

**Eastern Band of Cherokee Indian  
Heritage Development Initiative  
Produced for the Blue Ridge  
National Heritage Area  
And Citizens of EBCI**

**Completed in Partnership with:  
AdvantageWest  
NC Department of Commerce  
Partnership for the Future  
Smoky Mountain Host  
Eastern Band of Cherokee Indian  
Western Carolina University**

# NARRATIVE SUMMARY

## The Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation

### History

*The Cherokee People historically occupied parts of seven southeastern states in the continental United States. The Cherokee Nation was comprised of towns and villages situated along the broad river valleys which comprise this region of the southern Appalachian and Blue Ridge Mountains. Cherokees also controlled hunting grounds in the rugged highlands and maintained hunting camps there throughout the year. Headmen and chiefs, who were chosen through a matrilineal social system controlled by the women, governed villages and towns. This social structure consisted of seven clans of familial organization. The clans, Bird, Deer, Wolf, Blue, Long Hair, Wild Potato and Paint, lived in extended family homes constructed from wattle and daub, an adobe like clay, applied to wooden frames. The women controlled marriage and property and the matrilineal uncles principally reared children.*

At the time of European contact, first by Desoto in 1540, the Cherokee were governed by two distinct administrations, one for war and one for peace. These administrations were kept separate and reflected the religious beliefs of the tribe. Religion was not seen as a separate entity but rather an important philosophical base for their life ways.

The Cherokee viewed acculturation to the new European lifestyle as a means of survival and this was reflected primarily through education. The Cherokee invited religious missionaries into the Nation to develop schools. The disparities in language within this new educational system lead to the development of the Cherokee Syllabary or alphabet by a Cherokee named George Guess, better known as Sequoyah.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Cherokee Nation had adopted a written constitution as well as a bilingual newspaper. The new constitutional government fundamentally changed the social structure of the Cherokee from matrilineal to a paternalistic system.

During the 1830's the state of Georgia wanted to expand state jurisdiction to include the Cherokee Nation and moved to do so through a series of legislative actions. The Cherokee Nation opposed these actions through the court system. The United States Supreme Court upheld Tribal Sovereignty through decisions in *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* and *Worchester v. Georgia* but those two decisions were not supported by the administration. Subsequently, the Removal Act of 1830 was ratified by Congress and signed into law by President Andrew Jackson.

The Cherokee Nation was removed from their traditional territory during the winter and spring of 1838-1839 to Oklahoma. Nearly, 20,000 Cherokees were removed; however, only 16,000 survived the trip west. The Cherokee Nation reorganized under their original constitution and continues to live in Oklahoma today.

In North Carolina, those Cherokees who escaped removal either through a North Carolina provision called the Reservation Act of 1819 or by evading the United States Army remained behind in a land less state. By law, Native Americans were neither citizens of the United States nor the state where they resided therefore none could hold property. An adopted Cherokee named Will Thomas bought land with the Cherokees money, held the deeds in his name and allowed the fugitive Cherokees to live on and work the land. This ambiguous status continued until after the Civil War when the Cherokee question surfaced again. After several years of legal wrangling, the Cherokee formed a corporation. As a business, the Cherokee could hold the land and the land, which was to become known as the Qualla Boundary again, was in Cherokee control.

The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians obtained a corporate charter from the state of North Carolina in 1870. The Cherokee decided to re-organize their government and adopted a Constitution written by Lloyd Welch. The EBCI continues to operate under the duality of a Constitution and corporate charter.

Today, the 12,500 members of the EBCI live principally on the Qualla Boundary in Western North Carolina commonly called the Cherokee Reservation. Their democratic government is controlled through the Corporate Charter and through legislation developed jointly from North Carolina codes, federal codes and through legislation written and implemented by a popularly elected Tribal Council. The Tribal Council is elected from six voting districts to serve two-year terms. The chief executive officer is the Principal Chief who along with the Vice Chief is elected every four years. Tribal government provides services for Boundary residents and operated similarly to county governments. Tribal government also controls a tribal court system to hear both criminal and civil complaints. Funding for tribal government comes from a variety of sources including grants, taxable income from a tribal levy and casino profits.

Contemporary initiatives for the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians include the opening of the Ginger Lynn Welch Wellness Center, renovation of the Cherokee Indian Fair Grounds and the John Crowe Recreation Park. The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians continues to operate as a sovereign nation in providing for the prosperity of Tribal members.

To reach the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation tribal offices  
PO Box 455  
Cherokee, North Carolina 28719  
(828) 497-2771  
[www.cherokee-nc.com](http://www.cherokee-nc.com)

## NARRATIVE SUMMARY

### Qualla Indian Boundary Heritage Development Plan

Tourism has historically been an economic engine for the Qualla Indian Boundary. With the establishment of the Cherokee Historical Association in 1950 to provide seasonal employment for residents, attractions were provided to entertain visitors to the area.

With the opening of Harrah's Cherokee Casino and Hotel in 19976, the economic focus shifted from tourism to gaming entertainment. Regional advertising to attract family visitors was not significant enough to impact families' decisions to visit Cherokee. With demographics changing in towns and cities in the 300 mile marketing area knowledge of "The Cherokee" diminished.

Currently, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians has resources available for use to perpetuate and preserve their history, culture and the natural resources that make their homeland so appealing.

The Qualla Indian Boundary is the "Gateway to the Smokies" and is also the southern entrance to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the southern-most access to the Blue Ridge Parkway beings in Cherokee, NC.

## NARRATIVE SUMMARY

### Community Partners

The Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation

NC Extension Service

Cherokee Tribal Tourism and Promotion

EBCI Tribal Economic Development

Qualla Arts and Crafts Mutual

Cherokee Historical Association

The Museum of the Cherokee Indian

Microtel Inn and Suites of Cherokee

Quality Inn of Cherokee

Hampton Inn of Cherokee

## NARRATIVE SUMMARY

### Challenges

1. Overcoming longstanding attitudes with citizens of neighboring counties and towns.
2. Signage around area is inconsistent (interstates, state routes, and National Park).
3. No signage to recognize heritage sites.
4. Making GSMNP more of a NC resource.
5. Need tourists to stay longer.
6. Need to attract more heritage tourists.
7. Need to educate hospitality people about informing tourists
8. What else are tourists doing? (eating, outdoor activities)
9. Downtown renewal.

## NARRATIVE SUMMARY

### Priorities

- The Marketing and Promotion and Economic Development departments in a collaborative effort will coordinate efforts to implement the Heritage Development Plan for the Qualla Indian Boundary.
- The Marketing and Promotions Departments will plan and initiate marketing efforts to promote heritage Tourism for the Qualla Indian Boundary and the region of Western North Carolina covered by Smoky Mountain Host.
- Provide opportunities which would feature Cherokee culture/heritage and natural resource education for residents and visitors to the area. Activities would be age-appropriate and presented through schools or community based classes, programs, workshops, camps or other experiential methods.
- Efforts will be expended to renovate and update visitation to existing attractions that showcase the Cherokee heritage in a manner that appeals to residents and visitors to the community.

## NARRATIVE SUMMARY

### Qualla Indian Boundary Heritage Mission Statement

The Heritage Development Plan for the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians will provide for the preservation and continuation of the unique heritage and culture that exists on the Qualla Indian Boundary and in Western North Carolina. This plan will direct sustainable development opportunities for the Qualla Indian Boundary that will enhance the quality of life for residents and provide unique opportunities for visitors to our region to experience our culture and resources.

**Blue Ridge National Heritage Area  
Strategic Planning Tools**

**HERITAGE COUNCIL ACTION TEAM ROSTER**

	<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Affiliation</u></b>	<b><u>Contact Information</u></b>
1.	Sandy Sauer	Cherokee Quality Inn	828.497.4702 qualityinn@dnet.net
2.	Trent Fouts	Microtel Inn	828.497.7800 tfouts@earthlink.net
3.	Stacy Epperson	Hampton Inn	828.497.3114 chrke_hampton@hilton.com
4.	Vicki Ledford	Qualla Arts & Crafts	828.497.3103
5.	Robert Jumper	Marketing & Promotion	828.497.8123 robejump@nc-cherokee.com
6.	Mary Jane Ferguson	Marketing & Promotion	828.497.8129 maryferg@nc-cherokee.com
7.	Janice Wildcatt	Marketing & Promotion	828.497.8122 janiwild@nc-cherokee.com
8.	B. Lynne Harlan	Harrah's Cherokee Casino and Hotel	828.497.8329 lharlan@cherokee.harrahs.com

**Blue Ridge National Heritage Area  
Strategic Planning Tools**

**SUMMARY CHART**

*List each priority initiative by name and cost*

<b>Initiative Name</b>	<b>Estimated Costs</b>
Downtown Revitalization	\$ 25,000
Kituwah Interpretative Center (Study and consultants)	\$175,000
Cherokee Cultural Village (Study and consultants)	\$120,000
Arts School (Study and consultants)	\$125,000
Crafts Resource Development (Agricultural research, implementation and training)	\$150,000
Cherokee Children's Garden (Design and implementation)	\$150,000
Youth Environmental Camp	\$500,000
TOTAL	\$1,245,000.00
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,225,000</b>

## Blue Ridge National Heritage Area PRIORITY INITIATIVE WORKSHEET

<b>Initiative Title:</b>	Arts School
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<b>Project Narrative:</b>	The goal is to establish an arts institute of higher learning that focuses on the arts and culture of the Cherokee and other southeastern tribal neighbors with similar cultures.
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<b>Goal:</b>	To insure the continuation of traditional Cherokee Arts and Crafts.
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Person/Organization Responsible:	Cost to Implement:	Estimated Time to Complete:
Elowadi SE Indian Arts and Culture Steering Committee	Unknown at this time	3 – 4 years

Action Items:	Resources Required:	Who's Responsible:
Complete feasibility study	\$75,000	Consultants
Contract services for Project Coordinator	\$50,000	James Smith
Present study with recommendations to tribal council	?	Committee Chair
Present local colleges collaboration initiatives	?	Steering committee

<b>Performance Measures:</b>	Monitored by Arts School Committee with established timeline.
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<b>Status:</b>	Early phase is now in progress.
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**Blue Ridge National Heritage Area  
PRIORITY INITIATIVE WORKSHEET**

<b>Initiative Title:</b>	Craft Resource Development
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<b>Project Narrative:</b>	To ensure the continuation of traditional Cherokee crafts, materials, and markets.
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<b>Goal:</b>	Preservation of Cherokee arts and crafts.
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<b>Person/Organization Responsible:</b>	<b>Cost to Implement:</b>	<b>Estimated Time to Complete:</b>
Qualla Arts and Crafts	\$150,000	5 years

Action Items:	Resources Required:	Who's Responsible:
Resource management	\$50,000	Cultural Office Qualla Arts and Crafts
Agriculture Research	\$50,000	Cultural Office Qualla Arts and Crafts
Resource Assessment	\$50,000	Cultural Office Qualla Arts and Crafts

<b>Performance Measures:</b>	Monitoring and evaluation through Culture office and Qualla Arts and Crafts
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<b>Status:</b>	Initial Rivercane Symposium held in 2004, plan to follow in 2005
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## Blue Ridge National Heritage Area PRIORITY INITIATIVE WORKSHEET

Initiative Title:	Downtown Revitalization

Project Narrative:	To develop a plan to bring Downtown businesses into compliance with the Master Plan by changing the facades of those businesses.
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Goal:	To help Downtown Cherokee become more attractive to tourists and locals.
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Person/Organization Responsible:	Cost to Implement:	Estimated Time to Complete:
Economic Development Office	\$25,000	12 Months

Action Items:	Resources Required:	Who's Responsible:
Develop schematic for buildings owned by EBCI	Building Construction Dept	Economic Development Office
Organize businesses and meet to develop plan for all businesses to come into compliance		Economic Development Office
Research sources that could provide materials at reduced rates for bulk purchases	Building Construction Dept	Economic Development Office
Hire architect for plan development		Economic Development Office
Confirm funding source for this project	Funding source	Economic Development Office

Performance Measures:	A project plan will be developed and monitored on a monthly basis to ensure timely completion.
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Status:	Initial plan developed.
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## Blue Ridge National Heritage Area PRIORITY INITIATIVE WORKSHEET

Initiative Title:	Kituwah Interpretative Center

Project Narrative:	The goal is to protect the cultural integrity of the site while enhancing the use of the property through the establishment of an interpretive center along with a research component, a genealogy center, and the marketing of traditional Cherokee culture, art, and plans.
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Goal:	To interpret and educate the Kituwah site to visitors and locals.
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Person/Organization Responsible:	Cost to Implement:	Estimated Time to Complete:
Cultural Resources Dept. and Advisory Committee	Unknown at this time	3 – 4 years

Action Items:	Resources Required:	Who's Responsible:
Conduct a feasibility study	\$125,000	Consultants
Contract services: Green Way, native plants reintroduced	\$50,000	Consultants
Present study with recommendations to tribal council	?	Committee Chair
Present local colleges collaboration initiatives	?	Committee

Performance Measures:	Monitored by Committee with established timeline and individual project completion
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Status:	Early phase is now in progress.
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## Blue Ridge National Heritage Area PRIORITY INITIATIVE WORKSHEET

<b>Initiative Title:</b>	Cherokee Children's Garden
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<b>Project Narrative:</b>	To provide a hands-on, interactive garden for youth and adults (local and visitors) during all seasons. To illustrate local legends, stories, and culture through plants.
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<b>Goal:</b>	To share and educate Qualla Boundary's botanical environment.
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<b>Person/Organization Responsible:</b>	<b>Cost to Implement:</b>	<b>Estimated Time to Complete:</b>
Kathy Dugan	\$150,000	Several years

Action Items:	Resources Required:	Who's Responsible:
Develop Committees		Cooperative Extension and Garden Committee
Visit other gardens		Cooperative Extension and Garden Committee
Site Selection	\$5,000	Cooperative Extension and Garden Committee
Garden production	\$145,000	Cooperative Extension and Garden Committee

<b>Performance Measures:</b>	Monitoring and evaluation measured through Cooperation Extension and Garden Committee
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<b>Status:</b>	
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## Blue Ridge National Heritage Area PRIORITY INITIATIVE WORKSHEET

Initiative Title:	Cherokee Cultural Village

Project Narrative:	To develop a plan to create a working village for visitors to participate in daily activities in the village.
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Goal:	To have another unique cultural attraction to increase visitation.
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Person/Organization Responsible:	Cost to Implement:	Estimated Time to Complete:
Economic Development Office	\$120,000	3 years

Action Items:	Resources Required:	Who's Responsible:
Identify scope for village	Economic Development	Economic Development Office
Identify location	Economic Development	Economic Development Office
Do business plan with financial projections	Business Development Office	Economic Development Office
Pursue funding to start project	Cherokee Preservation Foundation	Economic Development Office
Identify work force to participate/work in Village	Economic Development Office	Economic Development Office

Performance Measures:	A project plan will be developed and monitored on a monthly basis to ensure timely completion.
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Status:	
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## Blue Ridge National Heritage Area PRIORITY INITIATIVE WORKSHEET

<b>Initiative Title:</b>	Youth Environmental Camp
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<b>Project Narrative:</b>	To educate the youth about the natural resources of the region and how to manage them properly for environmental, economic and social gains (cultural benefits).
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<b>Goal:</b>	To help educate and foster a strong environmental ethic among regional youth.
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<b>Person/Organization Responsible:</b>	<b>Cost to Implement:</b>	<b>Estimated Time to Complete:</b>
Multitude of organizations	\$500,000	2004-2006

Action Items:	Resources Required:	Who's Responsible:
Develop steering committee/planning committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Field Trips</li> <li>▪ Consulting Firms</li> </ul>	2004-2005 NCSU-NCCES
Construction of Camp	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ \$500,000</li> <li>▪ Consultation Firm</li> </ul>	2006 multiple organizations
Environmental Camp Operation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ \$125,000 Annual Operation</li> </ul>	2006+ Non-Profit Organization

<b>Performance Measures:</b>	This project will be monitored by the steering committee.
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<b>Status:</b>	Not developed.
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**Heritage Area Inventory  
Cherokee Indian Reservation**

	Contact Person	Description
<b>Cherokee Heritage sites</b>		
Museum of the Cherokee Indian	Ken Blankenship	museum of EBCI
Mountainside Theatre	Barry Hipps	outdoor drama
Oconaluftee Indian Village	Barry Hipps	living history attraction
Cherokee Welcome Center	Josie Long	visitor's center
<b>Music Heritage</b>		
Museum of the Cherokee Indian	Bo Taylor	museum of EBCI
EBCI Cultural Department	Myrtle Johnson	EBCI cultural resources department
<b>Craft Heritage</b>		
Qualla Arts and Crafts	Vicki Ledford	Cherokee artist cooperative
Seven Clans Art Guild	David Smith	art guild
<b>Natural Sites &amp; Historic Structures</b>		
EBCI Culture Resources	Myrtle Johnson	EBCI cultural resources department
<b>Agriculture</b>		
NC Cooperative Extension	Kathy Dugan	state agriculture office
Qualla Arts and Crafts	Vicki Ledford	Cherokee artist cooperative
<b>TOURISM MARKETING GROUPS</b>		
EBCI Marketing and Promotion Division	Mary Jane Ferguson	EBCI Marketing and Promotion Director
Cherokee Historical Association	Barry Hipps	outdoor drama/living village
<b>ANY EXISTING STRATEGIC PLANS</b>		
Cherokee Business District Master Plan	Chrissy Arch	Economic Development Director
Sustainable Economic Development Strategic Plan	Chrissy Arch	EBCI Economic Development
NC/EBCI Economic Development Task Force	Chrissy Arch	EBCI Economic Development