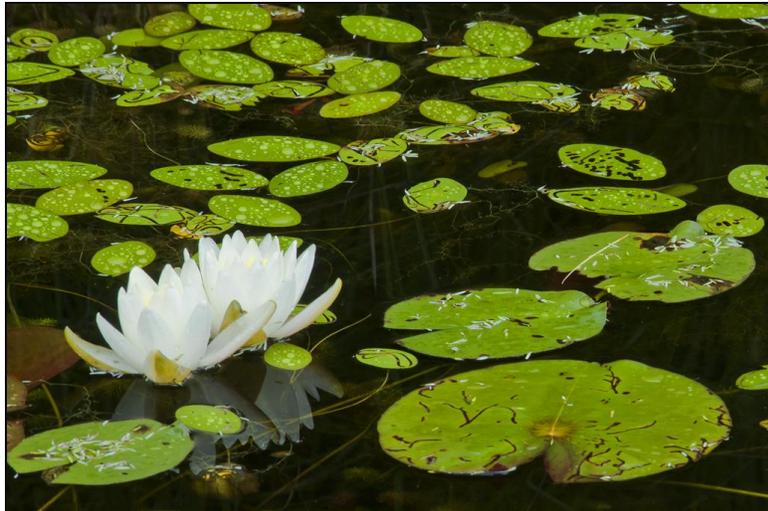
Bob Marshall
The Problem of the Wilderness

the preservation of some meaningful portion of the natural world in its natural state. That may seem like a somewhat naïve and incomplete way of phrasing the

matter, but doesn't it seem to devolve finally to something pretty much that simple? I ask that question as a small businessman who believes strongly in the entrepreneurial spirit; but it just seems like things have become a little skewed, and it must have felt that way, as well, to Bob Marshall at the beginning of the decade of the 1930's.

In September, 1929, just prior to the stock market crash, Louis Marshall died suddenly, leaving Bob comfortably well-off and without the need to work; but idling away his time was beyond question.

Following a year-and-a-half, both preparing for and being in Alaska to research *Arctic Village*, Bob found himself, in



the early fall of 1931, back in Baltimore actually writing the book and busying himself with several small projects. In the spring of 1932 New York's **Senator Copeland** requested an investigation into forest policy and procedure. **Earle Clapp**, who had been, in part, responsible for the creation of the first Forest Service Experiment Stations, where Bob had begun his career, had the responsibility of preparing the report, and he asked Bob to write the sections on forest recreation. Bob accepted, and it was this acceptance that set in motion the events for which I most remember Bob Marshall and am most grateful for his work.

Marshall would say that his efforts on the report were the best to that point in his career. His participation prompted him to relocate to Washington, D.C. at the time when **Franklin Roosevelt** was beginning his first term as president, and that led him to an acquaintance with **John Collier**, for whom he would later write letters of support for the position in the new administration of Commissioner of Indian Affairs. Collier, in turn, would seek out Marshall to fill, in his office, the role of Director of Indian Forest Service, which placed Bob within the Interior Department and, ultimately, under its wilderness-supporting secretary, **Harold Ickes**.

It would come to pass that Ickes would ask Marshall to serve on a committee studying the feasibility of creating a joint Canadian-American wilderness area, the Quetico-Superior, that would straddle the Minnesota and Ontario borders. During this time the issue of road construction in national parks was coming to the fore. It had begun with the policies of the Park Service's original director, **Stephen Mather**, who saw his responsibilities as including both preservation and public accessibility, and in the latter vein he had been very receptive to the construction of all sorts of amenities in his holdings that would draw in the recreation-seeking public: lodgings, restaurants, and concessions. These, of

course, required the building of roads; and, more and more, roads through potentially prime wilderness lands – of which there already seemed to be too few – were becoming anathema to supporters of the primitive.

In the early years of the Park Service no one had complained much about these construction activities, but as the country slid into The Depression and more and more workers were idle, there began to be increased emphasis on using some of the mass-unemployed and public funds to significantly add to what was currently in place. Preservationists were concerned.

In the summer of 1934 there were three such road-building projects proposed, or in early construction; all in the South: a road across the Blue Ridge Divide in Shenandoah National Park known as “Skyline Drive” , which was already under construction; a proposed “National Parkway” across the Blue Ridge from Shenandoah to the Great Smokies, which had been approved but not started; and a ridgeline road splitting the new Great Smoky Mountains National Park along its



Call Me Bud Lily

crest, which was the state line between North Carolina and Tennessee. Of this last project most was still in planning, although a seven-mile portion from Newfound Gap to Clingman’s Dome was already under construction.

Interior Secretary Ickes asked Marshall, in mid-1934, to make a tour of the region specifically to examine possible routes for the national road we now know as the Blue Ridge Parkway. While he was in the area, he also arranged to make a tour of the Smokies ridgeline road that was in progress.

Bob was appalled by what he observed as the impact of the seven-mile section now known as the Clingman’s Dome Road. His sense was that the road served only to slice apart an area of prime wilderness potential in order to make available to motorists the highest point in Tennessee, one of the highest mountains east of the Mississippi. On the trip to Clingman’s Dome, Marshall had invited a friend, **Benton MacKaye** of Knoxville, a regional planner and wilderness advocate, who had been the guiding force behind the creation of the Appalachian Trail. MacKaye had brought along his friend, **Harvey Broome**, another lover of wilderness. The two had originally planned to pitch to Bob the idea of an eastern organization of affiliated groups to advocate for wilderness preservation, but had been so caught up in Marshall’s road-building discussion it was only after leaving the Dome and driving to Waynesville, North Carolina that the advocacy organization became a topic. And thus I can say, with some reasonable feeling of accuracy, it was in Haywood County, where I lovingly call

home, that the seeds for the idea were truly planted for what was to become one of the great preservation organizations of our country.

Bob would return to Washington to recommend to Ickes that the remainder of the Smokies Crest highway be cancelled; but though Ickes would request that the



Fern Forest

Mount Chapman, and Mount Sequoyah among them, and spans the drainages of several incredible rivers – Pigeon, Little Pigeon, and Oconaluftee, before descending Mount Ambler into Newfound Gap.

On the west it comes in across the Little Tennessee River at Fontana Dam and climbs out of that rugged watershed, reaching 5000' somewhere between Spence Field and Thunderhead Mountain and steadily gaining until reaching 6000' on the western shoulder of Mount Buckley. From there it skirts mighty Kuwâ'hi, called Clingman's Dome by the Europeans, and begins to descend across Mount Collins and into Newfound Gap from the other side.

This is, of course, the great footway of the East, the Appalachian Trail. I have hiked most of the trail through the Smokies; I can only shudder when I consider what it might have been like if Arno Cammerer's road had been built to run parallel to the AT across those pristine ridges, and I shall remain forever grateful for the McDonalds at Silers Bald that was never built.

This story has become much longer than I ever intended, but it seems appropriate in proportion to the work of Bob Marshall to preserve, for all generations, the remaining vestiges of the Great American Wilderness. The upshot of his two trips south in 1934: his time spent with the likes of Benton MacKaye, and Harvey Broome on that ride from Newfound Gap to Waynesville

Park Service reconsider the road, its new director, **Arno Cammerer**, responded that the Service was committed to its construction. Thus began a chain of bureaucratic events that would ultimately lead, over a drawn-out two-and-a-half year period, to a directive from Ickes that he would not approve the road unless Cammerer first discussed with Marshall the specifics and Marshall agreed. The conclusion, thereby, became foregone that the road would not be built beyond its seven-mile existence, as it almost surely would have if Bob Marshall had not objected and Harold Ickes had not been a supporter of wilderness.

There is another path that traces the line of the Smokies Crest through the Park. It enters on the east at Davenport Gap, climbs the crest along the ridgeline, now ironically named for Arno Cammerer, transects several absolutely beautiful 6000' peaks of the Smokies high country – Mount Guyot,

and his return a month later during which Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) forester **Bernie Frank** was added to his list of like-minded souls, was the first



formal gathering, in mid-January, 1935, of the organization Marshall had so intensely wished for, for so long. It was called modestly **The Wilderness Society**, and its other founding members included a veritable Who's Who of Wilderness Preservation: Harvey Broome, Benton MacKaye, **Harold Anderson, Aldo Leopold, Ernest Oberholtzer, Robert Sterling Yard**, and Bernie Frank.

For more than three-quarters of a century now the Wilderness Society has worked tirelessly to identify and preserve tracts, large and even small, that remain free, in the words of its founders, from mechanical sights and sound and smell. Their work was pivotal in the creation and passage, in 1964, of the Wilderness Act which helped define wilderness and provide for its protection at law. It designated and set aside 9 million acres of, as yet, pristine land to remain so for all time, "...where the earth and its community of life are

It Must Be the Train

untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain." As I write this, the Society can rightly claim to have helped contribute 109 million acres to our wilderness preservation system.

The ensuing years would be busy ones for Bob Marshall. In May, 1936, the new Forest Service Chief **Ferdinand Silcox** offered Bob a newly-created position as director of recreation and lands. After further conversation and deliberation, Marshall accepted, only to have his transfer denied by Ickes who wanted to keep him at Interior. Bob saw the new position as "the most important [forest] recreation job in the country," and though disappointed in the denial stayed with Interior until April, 1937, when Ickes at last approved the change.

The new job would be Bob's greatest challenge as a forester and would give him the opportunity to do some of his best work, and as always, there were the on-going challenges to preservation by those interests who saw natural resources and their concomitant beauty and human value only in terms of their potential to be converted into dollars.

Through it all the things that stand out most for me are his steadfast optimism even in the face of stonewall opposition; his generally cheerful disposition, whether in victory or defeat; his unbounded energy and enthusiasm, whether in hiking the lands he loved so dearly or in attacking the problems of the bureaucracy in which he labored; his belief in the innate goodness of nearly everyone and in their desire to do the right thing for themselves, for others, and

for the land. Many, but certainly not all, of the ideas he espoused would



eventually find their way into official Forest Service policies that sought to balance the often competing interests of encouraging the greatest participation possible by the largest numbers of citizens possible in all of the public lands where we, as a nation, have been so abundantly blessed with such incredible treasures of beauty and solitude, against the on-going need for a sustainable forestry to help meet the timber needs of our society; and all that against the greed of men who would use their power or wealth to take all they can as quickly as they can with no thought of their fellow beings and then hide that greed behind the values we hold dear regarding liberty and property. It is said that people who do not remember history are doomed to repeat it, and for me that lesson seems most clear in recalling the metaphor of the frog in the biology experiment. The frog is placed in room-

Roots Sneaking up on Tree as the temperature of the water is gradually, incrementally increased until its heat has induced a lethargy from which awareness comes, not merely too late, but not at all; and there is no escape. If we look only at what we have today, then it becomes easy to justify a facile compromise with those forces that would continue to destroy the beauty of our world and to say in justification that there is still much room to give. Yet if we look behind us at where we have been, then it becomes all too apparent what we have once had and what we have now lost. Remember the Bob Marshalls of our world before it is too late.

There had already been several episodes in more recent years in which sudden and, on the surface at least, inexplicable illnesses had struck him, although the remainder of the time he appeared to be the picture of perfect health and stamina. He spoke little of them and brushed them aside as inconsequential when asked. The episodes usually required brief hospital stays followed by several days to a couple of weeks' rest after which he would be up and on the go again, charging forward as if nothing was awry. In hindsight, something was wrong. On the balmy Washington, D.C. evening of September 10, 1939, Bob visited with **Margaret Tyler**, the daughter of his good friend and Wilderness Society associate, Bob Yard. He was concerned about her father's financial situation and wanted to figure out what he could do to help. A little later that evening he went to dinner with his friends **Gardner** and **Dorothy Jackson**. At dinner he seemed fine. After leaving the Jackson's he boarded a midnight train for New York City to visit with his brothers **James** and **George**. When the train halted at

Penn Station, Bob Marshall did not appear at the platform; a porter discovered him dead in his berth. He was not quite two months shy of being 39. Labels do not suffice; they are too easily given and withdrawn often with great difficulty at too great a price. Bob Marshall's life defies them anyway: a city boy whose love of wilderness would be so intense and deeply abiding that the only way he could survive in this world, day by day, was to give vent to the passion within him that drove him to connect with the wild in every moment possible and wished for us all the same joy that he found there. *

* I am indebted to **James M. Glover** for most of the factual information contained herein. His excellent biography entitled ***A Wilderness Original The Life of Bob Marshall*** is a wonderful reference.

What's Now?:

Falling Up...The Smokies Approach Autumn

As it is, we do well to make over the mile an hour as extreme care has to be used on account of the narrowness of the ridge and the uncertainty of the footing... The indications are that not very many people have ever made the last half of this trip.

This stupendous mountain scenery has, nevertheless, repaid us for all our hard tramping and the memory of it will always be a source of pleasure to me.

From *A Walking and Camping Trip
Through the Great Smoky Mountains*
D.R. Beeson

[Written somewhere between Porter's Gap and Mount Guyot on September 2-3, 1914]

In late-August and early-September, 1914, as war loomed in overseas, **D.R. Beeson**, a self-trained architect from Johnson City, Tennessee, and his friend, Professor **C. Hodge Mathes**, an instructor at East Tennessee State Normal School (now East Tennessee State University), took an eight-day and estimated 113-mile walk through the Great Smoky Mountains. Their trip consisted primarily of a trek across the crest of the Smokies high country, through what was then, and still is, some of the most rugged and beautiful country in eastern North America. There was no Appalachian Trail, only the paths made and left by the Tsalagi and the pioneer farmers and woodsmen who came after them.

Being the time of year that it was, perhaps Beeson and Mathes talked about the hues that would soon grace the ridges and seep down into the valleys below in an ever widening flow of color. They left us with a beautiful memory of their time in these ancient woods.

Soon the memory of autumns past will again stir us to consider the prospects for the upcoming season. How will it be this year? Who can tell? Simply put, the intensity of fall color is primarily dependent on two things: temperature and moisture. That said, the easy part is over and the questions of when, what, and how much take over and things get very tricky indeed. In broad general terms,

the quality of the season's tones is a function of how much moisture/precipitation is available in the early part of the season, say, roughly, the beginning of September, and what sort of temperature range occurs during about that same period. Early-frost dulls and is a destroyer of good color; while temperatures that are too warm don't encourage the chemical changes necessary to good color to kick in. Mild days and cool nights, and plentiful moisture during that early autumn transition period are the recipe for fall delight.

It's been awfully dry around here lately, but that doesn't predict anything about the brilliance that may come. It's too early to tell how the season will fare.



Clouds over Cherokee Orchard

What can be told is that water levels are low. Of course, this is the dry season and one would expect levels to be down; however, on the whole this area is from 2"-6" below normal for this time of year; and while a couple of passing storms can alter levels in a given watershed, it's going to take more than that to bring stream flow up to where one would anticipate it to be. That said, stream images are always wonderful in the Smokies; and when water is low, rocks and strata become more apparent. Little River, both above Elkmont and in the lower gorge; Big Creek, on the northeastern edge of the Park; Middle Prong of Little Pigeon in Greenbrier; Oconaluftee near Kephart Prong; Deep Creek near Bryson City; and West Prong of Little Pigeon as it winds along Newfound Gap Road: all of these offer excellent opportunities if you are willing to do a little rock hopping. If you do, dress well, with good shoes/sandals, and exercise care. Even dry, rocks can be slippery. The prospects for sunrise and sunset images continue to be hampered by the ongoing construction along Newfound Gap Road. Morton Overlook is closed to vehicles. Sunset from the Clingman's Dome Parking Area is limited by the fact that for much of September the sun still disappears behind the Smokies Crest ridge before it sets, making the valleys of Noland, Forney, and Hazel Creeks dark well before sunset. This will change in October, but don't let it keep you from experiencing late afternoon light from the Dome now. Amazing things can happen in the waning light, and this will make the trip well worth the time. Sunrise, on the other hand, is becoming a good time to be in the high country, either at Luftee Overlook or at Clingman's Dome. In the upcoming third quarter of the year the sun, as it rises, is in a great position for images from both locations, and this is the season for low-lying valley fog, as warm days and cooler evenings give rise to good chances for overnight fog formation, especially in the

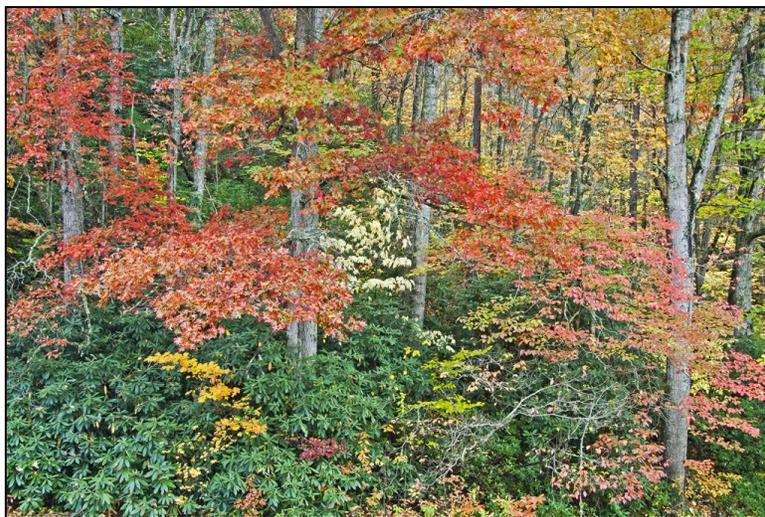
Ridge Parkway from Cherokee to Soco Gap this can be one of the more wonderful autumn day's you'll spend anywhere. Grand landscapes are more the rule here, but intimate scenes and close-up work are plentiful, including abstract play with double-exposures and Orton effects. By the middle of October the colors will generally have spread down the slopes into the mid-elevations and they can be combined with streams in many places for amazing



Watersmeet, Greenbrier

intimate forest results . Toward the end of the month the colors will be concentrated in pockets of mid-elevation locations, as well as in the lower valleys; and again water and color are powerful elements, especially reflections in places like Little River and Big Creek. With water and color come great abstract opportunities and lots of fun.

I once read that the reason the fall color season in the Smokies – and elsewhere



Intimate Color

in the Southern Appalachians – seems, commonly, to last longer is because there are more species of deciduous trees here than in other parts of the country; and because this diversity of types undergoes autumnal changes based on the dominant color of its secondary pigment (after green) the color time period proceeds like a wave from yellow dominant species to orange dominant and, finally, to red, being, thus, drawn out over a longer span. It even has a name, the fall color wave model, and perhaps it can serve you as a guide to your foliage journeys. Of course, there are exceptions to most everything, and sourwood(*Oxydendrum arboreum*) and black gum(*Nyssa sylvatica*) seem to be exceptions. They're both red, but they act like they're yellow, which is to say they turn early.

These wonderful mountains have seen great changes since those late-summer

days nearly a century ago when Don Beeson and Hodge Mathes walked through them, but their rugged beauty remains; and it will continue so as long as we all remember that we each have a role to play. We may never trek from Dalton Ridge to Davenport Gap, but we can each carry the journey with us every day in our hearts to remind us that what we have left that is still wild and beautiful and free should be allowed to forever remain that way.

A Tip is Worth?...

Steps Revisited: Taking the First Ones

For us, the most interesting approach to photography emphasizes the experience of seeing. It is what Henri Cartier-Bresson described as, “putting one’s head, one’s eye, and one’s heart on the same axis.” From the contemplative perspective we might describe this as connecting clear seeing with our inherent creativity. This seems to be the core approach of the great masters of photography: their work is thoroughly grounded in seeing. Craft has its place. Intention has its place. But the ground is definitely clear seeing.

Andy Karr and Michael Wood

From *The Practice of Contemplative Photography*

In the last issue of “A Song...”, I suggested eight steps that I consider to be incredibly useful, if not essential, to the creation of images that are memorable, that work in terms of the reasons why we create images in the first place. That list was just an outline, which, though perhaps clear enough in itself, might benefit from a little further elucidation.

- 1. Relax; tune out distractions. In other words: “Be here now.”**
- 2. Study the subject and the light. Is now the best time to photograph this subject? Ask yourself, “What is it that has attracted me here? What do I like about this subject, and how can I present what I like in my photograph?”**

Why is it even necessary to talk about relaxing, or being present, as a first step, as a sine qua non, if you will? It is because it is truly amazing what we can bring to the experience of taking a photograph that is other than being present. And if it is so difficult to be present, it is likewise difficult to be relaxed in whatever state other than being present we show up in. So, perhaps, the thing to be said is that, first, it



Wabi sabi Dogwood

is essential to be present to the experience of photography; and, having accomplished presence, then it is essential that we relax into that state of presence so that we can give ourselves the utmost chance to make a connection with whatever we have chosen as our creative subject. Part of that capacity comes from being comfortable with both our equipment and the mechanical/technical processes of image creation. Lacking this capacity is, in and of itself, enough to keep anyone from being truly relaxed, or present. So practice on a very regular basis becomes part of what encourages relaxation, as well as presence.

As I've just said, it's so very common to show up for photography, but not be present. Showing up is essential, but it's just a function of putting one's body in some location, and is incomplete without presence. Showing up without being present almost insures that relaxation will be difficult, because rather than being completely here, we're partly somewhere else; and in that state of duality, relaxing is hardly a natural act.

Forty years ago a young seeker named **Richard Alpert**, wrote a book outlining the previous ten years of his life, which highlighted his conversion from a hard-driving Harvard professor to a searcher after the truths he might wring from the experience of living life and being of service to others. His little book, which I still find wonderfully instructive, is called ***Be Here Now***. By the time he wrote it, Richard was no longer Alpert, but had morphed into the persona we know now as one of the great spiritual teachers of our age, **Ram Dass**. His words connected and my journey was made richer for it.

It is the state of being present to the experience – any experience – that allows you to “see” your subject, to become part of it, to let it express itself through you; and the relaxing is simply what allows you to do it more easily and completely. How you choose to tune out the distractions and the noises in your head is up to you, and there are many ways to go about it. Learning to listen to your inner wisdom – that awareness that reminds you when the voices are talking – comes from believing in your own ability to live your life in mindfulness. I have found for myself that mindfulness seems to flow from the cultivation of an alert stillness that allows me in the simple act of breathing in and out to sense my connection with the world around me.

Showing up and being relaxed in the present moment are what allow you to consider the second step: recognizing some intuitive truths, looking at the light



Monet's Dogwood

and the subject, and acknowledging some evaluative choices.

We are drawn to photographs because something in the visual field – even if that field seems chaotic – has spoken to us. Something out “there” has reached out and touched something in “here”, inside of us; and we have responded by offering

it our attention. On an elemental and symbolic level that “something”, as we will explore later, will invariably involve some combination of elements and principles of graphic design. On a visual level, it might be anything: an arrangement of leaves on the ground; a line of rocks in a stream; literally, anything. And in its initial stimulating moment, all we may know is that we have – in



Cades Cove Pastoral Calm

some small way – responded: our eyes become a little more focused, that coursing through our veins of the chemical reaction that is excitement becomes apparent, our heart may quicken its beat. We have been attracted to something, and we are aware of the attraction.

Now we have to identify the “something”, and this is not always easy, but there are helpful clues to guide us. If the answer isn’t immediately obvious, get your camera and begin looking through it at what you think the subject might be.

Move the camera around, move you around, look through different focal lengths, look from different angles and perspectives: get higher and lower. Do all of this in a relaxed and present way; and, as you do, quietly listen for that small voice that simply says, “Aha.” When you hear it, stop; you have found what attracted you in the first place. Of course, there may be lots of other images there as well, and it would be wise to shoot all of them that you see, just as it would be wise to attend to the “aha”; for it will tell you something about who you are as an artist and photographer.

Having found the subject of your image, how do you present it in the most meaningful way possible? This is a very personal consideration and one that only you can make based on your own internal responses to the connection you feel.

While all of this process has been going on, there is one additional consideration that you will want to be making. How is the subject in the extant light? Is now the best light for this subject or would a different light, or different time, be better? If you have the luxury of returning, what can you say now about when would be the time of most optimum light: morning, afternoon, dawn, dusk, mid-day? If a different light would be better, what can you say now about that light: softer, warmer, more direct, more diffused? Can you alter what exists in a way to make it what you’re looking for, say with a diffuser or some form of artificial light?

So the first two steps, then, are designed to help you enter into a receptive state of being such that creating a more powerful and meaningful image is more likely to be the result of your experience; and having become receptive, to help you identify the subject that has drawn you to it, so that you “see” most clearly what it is you want to express with your creation.

Think of your experience as “seeing what no one else is seeing”, because how you see the world is truly unique to you. But go a step further and consciously understand what this means. It means you must know how to see and it means making your thoughts and your awareness visible. One of the usual ways our minds try to



Welcome to Spiderville

make life easier is to create a first impression of anything: a problem, something in the visual field, whatever. Often these first impressions are narrow and superficial. We only see what we’ve conditioned ourselves to see; and notions that we’ve elevated into stereotypes keep us from seeing deeper or more clearly – to the detriment of our imagination. And all of this takes place without our conscious awareness ever being raised.

What a marvelous thing, to awaken to the realization that we can see clearly and calmly, and in that calm clarity we can turn our attention to the creation we want to bring forth.

As for EarthSong/Walking in Beauty...

Walking in Beauty

As I walk with Beauty
As I walk, as I walk
The universe is walking with me
In beauty it walks before me
In beauty it walks behind me
In beauty it walks below me
In beauty it walks above me
Beauty is on every side
As I walk, I walk with beauty

Traditional Diné Prayer

It has been nearly eighteen years ago that I began the path that I have been walking, and it has been truly the most amazing journey I could ever have imagined. During that time I have been blessed to know more than a few remarkable people whose energy, creativity, and love have guided me as I have traveled. And every time I begin to think that it can't possibly become more heart-stirring than it has been, new possibilities, new people, new ideas just seem to show up and off I go down another interesting



Adirondack Upland Wetland

trail. But while I'm still at the trailhead, I want to tell you about some really exciting things that have already happened this summer, but which hold significance for the future, as well.

This past June, EarthSong, in conjunction with the Adirondack Photography Institute, offered the first ever spring in the High Peaks weeklong workshop in Lake Placid, New York. Our host at the **Northwoods Inn, Gary Smith**, and his excellent staff, more than went out of their way to make us feel at home, and we did. We had a great group of participants who spent the week roaming the ponds, streams, wetlands, highlands, and forests of one of the very special places in this entire country. They had a wonderful experience, and so did I. I was assisted in the workshop by **John DiGiacomo** of **Placid Times Photography**, who has lived part-time in the High Peaks area for many years. I'll have more to say about that in an upcoming announcement. In scouting for this event I had already become convinced of the tremendous beauty of the Adirondacks as a spring workshop location, and after spending the time, both before and after our gathering, I am convinced that this is a place I will plan to put on our schedule as a regular occasion. And, by the way, there's a great little coffee shop in Keene.



Birchpath of Great Return

Immediately prior to the Adirondacks workshop, we spent an awesome week in a place that already feels like home. The Acadia spring workshop, again, was an inspiration. The lupine were as spectacular as I can ever remember; the light was

exquisite; the rocks, the cliffs, and the waters were truly amazing. We were in excellent company and our hosts, **Dave and Vickie Lloyd**, at **Seawall Motel** were their usual wonderful selves, only better. The best thing about leaving Southwest Harbor was knowing we'd be back next year, and the worst thing was realizing it would be twelve months away.

And that brings me to the present. This summer has really been busy and a lot of fun. The **One-day Workshop** in July took us from **Purchase Knob** in the Smokies and to the **Blue Ridge Parkway** above Haywood County. I had an excellent group of participants from four states who found the summer wildflowers and foggy conditions quite conducive to exciting images. The **Cusp of Autumn One-day Workshop** in September is filled and **Cades Cove** is preparing itself for our arrival.

There are two upcoming **Weekend Workshops**, and both of these still have a few openings. The **CNPA-Asheville Fussy Photographer Weekend Workshop, September 9-11**, in Asheville has openings. For more information contact **Everette Robinson** or **Karen Rowe**, co-coordinators at CNPA-Asheville: coordinator@CNPA-Asheville.org. The **See It~Say It Workshop, September 16-18**, also in Asheville, which I'll be teaching with **Warren Bedell**, likewise, has a couple of openings. This is an event that promises to offer an exciting mix of creativity and technology. Contact me or Warren for more information: don@earthsongphotography.com or warren@bedells.net.



Stairway to Heaven

There are two announcements that I am really excited to make. For some time I have been considering **the book** that I would like to create as my first foray into the publishing world. I have chosen the subject and am busily working on the manuscript; and I'm going to self-publish. My projection is to have it ready by the end of October. I'm going to keep the title and subject under wrap for the moment, but my intent will be to offer something that will inspire, both as an artistic and creative volume, as well as provide some technical advice on how to achieve those results. Be looking for the release date in a couple of months. The second pronouncement is that the **EarthSong Photography website, www.EarthSongPhotography.com**, is shortly to have a new portal engine and content management system which will allow me to create the **EarthSong Blog Page**. The blog will feature an image each week, which will serve as a vehicle to initiate a conversation on the creative and technical processes involved

in its making. The plan is for the new changes to be in effect by the **end of September**, and I'm really looking forward to the discussions we'll have. So look for the announcement of the starting date very soon.

The **2012 workshop schedule** will be ready for announcing within the coming week and will be posted to the website by Labor Day. There are some exciting things happening with regard to this part of the journey, but I'm going to save all of that news for the publishing of the schedule.

And finally, there are a couple of upcoming fall workshops that I want to mention:

The **White Mountains Fall Color Workshop, October 1-7 in Glen, New Hampshire** still has spaces available, and it's going to be a wonderful week of fun and creativity in one of the most beautiful fall foliage locations in the country. Contact me for more information at don@earthsongphotography.com.

The **Pioneer Valley "Creativity Intensive" Weekend Workshop, October 8-10, in Northampton, Massachusetts** promises to reprise the excellent fussy photographer weekend workshop we had in the amazing Pioneer Valley in 2010. If you live in western Massachusetts, northern Connecticut, southwestern New Hampshire, southeastern Vermont, or eastern Upstate New York I think you will really enjoy this two full days of fieldwork, classwork, and critiques in a location that the local folk try to keep secret because it's so lovely. Contact me for additional information at don@earthsongphotography.com, or Judy Cummings at cummings44@comcast.net.

Until next time, may the Spirit of Light guide your shutter release.

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Early Light, Purchase Knob