

Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians  
*Natural Resources Department:*

*Partnership driven success*

---

Mike LaVoie

EBCI Natural Resources Department

Eastern Band Cherokee Indians

[michlavo@nc-choerokee.com](mailto:michlavo@nc-choerokee.com)



*“Map of the former territorial limits of the Cherokee  
‘Nation of’ Indians” (C.C. Royce – 1884)*

MAP  
OF THE FORMER  
TERRITORIAL LIMITS  
OF THE  
**CHEROKEE NATION OF INDIANS**  
SHOWING THE EXTENT OF THE TERRITORY  
CONCESSIONED  
BY TREATY AND PURCHASE FROM THE INDIANS TO THE  
COLONIAL AND UNITED STATES  
BY PRIVATE PURCHASE FROM THE INDIANS BY THESE STATES  
WITH THE BOUNDARY OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI  
AND THE TERRITORY OF MISSISSIPPI  
BY CHARLES C. ROYCE  
1884



KENTUCKY

VIRGINIA

WEST VIRGINIA

NORTH CAROLINA

TENNESSEE

***EASTERN BAND CHEROKEE INDIANS***

SOUTH CAROLINA

ALABAMA

# Cherokee Natural Resources

Food  
Drinking Water  
Arts  
Ceremony  
Language  
Aesthetics  
Myth and lore  
Medicine  
Recreation  
Economy

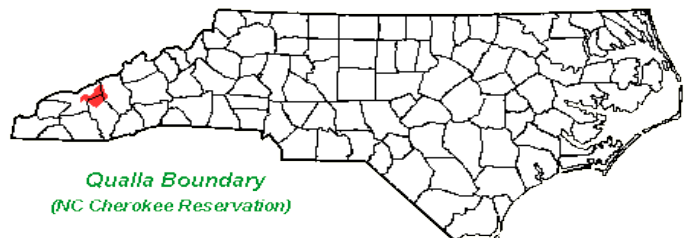


Cherokee Name: **daloge**

Northern hog sucker (*Hypentelium nigricans*) This is a large bottom dwelling fish of swift, clear streams.

Status: Common







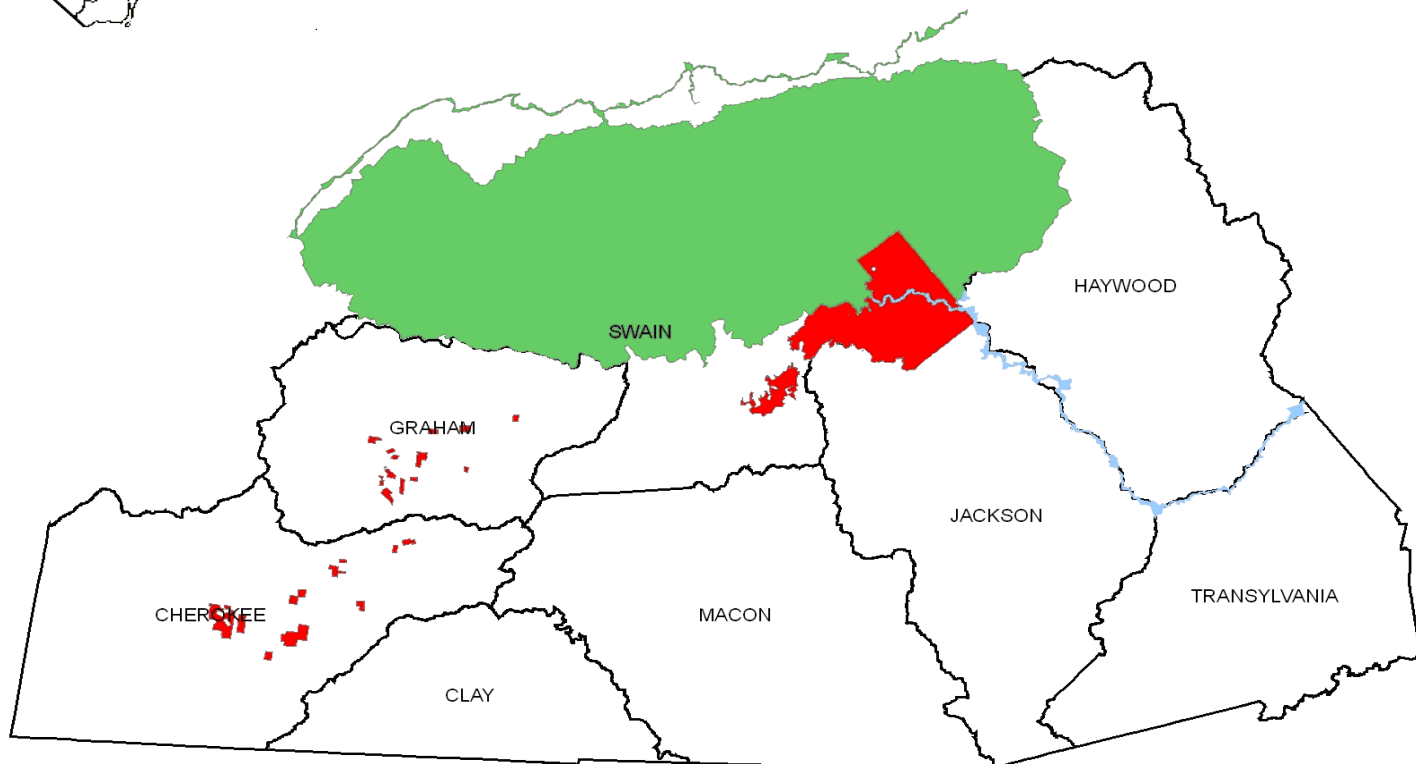


Qualla Boundary  
(NC Cherokee Reservation)



### Legend

-  RESERVATION\_BOUNDARY
-  GSMNP\_BOUNDARY
-  BRPW\_BOUNDARY
-  COUNTY\_BOUNDARY



**NATURAL RESOURCES**  
EASTERN BAND OF CHEROKEE INDIANS

# Evolution of EBCI Natural Resource Management



Further unravelling of traditional lifeways and overexploitation. Bureau of Indian Affairs authoritative management entity but no resources to be effective.

← *Late 1800's – Mid 1900's*



EBCI partners with U.S. Bureau of Fisheries to begin trout fishing program to promote tourism and provide fish for Tribal members

← *1960s*



Federal environmental laws and Tribal Self-governance (Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, Endangered Species Act, Indian Self-Determination Act)

← *1970s – 80s*



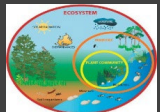
Establishment of EBCI Office of Environment and Natural Resources (water and air) and EBCI environmental ordinances

← *1996*



Cherokee Fisheries and Wildlife Management established with biological staff

← *2007*



EBCI Legacy Plan completed (Integrated Resource Management Plan)

← *2013*



Establishment of EBCI Natural Resources Department integrating environmental and wildlife management offices

← *2016*



The Citizens of the  
Eastern Band of Cherokee  
Indians (Governing  
Charter)

Tribal Court

Executive Office  
(Principal  
Chief/Vice Chief)

Tribal Council

Timber and Natural  
Resources Committee

- Division of Operations
- Division of Education
- Division of Housing
- Division of Human Resources
- Division of Public Health and Human Services
- Division of Treasury
- Office of Attorney General
- Division of Police
- Division of Commerce
- Information Technology
- Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources

1600 employees



- Cooperative Extension
- Renewable Energy
- Natural Resources Department

40 employees

EBCI Code of Ordinances  
municode

&

Operational  
budget and  
appropriations



***MISSION:** To conserve, protect, and enhance natural resources for the benefit of the Cherokee community.*

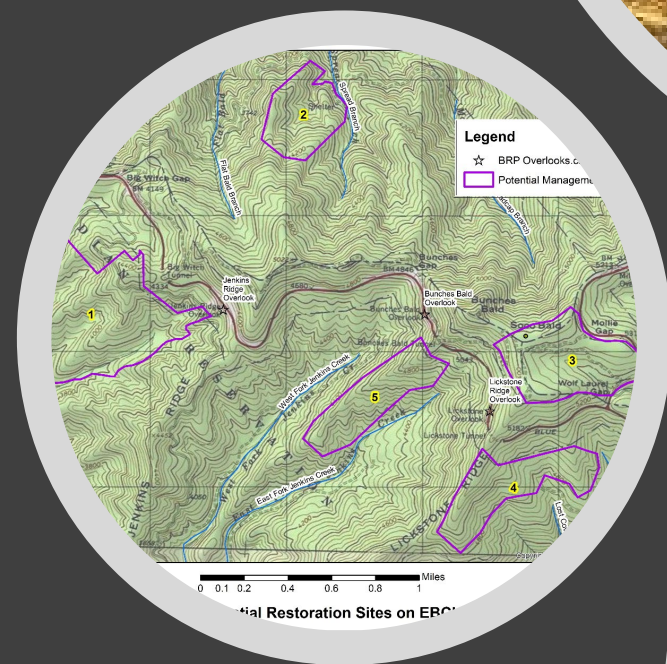
***Program Offices:***

- Forestry Resources
- Horticulture
- Air Quality
- Water Quality
- Regulatory Compliance
- Fisheries and Wildlife Management

# Forest Management

- Forestry and fire program compacting through BIA (P.L. 93-638)
- Forest Management Plan and Tribal Reserve Restoration Plan
- USFS landscape initiatives– Hall Mountain Community Forest / Tribal Forest Protection Act
- Native plant restoration (i.e. American chestnut partnership)
- Community forests

**Partners:** BIA, USFS, NRCS, The American Chestnut Foundation, Ecoforesters, Forest Stewards, Wilderness Society, University of Vermont, Western Carolina University





# Culturally Significant Plant Research and Access

- Conduct research to better inform the scientific validity and sustainability of traditional harvest methods
- Expand tribal member access to resources on federal lands
- Inform local and regional harvesting regulations and policies.

**Partners:** National Park Service, US Forest Service Southern Research Station; Stanford University, Southern Appalachian Man and the Biosphere



# Jesse Owle Dugan Native Plant and Greenhouse Facility

- Propagation of native and culturally significant plants for ecosystem restoration and community needs

**Partners:** EPA Region 4, USDA NRCS, NC State Cooperative Extension, Mother Town Healing Project





# Ambient Air Monitoring

- Parameters measured: Ozone, PM2.5 filter based (FRM), Meteorology
- Determine compliance with National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS)
- Establish baseline conditions to identify areas of concern
- Determine trends with long-term continuous data

**Partners:** EPA, NC Division of Air, Land of Sky Alliance



# Air and Renewable Energy Projects

- Biodiesel Production Facility (EPA)
- Electric Vehicles (NC Division of Air , EPA, Duke Energy (Diesel Emissions Reduction Act)
- Mobile monitoring and wildfire (EPA)
- Tribal Soil Climate Analysis Network (NRCS and BIA)
- Community Outreach (EPA, Duke Energy)

# Water Quality



## Monitoring (EPA, NCDWR, USGS)

- North Carolina state certified lab
- Surface water monitoring (permits, fixed stations, grab sampling)
- Bio-monitoring: macro-invertebrate and fish

## Regulatory Protection (EPA, USACE)

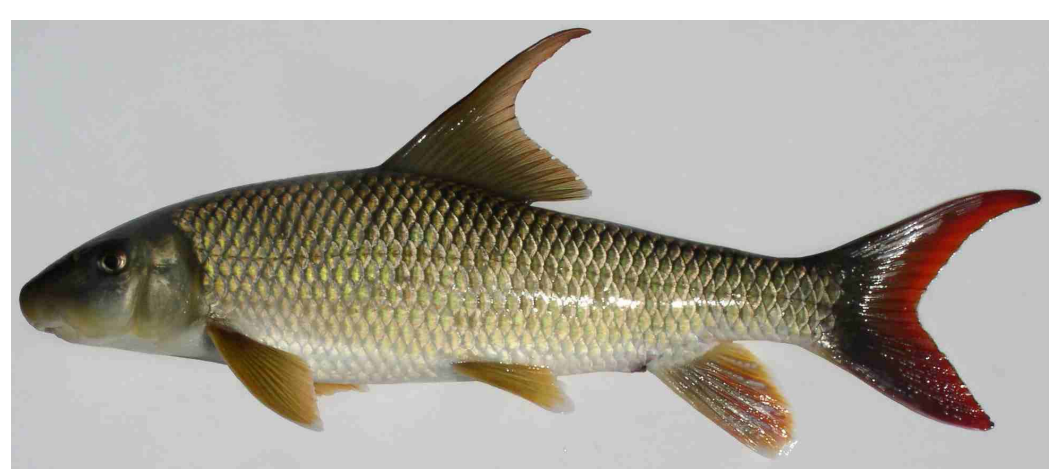
- Tribal CWA 401 certification
- Tribal Sediment and erosion control (projects <1 acre)
- Tribal Floodplain management (EBCI code Ch. 143)
- EPA Stormwater management – Construction General Permit
- USACE CWA 404 permitting



## Restoration (NRCS, EPA)

- Natural channel design and bank protection projects
- Aquatic organism passage projects (culverts and dams)
- Riparian zone management
- Wetlands program development





## Restoring native aquatic species

- Sicklefin redhorse
- Brook trout
- Eastern hellbender
- Mussels (spike, rainbow, wavy-rayed lampmussel)





Smoky Mountain **news**

***Tribe leads coalition to remove Ela Dam***

WRITTEN BY HOLLY KAYS, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2022

Partners: American Rivers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Northbrook Power Management

# Wildlife Management

- Culturally significant species Rare and ESA Listed Species
- Hunting
- Wildlife viewing and the economy
- Invasive species
- Animal disease traceability

**Partners:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, NC Wildlife Resources Commission, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Bureau of Indian Affairs, USDA Wildlife Services, USDA NRCS, Native American Fish and Wildlife Society







# Cherokee Trout Fishing

**\$26 million  
annual  
impact  
& supports >  
300 jobs**





# Future opportunities

- *Climate adaptation and resiliency planning*
- *Capacity and funding*
- *Expansion of partnerships within and outside of the EBCI*
- *Modernizing tribal laws and regulatory frameworks*

# *SGI-Thank You!*

