



# Notes from the Chief

*What I'm working on for You*

## Osiyo

Protecting the environment and being forward-thinking stewards of our land is an inherent Cherokee value and something our people have always passed down from generation to generation. It's a responsibility I take seriously as Chief of the largest tribal government in the United States, with more than 340,000 enrolled citizens.

It is well known that American Indians, including Cherokees, were this country's first conservationists. The environment impacts every single one of us on a daily basis through the water we drink, air we breathe and ground we walk upon. In that spirit, I appointed the first-ever Secretary of Natural Resources. Sara Hill is responsible for shaping our environmental policies.

One of the first initiatives in this renewed focus on natural resources was guaranteeing our hunting and fishing rights. We began issuing Cherokee Nation hunting and fishing licenses last year that allow Cherokees to hunt and fish in all 77 Oklahoma counties. We have issued about 115,000 of those to date.

Now, I am proud to announce our next brick in the foundation of our environmental preservation work, the formation of the Cherokee Nation Fish and Wildlife Association. Members of this association will be among the first to know when new opportunities arise to continue the work of our ancestors as modern-day stewards of our lands.

The association is for Cherokees Nation citizens; however, non-Cherokees can sign up as friends of the association and opt in to receive notifications that may be of interest to any outdoorsman or environmentalist. We will maintain a separate list of Cherokee Nation citizen-members and a list of friends and supporters of the association. Participation is voluntary and free of charge.

Along with information about the hunting and fishing license, members and friends will get relevant

information about Cherokee Nation initiatives, tips for hunters and anglers, and useful information for hobbyists interested in nature and wildlife conservation. Members will receive a membership card, a vehicle sticker and access to exclusive wildlife and hunting and fishing information in the “members only” area of the website.

Traditional Cherokee wildlife habitat and management information, lake levels, calendars, regulations, and maps for hunting and fishing seasons will be included in the information.

Additionally, public events will be part of the association’s efforts. We are currently in the planning process, and potential events include conservation projects, special hunts, fishing tournaments, archery lessons, hunting and safety classes, and recommendations for gun and bow owners.

You’ll also have an opportunity to provide feedback, so we can tailor our programs to support the outdoor recreational activities that you enjoy throughout the Cherokee Nation.

We are proving how we can be a state and national leader in environmental conservation, as well as a trailblazer in Indian Country, setting the standard for other tribal governments. No other tribe has started an association that resembles this effort. Cherokee Nation is again leading the way.

The Cherokee Nation Fish and Wildlife Association will make it a priority to better protect and preserve wildlife, teach better land stewardship, safeguard our water and air resources, provide our citizens and friends, especially our youth, with informative environmental data, and make a concerted effort to play our part to combat global climate change.

Northeast Oklahoma is one of the most beautiful places on Earth. It is my home. It is in these hills and waterways that I grew up hunting, fishing and hiking and being connected to nature.

I believe preserving that right forever is our moral obligation.

We can all join together to form an organization, the Cherokee Nation Fish and Wildlife Association, that makes our natural world a priority. This work will benefit nature enthusiasts and sportsmen alike.

I know that many of you will want to join us to build a brighter future for our children and grandchildren, and I applaud you. It is our duty to make our world livable for future generations. That’s why I hope we can empower, engage and encourage youth leaders to be active within this new association.

Through this effort and every decision we make, we strive to keep our land clean, our water safe and our air pristine. Stewardship, as a guiding principle, must be embraced at every level, and what we do today at the Cherokee Nation will impact whether our resources are sustainable for the next seven generations to come.

I encourage everyone interested in protecting the environment to join the association as either a member or a friend, because protecting and conserving shared resources for the future is a responsibility all Oklahomans share. During Cherokee National Holiday, we will have opportunities to sign up for the association, and soon a new website will be coming online for members and friends. For more information, contact Dale Glory at the Cherokee Nation at (918) 453-5333 or Dale-glory@cherokee.org.

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