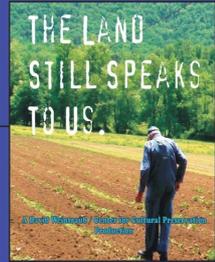
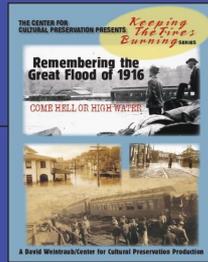
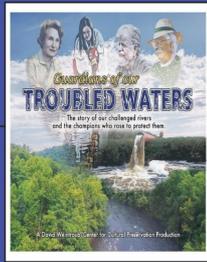


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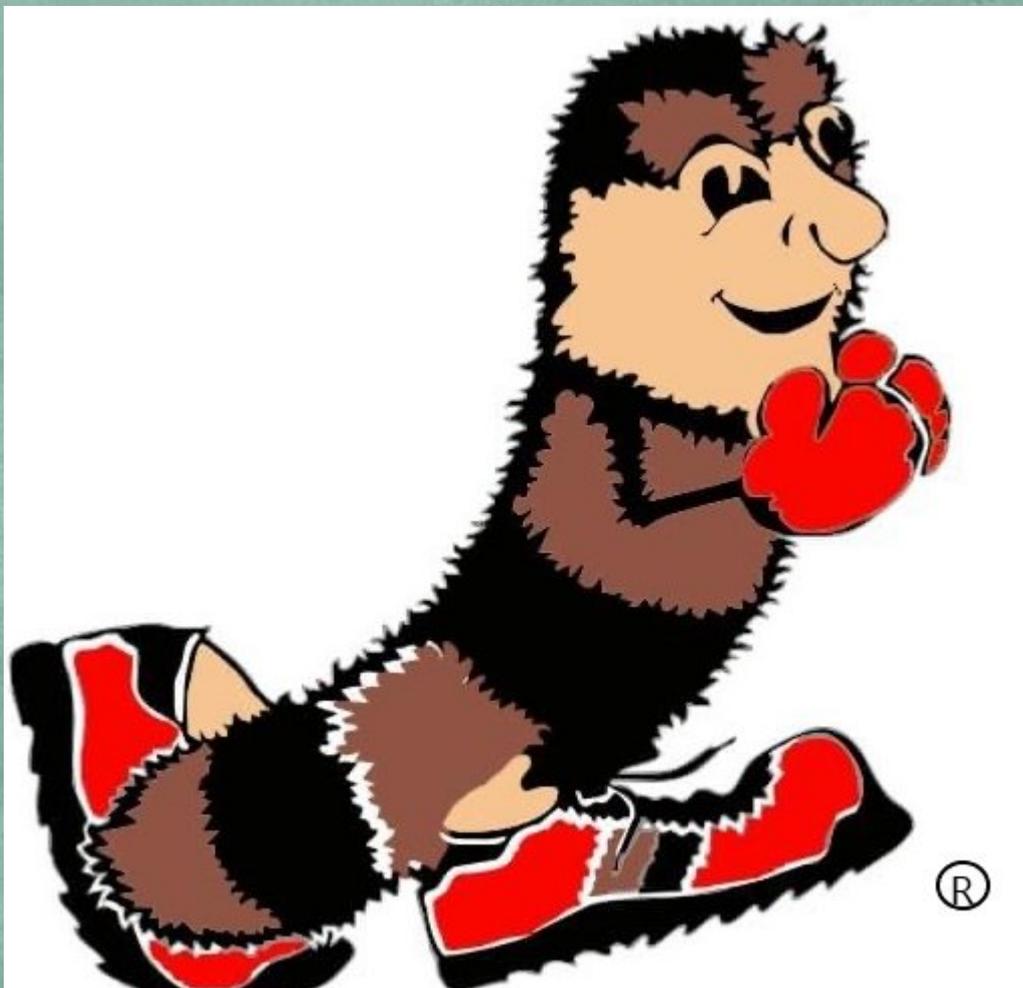


Dear Friends,

Anyone who hasn't been stuck in a hole all their lives knows that February 2nd is Groundhog Day. But did you know that the custom came from an ancient German tradition called 'Badger Day?' If a badger arose from his burrow and saw a sunny day, and therefore his shadow, we were destined for four more weeks of winter.

German immigrants coming to America couldn't find badgers quite as readily as they could groundhogs, thus turning a German custom into an American tradition. But how accurate is Punxsutawney Phil, or the Chimney Rock equivalent Greta in actually predicting an early Spring or a delayed Winter?

Apparently not very. According to researchers who studied over 100 years of records of all the incarnations of Phil, he accurately predicted the weather only 39% of the time, or as accurate as your average TV long-range forecast!



Of course, there are other animal prognosticators. In the Southern Appalachians the woolly worm is notably the star of the show and there are festivals to celebrate the critter's prediction. Legend has it that if a woolly worm (actually the larval stage of the Isabella toger moth) has a narrow red band, a harsh winter is foretold but if the redband is wide, we're in for a milder winter ahead.

An elder tried to spoof me years ago by showing me a totally black caterpillar to scare me into thinking that it was the end of the world! Banner Elk, NC has had an annual woolly worm festival for 44 years but don't bring your pets to this October event because they don't want to lose their forecaster before the event is over!

Likewise scientists who studied the woolly worms bands (what a job, huh?) found that there was no correlation between the caterpillar's bands and the weather. The critter's coloration was more directly linked to its diet, conditions of development and species rather than a predictor of future weather.



That doesn't mean that animals aren't sensitive to changes in the weather. Anyone who owns a cat or a dog knows that you can see their behavior change when a storm is coming long before we humans can tell, probably because of the change in barometric pressure. And there is a great deal of evidence that when major weather events are coming, the animals know long before our sophisticated equipment does.

Before giant waves slammed into Sri Lanka and India coastlines ten

years ago, wild and domestic animals seemed to know what was about to happen and fled to safety.

According to National Geographic Magazine, prior to the great Indonesian tsunami of 15 years ago, eyewitness accounts indicated that elephants screamed and ran for higher ground, dogs refused to go outdoors, flamingos abandoned their low-lying breeding areas and birds made themselves scarce until the danger had passed.

Do you know how I know when spring is 6 weeks away? I listen for the wood frogs. Wood frogs have a natural antifreeze that allows them to be out in freezing temperatures. But come late January or early February, you can hear them quacking like ducks, mating well before any sane amphibian comes out in the cold. When I hear them, I know spring is not far away!

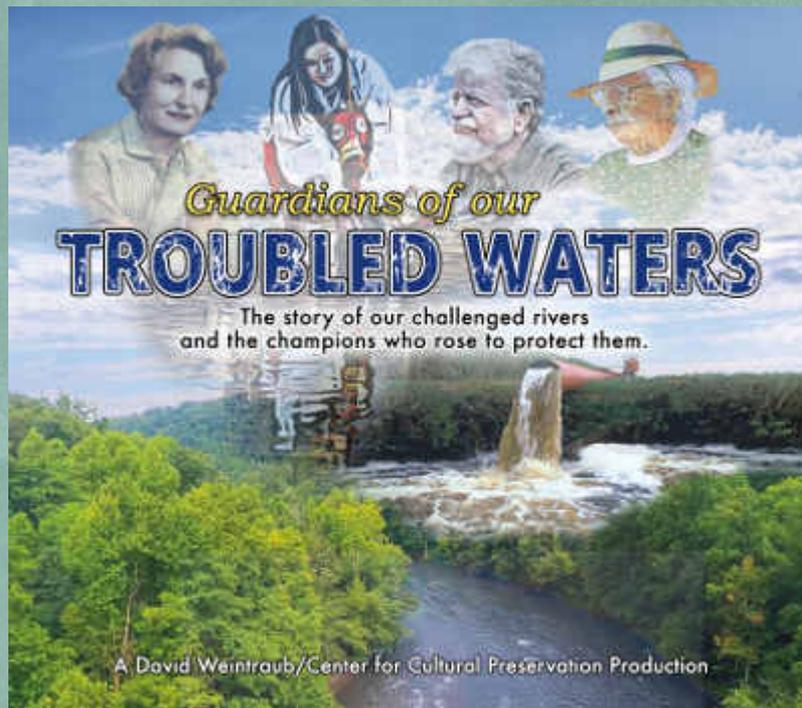


Anyway, we're back to our cultural preservation work and let me provide you with a quick update. First, a hearty thanks to all who supported the Center for Cultural Preservation's End of Year Campaign. Because of your support, we can begin work on our new project, The First Storytellers, focusing on the storytellers that connected our community's with our cultural legacies and with nature. We still have a long ways to go to complete our fundraising work, but enough to get started.

Your support also helped us begin work on preserving the many hundreds of oral histories we've collected over the years with the

goal of getting these all up onto a new-improved website and making them accessible to repositories in our area and around the country.

We are slowly dipping our toes into cultural programs by offering this spring an Encore Presentation of **The Spirits Still Move Them**, our recent moonshine history film on Zoom. If conditions are right, we'll look later this year into resuming more programs live. We'll keep you posted as we roll them out.



One of the things that is definitely rolling out in the coming month is the public television broadcasts of our recent films. **Guardians of Our Troubled Waters**, our river heroes of the South film, will start making its appearances on local, regional and national PBS stations soon in North Carolina, South Carolina, East Tennessee, Florida and far beyond. We've created some content to promote the stories in the film and you can find some of it below:





Wilma Dykeman, Hero of the French Broad



Marjory Stoneman Douglas, Grand Dame of the Everglades



Betty Osceola- The Miccosukee and their connection to nature



Enjoy Groundhog Day tomorrow and please remember if you haven't recently monetarily supported our work, become one of our supporters today by donating [HERE](#) or sending your tax deductible contribution to us at:

Center for Cultural Preservation

PO Box 1066

Flat Rock, NC 28731-1066

Thank you sincerely and have a wonderful day.

Sincerely,

David Weintraub



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