



Roundtable

... with Louis C. Fink

Union Camp Acts to Preserve Camassia Slopes Along Roanoke River

North Carolinians and naturalists everywhere are assured protection of one of the most spectacular displays of rare wild flowers in the Southeast. On 16 April 1982, Union Camp Corporation, which manages about 1.7 million acres of woodlands in six southeastern states, officially donated the 176-acre Camassia Slopes Tract to The Nature Conservancy as part of the company's Corporate Land Legacy Program, which was established in 1975 to identify and preserve areas of special ecological or historical significance among its landholdings. To date, the company had donated nine major tracts in five states, totaling about 77,000 acres with an appraised value of more than \$22 million. The Camassia Slopes Tract, which botanists describe as one of national significance, has an appraised value of about \$130,000. Explaining the donation, Peter J. McLaughlin, president and chief executive officer of Union Camp, said, "As a forest products company, Union Camp has to manage its lands for the highest and best end use. In this case, the best use is to leave the property as is, preserving a delicate and unusual segment of the Roanoke River Basin."

Known as the Camassia Slopes because of the abundant growth of *Camassia scilloides*, or Wild Hyacinth, the acreage has an almost 100% ground cover of more than 24 species of wild flowers designated as endangered, uncommon, or rare in the coastal plain of North Carolina. Here the Wild Hyacinth is a disjunct species, isolated a significant distance from its normal range. It is ordinarily at home west of the Appalachians in midwestern river valleys and prairies.

J. Merrill Lynch, a biologist for the Natural Heritage Program, an agency of the North Carolina Department of Natural Resources and Community Development, discovered the unusual nature of Camassia Slopes in 1979. The site is about 20 miles SE of Roanoke Rapids, Lynch's home town. After tests showed that the soil was highly basic, as opposed to the acidic soil elsewhere in the Roanoke River Basin, it became clear that Camassia Slopes was more than a random collection of rare plants. The tract's entire ecosystem is highly unusual—typical of a midwestern river basin, but unlike anything else in the surrounding area. Lynch initiated the effort that ultimately led The Nature Conservancy to approach Union Camp regarding preservation of the tract. The Camassia Slopes Tract, now donated to The Nature Conservancy, will be managed by the state chapter of the national conservation organization.

Lynch states that 60 to 70 species of breeding birds occur on the tract, which offers a good diversity of woodland forest habitat. There are at least 10 nesting warbler species in addition to the one or two pairs of Ceruleans, Turkeys, Red-shouldered Hawks,

Barred Owls, Hairy and Pileated Woodpeckers, and White-breasted Nuthatches also use the Camassia Slopes for nesting, feeding, or both.

Union Camp's largest land donations have been: 50,000 acres in the Great Dismal Swamp in Virginia, which became the core of the Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge; 16,000 acres for incorporation into the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge in Georgia; 3,800 acres along North Carolina's Chowan Swamp for use as an environmental studies center; and 1,700-acre Turtle Island, the southernmost barrier island along the coast of South Carolina. For further information about the last site, see "The Birds of Turtle Island, S.C." by W. David Chamberlain (Chat 42:3-7).

Alder Flycatchers on Roan Mountain: A Clarification

I would like to comment on a statement made in the article "Bird Finding on Roan Mountain, Mitchell County, N.C." (Potter and LeGrand, Chat 44:32-36). On page 33, in the discussion of Alder Flycatchers, the authors mention the June 1970 reports of Traill's Flycatcher (Smith, Migrant 41:68-72). I talked to Glen Eller, one of the observers, and he said that these were Willow Flycatchers (*fitz-bew* song form) found along the creek that flows through the town of Roan Mountain (Tennessee side, elevation 2500 feet). This information should have been included in the original publication. Our first record of Alder Flycatchers in the Roan Mountain area came in June 1978, though we did receive an unverified report in 1977 from a hiker along the Appalachian Trail (see Lura et al., Migrant 50:34-36). So far, Roan Mountain is the only location in Tennessee where Alder Flycatchers have been found in the breeding season, though some spots in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and elsewhere should be searched. Currently, I am planning to study the Alder Flycatchers on Roan Mountain for a Master's thesis.—RICK KNIGHT, 804 N. Hills Drive, Johnson City, Tenn. 37601

Cliff Swallows in Mountains: Additional Records and a Correction

Charles P. Nicholson, editor of *The Migrant*, writes in a letter dated 15 September 1981: "The nest record of Cliff Swallows at Fontana Dam (Chat 45:102) is very interesting. Last summer I had 10 Cliff Swallows on 19 June, which appeared to be 'prospecting' for nest sites—perching and flying about under the roadbed—at the bridge of US 129 over Tabcat Creek, about 5 miles above Chilhowee Dam. This is about 12 air miles from Fontana Dam, with Calderwood and Cheoah Dams in between. Both of these dams are fairly closed in; Fontana and Chilhowee seem much more suitable to Cliff Swallows. The swallows did not nest at Tabcat Creek bridge this year, and I've checked Chilhowee Dam for the past two years, with negative results. I wonder if the Fontana birds were the ones I saw at Tabcat."—CHARLES P. NICHOLSON, P.O. Box 402, Norris, Tenn. 37828

Jim McConnell, author of the field note mentioned above, calls to our attention an unfortunate typographical error in the quotation from Arthur Stupka's book regarding the status of the Cliff Swallow in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The species is an *uncommon* fall migrant there, not common. What a difference two little letters can make!—EFP

Sandwich Tern Recovery

"A summary of banded North American birds encountered in Europe" by John V. Dennis (North American Bird Bander 6:96-98) includes only one bird from the Carolinas. A Sandwich Tern banded at Cape Lookout 23 June 1978 was found dead in the Netherlands 6 months later, on 23 December 1978.