

AMERICAN INDIAN HERITAGE MONTH
AND AMERICAN INDIAN HERITAGE DAY

2023

BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE
COUNTY OF CHATHAM

A PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, the first American Indian Day was celebrated in May 1916 in New York; and

WHEREAS, in 1990 President George H.W. Bush signed a joint Congressional resolution designating the month of November “National American Indian Heritage Month”; and

WHEREAS, similar proclamations have been issued every year since 1994 to recognize what is now called “American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month”; and

WHEREAS, President Joseph R. Biden has proclaimed November 2023 as “National Native American Heritage Month” and urged all Americans, as well as their elected representatives at the Federal, State, and local levels, to observe this month with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities; and

WHEREAS, President Biden’s Proclamation further urges all Americans to celebrate November 24, 2023, as Native American Heritage Day; and

WHEREAS, Governor Roy Cooper has proclaimed November 2023, as “AMERICAN INDIAN HERITAGE MONTH” in North Carolina, and commended its observance to all citizens; and

WHEREAS, American Indian Heritage Month in North Carolina honors and celebrates the important history and heritage of tribal communities across the state, who have lived in the geographic area of North Carolina for more than 12,000 years; and

WHEREAS, this year's theme in North Carolina, "Many Tribes-One People," underscores the unity and strength, as well as the rich history and culture, of North Carolina's tribal communities; and

WHEREAS, North Carolina is home to eight state recognized tribes: the Eastern Band of Cherokee, Coharie, Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina, Haliwa-Saponi, Sappony, Meherrin, Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation, and the Waccamaw-Siouan, which hold seats on the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs as per the General Statutes of the State of North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, today, there are more than 130,000 North Carolinians who identify as American Indian in North Carolina, living in all 100 counties across the state, according to the 2020 U.S. Census; and

WHEREAS, Chatham County is recognized as having a rich historical and cultural heritage from numerous state-recognized tribes and other tribes, including more than 1,100 residents who identify as American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, or other indigenous community, according to the 2020 U.S. Census; and

WHEREAS, North Carolina's tribal communities represent the second-largest American Indian population east of the Mississippi River and the seventh-largest American Indian population in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs, the North Carolina American Indian Heritage Commission, the North Carolina Museum of History, and North Carolina's Indian Tribes and Urban Indian Organizations collaborate to develop American Indian Heritage Month celebrations each year, increasing awareness of American Indian history and related current issues; and

WHEREAS, the North Carolina American Indian Heritage Commission observes that “the state of North Carolina is situated on the ancestral homelands of many American Indian tribes who have lived in this place, cared for these lands, and traveled throughout the region for thousands of years. Tribes spoke different variants of Algonquian, Iroquoian, and Siouan languages. We honor them as the first stewards of this place and acknowledge, with sorrow and remorse, the violent history of their dispossession and forced removal”; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners encourages all residents to learn more about the rich history of American Indians and other indigenous people in

our nation, state and county and commit to preserving American Indian and other indigenous heritage and traditions for generations to come;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Chatham County Board of Commissioners does hereby:

PROCLAIM November, 2023, as "AMERICAN INDIAN HERITAGE MONTH" in Chatham County; and

FURTHER PROCLAIM November 24, 2023 as "AMERICAN INDIAN HERITAGE DAY" in Chatham County; and

COMMEND the observance of this day and month to all residents of Chatham County; and as part of that observance

RESPECTFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE the Coharie, Eastern Band of Cherokee, Haliwa-Saponi, Lumbee, Meherrin, Occaneechi Band of the Saponi, Sappony, and Waccamaw Siouan and honor the enduring presence, vibrance, and diversity of contemporary Indigenous communities.

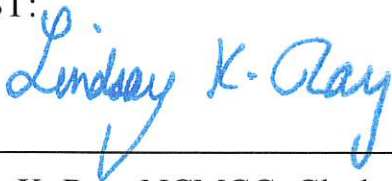
ADOPTED this 20th day of November 2023.



Karen Howard, Chair

Chatham County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:



Lindsay K. Ray, NCMCC, Clerk to the Board

Chatham County Board of Commissioners