

# World Premiere of Guardians of Our Troubled Waters



*Jere Brittain, Mills River. Photo courtesy of Center for Cultural Preservation*

The Center for Cultural Preservation has announced the release of its sixth feature film, *Guardians of Our Troubled Waters*, by David Weintraub. The film pays tribute to the ordinary people who did extraordinary things to protect southern rivers and streams in Western North Carolina, East Tennessee and South Florida. After living in large cities for most of his life, Weintraub was impressed by the well-preserved natural state of North Carolina when he arrived. "When I came here, one of the first things I was determined to do was to help protect this place," he says. "There was still something left to protect and everywhere else I had lived, there were telephone poles and electric poles and trucks and cars and noise." Weintraub started volunteering with environmental and ecological organizations and learning that there was a lot more to river health than what met the eye. "I've always wanted to draw peoples' attention to rivers," he says. "They are the source of our drinking water and a cornerstone of our economy."

As Weintraub started working on the film, he was drawn further afield of WNC to include heroes like Marjorie Stoneman Douglas, a conservationist who committed much of her life to protecting the Florida Everglades. "The challenge with this film was the embarrassment of riches," says Weintraub. "There are so many stories and heroes." Weintraub completed 70 interviews and had to make major cuts to what started as a 7-hour film. "I had several films but only the budget for the one," he says. "There is a lot of richness and substance in the film because so much effort has been made over the years to protect these waterways."



*Interview with Matthew Tooni, Cherokee musician, Qualla Boundary. Photo courtesy of Center for Cultural Preservation*

Wilma Dykeman is another major character in the film. Weintraub interviewed her son, Jim Stokely, about her work to protect the French Broad River. "I think this film is vitally important to those living in the French Broad River watershed, because it reminds us how dependent we are on geography and the natural world around us," Stokely says. "We live in a particular place on earth, and it is our responsibility to take care of that place. If we don't, no one will."

*Guardians of Our Troubled Waters* will have its world premieres on Thursday, June 20, at 7 p.m. at Blue Ridge Community College's Thomas Auditorium; Saturday, June 22, at 7:30 p.m. at the NC Arboretum and Sunday, June 23 at 7:30 p.m. at White Horse Black Mountain. Tickets are \$15 and \$20 at the door and advanced reservations are strongly recommended by registering online. Music by Cherokee performer Matthew Tooni will open each program, and the screening will be followed by a Q and A with the director.

For more information or to register for a premiere, call 828.692.8062 or visit [SaveCulture.org](http://SaveCulture.org).