



Photo by David Huff

# WNC Shines in Scenic America Photo Contest

By EMMA CASTLEBERRY

Western North Carolina made quite the showing at Scenic America's 2022 America the Beautiful Photo Contest. Asheville resident David Huff won the "People in Places" category with his photo of Vernal Falls in Yosemite and Theresa Rasmussen's image of Roan Mountain won in the "Mountains and Valleys" category. "We believe in the importance of preserving and protecting our nation's scenic beauty, and these winning images bring that mission to life

by reminding us just how special and spectacular they are," says Rebecca Aloisi, vice president for communications at Scenic America, a national environmental nonprofit based in Washington, DC, with chapters and affiliates across the country.



David Huff

Huff's photographic niche is public lands and historic structures, so it was a natural for him to enter the Scenic America contest. "Their mission to 'safeguard the scenic qualities of America's roadways, countryside, towns, and cities' fits with my own passion for conservation of beautiful places both natural and human made," he says. The Vernal Falls image he submitted to this year's contest was taken in 2017. "What makes this photo work is having Andy in the shot for scale," Huff says. "You get a sense of how big and powerful these falls are. The other thing that makes this photo work is the time of day, golden hour sunset, and the fact that smoke from wildfires was entering the park and creating a yellow diffusion for the already golden light. The photo is beautiful because of the elements within it. Part of this is skill, knowing how to ➔



frame a shot, and part of it is luck, having the right elements at the right time.”

Rasmussen feels similarly that her image of Roan Mountain was heavily influenced by timing and “Mother Nature showing off.” But she also says that successful landscape photography is about familiarity with a location and its possibilities. Rasmussen and her husband first traveled to Roan Mountain to see its famous rhododendron blooms for the first time about eight years ago. “I was overwhelmed by the beauty and immediately fell in love,” she says. “The balds of Roan Mountain are amazing: a



Theresa Rasmussen.  
Photo by Morgan Bremer

360-degree view at the top of the balds and the rhododendron and the flaming azaleas, which I hadn’t expected, were the icing on the cake.”

Rasmussen’s winning image is the top of Jane Bald as seen from a viewpoint she visited several

days in a row. “My photos from each day are totally different,” she says. “The day after I took this photo, there was a big thunderstorm with a lot of hail, and in an instant, most of the blooms were gone. If I hadn’t made the effort to visit each evening, I would have never gotten this photo.”

This is the second year Scenic America has hosted the photo contest and more than 800 entries were submitted. All photos were required to represent locations in the US that are publicly accessible and represented as they currently appear. Judges assessed the entries based on their representation of scenic beauty, originality, technical excellence, composition, overall impact and artistic merit. “Contests like this are important because they elevate the level of the craft by recognizing exceptional work,” says Huff. “We live on a rare planet. My hope is that through contests like this, we will both celebrate the beauty of this earth and remember the responsibility we have to take care of it.”

To see all of the contest’s winning images and learn more, visit [Scenic.org](https://www.scenic.org).



Roan Mountain. Photo  
by Theresa Rasmussen