

ga-du-gi 2011

WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE OUR COMMUNITY

The mission of Cherokee Preservation Foundation is to preserve our native culture, protect and enhance our natural environment, and create appropriate and diverse economic opportunities – in order to improve the quality of life for the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and our neighbors in western North Carolina.

What difference do we make? Each year, with this report, we highlight what's changing as a result of the work we are doing together.

Cherokee Preservation Foundation (CPFdn) has been operating since 2002 and we are seeing results

of our community investments while also continuing to initiate new efforts. We have distributed more than \$50 million through 683 grants in the areas of Economic Development, Cultural Preservation, and Environmental Preservation. Part of our responsibility is to be a good steward of this resource by tracking how this money is used and determining what impact it has in the community.

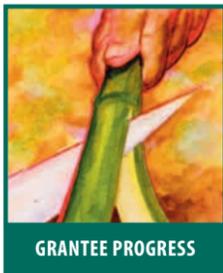
Inside this publication, you will see descriptions of progress in our three focus areas—Cultural Preservation, Economic Development, and Environmental Preservation. We show projects in various stages of work—using a basket-making theme to help describe how change happens. You will see basket drawings throughout this report to indicate the various phases of development of the projects CPFdn is supporting.

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK — The Foundation supports planning processes that help chart a positive course for our community's future.

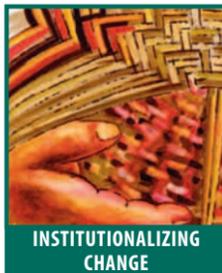
- ◆ In this report, we provide a glimpse into a pilot program called The Right Path that is training a group of Cherokee adults in culturally based leadership—so they may understand and carry forward the values of their elders.



LAYING THE GROUNDWORK



GRANTEE PROGRESS



INSTITUTIONALIZING CHANGE



REALIZING BENEFITS

- ◆ Area entrepreneurs get business skills and capital from the Sequoyah Fund; adults and children are learning Cherokee as their second language.

INSTITUTIONALIZING CHANGE — The Foundation wants the change that takes

place during the grant period to be lasting. In this report, we highlight:

- ◆ A five-year assessment of the Cherokee Language Revitalization initiative, which shows significant gains but also acknowledges the difficulties inherent in this important effort.
- ◆ Facilities upgrades and organization changes being made at Cherokee's cultural attractions (Museum of the Cherokee Indian, *Unto These Hills* outdoor drama, Oconaluftee Indian Village, and Qualla Arts and Crafts).

REALIZING BENEFITS — Ultimately, it is the Foundation's goal that our funded projects directly benefit people. This year we look at two areas of significant impact that stem from our early investments:

- ◆ Qualla Financial Freedom is now an established program that helps young people and adults manage their money.
- ◆ A valuable cultural landscape has been preserved containing Cherokee heritage sites as well as river cane and other Cherokee artisan resources, thanks to a partnership with Land Trust for the Little Tennessee.

All of this activity is possible due to a working alliance between CPFdn, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, and our neighbors in surrounding counties. We will continue investing in change and tracking outcomes. Each year, we report to the Cherokee community and to the CPFdn Board on our progress and on the challenges we face. That is our commitment—to help preserve and improve this treasured place that the Cherokee have called home for so many generations.

SPECIAL NOTE: Recently, Cherokee Preservation Foundation adopted a new strategic plan. See the section "Looking Ahead" at the end of this report to learn how we will work with current and potential grantees and the community to reach shared goals in coming months and beyond.

On behalf of Cherokee Preservation Foundation,
Deborah Grant, Wanda McCoy, Deb Mintz, Charlie Myers, Bobby Raines, Alicia Jacobs, Daniel Martin, Monaka Wachacha, and Sasha Watty,

Susan Jenkins,
Executive Director

GRANTEE PROGRESS — We provide the funding, but it is up to recipient organizations to implement the projects. We report on two programs CPFdn is currently supporting:

The Foundation helps protect and honor Cherokee culture. The Oconaluftee Indian Village, for example, has received funding to develop authentic programming. Mike Crowe, a guide at the Village, is pictured at left.

PHOTO BY MATTHIJS MEEUWSEN



CULTURAL PRESERVATION



FOCUS: GROWING NATIVE LEADERSHIP

\$1,693,543 invested by Cherokee Preservation Foundation

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THE RIGHT PATH

"This leadership program is designed to provide a bridge back to traditional Cherokee leadership approaches that have sustained the Cherokee over hundreds of years."

The Right Path program was initiated by the Cherokee Preservation Foundation as part of its mission to develop leadership among members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. The program was designed based on extensive research of leadership programs across Indian Country. From the start, it was decided that the program would attempt to bridge the past and present by covering in-depth traditional and cultural elements as well as introduce some contemporary leadership development competencies. This approach has been evident as the first nine months of programming have included Cherokee language, a visit to the sacred Kituwah Mound, and an introduction to Clan customs, along with training in the more current personality assessment tool known as Myers-Briggs, among numerous other topics and experiences.

PHOTO BY BRENDA OOCUMMA



Participants in The Right Path adult leadership program visit the reclaimed Cowee Mound area as one of their monthly learning experiences about Cherokee culture.



PHOTO BY BRENDA OOCUMMA

Part of the Jones-Bowman Leadership Award program is doing community service to benefit others in the tribe. Here, Noah Wachacha (left) and Joey Owle are creating rain barrels for use by tribal elders.

PROJECT STATUS: Eight Cherokee adults—selected for their leadership accomplishments as well as potential—are midway through the inaugural offering of The Right Path program, an intensive and rewarding 12-month journey into the rich traditions of the Cherokees.

The Right Path participants were nominated from the local community based on their selfless leader qualities and having the skills to operate effectively within the modern world. The Right Path 2011 includes Tonya Carroll, David Jumper, Tara McCoy, Robin Swayney, Catcuce Tiger, Matthew Tooni, Tony Walkingstick, and Trista Welch.

MODULES OF THE RIGHT PATH PROGRAM

Each month, the participants spend two days with program facilitators and an array of carefully selected presenters—mostly Cherokee—who share their knowledge and experiences on particular topics. The program modules are listed here:

- ◆ Introduction to Leadership Learning
- ◆ Cultural Values
- ◆ Social Systems and Gender Roles
- ◆ Cherokee Language
- ◆ Governance (including visits to Cowee Mound and Tribal Council Building)
- ◆ Healthy Living, including Farming, Foods, Medicines and Cooking
- ◆ Artistic Expression, including Art, Craft, Music and Dance
- ◆ The Natural World and the Environment
- ◆ Sports and Recreation, Storytelling and Humor
- ◆ Indigenous Peoples, including commendable tribal leadership initiatives, community programs, tribal heroes

INVESTMENT CHART

FOUNDATION INVESTMENTS IN THE COMMUNITY

by Focus Area

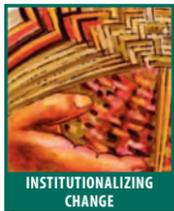
| | 2010 Dollars | Since Inception Total \$ | 2010 # of Grants | Since Inception Total # Grants |
|----------------------------|--------------|--------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| Cultural Preservation | \$ 2,809,337 | \$ 27,402,189 | 32 | 331 |
| Economic Development | \$ 2,184,112 | \$ 19,638,908 | 21 | 223 |
| Environmental Preservation | \$ 407,712 | \$ 3,868,158 | 16 | 129 |

From the Assessment authors:

“It should be said the Cherokee Language Revitalization Initiative is not only unique, it is exceptional. It is, to date... incomparable to other tribal efforts.”

The assessors also acknowledged there are significant challenges inherent to the complex task of revitalizing Cherokee language. These include the mammoth undertaking of creating learning materials for varied ages, finding and training teachers, designing programs for adult second-language learning, and identifying tools to measure fluency—all of which are being done for the first time. The assessment report contained recommendations to strengthen the shared vision and planning, as well as the capacities and coordination of those working on language revitalization. These recommendations will be a topic of discussion among the initiative partners to help strengthen their work over coming years.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



FOCUS: BUILDING BETTER ATTRACTIONS

\$17,223,256 invested by Cherokee Preservation Foundation

Four cultural institutions help keep the story of the past and present Cherokee alive, for local people and for visitors. The Cherokee Preservation Foundation invests in these organizations in various ways—helping develop and maintain their facilities, improving their offerings and programs, and strengthening the skills and capabilities of their leaders. Here is an update on significant changes at Cherokee cultural attractions during the past year—made possible through Cherokee Preservation Foundation support:

CHEROKEE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION (CHA) operates the Oconaluftee Indian Village as well as the *Unto These Hills* outdoor drama, which performs in the Mountainside Theater. These two iconic venues introduce thousands to the Cherokee’s unique history and culture each year.

◆ **Facilities Upgrade** – The campus of the Mountainside Theater received major improvements including a newly constructed women’s dorm and renovations to the men’s dorm, which house staff. The men’s dorm improvements include the addition of classroom space that may be utilized for a new type of CHA programming in the off-season: residential workshops, akin to those offered at Penland School of Crafts and John C. Campbell Folk School. Also, buildings now have new roofs, including the seven-sided Council House. The facilities upgrades provide safer quarters as well as multi-purpose rooms, which will be helpful for meeting programming needs.

◆ **Organizational Development** – CHA completed a Sustainability Consultancy that helped identify needed improvements in Board leadership practices; fundraising planning and staffing; financial systems and analysis; and staff development. The organization is now working on addressing these priority areas.



Cherokee Historical Association (CHA) has been undergoing improvements at Oconaluftee Village. The CHA board of directors has also been working to strengthen the organization, which oversees the Village and Mountainside Theater attractions. Here, the CHA board visits the Village site to see the upgrades prior to the season opening.

MUSEUM OF THE CHEROKEE INDIAN has for more than 60 years been a keeper of objects, stories, documents, and experiences that are unique to the Eastern Band people and place. They continue to grow in support and offerings.

◆ **First Year in the Education Wing** – The beautiful new building with performance spaces, studios for craft making, library and archival storage, has allowed the museum to expand its visitation to bus tours and large groups (including 150 from Cherokee Central Schools who enjoyed an experience making pottery, watching native dancers, and learning about early fire-making and arrowheads). During its inaugural year, the space served 1,000 visitors.

◆ **Emissaries of Peace Exhibit** – Launched in 2006, this popular exhibit most recently was hosted by the N.C. Arboretum and has been seen by more than 2 million people, from the McClung Museum in Knoxville, TN, to the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. The exhibit will return to Cherokee in 2012 as part of the 250th Anniversary celebration of the 1762 Cherokee and British delegation story.

◆ **Membership Expanding** – The museum now has more than 900 members who help support its programming (up from 147 in 2005).

◆ **Digital Access** – Researchers and others have free access to thousands of images and documents (via www.cherokeemuseum.org; then click on Museum Online Archival Catalogue; then “Search Our Collection.”)

◆ **Southeast Tribes Festival** – Eight tribes from across the country plus 20 writers who participated in the first Southeast Indian Writers Gathering. An estimated 2,000 visitors came this year, more than ever before in part because all of Cherokee Central Schools attended for free.

QUALLA ARTS AND CRAFTS MUTUAL is the oldest Native American Crafts Cooperative in the country, with more than 350 members who create and sell a wide variety of handmade items. High standards for membership ensure that the products sold in Qualla’s beautiful gallery store and at its new web site (www.quallaartsandcrafts.com) maintain the Cherokee tradition.

◆ **Craft Education Project** – Qualla is having great success with attracting younger people to learn time-honored Cherokee craft making skills which otherwise could be lost as elder artisans pass away. Traditional craft classes have attracted an average of 13 participants, focusing on: Cherokee stamped pottery, white oak basket weaving, river cane mat making, hammered copper, and other topics.

◆ **Facilities Upgrade** – A newly created storeroom with temperature and humidity controls and high quality archival storage is allowing Qualla to take better care of its valuable permanent collection.

TRENDS AT CHEROKEE CULTURAL ATTRACTIONS

| | Annual Visitation | | | | |
|--|-------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| | 2010 | 2009 | 2008 | 2007 | 2006 |
| Cherokee Historical Association | | | | | |
| <i>Unto These Hills</i> outdoor drama | 39,270 | 49,653 | 51,690 | 50,416 | 64,090 |
| Oconaluftee Indian Village | 66,068 | 77,612 | 63,407 | 69,204 | 75,504 |
| Museum of the Cherokee Indian | 76,717 | 83,205 | 82,179 | 91,383 | 95,127 |



FOCUS: INCREASING FINANCIAL LITERACY

\$276,662 invested by Cherokee Preservation Foundation

One role of Cherokee Preservation Foundation is to identify a need and then provide seed funding to get a promising project going. Ideally, the project is successful and finds long-term support to grow and sustain it. This is the scenario with Qualla Financial Freedom, which was started nine years ago through a Foundation grant and is thriving today.

PROJECT STATUS: When the casino arrived in Cherokee in 1997, with it came opportunity and resources. A special challenge emerged with the establishment of the Minors Trust Fund, which provides for every EBCI member to, at birth, begin receiving annual payments that are released in a lump sum at the age of 18. It quickly became clear there was a need for learning about money management so that the funds would be used wisely. In fact, three different organizations sought to start programs to address this need—N.C. Cooperative Extension's Cherokee office,

which works with youth; WNC Consumer Credit Counseling (now OnTrack Financial Education and Counseling), which helps individuals get out of debt; and Western Carolina University's Cherokee Center, which serves college students on the Qualla Boundary. All three



PHOTO CREDIT: SHAWN SPRUCE



PHOTO BY BRENDA OCCUMMA

Young people in Cherokee are learning money management skills through two programs – an on-line course called *Manage Your EBCI Money* (pictured here, with students taking it in a classroom setting) and the annual *Money Mo\$h* event (shown here, with Chelsea Cucumber and Shawn Spruce discussing what's involved in buying a car). Both programs are part of Qualla Financial Freedom.

approached the Cherokee Preservation Foundation for grants, to which the Foundation responded positively with the suggestion that the groups figure out how to work together.

One of the first grants made by Cherokee Preservation Foundation in 2002 was for the design and launch of Qualla Financial Freedom, including costs of start-up staff as well as program and curriculum development. A range of in-school and out-of-school programs were created to help prepare youth for handling future financial choices including responsibilities of young adulthood, post-secondary education, and management of the tribal per capita funds from casino revenues. Creative and fun offerings were developed on how to budget, purchasing and financing a car, tax requirements, investing, and more.

Eventually, it was realized that personal money management skills are an ongoing need and Qualla Financial Freedom became a long-term partnership of N.C. Cooperative Extension and the EBCI. This partnership helped ensure that teaching financial management would be a core module in the Cherokee Central Schools curriculum, as well.

Most recently, the EBCI has transformed the seed concept from Qualla Financial Freedom into an effective 21st Century on-line financial education program called *Manage Your EBCI Money*. The web-based curriculum was



developed for the EBCI by First Nations Development Institute, a Colorado based nonprofit that specializes in personal finance training for native communities. The EBCI Tribal Council took the step last fall of making completion of the *Manage Your EBCI Money* program a requirement prior to youth having access to their designated per capita funds.

This story charts the path from need (financial management for youth) to program idea (Qualla Financial Freedom) to sustainable, long-term impact (EBCI-led programming required for Cherokee youth) that has potential for improving the financial health of the Cherokee people. It is an example of how the Cherokee Preservation Foundation, the EBCI and other partners can strengthen the community together.



FOCUS: INVESTING IN ENTREPRENEURS

\$4,690,861 invested by Cherokee Preservation Foundation

PROJECT STATUS: The Sequoyah Fund was created with the help of Cherokee Preservation Foundation

to help overcome identified barriers to financial services in native communities by providing access to credit, capital and technical assistance. Since 2001, the Sequoyah Fund, together with Cherokee Business Development, has provided training and assistance to more than 1,000 individuals and approved 139 loans. According to Fund managers, they have helped businesses increase their annual incomes by anywhere from 3 to 7 percent. Listed at left is a breakdown showing the types of business that have received assistance and total number of jobs created.

The Sequoyah Fund's newest focus is on "green" jobs, supported by loans from their New Economy Fund which is available to environmentally responsible, knowledge-based, or creative economy businesses located in the seven far-western counties of North Carolina and on the Qualla Boundary.

SEQUOYAH FUND

Since inception, Cherokee Preservation Foundation has provided \$3.6 million to the Sequoyah Fund to invest in loans to local businesses and entrepreneurs. The Sequoyah Fund has received other funds for a total portfolio of \$7.2 million. This resource has created 568 jobs.

| Business Type | # Jobs Created |
|---|----------------|
| Construction-Related | 200 |
| Construction-84; Façade-66; Home Rehab-12; Painting-10; Masonry-8; Trailer Park-8; Guttering-6; Plumbing-6 | |
| Retail | 48 |
| Services | 48 |
| Daycare-10; Salon-8; Wrecker Service-8; Kennel-6; Dentist-4; Bookkeeping-4; Computer Sales and Repair-4; Services-2; Roadside Cleanup-2 | |
| Accommodations | 42 |
| Motel-26; Campground-10; Cabin Rental-6 | |
| Arts & Communications | 38 |
| Art Studio-8; Video Productions-8; Custom Printing-6; Publications-6; Dance Studio-4; Native Jewelry-4; Communications-2 | |
| Entertainment | 38 |
| Attractions-22; Entertainment-12; Travel-4 | |
| Manufacturing-Related | 36 |
| Manufacturing-16; Trucking-8; Logging-4; Paint Vehicles-4; Heavy Metal Customs-4 | |
| Outdoor Services | 30 |
| Landscape/Lawn Care | |
| Dining | 30 |
| Restaurant-24; Internet Café-6 | |
| Food | 28 |
| Grocery-20; Produce Company-4; Trout Farm-4 | |
| Other | 30 |
| Funeral Home-10; Home Office-10; and 10 more | |
| TOTAL JOBS CREATED | 568 |



PHOTO BY BRENDA OCCUMMA

The Sequoyah Fund wants to loan money to entrepreneurs who are utilizing environmental practices in their businesses. Todd and Sally Kent, above, have an outdoor services business providing mowing in warm weather months and snow removal in the winter. They operate their equipment with biodiesel fuel. The Kents have been able to expand their business with the help of a Sequoyah Fund loan to purchase equipment.

ENVIRONMENTAL PRESERVATION



FOCUS: PARTNERSHIP TO PROTECT THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

\$357,850 invested by Cherokee Preservation Foundation

The story of the Cherokee Preservation Foundation and the Land Trust of the Little Tennessee (LTLT for short) is the tale of a shared vision to protect the cultural landscape amid the river valley that was at the heart of the ancient Cherokee homeland.

A primary mission of Cherokee Preservation Foundation is to preserve the area's unique environment and to increase the natural resources (river cane, white oak and others) available to Cherokee artisans. The conservation organization LTLT has utilized a long-term partnership with the Foundation to make great strides in preserving significant natural and cultural areas that are rich with artisan resources and heritage sites.



PHOTO COURTESY OF LAND TRUST FOR THE LITTLE TENNESSEE

PROJECT STATUS:

Since an initial grant in 2002, the Foundation's investment in LTLT's strategy work has produced a series of land conservation achievements that each has unique value to the Cherokee. Foundation-supported work resulted in:

- ◆ Over 12,000 total acres preserved, including 36 miles of riverfront and tributary frontage
- ◆ 12 sites holding artisan resources including river cane, white oak, and butternut are protected with a number having access rights for use by Cherokee artisans; and
- ◆ Preservation of three ancient Cherokee town sites

While the Foundation provided some resources for project staff and research, a significant benefit of the partnership is that working closely with the Cherokee opened up streams of state and federal dollars that could be used for actual land acquisition. In this way, the Foundation's support of LTLT leveraged major outside funding that has produced a legacy of a protected cultural corridor in western North Carolina.

Highlights of the properties protected are:

- ◆ **Spring Ridge Dairy easement** – Preserved land that is the last remaining dairy in Macon County and was the site of the 1761 Battle of Echoe between the Cherokee and British forces.
- ◆ **Tessentee Farm** – Located along a historic trade route linking the Mississippi Valley to the Atlantic coastal plain. The site is thick with river cane stands that can be harvested long-term by basket makers affiliated with Qualla Arts and Crafts Mutual, due to a Memorandum of Understanding negotiated by LTLT.
- ◆ **Coweeta town site** – An ancient Cherokee town site with productive river cane land.
- ◆ **Watauga town site** – A large bottomland site with ¾-mile of river frontage.
- ◆ **Heart of Cowee** – 250-acre area including river frontage and surrounding the ancient town of Cowee, the principal 18th century commercial and diplomatic center of the mountain Cherokee. This includes Carter Branch, Hall Farm, Hall Mountain, and the return of Cowee Mound to the EBCI and the Cherokee people.
- ◆ **Needmore Tract** – Formerly owned by Duke Power and containing 27 miles of river frontage.
- ◆ **Hiwassee Valley land** – This is the new frontier of land preservation for LTLT, west of the Little Tennessee River basin and including the Valley River, which is in Cherokee County.



PHOTOS BY RALPH PRESTON

The partnership between Land Trust of the Little Tennessee and Cherokee Preservation Foundation has produced results in three main areas: river cane harvesting for local artisans (shown at left); preservation of valuable rural land (Tessentee Farm is pictured at top); and reclaiming of native cultural sites (Chief Michell Hicks is shown with the Warriors of Ani Kituwah and elder Walker Calhoun at the celebration of Cowee Mound returning to EBCI ownership).

The cultural conservation work of LTLT has benefitted from the wise guidance of three Cherokee board members: Freeman Owle, Gil Jackson, and Natalie Smith. In addition, LTLT has hired young Cherokee interns to help them learn the skills associated with land preservation.

The result of this collaboration has been the reclaiming of multiple sites that have deep value to the Cherokee.

ORGANIZATION BUILDING BLOCKS



FOCUS: SKILL BUILDERS – HELPING GRANTEES HAVE PROJECT SUCCESS

The mission of the Cherokee Preservation Foundation is to improve the quality of life on the Qualla Boundary and in the surrounding seven counties. This is done by first identifying clear goals (see new strategic plan information in "What's Ahead" article) and then providing grants to organizations that can help address these goals. Grantee organizations are either independent nonprofits or governmental entities such as Eastern Band of Cherokee Indian tribal departments. The Foundation's goals for improving the community can only be achieved if the groups that receive grants are effective at carrying out their projects.



Representatives of grantee organizations participate in Skill Builder courses to improve their abilities to carry out successful projects. Here, a group learns about Leadership Skills from Ron Robinson.

RESOURCES FOR BETTER PROJECTS AND STRONGER ORGANIZATIONS

Cherokee Preservation Foundation has offered a Skill Builders program for its grantees for two years, providing six courses on project planning and management topics as well as fundraising and communications. This program was started after Foundation leaders saw that some projects were not getting completed on time or perhaps not achieving their stated goals due to a range of challenges faced by grantees. Skill Builders was designed based on input from EBCI department representatives and nonprofit organization leaders. It was decided that Skill Builders would work on an incentive basis, with those groups that complete the training receiving priority consideration for future grant support. Many grantees have completed the six courses offered to date.

NEW SKILL BUILDERS OFFERINGS

The following Skill Builders courses are planned for Fall 2011, in response to participant requests.

Grants Part I: Preparing Your Grant Proposal – Step-by-step guidance in how to effectively complete the grant request process. This session will take the mystery out of what you need to do to submit a clear and compelling proposal. (Offered September 14th and 21st)

Grants Part II: Defining and Tracking Project Results – What difference does your project or program make? It is critical for you to be able to define what you expect to achieve from your project. This training will teach you how to define and track measurable outcomes. (Offered October 12th and 19th)

Designing Your Work Day – This course will teach basic time and stress management skills that will help you lead a more effective and happy work life. (Offered November 9th and 16th)

REGISTRATION: Choose whichever date is most convenient for these courses, which are free and held at the Holiday Inn-Cherokee from 9 a.m. to Noon followed by a one-hour networking lunch. **To sign up, contact Sasha Watty at 497-5550 or swatty@cpfdn.org**

Coming Up – During Summer 2011, Foundation representatives will be talking with grantees to determine future plans for the Skill Builders program. If you have comments on topics or approaches for this grantee assistance program, we welcome your input.

IN THE SURROUNDING REGION

While the majority of resources from Cherokee Preservation Foundation are invested in projects on the Qualla Boundary, the Foundation's mission also reaches into seven surrounding counties. In this section, we describe two recent projects that have taken place in the western North Carolina region.

FOCUS: CHEROKEE TRAILS – FROM ANCIENT PASSAGES TO PRESENT DAY TRANSPORTATION ROUTES

\$87,500 invested by Cherokee Preservation Foundation

For hundreds and thousands of years, Cherokee people traversed the Great Smoky, Nantahala, Cowee, and Snowbird mountains via narrow, often-steep routes and trails. The location of Cherokee towns nestled amid high barrier mountains limited outside access until the pathways became widened for trade.



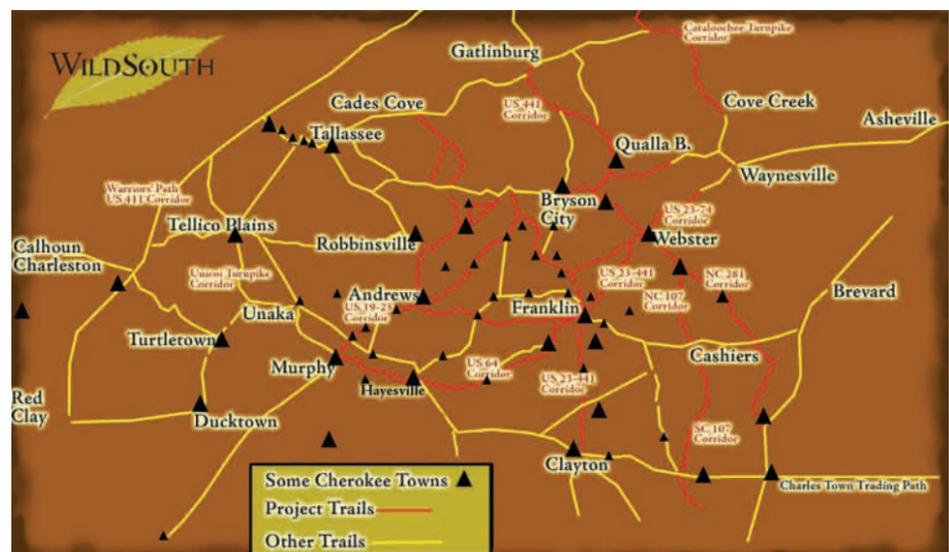
PHOTO COURTESY OF WILD SOUTH

A recent grant project documented historic Cherokee trails, including these unique marker trees along Wiggins Creek. The trees were intentionally bent by the Cherokee so they would help indicate certain locations and routes.

PROJECT UPDATE:

A recent two-year project supported by the Cherokee Preservation Foundation has documented more than 15 major historic trail routes. The research showed that Cherokee trails are largely the blueprint for today's modern transportation system in western North Carolina. While many of the trails are now covered by highways (including U.S. 441 and U.S. 19-23), other early trails exist today as unpaved logging roads or are hidden among overgrown forest habitat. Additionally, among the interesting findings of the project were many trail markers left by the Cherokee, made by bending young trees and pinning them to the ground so the tree grew a permanent 90 degree angle.

This combination of geography, anthropology, and cartography has been led by Asheville-based Wild South in consultation with the EBCI Tribal Historical Preservation Office, which will manage the distribution and access to the project documents. Materials are being developed out of the Cherokee Trails project including the map shown here as well as teaching guides for educational purposes and potentially for cultural heritage tourism.



MAP COURTESY OF LAMAR MARSHALL, WILD SOUTH

Extensive research of ancient Cherokee routes resulted in this beautiful map produced by Wild South, which shows more than 15 Cherokee trails, many of which can be visited today. The map also shows how these early trails became a blueprint for modern-day transportation routes.



Youth Councils from Cherokee and around southwestern North Carolina gathered for a weekend of leadership skills learning. The program included various team-building exercises, one of which is pictured above.

FOCUS: YOUTH COUNCIL TAKES OFF IN FOUR COUNTIES

\$478,394 invested by Cherokee Preservation Foundation

What started as a popular program among youth on the Qualla Boundary has spread to include students from four counties, through grant support from Cherokee Preservation Foundation. The Youth Council model is unique, with the organization totally led by students who set their priorities and plan social events and service projects. This replication of a successful model spawned in Cherokee is an exciting example of how young leaders on the Qualla Boundary are sharing their learning with the broader region.

PROJECT UPDATE: The Third Annual Youth Forum was held during the winter at Fontana Village, attracting 33 participants ages 12 to 18 from the Qualla Boundary, Graham, Swain, Macon and Jackson counties. The two-day program focused on leadership and included numerous learning games to help with team-building, valuing difference of opinion, and understanding varied personality types. An activity called "Roots and Branches" had each Youth Council identify an issue in their community that they will work on during the coming year. Last year at the Forum, Cherokee Youth Council identified teen pregnancy as their priority issue and proceeded to produce a video on the topic that is being viewed and discussed locally. This year, the Cherokee youth identified loss of their native culture as a topic they will focus on during 2011-12 through classes and events. Cherokee Youth Council continues to be the largest of the groups, with approximately 25 participants that get together regularly for socializing and work on community projects. The other groups range in size from 10 to 15 and are growing. All are facilitated through the 4-H model of the N.C. Cooperative Extension.



The North Carolina Symphony visited Cherokee recently and performed and did workshops with students at Cherokee Central Schools. Here, a young girl is "conducting" the Symphony members as the crowd observes. The Symphony visit is one of scores of opportunities made possible each year—locally and around the region—by Cherokee Preservation Foundation.

LOOKING AHEAD

During the past year, Cherokee Preservation Foundation conducted interviews and group discussions with grantees and community leaders to gain input for its 2011-2015 Strategic Plan. The process confirmed widespread support for the current direction of the Foundation, which was established through a unique Tribal-State Compact to utilize proceeds from gaming to benefit the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and the surrounding seven county region. The 2011-2015 Strategic

Plan was adopted in December 2010, including a series of goals in three focus areas (see box at left).

CHEROKEE PRESERVATION FOUNDATION — 2011-2015 STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

CULTURAL PRESERVATION

- ◆ Expand broadly the learning of Cherokee language
- ◆ Enable the emergence of new leaders with new skills and cultural perspective to help communities address challenges and opportunities
- ◆ Engage youth and adults in learning about and preserving Cherokee culture

ENVIRONMENTAL PRESERVATION

- ◆ Work with EBCI and others to protect and renew natural resources through effective management practices
- ◆ Expand raw materials for local artisans and be a resource for perpetuating traditional Cherokee ways
- ◆ Expand environmental education on the Qualla Boundary and in the WNC region

ECONOMIC & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- ◆ Identify occupations/jobs needed for next 15-20 yrs. and promote business climate that encourages tribal and non-tribal investment
- ◆ Ensure technology and skills are in place for future-ready workforce
- ◆ Work on the Qualla Boundary and in the WNC region to support comprehensive community planning
- ◆ Continue revitalizing Cherokee's business and cultural districts
- ◆ Continue development of diverse, high-quality attractions that make Cherokee a vibrant cultural tourism destination
- ◆ Expand and enhance entrepreneurial business development for adults and youth
- ◆ Develop financial literacy programs and outreach through all life stages

NEW APPLICATION PROCESS COMING

During summer and fall 2011, Foundation staff will meet with current and potential grantees to review the updated goals and discuss ways to work together to achieve them. In addition, the Foundation will host trainings on a revised application process to be implemented for the next grant deadline in December 2011. The intention of the new application is to simplify the question format and clarify measurable results so that the applicant and funder are clear on project expectations from the start. This step of having clear results is essential to the Foundation being a good steward of the resources entrusted to it.