

Nature's Wisdom Thru Native Eyes, a New Documentary by David Weintraub



Three elders: Cherokee storytellers Davy Arch, from left, Lloyd Arneach Sr.

By Natasha Anderson

Storytelling, Native wisdom and nature's intelligence converge in *Nature's Wisdom Thru Native Eyes*, a new film by award-winning documentary filmmaker David Weintraub and the Center for Cultural Preservation. World premieres take place Saturday, June 24, at North River Farms in Mills River; Thursday, June 29, at The Orange Peel in Asheville; and Saturday, July 1, at Trinity Presbyterian Church in Hendersonville. The starting time at all venues is 7:30 p.m.

"Native culture has always thought that the natural world was intelligent, that trees could communicate with each other, that animals shared many of the traits for love, use of tools and relationships that we did," says Weintraub. "Now Western science is starting to realize that what Native people have been saying forever is actually true."

Nature's Wisdom integrates Native storytelling and philosophy with cutting-edge science that supports these age-old views. The film features Native elders discussing how, for more than 10,000 years, storytelling connected the tribe to nature and to one another, and how the use of medicinal plants and the Native approach that focuses on connections can help all of us heal our broken relationship with the living world.

"There's always something to be gleaned from these old stories and the attitude of the storytellers passing this information on," says Cherokee elder, storyteller and mask-maker Davy Arch. "Because they say it's all interconnected—attitude, mindset, resources and the way we use them."

Scientists participating in the discussion include New York Times bestselling author and nationally recognized wildlife ecologist, Carl Safina as well as local botanists Steve Pettis and Dave Coyle. They discuss the importance of learning from Native wisdom and how it is a vital way of reconnecting ourselves to the living world. According to Safina, "Native people understood that all the knowledge needed to survive and thrive was contained in the land and that their role was not to change it or control it but to learn from it." This documentary is made possible by the Community Foundation of Henderson County, the Arts Council of Henderson County and North Carolina Humanities. It is Weintraub's 50th film. His work has appeared on PBS stations across the US and at film festivals around the world'.



Davy Arch in the cane. Photo by Milenka Kahn

This is the culmination of all my years of filmmaking," he says. "Connecting history, culture and the love of nature is where I've lived all my life. Hopefully this film will help the viewer connect with the idea that history is a treasure chest of jewels that can help us find our way onto a better path." Each screening will begin with Native flutists and be followed by a discussion with the filmmaker and film participants. prices vary by location. Advanced reservations are highly recommended. Order tickets online at SaveCulture.org or by phone at 828.692.8062.