

Outdoors: Sierra Club to Host Presentation on National Forests

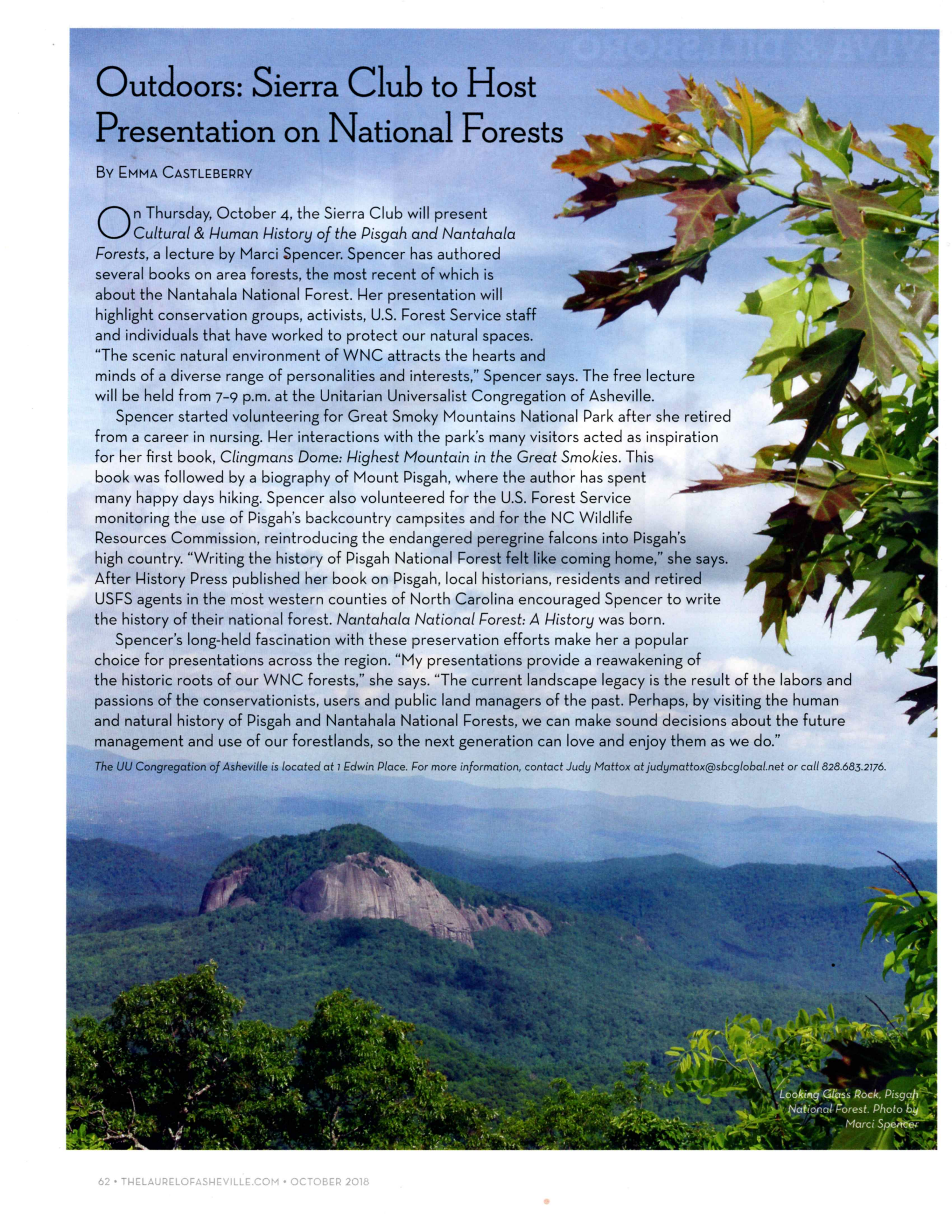
BY EMMA CASTLEBERRY

On Thursday, October 4, the Sierra Club will present *Cultural & Human History of the Pisgah and Nantahala Forests*, a lecture by Marci Spencer. Spencer has authored several books on area forests, the most recent of which is about the Nantahala National Forest. Her presentation will highlight conservation groups, activists, U.S. Forest Service staff and individuals that have worked to protect our natural spaces. “The scenic natural environment of WNC attracts the hearts and minds of a diverse range of personalities and interests,” Spencer says. The free lecture will be held from 7-9 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Asheville.

Spencer started volunteering for Great Smoky Mountains National Park after she retired from a career in nursing. Her interactions with the park’s many visitors acted as inspiration for her first book, *Clingmans Dome: Highest Mountain in the Great Smokies*. This book was followed by a biography of Mount Pisgah, where the author has spent many happy days hiking. Spencer also volunteered for the U.S. Forest Service monitoring the use of Pisgah’s backcountry campsites and for the NC Wildlife Resources Commission, reintroducing the endangered peregrine falcons into Pisgah’s high country. “Writing the history of Pisgah National Forest felt like coming home,” she says. After History Press published her book on Pisgah, local historians, residents and retired USFS agents in the most western counties of North Carolina encouraged Spencer to write the history of their national forest. *Nantahala National Forest: A History* was born.

Spencer’s long-held fascination with these preservation efforts make her a popular choice for presentations across the region. “My presentations provide a reawakening of the historic roots of our WNC forests,” she says. “The current landscape legacy is the result of the labors and passions of the conservationists, users and public land managers of the past. Perhaps, by visiting the human and natural history of Pisgah and Nantahala National Forests, we can make sound decisions about the future management and use of our forestlands, so the next generation can love and enjoy them as we do.”

The UU Congregation of Asheville is located at 1 Edwin Place. For more information, contact Judy Mattox at judymattox@sbcglobal.net or call 828.683.2176.



Looking Glass Rock, Pisgah National Forest. Photo by Marci Spencer