

# Native American Heritage Month

WHEREAS, Buncombe County is committed to creating an inclusive community that celebrates diversity and ensures all residents have equitable opportunities to lead healthy, peaceful, safe, and sustainable lives; and

WHEREAS, in honoring the cultures, traditions and accomplishments of Native Americans that have shaped our country, we also acknowledge our nation's history of colonialism that has inflicted discrimination, deprivation, violence and genocide upon indigenous people; and

WHEREAS, the area currently known as Buncombe County, North Carolina rests on land that was first inhabited by the Cherokee People, who flourished here for thousands of years, as well as the Catawba People; and

WHEREAS, the Cherokee People endure to this day, having survived catastrophic diseases, loss of their ancestral lands, forced relocation to a reservation, long-term mismanagement at the reservation, family separations through the removal of children to boarding schools, and termination; and

WHEREAS, more than 16,000 members of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee now live in the five counties of Cherokee, Graham, Haywood, Jackson and Swain; and

WHEREAS, we recognize and honor the generous contributions of the Eastern Band of Cherokee to our economy, culture, and community; and

WHEREAS, the Buncombe County Register of Deeds collaborated with Cherokee counterparts to collect information for the creation of the website, "As Long as the Grass Shall Grow," featuring the history of Cherokee land cessions that created Buncombe County; and

WHEREAS, the Buncombe County Library System subscribes to and promotes the usage of NC LIVE Transparent Language Online system, which offers Buncombe County residents free access to learn various languages, including Cherokee; and

WHEREAS, the Buncombe County Commissioners selected three artists to bring themes of racial equity, reconciliation, and restoration to three Buncombe walls for the Buncombe Creative Equity Mural Project: Forming A Collaborative Culture Of Art, and one is dedicated to enhancing awareness of indigenous people, history and culture, and the project will involve engagement with the tribal structures within the Eastern Band of Cherokee People for input on design and syllabary; and

WHEREAS, the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners supports renaming the Great Smoky Mountains National Park's "Clingmans Dome" to its Cherokee name "Kuwohi;" and

WHEREAS, we seek to repair the trauma of past oppression and broken trust—both locally and regionally—by lifting up indigenous cultures and voices and striving together to build a future of shared hope and promise for all;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that on this 21<sup>st</sup> day of November 2023, the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners does hereby proclaim November 2023 as **Native American Heritage Month**, a time to celebrate the rich and diverse cultures of indigenous people, to raise awareness about our shared history, to recognize that truth must come before reconciliation, and to acknowledge the important contributions that Native Americans have made and are making to our community and our nation.



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Brownie Newman, Chairman  
Buncombe County Board of Commissioners