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Subject: Blue Ridge National Heritage Area Partnership Announces Grant Awards for 2019

The Blue Ridge National Heritage Area Partnership (BRNHA) has awarded 19 grants totaling \$190,171 to support projects across the North Carolina mountains and foothills, focusing on craft, music, natural heritage, Cherokee culture, and agricultural traditions. These five facets of the region's heritage earned the 25 counties of Western North Carolina a Congressional designation as the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area in 2003.

"These grant awards will support community projects across Western North Carolina," said Angie Chandler, Executive Director of BRNHA. "By spotlighting our cultural traditions and natural wonders, we help sustain these assets, build community pride, draw more visitors, and grow the regional economy."

The 19 grants awards include:

- **Appalachian Theatre of the High Country:** \$6,521 to support the creation of a historical mural frieze in the community room of a historic theatre in downtown Boone.
- **Beech Mountain Tourism Development Authority:** \$3,650 to revitalize and promote Barn Quilt Trails in Avery and Watauga counties.
- **Blowing Rock Art & History Museum:** \$9,400 for an exhibition and programming showcasing North Carolina textile and fiber artists.
- **Center for Cultural Preservation:** \$13,470 to support a documentary film on the history of waterway stewardship in Western North Carolina.
- **Church Mouse Ministries:** \$5,000 for a community garden in downtown Robbinsville that will serve as an outdoor classroom and resource for community development.
- **Conserving Carolina:** \$16,000 for interpretive signage and a visitor brochure spotlighting the region's camp heritage at the new Bell Park in Henderson County.
- **Cove Creek Preservation and Development, Inc.:** \$10,000 for a plan to enhance the Doc Watson Museum at the Historic Cove Creek School in Sugar Grove.
- **Folkmoor:** \$8,000 for auditorium improvements to support year-round cultural programming at the Folkmoor Friendship Center.
- **Forest Stewards Guild:** \$9,000 to build a coalition of organizations and landowners to improve forest health and management in the Sandy Mush community.
- **Friends of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park:** \$7,350 to rehabilitate a historic fishing cabin in the Cataloochee Valley.
- **Junior Appalachian Musicians, Inc.:** \$10,000 to create videos and other resource materials that will give JAM students a deeper appreciation of the history and cultural context of the region's music traditions.

- **Madison County Arts Council:** \$16,000 to rehabilitate a building in downtown Marshall for concerts and for a Junior Appalachian Musicians program classroom.
- **Nina Simone Project:** \$5,000 for an interpretive kiosk at Nina Simone Plaza in downtown Tryon.
- **North Carolina Arboretum Society:** \$16,000 for outdoor interpretive exhibits at the Arboretum's Willow Pond celebrating wetlands and the region's status as a world hotspot for salamander diversity.
- **North Carolina Folklife Institute:** \$15,840 to create an online exhibit and radio broadcasts spotlighting notable musicians, storytellers, and craft makers in the Beech Mountain area.
- **Surry Arts Council:** \$10,000 to create new music heritage exhibits next door to the Historic Earle Theatre in downtown Mount Airy.
- **Todd Community Preservation Organization:** \$7,000 for music venue improvements at Cook Memorial Park in Ashe County.
- **Warren Wilson College:** \$5,940 to engage the local community in the use and stewardship of the college's forest and trail system.
- **Will & Deni McIntyre Foundation:** \$16,000 to support the production of Season Four of *David Holt's State of Music* series which showcases the region's bluegrass, old-time, and gospel traditions on public television.

Since its inception in 2003, the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area Partnership has awarded 173 grants totaling over \$2.3 million and leveraging another \$5.6 million in matching contributions from local governments and the private sector. These grants have funded projects in all 25 counties of Western North Carolina.

The Blue Ridge National Heritage Area, designated by Congress and the President in November, 2003, works to protect, preserve, interpret, and develop the unique natural, historical, and cultural resources of Western North Carolina for the benefit of present and future generations, and in so doing to stimulate improved economic opportunity in the region. National Heritage Areas are locally-governed institutions that encourage residents, non-profit groups, government agencies, and private partners to work together in planning and implementing programs that preserve and celebrate America's defining landscapes.

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