

SUCCESS STORY



BLUE RIDGE NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA, NC

The Blue Ridge National Heritage Area Partnership develops and promotes heritage tourism in 25 Western North Carolina counties. Designated as a National Heritage Area by Congress in 2003, our region covers 11,000 square miles (about the size of Maryland), with 1.2 million mostly rural residents, and we welcome more than 16 million visitors annually.

Our region is nationally significant and includes:

- The two most visited units of the National Park Service—the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the Blue Ridge Parkway
- A Cherokee heritage spanning 10,000 years
- The most bio-diverse region in North America
- One of the largest handmade craft industries in the U.S.
- A music heritage that has played a major role in defining American music



IMPACT STATEMENT

We have made an impact and invested resources wisely: Partnering with hundreds of non-profits, businesses, tourism organizations, educational institutions and local governments, BRNHA benefits the regional economy, including:

- Contributing \$2.39 billion annually to the Western North Carolina economy, generating \$1.765 million in state and local taxes, and supporting more than 30,000 jobs.
- Since 2004, BRNHA has awarded 154 local grants totaling \$2.1 million to 97 regional organizations, and with a \$3.7 million match brings the invested total to \$5.8 million. Grants are used to build and sustain heritage tourism infrastructure, educational programs, heritage preservation and interpretation with a return on investment for rural communities.
- BRNHA has leveraged over \$10.7 million in matching state, local and private investment over the past 15 years, in exchange for a total of \$8.7 million in federal funds, exceeding its required 50 percent match. Some 80 percent of BRNHA funds are spent on programs.

We have many stories to share, here is one:

The Blue Ridge Mountains have been a fertile ground for European, African-American and Cherokee sounds to mingle for centuries. The Blue Ridge Music Trails, launched by BRNHA and the NC Arts Council in 2013, invite people to enjoy these living traditions around the region.

We have awarded more than 50 grants to create stages, improve sound systems and attract fans. Our website guided more than 90,000 users last year to festivals

and stages across the region. A survey shows Music Trails visitors spend more than other travelers on room, food, souvenirs, recordings and transportation-up to \$300 a day. For more information and success stories, go to www.BlueRidgeHeritage.com