

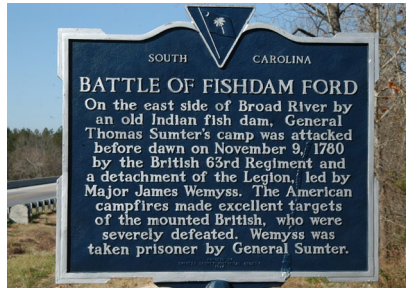
# 106 SUCCESS STORY

## Routine Bridge Replacement Saves Revolutionary War Battlefield

Chester County, South Carolina

“This is a great example of people and agencies working together on many levels of federal, state, and local government. Preserving this land through a purchase agreement was clearly the right thing to do. It is a savings to taxpayers, a benefit to local motorists who will use the new bridge much sooner than had we gone the excavation route, and, of course, it is also a treasured resource for historians.”

—BOB L. LEE  
Division Administrator,  
FHWA South Carolina Division Office,  
South Carolina Historic Preservation  
Awards ceremony, March 28, 2006



### THE STORY

In the pre-contact period, Native Americans dammed a low water crossing on the Broad River with rocks to build a fish weir for catching fish. In the 1700s, the Great Wagon Road and the Broad River were major transportation routes in South Carolina, and the weir became an important landmark serving as a meeting place and river crossing. Upstream of the weir were the supposed remains of the Fish Dam Ford Battlefield, the site of an important American victory over the British in November 1780. The location of the Fish Dam Ford Battlefield had been lost over time when an upstream ferry diverted the road away from the ford and the battlefield. The fish weir was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973.

### THE PROJECT

The Broad River Bridge is the only river crossing for 30 miles along South Carolina Route 72 (SC 72), and in 2003, the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) deemed it functionally deficient. A new bridge site was selected to avoid the assumed remains of the Revolutionary War battlefield and the fish weir. However, detailed archaeological investigations revealed an intact portion of the battlefield under several feet of sediment on the proposed new bridge site. The proposed bridge would destroy the battlefield.

### THE 106 PROCESS

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) was the federal agency funding this project and was responsible for conducting the Section 106 review process under the National Historic Preservation Act, which requires agencies to identify historic properties and assess the effects of the projects they carry out, fund, or permit on those properties. Federal agencies also are required to consult with parties that have an interest in the historic property when adverse effects may occur.

Although the new bridge would be designed to minimize impacts to the newly identified battlefield site, adverse impacts to the site could not be avoided. SCDOT consulted with FHWA and the South Carolina State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) to enter into a Memorandum of Agreement to create a mitigation plan for the site. The Catawba

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Photos: Above, Fishdam Ford weir on the Broad River (by Charles R. Robbins Jr., HMdb.org); Right, Battle of Fishdam Ford marker (by Michael Sean Nix, HMdb.org) fish dam weir (photo courtesy FHWA)



Indian Nation was involved in the Section 106 process and provided review of the Archaeological Study. The first plan called for acquiring 30 acres for mitigation and excavating the site for data recovery. Faced with more than 7 feet of alluvial river sediment accumulated over the past 250 years, excavation would be difficult and time consuming with an estimated cost of \$2 million. The consulting parties developed an alternative mitigation plan to purchase the entire historic 143 acre site outright along with a buffer for additional site protection. This plan would provide the battlefield permanent protection and be less costly than conducting invasive excavations in deep soil. The South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (DNR) agreed to manage the land through its Heritage Preservation Program, and the U.S. Forest Service agreed to monitor activity on the site adjacent to Sumter National Forest. Using federal-aid bridge replacement funds supplemented with Transportation Enhancement funds, SCDOT purchased the site from a private citizen and turned it over to DNR in June 2005. SCDOT worked with the SHPO to include period design elements to the replacement bridge in order to maintain the character of the district. The new bridge is located downstream from the old bridge and next to the battlefield site.

Photos: From left, the Broad River, SC (photo courtesy NOAA); Monument to the Battle of Fishdam Ford, located on the east bank of the Broad River, (by Washuotaku, Wikipedia)

## THE SUCCESS

This creative effort between state and federal agencies allowed SCDOT and FHWA to fulfill their Section 106 responsibilities and resulted in preserving the battlefield site while meeting current transportation needs. Purchasing the battlefield site was also a financial success. The excavation of the site would have cost more than \$2 million and would have significantly extended the project schedule, impacting motorists on SC 72. Acquiring the site resulted in savings of \$1.5 million.

The combined state and federal agencies' effort in South Carolina illustrates the positive effects of teamwork and innovative thinking when addressing transportation and historic preservation in the Section 106 process. The citizens of South Carolina have a safe, new bridge, tax dollars saved, a historic battlefield protected, and a new tourism site. Likewise, the Broad River Bridge project has built ongoing partnerships. SCDOT now conducts more innovative mitigation beyond traditional documentation of historic resources, producing maps, brochures, and kiosks as part of historic driving tours. The involvement of the South Carolina Departments of Tourism and Parks and Recreation has promoted public access to historic sites associated with the state's Revolutionary War and transportation history. It is fitting that SCDOT and the South Carolina Division of FHWA received the 2006 South Carolina Historic Preservation Honor award for preserving a piece of South Carolina and American history.

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Historic Preservation  
Officer

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Department of  
Transportation

For more about  
Section 106 and  
the ACHP go to  
[www.achp.gov](http://www.achp.gov)



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