

Article for *Lake Chatuge Living Magazine* January 2023

It seems like every week you meet someone who visited the Lake Chatuge area, was impressed by the natural beauty, the selection of outdoor activities, the friendliness of the community, the lack of traffic and the slower pace, and decided to call it home. Those same attributes have been drawing people here for decades.

In 1998, life-long residents and newcomers on the North Carolina side of the lake recognized the need to ***stimulate economic growth, promote the assets and preserve the heritage of Clay County NC***, and so adopted that mission for the new non-profit Clay County Communities Revitalization Association ([CCCRA](#)). 25 years later CCCRA is still powered by an all-volunteer group of people.

Funded through memberships, donations, and grants, CCCRA focuses on Trails & Greenways, Cherokee Culture, Community Outreach and the sustainable operation of the Historic Clay County Courthouse.

Have you visited the Jackrabbit Mountain Bike and Hiking Trails on the lake? CCCRA's Trails & Greenways team was awarded multiple grants in a 20-year period that resulted in over 20 miles of high-quality trails, the last 0.4 mile completed in 2022. Next up for Jackrabbit? Funding a pavilion at the trailhead. A new initiative, "Hayesville Moves", a part of MADE x MTNS WNC's [Building Outdoor Communities](#) program, is being led by CCCRA, [Historic Hayesville Inc. and Clay County Chamber of Commerce](#).

For centuries, the Cherokee Nation called Clay County home. CCCRA's Cherokee Culture team constructed and maintains the outdoor Cherokee Homestead Exhibit, built the Quanassee Path history trail that celebrated five Cherokee-related sites surrounding downtown Hayesville and curates the Cherokee Culture Center at the Moss Regional Library. Every September, the Cherokee Heritage Festival reminds visitors of the richness of the Cherokee civilization.

CCCRA's Community Outreach team produces the Friday Summer Concert series on the Historic Courthouse grounds and is behind beautification projects like the commissioning of the Traditional Music sculpture in front of the Hayesville Town Hall. In collaboration with other non-profits and local businesses, we look for opportunities to grow Clay County's economy while preserving the beloved quality of life.

Preservation and restoration of the iconic Historic Courthouse is one of the projects of which CCCRA is most proud. The Historic Clay County Courthouse, located on the Square in downtown Hayesville, was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1975, and rejuvenated in 2018 to the simplicity and beauty of its early roots. The [Historic Clay County Courthouse/Beal Center](#) is now a unique event and community venue, once again the center of the charming, revitalized downtown Hayesville, North Carolina.

It's amazing what volunteers can do! We invite all full-time and parttime residents, newcomers, and visitors to the Lake Chatuge area to join our CCCRA community. Support our mission by becoming a member, volunteering, and choosing the Beal Center for your next gathering. Visit our website at www.cccra-nc.org.