



AMERICAN BATTLEFIELD TRUST ★ ★ ★

PRESERVE. EDUCATE. INSPIRE.

Request for Proposals: Liberty Trail Augmented Reality

INTRODUCTION

With the support of funding from a grant from the National Park Service’s American Battlefield Protection Program, 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 three South Carolina Revolutionary War battlefields using augmented reality (AR).

A. ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

The American Battlefield Trust is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization based in Washington, DC 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 interpretive signage and digital experiences, such as our Liberty Trail Mobile Tour app, address the questions: “What happened here?” and “Why does it matter?”

The South Carolina Battleground Trust is a nonprofit established in 1991 and dedicated to the preservation of South Carolina’s historic battlegrounds and military sites. SCBPT preserves South Carolina's military heritage employing a variety of tools from conservation easements and land acquisitions to high-tech ground-based laser scanning surveys and public interpretation. SCBPT has preserved 61 battlefields and historic military sites in South Carolina either through conservation easements or fee simple ownership. For more information, visit www.scbattlegroundtrust.org.

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 1775-1782 in the Carolinas and Georgia directly led to an American victory in the war.

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. The Liberty Trail will be a unified path of preservation and interpretation across South Carolina, telling the captivating and inspiring stories of this transformative chapter of American history. These important battlefields, still largely unspoiled, are being preserved and interpreted through this partnership between the Trust and SCBPT.

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Supporting the experience of the Trail is an app that debuted in winter 2022, currently covering 29 South Carolina sites and broadly available for free download online and through the Apple App Store and Google Play. For reference on the format of the app, please use any web browser to open this URL: <https://thelibertytrail.stqry.app/1>. Please note that preceding link is viewable in any web browser but formatted for mobile phone use.

C. PROPOSED AUGMENTED REALITY LOCATIONS

Marion Square, Charleston, SC

Marion Square is a vibrant urban park located in the heart of downtown Charleston, South Carolina. At the time of the Revolutionary War, Charles Town's Horn Work, a large gate flanked by horn-shaped half-bastions covering three city blocks and a central feature of a system of fortifications designed to protect the city from the British, filled this space. Today, all that remains above ground of the once towering structure is a small remnant of the tabby wall.

While no period drawings or plans of the Horn Work are known to have survived, the findings of a recent archeological study, together with historical research on comparable tabby fortifications built in the same area and time by the same engineer, have made it possible to create an architectural rendering of the Horn Work.

Eutaw Springs, SC

While the Eutaw Springs battlefield stretches for several miles, the center of the battlefield was occupied by a brick house and a significant British camp at the time of the September 8, 1781 battle. The proposed AR experience for this location would focus on this area of the battlefield.

Fort Fair Lawn, SC

Fort Fair Lawn is an 80 acres site located in Berkeley County, South Carolina. The site includes 1.75 miles of gravel walking trails, boardwalks, park benches, and a gated trail connection to Old Santee Canal Park. The central feature of the site is an extant earthen fortification built by the British in 1780. At the time of the British occupation of this location during the Revolutionary War, the fort was surrounded by camp sites and a field hospital.

D. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The objective of this work is to use AR to allow visitors to these battlefields to see what cannot now be seen. We'd like to use AR to digitally reconstruct physical features that were present at the time of the battle, including, but not limited to, the Horn Work fortification at Marion Square (see images below), the British Camp and house located at Eutaw Springs, and the British fortification at Fort Fair Lawn (see image below).

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Charleston Horn Work Image:



Fort Fair Lawn Image:



We would like help to create a fully realized experience with the AR being used on-site (and other places), and signage on the battlefield and in visitor centers/museums (where applicable) to start (and advertise) the experience so that it is as easy and seamless as possible. Our goal is to create an experience that can be accessed through devices (personal phones and tablets) and, for at least one site, through a physical installation that will deliver the AR experience. For the device-based experience, we are open to exploring WebAR, and app-based experiences, with the ultimate selection guided by the creation of the optimal experience for visitors to the battlefield. For the physical solution, this could be AR binoculars or another installation that will deliver the AR content to visitors without the use of a personal device.

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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 the Horn Work, for example, Mr. Bostick notes that when a British force of approximately 14,000 men under the command of General Henry Clinton occupied the ground north of Charleston in the spring of 1780 and commenced a protracted siege of the town, the Horn Work formed the centerpiece of the American defensive line and the headquarters of the commanding officers. Eighteen of the defenders' largest cannons stood on an elevated platform and fired through embrasures in the Horn Work's northern walls. One French officer remarked that the cannon within the Horn Work fired from a height of thirty feet above the surrounding terrain. Under the direction of French engineers in early 1780, laborers enclosed the unfinished south side of the Horn Work with a large earthen ravelin (a fortified gateway), and the American command designated the tabby fortress "a place of retreat for the whole army."

The team of subject matter experts will be able to provide exact geolocations to anchor the AR for this, and other, structures.

F. DELIVERABLES

The vendor shall deliver an AR experience that includes the key features that were a part of each site at the time of the Revolutionary War. 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 ("fbx", for example) and "glb" and "usdz" formats unless otherwise determined by the Trust and the vendor. The files shall be viewable from a simple web link, once in public view and/or used within the context of The Liberty Trail app.

The vendor shall also deliver working AR models for the physical AR installation, including installation specifications.

Finally, the vendor shall deliver signage that will alert visitors to each of the three sites 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. The Trust will contract with a separate vendor to fabricate these on-site signs.

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G. PROJECT SCHEDULE

The suggested work schedule is below. Work begins in July 2023 and is completed (AR will be live and operational) by December 2023.

	Action	Deliverable
June 2023	RFP Released	
July-August 2023	Draft contracts with vendors Deliver historical reference material Formal project kick-off Research & scripting commences Creative design commences Production schedule agreed Script writing begins	Contracts signed Production schedule Initial storyboards and design comps.. Voice-over and other talent identified, if needed
August-September 2023	Review draft content with partners, as needed Production commences User testing Additional script writing Submit signage installation plans to SHPO for required approvals	Feedback compiled; refinements made Test AR delivered
September – October 2023	Final feedback Animation completed with voice-overs Music sourced Closed captions inserted Final report produced	Final AR files delivered and tested
November 2023	Deployment and retrospective meeting Design and develop signage to alert the visiting public to the AR	Final files on an AR platform
December 2023		Signs in the ground

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 (K-12 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 and SCBPT’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.

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- 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 July 14, 2023; 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.