Request for Proposals: Fort Watson Augmented Reality

INTRODUCTION
With the support of funding from a grant from the State of South Carolina and matching monies, the American Battlefield Trust (the Trust) and its partner, the South Carolina Battleground Preservation Trust (SCBPT), are requesting proposals from qualified development and design agencies to interpret and contextualize the Fort Watson Revolutionary War battlefield using augmented reality (AR). The Trust and the SCBPT aim to use the AR within its app, The Liberty Trail and on the website, www.battlefields.org, among other possible online channels. We imagine that the AR will be web-based in its execution, thereby not requiring app creation, but we are open to considering other approaches.

A. ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND
The American Battlefield Trust, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization based in Washington DC, is dedicated to preserving America's hallowed battlegrounds and educating the public about what happened there and why it matters today. The nonprofit organization has protected tens of thousands of acres of battlefield land associated with the Revolutionary War, War of 1812, and Civil War. The Trust also has a strong online presence with more than 600,000 followers on its social media accounts, such as YouTube, Facebook, and TikTok, and more than one million visits to its website each month. Nearly 80% of those visits are by students and teachers. An increasingly important aspect of the Trust’s work is battlefield visitation and on-site interpretation. Land preservation in combination with signage, trail-making, wayfinding, and digital experiences, such as with one of our 20-plus apps, address the questions: “What happened here?” and “Why does it matter?”

B. THE LIBERTY TRAIL
Many historians consider the Revolutionary War to have been decided in the swamps, fields, woods and mountains of the South, won by the resilience and determination of Continental soldiers and Patriot militia. Although the full story of the Southern Campaigns is not widely known, the events of 1779-1782 in the Carolinas directly led to an American victory in the war. We call this history The Liberty Trail.

The Liberty Trail will be a unified path of preservation and interpretation across South Carolina, telling this remarkable story. These important battlefields, still largely unspoiled, are being preserved with the help of our partner, the South Carolina Battleground Preservation Trust.

More than 200 battles and skirmishes occurred in South Carolina during the war. Working with a panel of historians and archaeologists to select the most significant of these actions, we have developed plans to form The Liberty Trail, an innovative driving route designed to connect these battlefields and tell the captivating and inspiring stories of this transformative chapter of American history. Supporting the experience of the trail is an app that will debut in winter 2022. The app will initially cover 29 South Carolina sites in what may be seen as a driving tour, but could easily be used by anyone, in any place, who is interested in the history of the American Revolution.
For reference on the format of the app and the platform to be used, please use any web browser to open this URL: [https://thelibertytrail.stqry.app/1](https://thelibertytrail.stqry.app/1). Please note that preceding link is viewable in any web browser but formatted for mobile phone use. The goal is to get people moving around a battlefield using the app to explore the history of the land that would otherwise be inaccessible without a human guide. To avoid requiring users of the app to download a second app to experience the augmented reality experience envisioned in this proposal, we favor a WebAR implementation that may allow links to be placed within the app and signs on the land that will make for a more seamless experience.

C. FORT WATSON

Fort Watson, built atop a Santee Indian ceremonial mound, was a critical link in the British supply chain between Charles Town and Camden. Patriot Brigadier General Francis Marion and his men began laying siege to the British post on April 14, 1781, cutting off access to its water supply at Scott Lake. Unfazed and with plenty of food, British Lieutenant James McCay had his men dig a well and trench for water. The Americans possessed no artillery, which made a traditional bombardment impossible and the siege very difficult. In lieu of artillery, Major Hezekiah Maham instructed his men to construct a 40-foot wooden tower so they could gain a vertical advantage over the British. Hidden by trees and under the dark cover of night, Maham’s men hewed logs and erected the tower, which allowed sharpshooters to fire down on the British in the fort. With the British thus pinned down, Patriot troops began tearing down the exterior works and planned to charge into the fort. Foreseeing the inevitable, McCay surrendered the fort. Today, Fort Watson is located within the Santee National Wildlife Refuge.

D. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The objective of this work is to use AR to allow visitors to the battlefield to see what cannot now be seen. We’d like to use AR to digitally reconstruct the Maham Tower, the fort, and the camp outside the fort. The illustration below gives one a sense of what these structures are and what they looked like.
Here’s another view of the tower and the fort:

![Diagram of Fort Watson](image)

We would like help to create a fully realized experience with the AR being used on-site (and other places) including signage on the battlefield and in the visitor center to start (and advertise) the experience so that it is as easy and seamless as possible. As previously stated, making AR available without the burden of an app download is the reason for our preference for WebAR, but we are open to hearing other approaches that are dictated by the optimal experience for visitors to the battlefield.

In addition to the structures, we invite responses to this RFP to include enhancements to create a full and immersive experience. Examples included characters in the battle, sounds, music, guides who may convey the history, and other ways to bring the history to life.

E. Historians Doug Bostick and Dan Davis head our team of subject matter experts. Mr. Bostick and Mr. Davis are experienced not just as subject matter experts, but as public historians, ensuring that our content will be highly researched, accurate, and accessible. The subject matter experts will provide all content to the vendor in the form of text or visual source material from which the vendor will create the final product.

About the structure of Fort Watson, for example, Mr. Bostick notes that it was seventy-five feet long, fifty feet wide and was built on top of the twenty-three-foot mound. The seven-foot-high log walls called stockades made the fortification thirty feet high. The fort was protected with three rows of abatis. These sharpened logs and branches were pointed out towards an attacking enemy, which formed a barrier that was difficult for attacking soldiers to penetrate, especially under fire. The team of subject matter experts will be able to provide exact geolocations to anchor the AR for this, and other, structures.

If the budget and creative strategy allow, we also may call on an expert of the history of the Santee Indians and their dwellings to recreate the inhabitance that existed there well before the American Revolution.

F. DELIVERABLES
The vendor shall deliver an AR experience that includes the fort, tower, and other dwellings that were a part of the site at the time of the Revolutionary War battle. At a minimum the experience allows users of
the AR to pin the augmented structures to a location where historians suggest they may have been, and at full, 1 x 1 scale. The AR should be portable and playable in one or more streaming platforms such as 8th Wall (or in another mutually agreeable way). The vendor shall deliver work in both raw and “glb” formats unless otherwise determined by the Trust and the vendor. The files shall be viewable from a simple web link.

The vendor shall also deliver signage that will alert visitors to the Fort Watson battlefield of the AR experience. The vendor will work with the Trust to determine the best place, size, and style of the signage and work according to established design guidelines.

G. PROJECT SCHEDULE
The suggested work schedule is below. Work begins in March 2022 and is completed (AR will be live and operational) by July 2022.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Deliverable</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February 2022</td>
<td>RFP Released</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2022</td>
<td>Draft contracts with vendors, deliver historical reference material, formal project kick-off, research &amp; scripting commences, creative design commences, production schedule agreed, script writing begins</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 2022</td>
<td>Production commences, user testing, additional script writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>May–June 2022</td>
<td>Final feedback, animation completed with voice-overs, music sourced, closed captions inserted, final report produced</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 2023</td>
<td>Deployment and retrospective meeting, design and develop signage to alert the visiting public to the AR</td>
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H. AUDIENCE
The audience for this AR experience can be described as the “general public,” but the focus is on families and those in school (students and teachers) who visit the battlefield.

I. SELECTION CRITERIA
The proposals will be reviewed and evaluated based on the following factors. The factors will be evaluated through a balanced combination of all of them together and, overall, the selection will hinge on the Trust’s judgment of best value, defined as most likely to produce high-quality results, not necessarily the fastest or the least costly.
a. The vendor should have a proven track record of developing successful and attractive AR experiences, ideally for a variety of clients. Please share links, references, and/or case studies to demonstrate relevant prior experience. The following factors will also be considered when evaluating the applicants submitting their qualifications:
   i. Demonstrating an understanding of the purpose and scope of the AR.
   ii. Creative vision: ability to envision, articulate, and design a high-quality AR experience that addresses the Trust’s goals based on the latest research and best practices.
   iii. Specialized experience and technical competence.
   iv. Prior success in developing inventive digital media, especially AR, products in a cost-efficient and timely manner.
   v. An understanding of human-centered design, and/or experience in conducting testing with target audiences and incorporating feedback into final products.
   vi. The specific experience of individuals who constitute the firm will also be considered. A primary contact must be identified.
   vii. Client references, relevant projects, company background, tentative timeline, and your development approach.
   viii. The vendor’s available resources and capacity to complete the project within the specified timeframe, and within a team environment.

b. Working within the identified budget for this contract of approximately $200,000.
   i. We welcome offers of in-kind donations from applicants to this solicitation.
   ii. Allowance for appropriate credits to donors and partner organizations on the media or signs may be necessary.

J. SUBMISSION AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Submissions should address the criteria above and communicate a creative vision that is adherent to the timeline and budget provided.

Please include the following in a response to this RFP:

- Company background
- Why your agency is the right fit for this project and what do you do best
- Agency team information and people to be assigned to this work
- Three client references and relevant portfolio work
- High-level production plan, timeline, and budget
- Client revision process
- Disclosure of any conflicts of interest

Please submit your proposal to Lawrence Swiader at lswiader@battlefields.org no later than noon ET on March 11, 2022; proposals received after this date will not be considered. Additional questions about the project or this RFP may also be directed to Lawrence Swiader.

The American Battlefield Trust is committed to creating a diverse environment and is proud to be an equal opportunity employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, national origin, genetics, disability, age, or veteran status.