

# Eubanks finds the fabulous ordinary

Celebrated author and nature writer Georgann Eubanks will be the featured speaker for the next installment of the 2025 Zahner Conservation Lecture Series. Her talk, titled “Finding the Fabulous Ordinary,” will take place on Thursday, Aug. 7 at 6 p.m. at the Highlands Nature Center. This event is free and open to the public, with a small reception to follow.

Drawing from her newest book, *The Fabulous Ordinary: Discovering the Natural Wonders of the Wild South*, Eubanks takes audiences on a vivid journey through the seasonal

## Zahner Lecture set for Aug. 7

joys and stunning biodiversity of the southeastern United States. She explores awe-inspiring moments in nature across seven states including the bugling of elk in the Smokies and half a million purple martins roosting in a South Carolina lake, to glowing gnat larvae in an Alabama canyon and the bloom of trout lilies in a remote Georgia forest.

Eubanks reminds us that the natural world is full of wonder and that many of its most magical moments

can be found in ordinary, accessible places, often just a short trip away. Her stories serve not only as inspiration for outdoor exploration but as a call to protect the fragile ecosystems that make these moments possible.

Eubanks is the author of six acclaimed books published by the University of North Carolina Press, including *Saving the Wild South: The Fight for Native Plants on the Brink of Extinction*, *The Month of*

*Their Ripening*, and her latest, *The Fabulous Ordinary*. She is also the author of *Rural Astronomy*, a recently released memoir-in-poems from EastOver Press. Eubanks is co-principal of Minnow Media, an Emmy-winning documentary production company, and she co-leads the Table Rock Writers Workshop in Little Switzerland. Known for her warm, engaging presentations, she is a sought-after speaker on topics of conservation, culture, and the writing life.



See **ZAHNER**, Page 6B **Georgann Eubanks**

# May peace prevail



Photo by Kevin McCall/Staff

Rotarians, children and community members gathered for the dedication of the Peace Pole at the Community Building in Highlands.

## Rotarians unveil Peace Pole in Highlands

A quiet yet robust wish for peace rose from Highlands, on July 29 when a new Peace Pole was unveiled. The year-long effort to establish a tribute to peace is a joint project of the Mountain-top Rotary Club and the Rotary Club of Highlands, joining 250,000 communities worldwide that host Peace Poles.

Rotary Presidents Cath Connolly Hudson and Randy Foster gifted the 12-foot Peace Pole to the Town of Highlands. At the dedication, Mayor Pat Taylor expressed his gratitude to Rotarians for initiating a conversation

about peace in this important way.

Every installation is unique, but all include the phrase “May Peace Prevail On Earth” in languages appropriate to its respective community. In Highlands, the phrase is written in Cherokee, Gaelic, Spanish, and English. The dedication ceremony included brief remarks by Jessica Jenkins, Rigo Ortega, Alistair Fox, and Cath Connolly Hudson, each of whom quoted a poem, prayer, or song emblematic of their culture.

Children from Highlands Commu-

nity Child Development Center sang “It’s A Small World” against a backdrop of hundreds of colorful pinwheels, peace doves, peace signs, and hopes for peace made by students from The Bascom, the Boys and Girls Club, The Gordon School, HCCDC, The Literacy and Learning Center, and individual Highlands residents.

Highlands’ unique culture was highlighted at the beginning and end of the dedication, when the solemnity of the occasion was marked by soulful airs played by bagpipers Margaret Tooke

and Glenn Morris.

The idea for increasing the number of Peace Poles in North Carolina came from Western North Carolina’s Rotary 2024-25 District Governor Connie Molland, who had the vision of illuminating Rotary’s commitment to worldwide peace in this manner. Molland, who attended Highlands’ dedication, expressed her personal appreciation and noted Rotary International’s work to create environments of peace

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## Jackson County releases new birding guide

The Jackson County Tourism Development Authority (TDA) has launched its Birding in Jackson County guide—a free, full-color publication designed to help locals and visitors discover one of the most engaging outdoor activities the region has to offer.

With a wide variety of public lands and habitats ranging from river valleys to mountaintop forests, Jackson County is home to an incredible diversity of bird species. The guide highlights top birding locations across different elevations, best seasons to visit, and species to watch -making it an ideal companion for both beginners and experienced birders.

“This guide is one of the most thoughtfully produced outdoor resources we’ve published,” said Nick Breedlove, Executive Director of the Jackson County TDA. “Birding is something anyone can enjoy, because it’s free, easy to get started, and a meaningful way to connect with nature.”

The JCTDA has printed 20,000 copies of the guide, which are available for free at the Cashiers Area Chamber of Commerce and the Jackson County Chamber in Sylva. Designed for accessibility and ease of use, the guide includes maps, seasonal tips, and listings for ADA-friendly trails and observation spots.

An interactive digital version is also available on the official tourism website at [www.DiscoverJacksonNC.com](http://www.DiscoverJacksonNC.com) under the ‘Things to Do’ menu.

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Pop Up Pipers!

Celebrating Highlands’ Heritage

Listen for the call of the Highlands Bagpipers as they perform from a different location the first Saturday of each month through October.

This Month’s Performance:

114 N. 4th St

Saturday, August 2

4:30 – 5pm

Performances are made possible by the Highlands Chamber of Commerce/Visit Highlands, NC.

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Zahner Lecture 8

FINDING THE FABULOUS ORDINARY

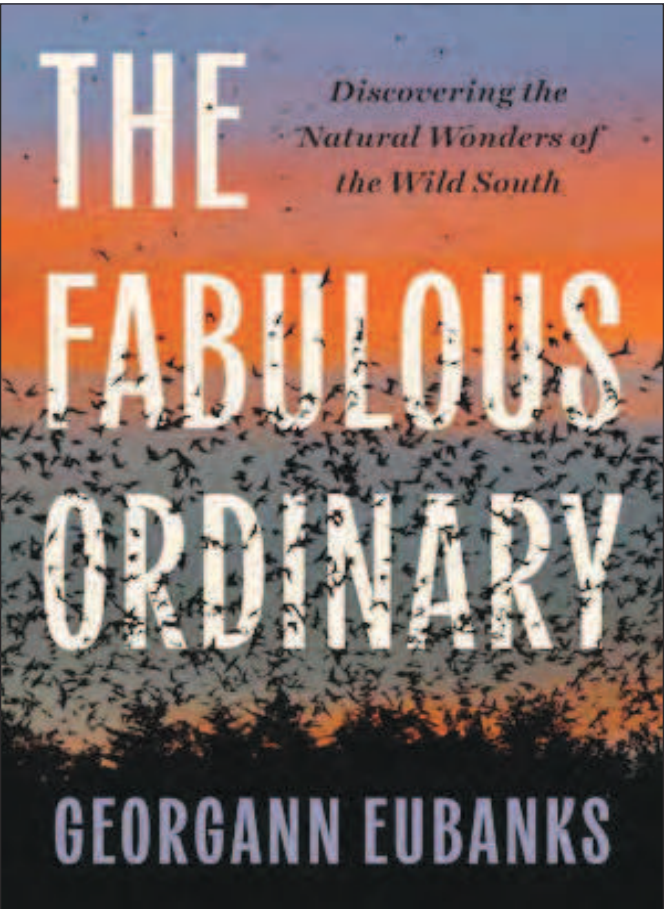
A guidebook to seasonal joys of ecosystems in the Southeast

GEORGANN EUBANKS

FEATURED SPEAKER

Submitted photos

Georgann Eubanks will present the eighth lecture of the Zahner Series on Thursday, Aug. 7 at 6 p.m.



**The Fabulous Ordinary: Discovering the Natural Wonders of the Wild South.**

the Highlands Nature Center (930 Horse Cove Road).  
For the full schedule of lectures, visit [www.highlandsbiological.org/zahner](http://www.highlandsbiological.org/zahner). The Highlands Nature Center is part of the Highlands Biological Station, a multi-campus center of Western Carolina University.

## Zahner

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This program is generously sponsored by Kim & Rich Daugherty and Kathy & Bestor Ward.

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SUNDAY BRUNCH

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ELEV. 4118

Outdoor Concert Series

Each Friday and Saturday night from May through September, the Highlands Chamber of Commerce/ Visit Highlands, NC hosts live music downtown.

Join us for our August concerts!

All shows take place from 6 – 8:30 p.m.

Friday Night Live

Town Square | 343 Main Street

Showcasing traditional mountain music and local talent

AUGUST 1

Ezra & Katie

AUGUST 8

McClain Family Band

AUGUST 15

Shawn Lane Trio, Featuring Lane Brothers

AUGUST 22

Spare Parts Bluegrass Band

AUGUST 29

The Foxfire Boys

Saturdays on Pine

Kelsey-Hutchinson Founders Park

411-499 Pine Street

Featuring a variety of popular, regional bands and musicians

AUGUST 2

High 5

AUGUST 9

HC Oakes Band

AUGUST 30

Southside Station

visithighlandsnc.com

Submitted photo

Free print and digital copies of guide are now available at [DiscoverJacksonNC.com](http://DiscoverJacksonNC.com)

## Birding

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The guide was written by Cullowhee-based birding expert Topher Stephens, a professional naturalist, educator, and leader of

the Birders of the Tuckaseegee Watershed. It reflects decades of field experience and a commitment to conservation and public engagement.

To learn more or to download the guide, visit [www.DiscoverJacksonNC.com](http://www.DiscoverJacksonNC.com) or pickup one at your local Chamber & Visitor Center.

## Peace

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through education, mediation, advocacy and individual peace projects. The 2025-26 Rotary District Governor, Alex Portelli, was also in attendance.  
Randy Foster noted that the creation and installation of Highland's Peace Pole was made possible with the talent of architect Jim Ward, land-

scape architect Hank Ross, contractors and suppliers Robi Decking, Yonah Mountain Timber Frame, Rigo's Stonework, and Bryson's Grading, Tate Landscaping and Reeves Ace Hardware.  
Highlands' Peace Pole is located at the Community Building, adjacent to the Ball Field on Route 64.

### History

The first seeds for a Peace Pole were planted in Ishikawa,

Japan, where a small gathering of peace workers joined Masahisa Goi to listen to his philosophy and visions for a better world. Masahisa Goi encouraged creative ways in order to carry the message to public view.  
In 1976, the idea of placing the Peace Message and Prayer on poles began to gain popularity. This was the first impulse that led to the beginnings of the Peace Pole Project.

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