



## Strengthening Western North Carolina through Regional Collaborations

Cherokee Preservation Foundation (CPFdn) has been working to improve the quality of life of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI) and the residents of Haywood, Jackson, Clay, Macon, Graham, Swain and Cherokee counties in Western North Carolina since the independent 501(c)(3) foundation was established in 2000 as part of the Second Amendment to the Tribal-State Compact between the EBCI and the State of North Carolina. The Foundation's role is to help identify needs and opportunities on the Qualla Boundary and in the surrounding seven counties and address issues that fall within CPFdn's authorized areas of focus — economic development, environmental preservation and cultural preservation.

The Foundation is particularly interested in supporting programs that foster collaborative partnerships between the EBCI and other players in the region and encourage public involvement. Since 2000, CPFdn has made more than 750 grants totaling more than \$60 million, with over a third of the grants awarded to regional collaborations that benefit people throughout the seven westernmost counties. The Foundation funds projects that aim to unify Western North Carolinians and increase the capacity of the region as a whole. The programs that follow are representative of CPFdn's regional efforts.

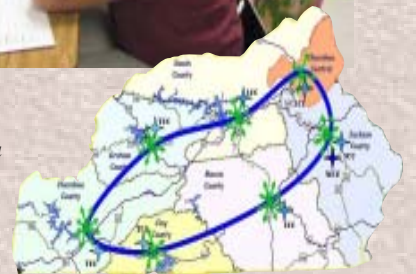
### Enabling WNC Students to Have the Technology Tools to Succeed

Cherokee Preservation Foundation has provided more than \$1.75 million to support the construction of a dedicated broadband connection, WNC EdNet, that brings together 60 educational sites — primarily public schools, colleges and administrative offices — around the seven westernmost counties and the Qualla Boundary. CPFdn collaborated with the Western Region Educational Services Alliance (WRESA), the Appalachian Regional Commission, the Golden Leaf Foundation, the Business and Education Technology Alliance, the North Carolina Rural Economic Development Center and the Public Schools of North Carolina so that rural students can achieve the same levels of learning as students in more urban areas and compete in our global society.

More recently, the emphasis has been on engaging WNC educators and students in decisions about how to utilize technology in the classroom. CPFdn funded student participation in a Technology in the Classroom conference presented by WRESA, and the Foundation also provided the funding for students and teachers to engage in regional collaborations. The schools have formed student advisory councils and engaged in projects such as students teaching educators how to use Web 2.0 communications tools, and creating a school web site whose content is created by students.



*WNC EdNet connects 60 educational sites in seven counties and on the Qualla Boundary.*



## Ensuring the Mountain Region's Sustainability

Cherokee Preservation Foundation has worked closely with the Southwestern Commission, the Community Foundation of Western North Carolina, and the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, providing \$125,000 of financial support for Mountain Landscapes. This regional initiative addresses how to grow the beautiful mountain region without threatening the natural resources that not only provide a special sense of place for residents, but that also bring people to the region. In the information-gathering stage of Mountain Landscapes, CPFdn enabled area youth to take pictures, including natural features in their communities that are important to them, development that they regard as positive, and development they would like to see improved. The slide shows they created were shared with the team of designers and planners that put together a toolbox of ecologically sound solutions undertaken by other communities, dealing with everything from steep slopes to river bottoms, revitalization of historic towns, and green building techniques.

Through a community-wide planning effort initiated by CPFdn known as Generations Qualla, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians set its goals for being a green community and began pursuing a range of initiatives. Now CPFdn is working with Haywood Community College, Southwestern Community College and Tri-County Community College to develop a sustainable building practices curriculum that will prepare builders throughout the seven westernmost counties — not just on the Qualla Boundary — to be more environmentally friendly and preserve the mountain region.

With CPFdn's support, the Sequoyah Fund (the Community Development Financial Institution on the Qualla Boundary) is working with the three community colleges on a competition to spur the development of green business ideas. Community college students will be encouraged to submit green business plans in Spring 2010, and the Sequoyah Fund will also be engaging regional high school entrepreneurs in the competition.



*Regional community colleges will be teaching local builders about green construction techniques.*

## Bringing Visitors to Western North Carolina

Cherokee Preservation Foundation works closely with the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area (BRNHA) and other partners to make Western North Carolina a highly regarded visitor destination. Working with the National Park Service and U.S. Department of the Interior, the Foundation enabled an Asheville-based exhibition utilizing leading-edge museum technology to enable visitors to understand the Blue Ridge region, its heritage and its resources, and to encourage them to visit the westernmost part of North Carolina.



*The Warriors of AniKituhwa are helping bring visitors to Western North Carolina.*

In association with the BRNHA and Smoky Mountain Host, CPFdn sponsored market research aimed at increasing the effectiveness of tourism marketing efforts on the Qualla Boundary and seven westernmost counties. Over the past five years, CPFdn has provided over \$6.5 million of financial support for a marketing campaign that brings visitors to the Eastern Band's principal cultural entities, and often to other attractions in Western North Carolina as well.

As a result of a CPFdn grant, soon the region's visitors and school children will be able to once again see Judaculla Rock in Jackson County, the best known petroglyph site in North Carolina and one of the foremost in the nation. Revered by the Cherokee who consider it a vital link to their ancestors, Judaculla Rock withstood the test of time until the 1960s, when erosion on a hillside above became more prevalent and half buried it. A CPFdn planning grant awarded to Jackson County has enabled design and engineering of the site.



## Raising the Capacity of the Region's Nonprofits

Cherokee Preservation Foundation partnered with the Community Foundation of Western North Carolina, the Mission Healthcare Foundation, and the United Way of Asheville and Buncombe County and established WNC Nonprofit Pathways with the purpose of sharpening the skills of regional nonprofit leaders and strengthening the sector. WNC Nonprofit Pathways provides information, training and workshops, assessments, tailored consultancies and networking to help nonprofit leaders improve the governance and management of their organizations.



*The Recession Response Fund is helping essential nonprofits meet needs brought on by the recession.*

WNC Nonprofit Pathways helps nonprofits in 18 western counties that serve as economic engines and employers, as community builders that improve our quality of life, and as the providers of the safety net for our citizens with the greatest needs. WNC Nonprofit Pathways' support is offered to participating nonprofits at no or low-cost.

CPFdn has also provided \$100,000 to a Recession Response Fund to help regional nonprofits providing essential services meet the huge surge in need in our communities brought on by the recession. CPFdn joined a dozen other philanthropic organizations in the region, forming the WNC Funders Collaboration to help local homeless shelters, food pantries, soup kitchens and domestic violence shelters keep their doors open and provide much needed services to community members.

## Connecting Businesses with Resources to Grow the Region's Economy

Cherokee Preservation Foundation is a partner in regional efforts to support the manufacturing industry that has long sustained WNC's economy. The Foundation provided financial support for a LEAN Manufacturers Conference earlier in 2009, at which manufacturers were offered opportunities to develop regional supplier relationships, assess their needs for training and education, and receive online communication and networking tools through the [www.wncLEAN.org](http://www.wncLEAN.org) Web site specifically designed for them. Other partners in the effort include the North Carolina Department of Commerce, the South western Commission, the EBCI, Haywood Community College, Southwestern Community College and Tri-County Community College.



In another project, CPFdn and Mountain Bizworks, a national leader in the small business development field located in Asheville, brought together over 20 agencies to form the Western North Carolina Business Assistance Providers (WNC-BAP) program, which enables people who are starting or growing businesses to visit [www.wncbap.org](http://www.wncbap.org) to learn about available services and capital.



CPFdn has also worked with the region's community colleges to develop and deliver a customer service training program for the region's hospitality industry that is based on traditional Cherokee values.

## Support for Youth Development

Many of the programs already mentioned demonstrate that Cherokee Preservation Foundation places special emphasis on initiatives that teach young people critical skills and involve them in developing solutions to regional problems.

When young people in the region learned about the success of the Cherokee Youth Council and expressed interest in participating in similar organizations, CPFdn made grants that supported the creation of youth councils in Swain and Graham counties. CPFdn helped establish the Cherokee Youth Council to give young enrolled members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians the opportunity to make their voices heard on issues that are important to them, serve their community and develop their leadership skills.

When Jackson County Commissioners convened public meetings to help develop land preservation strategies and clarify development opportunities along the Highway 441 corridor between U.S. 74 and Cherokee's business district, CPFdn funded a component of the project that enabled area middle and high school students to give their opinions and learn how communities get built through a mix of collaboration, physical limitations and regulation.



*A CPFdn grant enabled students to learn about planning and provide their input about Highway 441 Corridor development.*

And CPFdn has made the eco-study tour program in Costa Rica it initially developed for tribal youth available to other young people in the region as well. The trips involve cross-cultural experiences such as visits to indigenous communities in Costa Rica, and the exchanges expand the horizons of young people and deepen their appreciation for their own culture. To date, 70 students have participated in the program.

## For More Information



One of the many complex designs created by gifted Cherokee basket weavers over past centuries is the Unbroken Friendship pattern. This pattern has been incorporated in the Cherokee Preservation Foundation logo to symbolize the Foundation's role as a convener that brings the people of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians together with their neighbors in the region to address mutual opportunities and concerns.

For more information about Cherokee Preservation Foundation, visit [www.cpfdn.org](http://www.cpfdn.org). The Foundation is located at 71 John Crowe Hill Rd., P.O. Box 504, Cherokee, NC, 28719.



*Cherokee Preservation Foundation is located in Cherokee, NC.*