

## EBCI tribal members featured in new documentary

HENDERSONVILLE, N.C. – What happens when storytelling, native wisdom, and nature’s intelligence converge? That’s what a new film by award-winning documentary filmmaker David Weintraub and the Center for Cultural Preservation seek to explore in “Nature’s Wisdom Thru Native Eyes”, set to hold its world premieres this June.

According to Cherokee elder, storyteller, and mask-maker Davy Arch, “We were trying to stay connected to the natural world because we realized that everything that was connected to it thrived, so we understood that if we would stay connected to it, we would be prosperous as well.” Arch is one of several native elders featured in the film discussing how for over 10,000 years storytelling connected the tribe to nature and to each other, the use of medicinal plants, and how the native approach that focuses finding connections can help all of us



Lloyd Arneach Sr., an elder of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, is a storyteller featured in the upcoming documentary by award-winning documentary filmmaker David Weintraub and the Center for Cultural Preservation entitled “Nature’s Wisdom Thru Native Eyes” which is set to hold its world premieres this June. (Photos courtesy of Center for Cultural Preservation)

heal our broken relationship with the living world.

Film Director David Weintraub elaborates that what struck him most of all while working with the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and half a dozen other native tribes is their sophisticated approach in seeing the connections between history, culture and nature. "In the western tradition,

humans are considered to be at the top of the hierarchy, with animals and plants far below. But native people instead believe that since humans were the last to come and have the least experience on how to live, they must turn to plants and animals as their teachers. By looking at the living world that way, it transforms us and how we view the living world. Instead of nature being our conquest, it becomes our partner."

"Nature's Wisdom" integrates native storytelling and philosophy with cutting edge science that's now discovering that what native people have been saying about the intelligence of nature for thousands of years is actually true! According to Weintraub, "Recent research confirms that trees have a highly intelligent way of communicating with each other, sharing resources and warning each other of potential hazards. Many animals use tools, and communicate with each other in ways that we never thought possible before. And yet native stories and wisdom has observed these behaviors for thousands of generations."

Scientists participating in the discussion including New York Times bestselling author and nationally recognized wildlife ecologist, Carl Safina as well as local botanists Steve Pettis and Dave Coyle who discuss the importance of learning from native wisdom and how it is an important way to reconnect 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."



Mary Thompson, a noted basket maker of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, is shown making basket dyes during filming for the documentary.

What does film director Weintraub hope will be taken from his new film? "When we reestablish our relationship with the land as a sustaining force, as our grocery store, pharmacy and as our connection to both the past and the future, we truly become the stewards of creation that we were meant to be, connected to the wisdom of our ancestors who understood that history, culture, nature were all connected."

"Nature's Wisdom" will have its world premieres in the western North Carolina region from June 24 through July 1. Each screening will begin with native flautists and be followed by a discussion of the film with the filmmaker and film participants. World premieres are scheduled for June 24 at North River Farms in Mills River as drive-in theater with seating options (weather date: June 30), at The Orange Peel in Asheville on Thursday June 29 and on Saturday, July 1 at Trinity Presbyterian Church in Hendersonville. The starting time at all venues is 7:30 p.m. The outside location is subject to weather dates if necessary.

Ticket prices vary by location and advanced reservations are highly recommended given high demand and expected sellouts by ordering online at [www.saveculture.org](http://www.saveculture.org) or by calling the Center at (828) 692-8062. Ticketbuyers get \$5 off the price of the DVD if they buy it in advance.

This film is made possible by the Community Foundation of Henderson County, Prestige Subaru, the Arts Council of Henderson County, and North Carolina Humanities. The Center for Cultural Preservation is a cultural nonprofit organization dedicated to working for mountain heritage continuity through oral history, documentary film, education and public programs. For more information about the Center contact them at (828) 692-8062 or [www.saveculture.org](http://www.saveculture.org)