



## October 2024 News



*A month ago, I had a different message planned. I was going to share how much I love this time of year. I still do. I enjoy the light, especially in the early morning and the late afternoon. A month ago, we never expected Tropical Storm Helene and all her fury! While we will be reminded of the devastation for years to come, I hope that we will also remember the goodness of our people, both near and far, who continue to step up to help our neighbors in Polk County and “up the mountain.” I am proud to be a Western North Carolinian! Message continued on pg. 2.*

### **A Storm Like No Other**

This has been a difficult time for everyone in Western North Carolina during and following Tropical Storm Helene. Unfortunately, Pearson’s Falls and Glen was not spared Helene’s fury.



The Tryon Garden Club Board members are grateful for the rescue teams and road crews that helped people along Pearson Falls Road. Pearson’s Falls Operations Director Andy Ruff and his wife were able to walk out to safety with a team on Monday, September 30. Pearson Falls Road has been cleared and is drivable for local traffic. Andy and Melissa moved back into the cottage on October 21.

The good news is that our buildings and other structures near the parking area suffered no damage. Unfortunately, that is not the case moving beyond the trailhead. The Pearson Family Trail to the falls is severely damaged from the lower picnic area past the bridge to the upper falls. The historic Chase Bridge is still there but the waterflow was clogged by debris and Colt Creek found another route. The creek now flows directly through what was the trail at Lightner’s Ledge; as a result, the short trail to look up at the falls is completely gone and the area is full of debris. There were two landslides near the falls, and there’s another one visible on the property. The area at the falls is a mess!

The bright spot is that the Webster Way trail is mostly there, and debris removal on the trail to the lower picnic area has begun. Both the lower and upper falls look good, although a bit wider.

The Tryon Garden Club has established a Restoration Team, led by VP John James, to begin both short-term and long-term assessments. The club’s finances are solid for now, as the club has an emergency operational

fund for such an event. Operations Director Andy Ruff will be a key member of the Restoration Team. TGC President, Beth Rounds is leading the outreach and communication efforts. She and Andy are meeting with local organizations to explain the Pearson's Falls and Glen situation. A fundraising committee will be established soon.

Our restoration efforts will be costly. Funds will be needed for the long-term plan to rebuild Pearson's Falls trails. If you want to donate to the Restoration Fund, checks can be made to the Tryon Garden Club with a note to the 'Restoration Fund.' These can be mailed to Tryon Garden Club, PO Box 245, Tryon, NC, 28782.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Beth Rounds at [bethrounds55@gmail.com](mailto:bethrounds55@gmail.com) or John James at [treasurer.tryongarden@gmail.com](mailto:treasurer.tryongarden@gmail.com).

For more storm damage pictures see pages 4 & 5.

## Upcoming Event

**General Meeting: Wednesday, November 20**

**Social and snacks:** 1:30 pm

**Program:** 2:00 pm

**Where:** FENCE

**Speaker:** Kristen Barnett/Indigo Roots Textiles

**Title:** Rooted in Blue

Kristen will present a brief history of indigo and its importance to the Carolinas during the pre-Revolutionary War era and how indigo is making a comeback today!

## Club Business

*President's Message continued from page 1.*

Thank you to all who came to our October meeting. The feedback Andy, John, and I have received has been positive. Many of you are asking how you can help. For starters, get in touch with Andy, John, or me, and we will put you on the list. We will need help across the board. The Restoration Team is just gearing up; soon a team member will let you know specifics on where you can help.

In the meantime, enjoy our beautiful area. Take a walk at Vaughn Creek Greenway. Support local small businesses by spending some of your holiday money in Tryon and Saluda. Visit Upstairs Artspace's new

exhibit by Dale McEntire, *Reflections Along the Path*. His work is nature-inspired and beautiful. Learn more about Dale's exhibit at <https://www.upstairsartspace.org/>.

## Updated 2024/25 TGC Board:

- President, Beth Rounds
- Vice President, John James
- Treasurer, John Ryan
- Secretary, Jackie Weedon
- Pearson's Falls Education, Rae Ann Wessel
- Depot Garden, Jane Herman
- Member Engagement/Hospitality, Bob Rossier

**Financials:** John J. reports that a new Square interface was installed at Pearson's Falls for credit card and cash sales in early September. This change was meant to ease the gatekeeper's recordkeeping and simplify monthly reports from Andy to the Treasurer.

The state of the club's August and September financials were good. There has been no October income. The Glen has been closed since September 26.

## Grants:

**Kirby Endowment Fund, PF Trail Maintenance and Special Projects/Tryon Beautification Grants**

Beth R. reported that October is the month for submitting the Kirby Endowment Fund documentation to the Polk County Community Foundation (PCCF).

Beth also noted that the TGC Board wants to thank the Kirby



Endowment Fund and PCCF for the Trail Maintenance Fund and Special Projects/Tryon Beautification Grant.

A thank you article appeared in the Tryon Daily Bulletin on Wednesday, September 18. Lucy Brannon stated that this money has been used to renovate the Depot Garden. Currently, Jane Herman, Chairperson, and the Civic Beautification Committee are installing and labeling native plants and shrubs. The Depot Garden has been designated a Homegrown National Park. Across the street, at Morris, you can walk up to the horse, stand on the new stepping stones, and have your picture taken. (See the Morris photo on the top page 1.)

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### Tryon Garden Club's Grant Fund

As reported in the summer newsletter, the Tryon Garden Club has awarded the Tryon Downtown Development Association (TDDA) \$5000 for the Trade Street Clocktower project.

**Marketing:** Beth R. will be changing the content of the website to reflect Pearson's Falls and Glen's closure due to the storm. Just before the Pearson's Falls devastation, Beth had completed a website update with new photos and content. The TGC board outsources the website design, hosting, and content changes to Cross Anchor Design. This makes it easier to keep the site current.

Recently, *Life in the Foothills* magazine featured Pearson's Falls on the cover. Again, our local neighbors voted Pearson's Falls the Best Hike in Polk County. Rae Ann W., Andy R., and Beth R. met with a Tryon Daily Bulletin (TDB) reporter to discuss a future article.

Before Helene, two new information posters were on display at Pearson's Falls, one highlighting our history and the club's long-standing role in conservation, and the other featuring some of the most common questions visitors ask our gate staff.

**Hospitality:** Hats off to Bob Rossier and his committee for delicious snacks before the September and October meetings. These treats were more than snacks; these were a hearty lunch! Also, the table was beautiful. Thank you to the hospitality team. It was true comfort in a time of a storm.

**Programs:** The Club's **December Holiday Event** will be **Thursday, December 12 at the Tryon Country Club at 6 pm. THIS IS A THURSDAY EVENING CELEBRATION.**

### Depot Garden

**Flower Petals from the Garden:** Jane Herman reported back in August that it was quiet in the Depot Garden. In the months that followed, everything continued to hum along smoothly. Even the storm Helene didn't cause much disruption other than lots of stray twigs on the ground. The everblooming azaleas have been putting on a magnificent display. And currently, the chrysanthemums, blue mist, and other fall bloomers are putting on



a show. The oak leaf hydrangeas are turning a lovely color, and the milkweed pods are way cool! You are invited to stop by, sit awhile, and enjoy the beautiful and peaceful surroundings.

### Bon Voyage, Gene Justice!

Gene's last day at Pearson's Falls will be October 30. Gene has been contemplating retirement for the past three years. Now that his wife has retired from teaching, they feel it is the right time to write their next chapter. Gene and Libby will be on the road more often, exploring the U.S. in their RV.



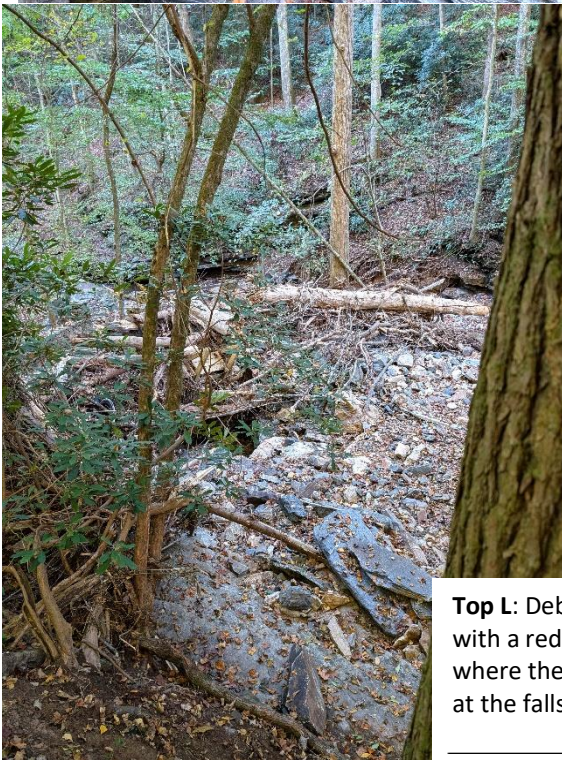
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PEARSON'S  
FALLS  
AND GLEN



**Top L:** Debris under Chase Bridge. **Top R:** The landslide with a red arrow indicating a person. **Bottom L:** Debris where the trail once was. **Bottom R:** Susan Kelley's bench at the falls and what is left of the railing.

Photos John J and Andy R



## October General Meeting

Andy R. and Beth R. reported on the state of Pearson's Falls following Tropical Storm Helene.



Storm Day  
September 27<sup>th</sup>

- 27 inches in total
- Friday a.m. power outage
- Evacuated on Monday, Sept 30

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### The Good News

- The buildings are in good shape, including restrooms.
- The original Pearson's Falls Gate is not damaged.
- The parking lot is untouched, including the plants, shrubs, and trees.
- The water fountain works!
- Elizabeth Webster Way is in good shape.
- Susan Kelley's and Linda Eiserloh's benches are still standing.
- Oconee bells, walking ferns, Hepatica, and other wildflowers have been seen.

### Access is limited. Please stay away for now.

#### It is not safe.

- Hwy 176 from Saluda to PF Road is open for local traffic.
- Pearson Falls Road is open but not recommended.
- Power and communication links are reconnected.

### As of October 15, 2024

- A Restoration Team was formed on October 9.
  - John J. lead, Andy R., Bob T., and Rae Ann W.
  - Assessing and creating a short-term plan
  - Contacting agencies – trail assessment, engineering resource, outside funding.
- Visitor centers were updated.
- Beth R. met with Noah Woods, Polk County Community Foundation (PCCF)
- John Ryan and John James are transitioning the treasurer role.
- The Operational Fund at PCCF will be tapped.



**Top Left:** The room was full of those eager to know about Pearson's Falls.

**Top Right:** Beth's great slide presentation.

1. The power of water
2. Debris caught along the bank
3. One landslide
4. At the picnic area and Webster Way

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**September: Native Bees and the Habitats They Require**

was the topic. Brannen Basham and Jill Jacobs of Spriggly's Beescaping shared their knowledge about bees of numerous species and beneficial pollinators. These are easier to attract to your garden than you might think. Jacob and Jill offered approaches and practical advice for your everyday gardening. Their business, Spriggly's, is a nature education and habitat restoration business with a focus on native plants and native pollinators.

Everyone enjoyed the social time before the program; it was an opportunity to reconnect after the summer. There was good conversation and delicious luncheon treats, thanks to a diligent social committee.



Books for suggested reading can be found on page 5.

Photos by Donna S, Beth R. & Nell L.

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benches were washed away—gone forever. Pearson’s Falls was inaccessible. The PF chairperson cancelled her meeting with the tree men and with Chris Bartol of the Thermal Belt Rotary who had offered the club’s manpower to aid in cleanup.

Boyd Plemby, a logging contractor, was hired. He had a 4-week deadline at \$7,920. Pearson’s Falls was closed. Col. Harrison Smith, retired Corps of Engineers, donated his time to inspect the bridge. He determined that the bridge foundation had been severely damaged due to the erosion.

The driveway and parking lot were graded and dressed for \$18,000. Club members and their spouses, and the Thermal Belt Rotary Club donated hours of labor. The TGC treated the Rotary Club to lunch on their September 30 workday. A Restoration Fund was established. Large donations included Polk County Community Foundation \$5000, the Kirby Family \$2000 (this was before the PCCF Kirby Fund), and Green Blades \$500. Other donations came from garden clubs, individuals, and organizations as far away as Brevard and Spartanburg. TGC members donated \$16,440. Then the club learned that even though it is a tax-exempt 501(c)(5) organization, donations were not tax deductible because it was not a 501(c)(3) business.

By October 2, 1995, the stonework, bridge, and trails were completely repaired. The insurance representative inspected the trail and said that adding 3 sections of railing, PF was good for receiving visitors. The debris in the creek was cleaned up except for logs caught under the bridge. It was hoped they would be easier to remove with the next high water. This was later accomplished. Pearson’s Falls and Glen was officially reopened on Friday, October 6, two days later than expected because of heavy rain. The club published a full-page ad in the Tryon Daily Bulletin thanking everyone who helped to restore Pearson’s Falls and Glen. New rhododendrons and azaleas were purchased for in front of the Ellen Holt (caretaker’s) cottage. The club began to actively pursue 501(c)(3) status (which it now has).

On February 2, 1996, a devastating winter storm hit Pearson’s Falls and closed the glen for another month. During the closure, only TGC members could visit the glen on Sundays, when there were no workmen.

**Historical Tidbit**

**1995’s Severe Storm Damage at Pearson’s Falls**

On August 19, 20, and 26, 1995, a storm caused PF to be closed for almost two months. On the weekend of August 19-20, the glen received 23 inches of rain; there was heavy rain, the valley was flooded, dozens of fallen trees, collapsing banks, extreme erosion, damaged bridge, fences, picnic tables and benches, and rocks blocked the creek’s water flow. Pearson’s Falls was closed for several days before it was safe to welcome anyone. The Drews, the caretakers, purchased a chainsaw for which the club later reimbursed them. Using this saw, Dennis Drew saved the club hundreds of dollars. It got a lot of use. Everyone who was able to reach the falls was shocked by the damage.

The following Saturday, August 26, the rain returned; Pearson’s Falls received an additional 13 inches and the valley was flooded again. The bridge was endangered by a log jam in the creek, now a roaring river. The Drews saved the bridge by cutting logs and sending them down the swift and strong current. The granite boulders at the foot of the falls were moved. The top of the falls was greatly changed. Two tables and two

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## Exploring with Jim Welch

### Vertical Bog and Devil’s Courthouse

In spite of my somewhat worn-out right knee, I still enjoy a good outing, and such was the case a few weeks ago when my friend and fellow TGC member Grady Nance and I joined a group of South Carolina Association of Naturalists (SCAN) members for a walkabout on the Blue Ridge Parkway. SCAN was founded in 1976 by Naturalist Rudy Mancke and is dedicated to the gathering and sharing of information about natural history.

The drive from our homes near Flat Rock took less than an hour to reach the assigned gathering point at the parkway’s Wolf Mountain Overlook. There we were given our choice of nearby natural areas to visit. Grady and I joined a small group looking at rare plants at a vertical bog some 5,500 feet above sea level. It is a unique spot where water trickles down the rockface next to the highway and creates a special environment for many unique plant species that one would expect in northern New England, not the Southern Appalachians.

There were clumps of *Drosera rotundifolia* (Sundews), *Parnassia* (grass of Parnassus), and *Sanguisorba canadensis* (American burnet), and a great example of the web of the Trashline orbweaver spider. The spider decorates the web with a silk line of debris including the dry husks of insects it has eaten. The spot is also known for five species of St. John’s Wort.

Grady and I left the group as they departed for other areas, and we drove to the Devil's Courthouse parking lot a few miles up the parkway. At 5,720 feet elevation, the prominent landmark of legend affords some of the most spectacular vistas in the Blue Ridge Mountains. There are panoramic views of four states. The site’s name is from early settlers’ legends that the Devil judges souls in a cave beneath the rocky summit. The Cherokee believe the cave is the private dancing chamber and dwelling place of the sensitive slant-eyed giant Judacalla. The short climb up to the summit is strenuous but the path is wide enough in most places, albeit a bit steep.

*Continued on page 9*



**Above:** Vertical Bog. **Below Left:** *Drosera rotundifolia* (Sundew).

**Middle:** *Parnassia* (grass of Parnassus). **Right:** *Sanguisorba canadensis* (Canada burnet)

**Above:** Jim and Grady Nance at Devils Courthouse.

**Below:** The view from Devil’s Courthouse.

Photos by J Welch & Grady N

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View looking back at Devil's Courthouse parking lot.

The area provides a good habitat for a variety of rare, high-altitude plants, some of which may be remnants from the last glacial period. Hawks, ravens, vultures, eagles, and peregrine falcons are often observed from the summit.

There are 369 miles of hiking trails along the Blue Ridge Parkway. These two spots are two of the shortest trails (the vertical bog is just across the road). Both places are special, and it was another memorable, outstanding adventure.

## Invasive Plant to Eradicate

**Ground ivy, *Glechoma hederacea*, commonly called creeping Charlie:** This plant was introduced for its medicinal properties. It has spread into moist forests and along streams in the eastern and northern United States. It spreads by seeds, but mostly from its stems. When the stems bend down to the earth, it allows them to root and attach themselves.

Ground ivy creeps along the ground, covering it with round or kidney-shaped, round-serrated leaves (1 – 3” diameter). They are arranged oppositely along the stem. It is from the mint family so leaves release a mint odor when crushed. And, like other mints, the stems are square. Blue-violet flowers whorl around the leaf axils; these bloom in early spring.



Top photo: BHG/K Emanuel  
Bottom photo: authentic Wisconsin

*Information from the NC Invasive Plant Council, [nc-ipc.weebly.com](http://nc-ipc.weebly.com), [Wikipedia.org](http://Wikipedia.org), and *Better Homes and Gardens*, Leah Chester-Davis, August 11, 2024*

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## NC Native Plant for Your Garden

**American hazelnut** or American filbert, *Corylus americana*, is a native species of flowering shrub in the Betulaceae family and is deciduous. The tasty nuts with easy-to-crack shells are used in cooking and have high nutritional value. They can be consumed raw or ground into flour to obtain a cake-like bread. Usually, these tasty nuts are born annually, after the shrub is two or three years old.



**Left:** American hazelnut, *Corylus americana*. Photo: Schoolcraft.com (Shrub)

**Right:** American hazelnut fruit cluster (nuts enclosed in leaflike bracts. Photo: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corylusamericana#/

American hazelnut is easy to grow and care for. It grows at a fast pace that will eventually produce a clumpy overall appearance formed from multiple stems. It can be used as windbreaks, visual screens, and to attract wildlife.

When planting American hazelnuts, the roots should be soaked in water for an hour or more to increase their survival chances.

American hazelnuts are medium to large shrubs that can grow from 8 to 16 feet high and have a crown spread of about 10 to 15 feet. Under some conditions, they can take the appearance of a small tree. To maintain the American hazelnut's desired size or shape, you can prune it regularly from winter to summer. This will ensure vigorous growth, sporadic blooming, and rich fruit-bearing.

The leaves are simple, ovate to heart-shaped, hairy, and tooth-edged. They grow alternately arranged with a green tint in summer turning yellowish in fall.

enclosed in protective bracts of buds and contain reddish styles at their tips. The nuts reach maturity from mid-summer to fall. Each nut is attached to two leaf-like bracts that have irregularly lacinate edges.

American hazelnuts can be bothered by nut weevils, filbert worms, aphids, tent caterpillars, and other intruders. These can be removed with bare hands, sprayed with a strong stream of water, or treated with suitable insecticides and pesticides.

Hardiness zones 4-9. Prefers full sun or partial sun. Grows in acidic, alkaline, loamy moist, rich, sandy, well-drained, and clay soils. Drought tolerant.

Information from *Arborday.org* and *gardenbest.com*.

### Quote of the month:

*Essential advice for the gardener: grow peas of mind, lettuce be thankful, squash selfishness, turnip to help thy neighbor, and always make thyme for loved ones.*

Garden.org newsletter for July 11, 2020

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