



# a natural state

**Artist: Nancy Basket**

**Video 4: Sandhills State Park**

Basket: About a month ago, I was driving through here to go to an artist-in-residency program in Chesterfield. And I saw all of the burned needles, and I thought, “Oh, my gosh, they’ve had a fire.” And then I saw the forest service place over there on the left, so I pulled in and I said, “Hey, you guys, what happened to your forest?”

They said, “No, no, that’s a prescribed burn. It’s OK.”

I said, “Well, let me show you what I’m doing.” So I showed them my baskets, and told them about pine needles and how to coil them. And they couldn’t believe it. They’d never heard of it. I couldn’t believe that, but they took me over here and they gave me a permit.

I always ask permission first before I go anywhere to gather needles. And they gave me permission to come into the forest and gather the longleaf that was already burned. To me, that’s like a big microwave oven just, you know, it turns them all golden brown. And that’s green gold to me, too.

The pine forest has a purpose for being here and the forest people have reasons and people who collect these...the pine needles from the ground. I knew that. I knew about the baling. And the people have to pay for that. But I knew that I had, as a Native American, the rights to go in and gather some things that I would use naturally for my baskets. But, still, you don’t take something for nothing. You always ask permission first.

And you never can tell, you know, if it’s hunting season and you go out into the forest by yourself, you could get shot. So it’s always a good thing to get permission and let somebody know where you’re going. And then if you get lost on one of these roads, people’ll know where to find you. I’ve done that before...only once.

