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Exploring the Southern Appalachian Grassy Balds: A Hiking Guide

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Abstract

Jeffery P. Barbour, MLIS student at University of South Carolina, reviews *Exploring the Southern Appalachian Grassy Balds: A Hiking Guide* by Amy Duernberger.



BOOK REVIEW

Exploring the Southern Appalachian Grassy Balds: A Hiking Guide

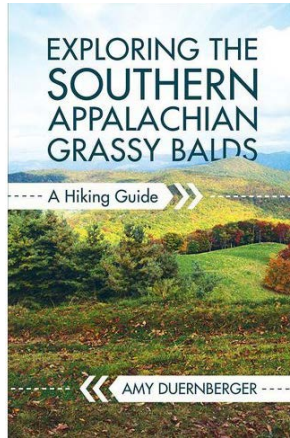
Amy Duernberger

University of South Carolina Press, 2017, \$17.99/\$22.99

Exploring the Southern Appalachian Grassy Balds not only serves as an invaluable hiking guide but also a resourceful book for a hiking enthusiast who wants to learn more about these historical landmarks. The reader discovers the exact location of the Balds, and the spacious and grassy meadows located on or near the mountain summits. The reader also learns more about the historical aspects and the nature of the Appalachian Balds, which makes this book an ideal addition to the collection of public, academic, or high school libraries.

Amy Duernberger skillfully writes with passion for the outdoors, hiking, and history with an interest to preserve their beauty. She writes with experience from over twenty years of research about the Appalachian Grassy Balds, and working for the National Parks Service and holds a master's degree from the School of Library and Information Science at the University of South Carolina.

Throughout *Exploring the Southern Appalachian Grassy Balds*, Duernberger provides the reader with a comprehensive understanding of the Grassy Balds by her elaborate, yet specific writing style about the Grassy Balds regions in addition to their key features, such as the hiking distances, total ascent, and useful information for hiking the trails. The reader learns more about each region that spans from Virginia, to North Carolina, to Tennessee. Duernberger consults the most current, reliable, and authoritative articles for research about the management of the beautiful Appalachian Grassy Balds and the conservation



efforts to retain their beauty. As she and her research assistant hike the Appalachian Grassy Balds Regions, their first-hand accounts enlighten the reader about the hiking trails along each of the Grassy Balds Regions.

While reading this book, the reader vicariously experiences the hikes of the Balds throughout the Southern Appalachian regions. Chapters 8 through 11 discuss each specific region:

"Asheville," "Cherohala Skyway," "Great Smoky Mountains National Park," and "Roan Highlands." Of special note, the "Max Patch" section includes beautiful and colorful photographs of the "Catawba Rhododendron," "Flame Azalea," "Turk's Cap Lily," and other wildflowers that may actually be seen while hiking that region during spring, summer, or fall. Fittingly named, the "Cherohala Skyway" snakes its way around high mountain elevations between a small town of Robbinsville, North Carolina, and Tellico Plains, Tennessee (p. 66).

Exploring the Southern Appalachian Grassy Balds serves as a valuable research tool with appendixes of the hikes arranged alphabetically and by levels of difficulty. There is a subject index and recommended websites for further research. Before beginning a hike, the reader may want to consider reading Chapter 6 that discusses, "Preparing for Your Hike: Trail Safety and Etiquette." So, grab your hiking gear and take along this guide as you travel and marvel at the majestic Appalachian Grassy Balds.

Jeffery P. Barbour is an MLIS student at the University of South Carolina, Columbia