

**Report of the Division of Historical Resources  
To the North Carolina Historical Commission  
For its December 2025 meeting**

**Ramona M. Bartos, Division Director and Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer  
December 2, 2025**

***Division in general***

***Personnel matters.***

**Restoration Specialist (western Piedmont service territory).** Following the promotion of Brett Sturm to Restoration Services Branch Supervisor, we filled the specialist position vacated upon his elevation and moved its duty station to Asheville so it can more easily handle the western Piedmont than from Raleigh. After a competitive process, we promoted Survey Specialist Audrey Thomas, who has worked in western NC for over 5 years in our office, undertaking architectural survey projects. Audrey is a graduate of the University of Georgia Master of Historic Preservation program.

**Restoration Specialist (Eastern service territory).** Likewise, we have filled a parallel position for our eastern North Carolina region that resulted from the resignation of Chris Stone, who took a position in the private sector. Wade Rogers from Edenton joined our office the first week of December.

**National Register Assistant.** We regretfully accepted the resignation of our National Register Assistant Sharon Hope, who has accepted a local government job with a short commute and more benefits. We will be advertising her position in the near future.

**Retirements.** This fall we said goodbye to two long-tenured colleagues – Madeline “Punk” Spencer, who served as the office manager for the Underwater Archaeology Branch in Kure Beach, and Jannette Coleridge-Taylor, lately our Restoration Branch Assistant and before that our National Register Assistant for many years. Punk’s job has already been filled with an internal promotion of Daniel Lowery from the Underwater Conservation Lab in Greenville, and we will be undertaking a search for Jannette’s former job soon.

**Recruitment considerations.** Recruitment and retention issues continue with our division’s positions. Specifically some candidates are declining to move forward with the hiring process, or alternatively have discontinued their employment, citing low salaries or lack of affordable housing. For example, staff in the field during the statewide preservation conference in Asheville this year noticed that advertisements in downtown Asheville real estate offices show *mobile homes* in Asheville suburbs selling for in excess of \$350,000. The same COLA stresses are true in western and coastal areas and the Triangle, and many state employees live far from our offices, meaning long and arduous commutes. Teleworking continues to be a positive, no-cost opportunity that we can offer to aid in recruitment and retention.

## **State Historic Preservation Office (HPO)**

### **Historic Preservation Fund funding.**

**FY 2026 federal Historic Preservation Fund funding.** We were pleased that FY 2026 funding (as with other federal funding, through January 30) was included in the continuing resolution passed following the government shutdown in November. With Congress setting up another spending deadline in late January, we are hopeful that this vital funding will continue throughout the rest of the federal fiscal year. As a reminder, our federal funding is derived from the federal Historic Preservation Fund, which is derived from offshore oil and gas lease dollars. The 59 SHPOs in the states and territories received together \$62.15M; North Carolina's apportionment for operational funding is nearly \$1.3M and funds 14 FTEs (wholly or partially) plus travel and support monies (**this is 1/3 of our staff in the Division of Historical Resources**), and the Certified Local Government subgrant program (+/- \$130,000 statewide).

**Emergency Supplemental Historic Preservation Fund dollars.** As reported previously, we applied in **June 2025** for emergency supplemental Historic Preservation Fund funding appropriated by Congress in December 2024 for SHPO capacity (personnel, survey, office efficiency measures) for Helene recovery as the need for our services will outstrip / is outstripping our capacity. For example, our Section 106 reviews have as usual increased by upwards of 40% after Helene, an increase to be expected during the multi-year recovery effort. We have as expected also experienced upticks in constituent outreach and technical assistance, including for historic tax credit project consultations in the Helene zone.

Our final ask for the SHPO capacity grant category was for **\$6.71 million** including additional term-limited personnel to meet this need, records digitization, and architectural and archaeological surveys to create a new baseline post-Helene. As of our last NCHC meeting in September, we were awaiting word of an award although we expected grant award news in **August**. We are in December 2025, still awaiting any information about this grant program, **now close to a year** after Congress appropriated these funds.

(We are likewise still waiting on our grant request for a full conditions assessment report that will include plans for waterproofing, construction management, and repairs for the DNCR Western Office that has suffered multiple episodes of basement flooding because of heavy, prolonged rains, including from Helene.)

**US Senate Section 106 hearing.** The Energy and Natural Resources committee of the US Senate held a hearing in late October regarding the role of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act in project delivery, including provision of energy. Both a State Historic Preservation Officer (Utah) and a Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (Pueblo of Acoma in New Mexico) testified. As you know, Section 106 provides for consultation with the public, State Historic Preservation Offices, and Tribes for federally permitted, funded, or

approved projects so as to insure consideration of historic places in the development of those projects.

Section 106 originated from the unfortunate consequences of large-scale interstate highway projects and urban renewal efforts in the 1950s and 1960s that destroyed wide swathes of the historic areas of communities throughout the United States. The discussion largely focused on the need for Section 106 and streamlining measures that would balance project delivery with historic preservation (both “above ground” historical / cultural places and archaeological resources).

News coverage [here](#). Hearing video [here](#). More about Section 106 [here](#).

Challenges most frequently experienced by SHPOs outlined [here](#), including:

1. **Lack of Federal Agency Ownership and Capacity (including overreliance on SHPOs);**
2. **SHPO Capacity and Resource Limitations (funding and staffing shortfalls and technology deficits)** – this issue is felt by our own office, which has sought for several years additional staff capacity and digitization funding from our state legislature as available federal funding is inadequate.
3. **Inadequate & Poorly Timed Submissions (incomplete information and late consultation).**

**National Register Advisory Committee (NRAC) meeting.** The second of our 3 NRAC meetings in 2025 was held on Thursday, October 9. The National Register agenda as usual was quite full and varied with 11 National Register nominations, again demonstrating the strong public demand for this program, along with over 20+ proposed Study List properties. As an example, the Former Hans Rees Tannery in River Arts district in Asheville was being nominated (these buildings housed artist studios that were flooded by Helene (and in 1916 too). National Register coordinator Jeff Smith and our entire NR team are to be greatly credited for maintaining a steady momentum with review and moving constituents’ projects forward.

The federal shutdown throughout October placed a pause on consideration of our state’s nominations, and the clock was “stopped” by the National Park Service, resuming only with the end of the shutdown in November. As a result, our October nominations have a 45-day consideration deadline now in Washington of December 29.

Our next meeting on February 12, 2026, will likely have an even lengthier agenda, now exceeding a dozen nominations. With National Register Assistant Sharon Hope leaving us in late December to take her new local government position, we will certainly fill her absence shortly with preparations for the meeting falling on other staff to fill the gap.

**State Register exploration.** With the strong public interest in the official honorific of the National Register, we find that we are not always able to find a National Register path forward for earnest advocates for historic properties. To that end, we are investigating

whether or not a State Register of Historic Places may be another viable path for recognition, especially for properties that are not eligible under the strict rubric of the National Register.

In the next few months, we will be researching how other states use their state register as it exists in those states, and the efficacy and pros and cons of establishing a formal State Register in NC.

To date, our State Register as provided in [NC GS 121-4.1](#) is synonymous with North Carolina's listings in the National Register of Historic Places. [NC GS 121-4.1](#) has existed since 1989, and has been largely viewed as a "back-up" in case the National Register ever ceases to exist. This statute provides as follows:

***§ 121-4.1. North Carolina Register of Historic Places.***

- (a) The Department of Natural and Cultural Resources may establish, expand, and maintain a North Carolina Register of Historic Places composed of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in North Carolina history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture. Until such time as the North Carolina Register of Historic Places is established, all references to it in the General Statutes and in the rules adopted pursuant to it shall be construed to mean properties and districts in North Carolina that are listed in the National Register of Historic Places.*
- (b) The North Carolina Historical Commission shall establish criteria for properties to be included in the State Register of Historic Places, and, within such criteria, shall provide for levels of significance as necessary and appropriate.*
- (c) The North Carolina Historical Commission shall promulgate regulations requiring that before any property or district may be included on the North Carolina Register of Historic Places, the owner or owners of such property, or a majority of the owners of the properties within the district in the case of an historic district, shall be given the opportunity (including a reasonable period of time) to concur in, or object to, the nomination of the property or district for such inclusion or designation. If the owner or owners of any privately owned property, or a majority of the owners of such properties within the district in the case of an historic district, object to such inclusion or designation, such property shall not be included on the North Carolina Register until such objection has been withdrawn. The regulations under this paragraph shall include provisions to carry out the purposes of this paragraph in the case of multiple ownership of a single property. (1989, c. 60; 2015-241, s. 14.30(s).)*

**Local Government Preservation Commission training.** Local Government Coordinator Kristi Brantley and HPO colleagues have been conducting local government historic preservation commission training in the field this fall, including Hendersonville (September 5), and upcoming Southern Pines (October 3).

Our Western region Certified Local Government Training included +/- 40 participants from 17 local governments and their preservation commissions (Alexander County, Asheville / Buncombe County, Black Mountain, Cleveland County, Flat Rock (including Mayor Anne Coletta), Henderson County, Hendersonville, Jackson County, Lincoln County, Mooresville, Reidsville, Selma, Transylvania County, Tryon, Waxhaw, and Waynesville).

The Southern Pines training likewise had a robust attendance with 20 individuals from surrounding local government historic preservation commissions and city / county staffs participating.

We also held our annual local preservation planners' workshop on November 13, here at 109 Jones Street in Raleigh. 36 local governments were represented with over 50 participants, and the day consisted of mentoring, lectures, and an architectural tour of the Legislative Building. Participant photo below from the day:



Our local government coordinator Kristi Brantley also presented with local preservation planner Kyle Garner and UNC-Chapel Hill associate Ben Hitchens at the North Carolina Planning Conference this October in Charlotte; the topic was *Protecting Your History from Hazards: The Beaufort, NC Story*; here is the conference program blurb for this well-attended session:

“As the number and intensity of extreme weather events increases, natural hazards are taking their toll on our local historic resources. These historic properties are often irreplaceable and help communities build their local identity, tell their story, and power their local economy. To respond to this challenge, the North Carolina Historic Preservation Office, using Emergency Supplemental Historic Preservation Funding, contracted with a team of university experts led by the UNC School of Government to develop guidance and training for planners to prepare historic resilience community plans. The Town of Beaufort, NC is the first local government in North Carolina to use this methodology and has valuable lessons to share from its work. In turn, the N.C. Historic Preservation Office offers technical assistance to communities throughout North Carolina who want to pursue such a project. Come hear about this new community planning approach and its real-world application,

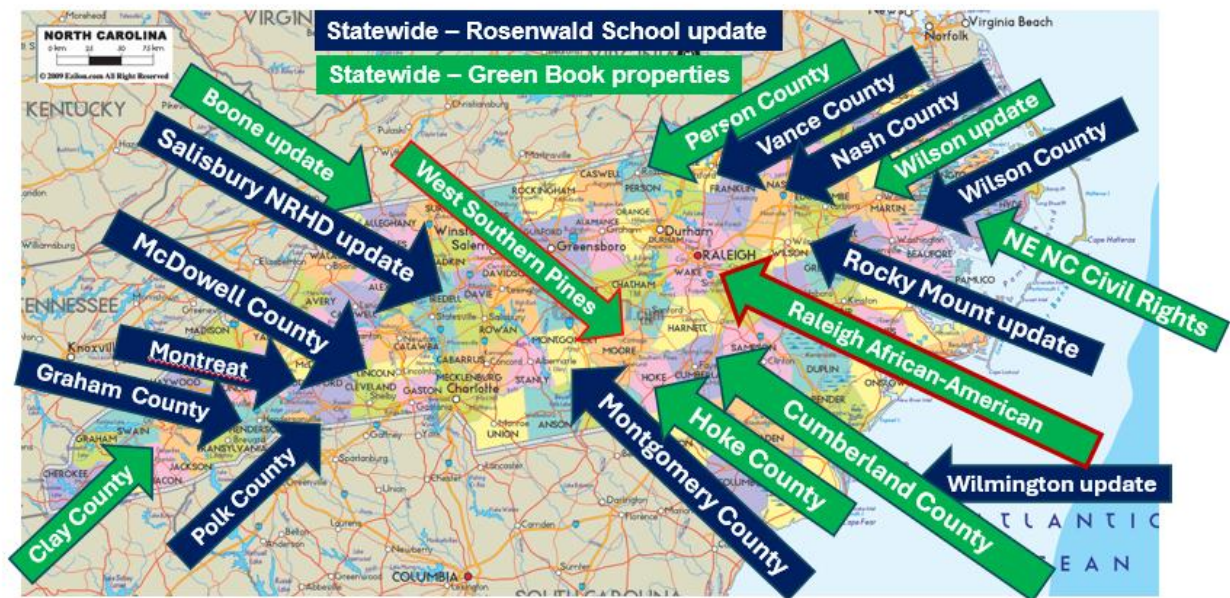
along with valuable resources to help you protect the history, culture, and the economy of your community.”

**Family History Fair.** Members of the HPO participated in the State Archives’ Family History Fair in October, and held station with an HPO table, advertising our resources that could be useful for genealogical research, especially our GIS mapping enterprise HPOWEB and architectural survey files.

**Architectural surveys.** The Clay County survey has been completed. The Polk County architectural survey to get underway shortly; it was postponed because of Hurricane Helene, and is funded by our NPS hurricane recovery grant from Hurricanes Florence and Matthew (soon to be exhausted).

Recent news coverage: <https://tryondailybulletin.com/2025/11/04/polk-county-architectural-survey-to-restart-in-2026>

Below is a map of our current survey projects:



## HPO Architectural History Surveys New + underway or just completed as of 9/2025

### State and National meetings.

- **National Trust for Historic Preservation.** Dr. Waters and Ramona Bartos represented North Carolina at the fall board meeting of the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in September. Ramona also participated in a SHPO panel with four other states (Iowa, Michigan, Tennessee, and Wisconsin) represented in a session at the concurrent National Trust for Historic Preservation annual meeting (“SHPO Open Mic”) that was also livestreamed nationally (video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fp0tesL4d5o>); one question posed by an audience

member provided an opportunity to highlight North Carolina's historic tax credit program.

- **ACRA meeting.** Dr. Waters as State Historic Preservation Officer offered greetings to the national meeting of the American Cultural Resources Association (ACRA) held here in Raleigh in mid-September. "The American Cultural Resources Association is the national network of professional firms and service partners representing the cultural resource management (CRM) industry and associated fields of study. ACRA members apply specialized research skills within a framework of federal, state, local, and/or tribal law and also facilitate an open dialog where every stakeholder has a voice in order to help guide smart, sustainable economic development and safeguard important historic and cultural heritage assets."
- **Preservation North Carolina statewide preservation conference.** Dr. Waters gave the Year in Review presentation of the work of the State Historic Preservation Office at the Preservation North Carolina statewide preservation conference in Asheville on Tuesday (attached). DSHPO Ramona Bartos, Local Government Coordinator Kristi Brantley, Restoration Services Supervisor Brett Sturm, Preservation Architect Jamie Bell, plus Asheville-based staff (Survey Coordinator Beth King, Restoration Specialist Jennifer Cathey, and Preservation Specialist Hannah Beckman-Black) also participated in the conference.

**DOI audit.** The overall Florence Yutu Michael (FYM) Emergency Supplemental Historic Preservation Fund program aka HPO Hurricane Grant program (started in 2019) is being audited by an external entity at the direction of the Department of the Interior. As mentioned previously, it is NOT an audit of DNCR's FYM grant, though we were asked for audit confirmations, and provided sampling materials in a timely fashion, demonstrating our proper drawdowns and administration of the program for North Carolina's grant.

### ***Office of State Archaeology (OSA)***

**Cemetery stewardship workshops.** These field workshops were held in October in Asheville and were held in cooperation with National Park Service's Louisiana-based National Center for Preservation Technology and Training were well attended and received. Kudos to Western Office staff (Cindy Bradley, Jennifer Cathey, Dylan Clark) and OSA Cemetery Specialist Melissa Timo, who likewise facilitated and participated. Secretary Cashwell likewise visited one of the field sessions, which gave participants exposure to best practices for gravestone cleaning and repair and cemetery stewardship techniques.

**Lego League outreach.** OSA set up a special Lego League website because of constituent demand for interaction with our archaeology staff. This year's competitive theme is "Unearthed", focused on archaeology; [First Lego League](#) is a STEM-oriented global robotics competition for young people.

**Cemetery mapping.** We were delighted that DNCR management included our cemetery assistant temporary employee on the lapsed salary funding list for continuation of this position through the state fiscal year. We have mapped over 50,000 cemeteries to date, and that work continues into the final third of counties. Knowledge of cemeteries and their accurate locations are vital any day, but particularly now with the high development profile of our state. Knowing where cemeteries are aids in their protection, especially when development of adjacent tracts are under consideration.

**OSARC demolition.** As a reminder (previously reported), the state budget over the last few years has included funding for demolition of buildings on Caswell Square in Raleigh, returning the block to a park. One of those buildings is our Office of State Archaeology Research Center (OSARC), and as requested by Dr. Waters, our division prepared a proposal earlier this year as to the needs for a successor facility (which is not to our knowledge funded). OSARC is the permanent curation facility for over 1 million archaeological artifacts and ancestors' remain (both those subject to and not subject to NAGPRA).

We understand there is continued interest in moving forward with these plans, but there is no plan as of yet to rehouse these vital collections and staff. Secretary Cashwell visited OSARC since the NCHC's last meeting as a result of these proposals, which to date have not been acted on.

State Archaeologist Chris Southerly and OSARC Supervisor Emily McDowell have done an excellent job in articulating OSARC's needs for a new facility.

Unless plans change, the demolition is slated for 2027-2028.

### ***Helene updates.***

Basement repairs for Helene damage / water infiltration at Western Office were underway through the fall, and are now practically completed.

As of September 2025, we exceeded the number of environmental reviews undertaken for all of 2024; if trends continue, we anticipate 130% to 140% of 2024 numbers, underscoring our need for additional staff capacity. Many of these projects continue to be Helene-related projects (+/- 50% alone in November).

We continue to work with FEMA to finalize existing streamlining Section 106 review protocols for disaster response and recovery; the federal shutdown slowed our momentum, but a call this week with the FEMA Federal Preservation Officer underscored our dual commitment to these efforts which will balance preservation with disaster recovery needs.

***Our deep thanks to the Commission for its support of and engagement with our Division.***



North Carolina  
State Historic Preservation Office  
Department of Cultural Resources  
Office of Archives and History  
Division of Historical Resources

**2024-2025 Year in Review**



**DNCR**

## Our mission

To help the state's citizens, private organizations, and public agencies **identify, protect, and enhance North Carolina's historic resources and communities** through a coordinated program of incentives and technical assistance **for today and future generations.**

# Historic Preservation Fund



Currently **\$62.15M** for states & territories to share through apportionment formula

**\$1,286,023 to North Carolina** for SHPO operations  
(state match required)

- Exercise in **federalism**  
(state/federal cooperation with state match required)
- Funded by federal **off-shore oil and gas lease revenue** > *non-renewable in exchange for renewable*
- **Reauthorized** periodically  
(1-year currently per FY25 budget; last was 7 years)

# Historic Preservation Under Threat

*"...preservation engages the past in a conversation with the present over a mutual concern for the future"*

-WILLIAM J. MURTAGH, 1st official "keeper" of the National Register of Historic Places

## National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA)

*The NHPA represents nearly 60 years of commitment by the federal government to invest in historic places across the nation.*

*The designation of State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs), Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPOs), & Certified Local Governments (CLGs), ensures local expertise of historic resources.*

## CONGRESS MUST...

1

**Facilitate the immediate approval of the FY25 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) & subsequent swift review & approval of applications to ensure the work of SHPOs & THPOs continues to aid in the preservation of our nation's heritage.**

## IMMEDIATE THREAT



**FY 2025 funds have not been released to SHPOs, THPOs, & competitive grant programs under the HPF, despite being appropriated by Congress in March 2025.**

### WITHOUT PROMPT FUNDING

- States and Tribes will be forced to eliminate the federally required staff who review federal projects, identify and protect historic properties, and provide support to communities - jeopardizing billions in investment
- Federal projects are more likely to have negative, irreversible impacts on historic landmarks and cultural & archeological sites
- Preservation projects will halt and properties will be lost

## FY 2026 THREAT



**The President's proposed FY26 budget seeks to eliminate the HPF almost in its entirety.**

### THIS PROPOSAL

- Will decimate the statutory work of states, Tribes, and

# Retirement farewell



## **Mitch Wilds**

Restoration Services Branch

Supervisor

43 years of service

**Retired February 2025**

# New role

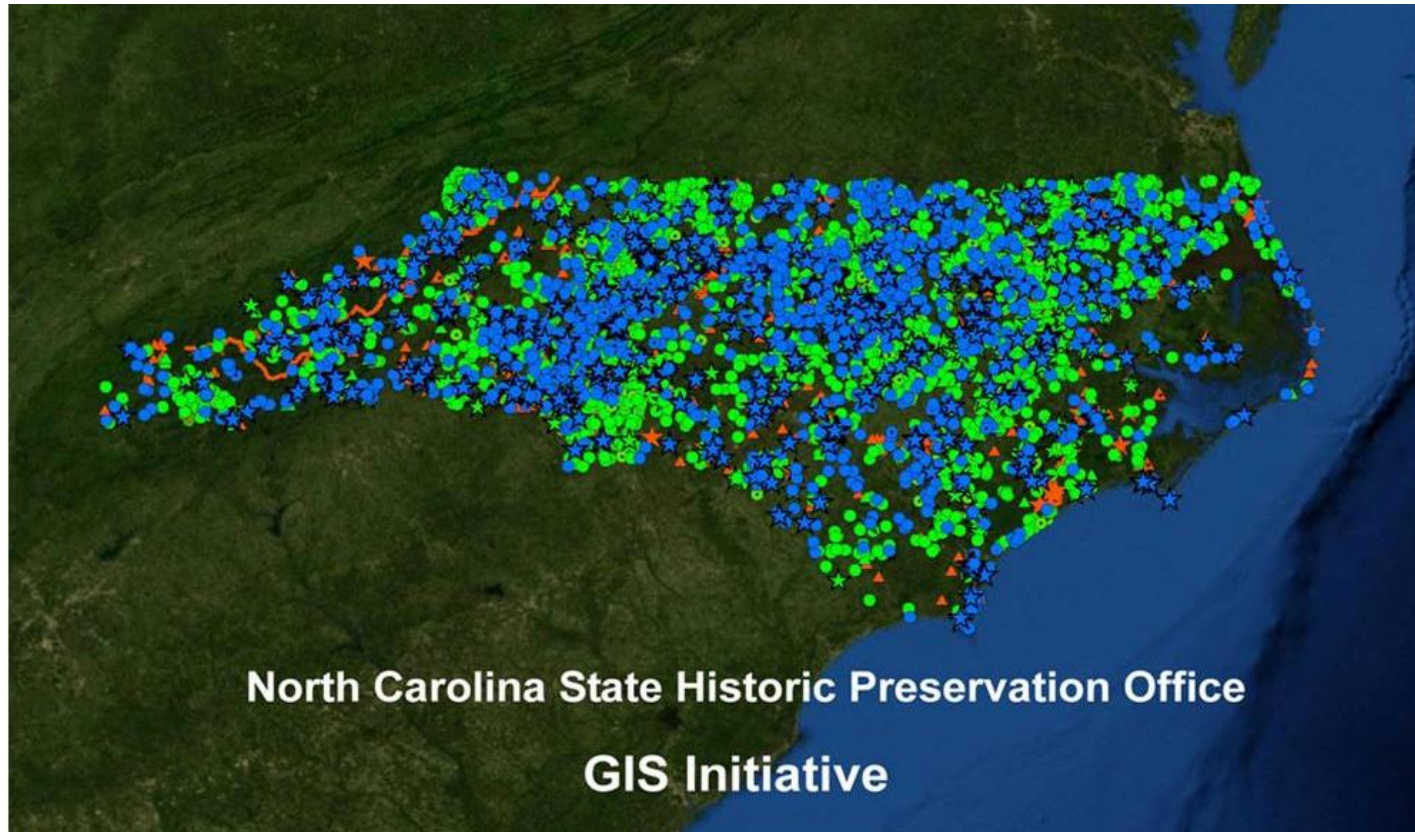


## **Brett Sturm**

Promoted from  
Restoration Specialist  
(western Piedmont) to  
**Restoration Services  
Branch Supervisor**  
(April 2025)

**2024 Gertrude S.  
Carraway Award of  
Merit**

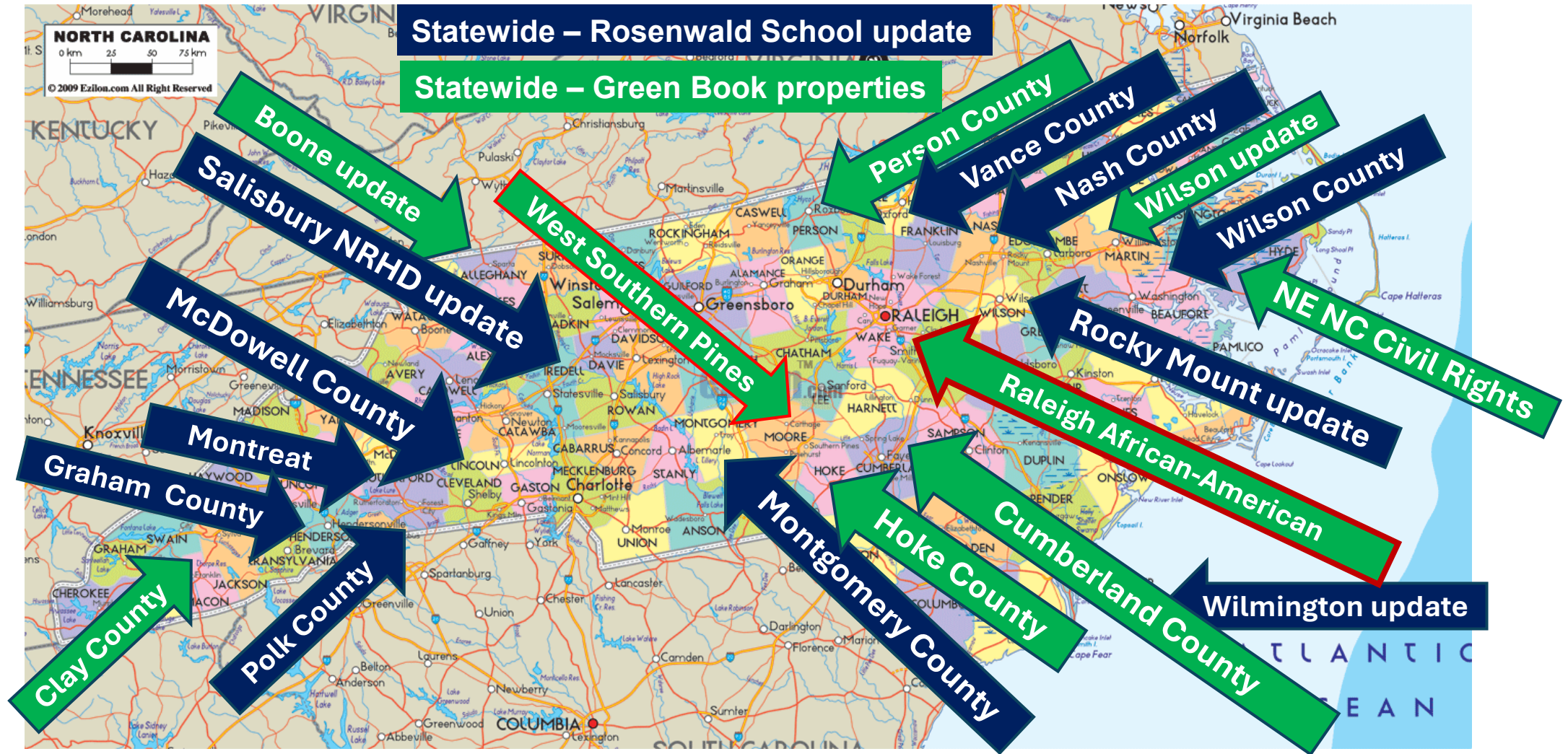
# IDENTIFY



**139,722**  
records of  
historic places  
in our  
statewide  
database –  
approximately 99% mapped in  
HPOWEB

**2,784 newly  
mapped**

*FY 2024-2025*



# HPO Architectural History Surveys

## New + underway or just completed as of 9/2025

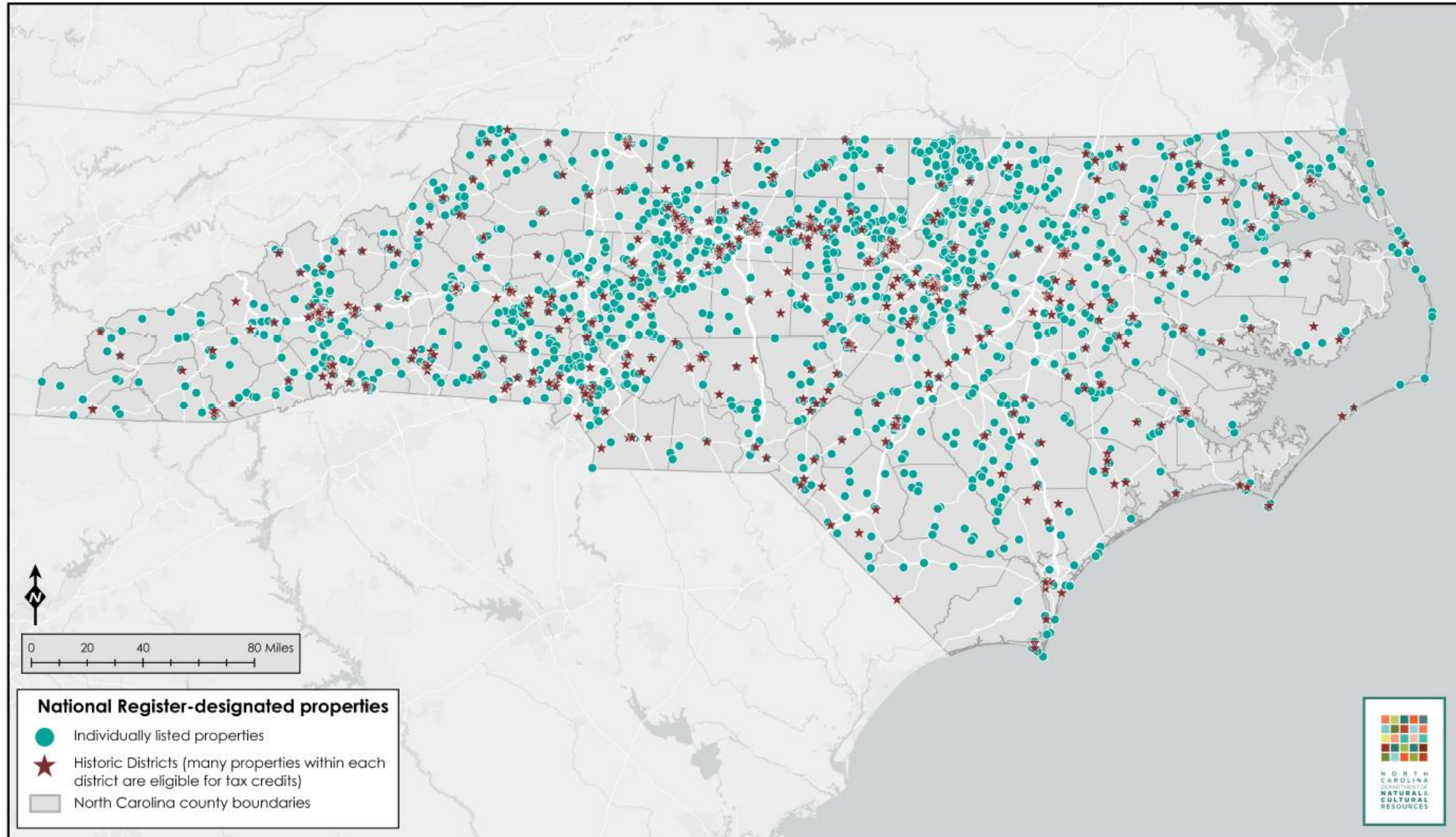
# National Register of Historic Places

**32 listings in FY 2024-25 (25% increase)**

8 houses	1 restaurant
2 schools	1 YWCA building
3 churches	2 warehouses
4 mfg mills	7 districts / district
1 grist mill	updates
2 cemeteries	

**108 Study List presentations (23% increase)**

National Register-designated properties  
eligible for tax credits (as of January 1, 2025)



# Johnson's Drive-In

Siler City, Chatham County,  
NC

New National Register listing

Example of **mid-century roadside quick-service restaurant** for passing motorists on busy highway corridors (US Hwy. 64)



# Hopkins Chapel AME Zion Church

Asheville, Buncombe County,  
NC

New National Register listing

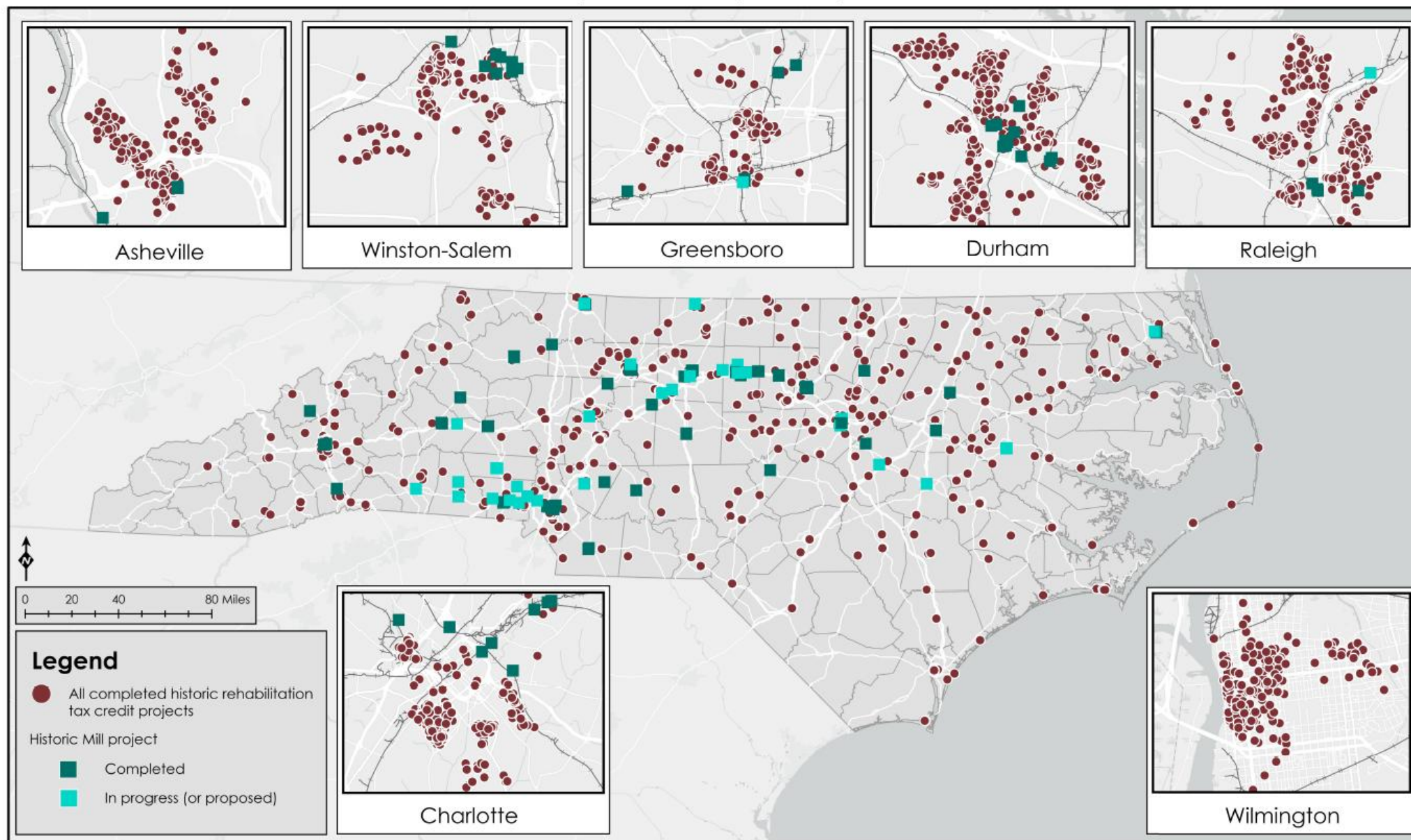
Home to the oldest AME Zion  
congregation in Asheville, and  
an important landmark of the  
East End African American  
community



# ***PROTECT***

- Mid-September 2025 -- reached 100% of 2024 Environmental Review submissions
- **Trend for 130% to 140% of 2024's submissions by end of 2025 *without* additional staff capacity**
- Helene recovery projects coming in
- FY 2024-25: **3,731 projects reviewed statewide**

# Commercial and Residential Historic Preservation Tax Credit Projects (as of January 1, 2025)



## ***Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit projects through 2024***

**4391 projects**

*83 more projects than year previous*

**91 counties**

**\$3.849 billion**

*\$251 million more private investment in  
North Carolina historic buildings and communities  
than year previous*

through 12/31/2024

# FY 2025 CLG Grant Awards

**\$140,938 in Certified Local Government Grants**



Photo provided

Taking part in an African American history event on Tuesday are (from left) Gypsy Houston, Velma Fann, Brittany Hyder, and Vivie Miller. Houston and Miller are members of the steering committee for the project; Fann and Hyder are historians with New South Associates.

## Waxhaw presents African American history project

**BY JANET PEIRANO**  
TOWN OF WAXHAW SENIOR  
PLANNER

WAXHAW, N.C. — The Waxhaw Historic Preservation Commission and New South Associates held an

be scanned and recorded for the project.

The African American History Project is a community-driven project designed to document historic resources based on oral history and

events that are important to the community. Identified sites will be evaluated for eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Funding for the proj-

# 2025 Certified Local Government Grants

- **Building Assessment**
  - Waynesville Municipal Building
  - Palmer Fire School Tower, Mecklenburg County
- **Bricks and Mortar projects:**
  - Distiller's Roof Replacement, Bethabara, Forsyth County
  - Carolina Theater, plaster repair, Greensboro
- **Design Guidelines update:**
  - Kinston
- **National Register nominations:**
  - Albemarle Downtown Historic District (update)
  - Monroe Downtown Historic District (update)
  - Salisbury (update)
- **Public Outreach:**
  - Window Preservation Workshops, Charlotte-Mecklenburg County




**Through  
partnership, we  
preserve.**



Thank you for the  
opportunity to serve you and  
the State of North Carolina





## Preservation North Carolina

## HPO Year in Review Script, October 2025

SLIDE	COMMENTARY
 <p>North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office <small>Department of Cultural Resources Office of Culture and History Division of Historical Research</small></p> <p>2024-2025 Year in Review</p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="display: flex; gap: 5px;"> <span style="width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: #e67e22;"></span> <span style="width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: #2ecc71;"></span> <span style="width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: #3498db;"></span> <span style="width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: #f1c40f;"></span> <span style="width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: #d35400;"></span> <span style="width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: #8e44ad;"></span> <span style="width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: #2980b9;"></span> <span style="width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: #27ae60;"></span> </div> <span>DNCR</span> </div>	<p><b>Thank you to Preservation North Carolina for giving us the opportunity to share with you a few of our activities, accomplishments, and challenges since the last PNC conference in 2025. There is much to be proud of, and challenges to face together.</b></p>
<p><b>Our mission</b></p> <p>To help the state's citizens, private organizations, and public agencies identify, protect, and enhance North Carolina's historic resources and communities through a coordinated program of technical assistance for today and future generations.</p>	<p><b>As we reflect on the last year, we acknowledge that we have experienced a wholesale reconsideration of historic preservation – and its value – from many quarters.</b></p> <p><b>Consequently, we wanted to share the fundamental nature of our mission set forth in both federal and state law – “to help the state’s citizens, private organizations, and public agencies identify, protect, and enhance North Carolina’s historic resources and communities through a coordinated program of</b></p>

	<p>incentives and technical assistance for today and future generations”</p>
 <p><b>Historic Preservation Fund</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercise in federalism (state/federal cooperation with state match required)</li> <li>• Funded by federal off-shore oil and gas lease revenue &gt; non-renewable (in exchange for renewable)</li> <li>• Reauthorized periodically (1-year currently per FY25 budget; last was 5 years)</li> </ul> <p><b>\$62.15M</b> for state &amp; territories to share through appropriation formula</p> <p><b>\$1,286,023 to North Carolina</b> for SHPO operations (state match required)</p>	<p><b>Much of that scrutiny surrounded our office’s federal funding –</b></p> <p><b>Our office counts on the mustard seed federal funding from the Historic Preservation Fund – for North Carolina, not quite \$1.3 million – but essential for staff salaries and travel to visit with constituents and their properties statewide. Since 1976, this annual funding comes from federal off-shore oil and gas lease monies – exchanging a non-renewable resource for a renewable one – our nation’s historic properties. It is also an exercise in federalism with federal dollars being matched by state funding, and a State Historic Preservation Office present in every state and territory.</b></p>
 <p><b>Historic Preservation Under Threat</b></p> <p><b>CONGRESSIONAL MISTAKE:</b> The House of Representatives passed a bill to reauthorize the Historic Preservation Fund, but the Senate did not. This means the fund is not reauthorized and its funding is at risk.</p> <p><b>IMMEDIATE THREAT:</b> The fund is currently authorized through FY25, but there is no guarantee it will be reauthorized beyond that point.</p> <p><b>FY 2025 THREAT:</b> The fund is currently authorized through FY25, but there is no guarantee it will be reauthorized beyond that point.</p>	<p>For a time, our continued operations were under threat as federal funding was withheld for many months, and indeed, the entire preservation community and many fellow North</p>

	<p>Carolínians rallied to support our mission. And for that we are grateful.</p>
<p>Retirement farewell</p> 	<p>This January we also said a bittersweet farewell to our retiring colleague Mitch Wilds. A proud resident of Louisburg, North Carolina, Mitch retired in January 2025 after a long and distinguished career of 41 years serving the people of North Carolina in the State Historic Preservation Office. 20 years of that time were spent as Restoration Services Branch Supervisor. As branch supervisor, he oversaw the successful completion of over 2500 historic tax credit projects statewide, representing over \$3 <b><u>billion</u></b> in private investment in North Carolina’s communities, often of landmark, iconic buildings, like America Tobacco Warehouses in downtown Durham, the RJ Reynolds Tobacco Company complex (now Innovation Quarter) Winston-Salem, and many historic downtown commercial buildings statewide, contributing mightily to the economic development and growth of the state through historic preservation. He also</p>

	<p>nurtured the “Preservation Extension Service” consultation program for the Branch, offering technical assistance to thousands of North Carolina, stewarding both public and private historic buildings. His expertise was counted upon as lead advisor to the State Construction Office and multiple administrations for the stewardship of the Executive Mansion and State Capitol and other historic state buildings and sites. It is impossible to place a price on his invaluable counsel to public and private alike; the amount of institutional and expert knowledge that he offered will be extraordinarily difficult to duplicate, much less encounter.</p>
<p>New role</p>  <p><b>Brett Sturm</b> Promoted from Restoration Specialist (Western Piedmont) to Restoration Services Branch Supervisor (April 2025)</p> <p>2024 Gertrude S. Caraway Award of Merit</p>	<p>We were pleased to promote Restoration Specialist Brett Sturm as his successor in March 2025.</p> <p><b>I’d like to ask you to join me in applause to recognize and thank those State Historic Preservation Office and Office of State Archaeology colleagues <u>here</u> for all of their hard work throughout this past year.</b></p>

**IDENTIFY**



139,722  
records of  
historic places  
in our  
statewide  
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2,784 newly  
mapped  
FY 2004-2005

North Carolina now boasts **over 3000** National Register Listings, including over 600 National Register historic districts.


We are making steady progress in mapping our historic resources with over 139,000 records in the database, nearly 3000 more properties than last year. Our HPOWEB GIS mapping enterprise continues to be among the best nationally for state historic preservation offices.





HPO Architectural History Surveys  
New + underway or just completed as of 9/2025


Those additions to our statewide map is the fruit of our strong architectural survey program .


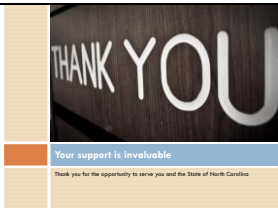
- Blue means underway; green is completed
- Newly underway – Graham County and West Southern Pines
- Completed since last summer:
  - Boone and Wilson updates;
  - the Raleigh African American Heritage Resource Survey Update

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ multiple countywide surveys (Clay, Cumberland, Hoke, and Person); and</li><li>○ a statewide Green Book Survey, supported by a National Park Service grant</li></ul>												
<p>National Register of Historic Places</p> <p>32 listings in FY 2024-25 (25% increase)</p> <table><tr><td>8 houses</td><td>1 restaurant</td></tr><tr><td>2 schools</td><td>1 YWCA building</td></tr><tr><td>3 churches</td><td>2 warehouses</td></tr><tr><td>4 mfg mills</td><td>7 districts / district</td></tr><tr><td>1 grist mill</td><td>updates</td></tr><tr><td>2 cemeteries</td><td></td></tr></table> <p>108 Study List presentations (23% increase)</p>	8 houses	1 restaurant	2 schools	1 YWCA building	3 churches	2 warehouses	4 mfg mills	7 districts / district	1 grist mill	updates	2 cemeteries		<p>Our National Register designation program continues to experience <b>extraordinarily strong constituent demand</b> – 32 listings in FY 2024-25, a 25% increase, representing a wide breadth of property types and geographic locations. The average turnaround for a nomination is about 9 months now. Demonstrating extraordinary public interest as well as the results of our survey program, we also made 108 Study List presentations this fiscal year– likewise a 23% increase -- to assess properties’ eligibility for the Register.</p>
8 houses	1 restaurant												
2 schools	1 YWCA building												
3 churches	2 warehouses												
4 mfg mills	7 districts / district												
1 grist mill	updates												
2 cemeteries													
	<p>National Register listings continue to span the state, and increasingly encompass a more expansive scope of North Carolina’s historic places.</p>												



	<p>reached 100% of our submission numbers for 2024, and expect that we will see an additional 30% to 40% by the end of 2025.</p> <p>Many of these reviews are attributable to Helene recovery projects, which we expedite in less than 7 calendar days. In 2024, we reviewed nearly 4000 projects statewide.</p>
	<p>The state and federal historic tax credits continue to fuel a robust statewide program at the intersection of historic preservation, community development, and private investment – almost from Murphy to Manteo as shown by this statewide map. Teal dots = commercial / residential projects; red dots = mill projects.</p>
	<p>With activity in 91 of 100 counties, and <b>\$3.849 BILLION</b> with a “B” of private investment in completed projects over the life of the program, and \$251 million alone this past year (2.5 times the amount last year!), our federal and state historic tax credit programs are strong.</p>

	<p>Out of state investors continue to come to North Carolina, drawn by the open nature of our state program, which unlike other states, has no overall program cap or rationing of benefit beyond reasonable per-project caps.</p>
<div><p>FY 2025 CLG Grant Awards</p><p>\$140,938 in Certified Local Government Grants</p><p>Waxhaw presents African American history project</p></div> <div><p>2025 Certified Local Government Grants</p><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Building Assessment<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Waynesville Municipal Building</li><li>• Patton Fire Station Tower, Mecklenburg County</li></ul></li><li>• Bridge and Master projects<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Charlotte School Replacement, Matthews, Forsyth County</li><li>• Carolina Theater, plaster repair, Greensboro</li></ul></li><li>• Design Guidelines updates<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Kinston</li></ul></li><li>• National Register nominations<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Albemarle Quartertown Historic District (update)</li><li>• Raleigh Quartertown Historic District (update)</li><li>• Salisbury (update)</li></ul></li><li>• Public Outreach<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Winston Preservation Workshops, Charlotte-Mecklenburg County</li></ul></li></ul></div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Statewide, we were pleased to award \$140,938 for FY 2025 for Certified Local Government grants. Shown here is a FY 2024 project – for a Waxhaw African American history project, including oral histories</li></ul> <p><b>CLICK.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You should know that total grant requests were substantially more, and our program becomes more competitive each year. <b>Here’s a list of our Certified Local Government grant awards for 2025. You’ll see geographic distribution across the state.</b></li></ul> <p><b>You’ll also see the breadth of projects allowed by our grant rules:</b></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Building assessments, Bricks and Mortar projects, design guidelines, National Register nominations, and public outreach.</b></li> </ul>
	<p><b>While place-based, our work is people-focused above all. From training with our architectural consultant colleagues to aiding stewards of Rosenwald Schools to working one-on-one with property owners trying to start anew after Helene, we want to help our fellow North Carolinians reach their preservation goals.</b></p>
	<p><b>This report just scratches the surface of our work in service to North Carolinians.</b></p> <p>Joined by my colleagues at the State Historic Preservation Office and the Office of State Archaeology and the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, we thank you for the opportunity to serve you and the State of North Carolina.</p> <p><b>In partnership with you, we preserve North Carolina.</b></p>



## Division of Research and Publications

### December 2025 Report

Submitted by Ansley Herring Wegner

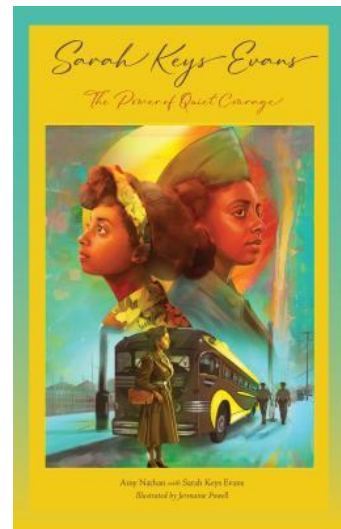
In the past quarter Research and Publications has lost both Civil War Roster Editors, one due to retirement and one due to salary inadequacy. We took the opportunity to move the project to digital publishing, with exhibits being published on Mosaic (joining the Colonial Records and Governors' Records projects) and the troop rosters will be published online as they are completed. We are pleased that the arrangement to make these materials available online will cut down the time between rosters being made available and the new Civil War research will be free and easily available to the public. Rachael Davis, the new Civil War Records Editor began work on December 1. Davis is currently completing her PhD at American University. The second Civil War Roster Editor position has been reclassified into a fourth Research Historian Supervisor in the division, with a working title of Supervisor of Grants and Outreach. That position should be advertised any day now.

### Historical Publications:

The office published [\*Sarah Keys Evans: The Power of Quiet Courage\*](#) by Amy Nathan with

Sarah Keys Evans. In 1952, Sarah Keys, dressed in her Women's Army Corps uniform, was arrested for not moving to the back of a bus when it stopped in Roanoke Rapids enroute to her home in Washington, N.C. Her case against the Interstate Commerce Commission helped to desegregate interstate transportation. The book, geared to fifth through eighth grades, is gorgeously illustrated by Jermaine Powell.

Research Historian Mike Coffey has completed *A Chronology of the American Revolution in North Carolina: A List of Dates in a National and International Context* as part of the office's America 250 NC focus. We expect it to be sent to UNC Press at the end of December.



### Digital Publications:



The online exhibit titled [\*She Stands Accused: Women on Trial in Colonial North Carolina\*](#) was published in October. It contains 151 documents and transcriptions from the State Archives about witches and other women that stood trial in the colonial North Carolina court system.

### Historical Marker Program:

At their meeting scheduled for December 16, the Historical Marker Advisory Committee is set to review 15 new applications for historical markers.

### America 250 NC:

America 250 NC had a large footprint in the lobby of Dorton Arena for the State Fair. The



Museum of History supplied a mannequin in a Continental Line uniform to greet the thousands of visitors. We had our two newest traveling pop-up banner exhibits set up in the space. The American Battlefield Trust provided for the exhibition area an interactive kiosk that maps and describes important people, places, and events in colonial and Revolutionary North Carolina history. America 250 NC staff played key roles in providing and reviewing content used in developing the kiosk. It is now situated in the lobby of 109 E. Jones Street.

America 250 NC will be highlighted at the Best of Our State, a conference hosted by *Our State* magazine in Southern Pines in January.

America 250 NC received a \$25,000 grant from Walmart to support the First in Freedom Festival, centered on the 250<sup>th</sup> of the Battle of Moores Creek Bridge in February. Much of our outreach at events in the last few months has featured the battle and the festival.

We have developed a fun initiative to encourage citizens to learn about Cornelius Harnett. Flat Cornelius, like the old faithful school project Flat Stanley, encourages people to color and cut out their own Cornelius Harnett and then take him on adventures. If they post pictures on social media and tag them #FlatCornelius, they will be uploaded onto our [Flat Cornelieus webpage](#).



America 250 NC staff members continue to partner with people within DNCR and around the state to commemorate the 250<sup>th</sup> of the signing of the Declaration of Independence and the beginning of the American Revolution. In November we signed on our 86<sup>th</sup> [county committee](#) (Nash) and the 87<sup>th</sup> county (Swain) is set to vote on their America 250 NC committee resolution this month.

**NC Historical Commission Report: September 4 - December 5, 2025**  
**Division of History Museums**  
**11 December 2025**

NC Museum of History the Demolition Phase is Underway



*Figure 1. Demolition at the NC Museum of History, fall 2025.*

The demolition phase of the renovation project at North Carolina Museum of History (NCMH) at 5 E Edenton Street has officially begun. The renovation of the NCMH is currently on time and on budget, with the bid packages having been accepted. With staff working at two different sites within the Triangle, work continues for the museum's grand reopening exhibits, scheduled for late 2028. The NCMH staff is beginning work with design firm GSM who replaced Luci Creative as the lead partner for the first-floor exhibits. The change in design firm has not affected the reopening timeline.

Staff is also preparing for the grand reopening to the public with work on rebranding and redeveloping the 2025-2030 Strategic Plan. Meanwhile, public programming for in-person audiences, as well as digital participants, is ongoing.

AIHC at the NCMA:

The 30<sup>th</sup> Annual American Indian Heritage Celebration (AIHC) occurred at the NC Museum of Art's campus on Saturday, November 22. Over 6,000 attendees attended the day-long event which included participation from all eight state-recognized tribes. On the previous Friday, the AIHC Education Day provided a new format for educators across the state of North Carolina -- there were prerecorded videos in lieu of live broadcast as in years past.



Figure 2. 30th American Indian Heritage Celebration, November 22, 2025.

### Regional History Updates:

The **NC Maritime Museum at Beaufort** was closed to the public starting November 2024 to replace the building's HVAC system. During this time, staff continued educational programs at alternate locations. During this project, staff used opportunity to develop and design two new exhibitions, *Always Ready* (early lifesaving) and *Swell Times*, (recreation on the water). Further enhancements to the museum include artifact storage and mounts, refreshed graphic panels, new glass vitrines/casework, and new carpet. The museum is scheduled to be reopened in early 2026.

Likewise, HVAC replacement work at **the Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum** began in early September 2025 and is expected to be completed by end of February 2026. The museum's visitor operations will not be impacted by the work.

**The Museum of the Albemarle** is working on their newest exhibition, *Race What You Bring: Racing in Northeastern North Carolina*. The exhibition will feature artifacts and images that relate to flat track and motocross racing, marathons, swimming, power boat and sailboat racing, rowing and sculling, late model and modified car racing, barrel racing, harness racing, dog racing, and much more. The opening is planned for February 28, 2026.

Repair work is ongoing at **the Mountain Gateway Museum** due to damage from Hurricane Helene. Staff is working from a nearby office space where programming and community engagement continues as repair work on the museum continues.

Groundwork is underway in Arsenal Park for the construction of the North Carolina History Center on the Civil War, Emancipation, and Reconstruction at the **Cape Fear History Complex**. Construction fencing is installed, and public access to portions of the park will be limited during this phase.

**Tobacco Farm Life Museum** officially opened to the public on June 30. This addition makes the seventh regional museum in the portfolio of the division of State History Museums across the state of North Carolina. [This information was not present in the previous NC Historical Commission Report.]

## Personnel:

### Hiring and Promotions:

- **Amanda Cannon** was promoted to the Budget Officer at NCMH.
- **Amy Garner** was hired as the Assistant to the Regional History Museum Director (New Position).
- **Jamie Long McCargo** was hired as the Museum Site Manager at Beaufort (New Position).
- **Anna Kellner-McColl** was hired as Volunteer Coordinator at Beaufort.
- **Barbara Putnam** was promoted to Museum Site Manager at Albemarle.
- **Damel Riddick** was hired as Maintenance and Construction Tech I at Albemarle.
- **Rebecca Stiles** was promoted to Senior Administrative Officer at Albemarle.
- **Paul Vincent** was promoted to Facilities Manager at Albemarle.
- **Kathryn Wilson** was hired as Historical Publications Editor at NCMH.

### Retirements and Resignations:

- **Wayne Mathews** retired as Facilities Manager at Albemarle.
- **Lori Meads** retired as Chief Museum Educator at Albemarle.
- **Don Pendergraft** retired as Director at Albemarle.
- **David Reid** retired as Administrator at Cape Fear.

## Public Programming:

## NC Museum of History:

**North Carolina Museum of History Pop-Up! Durham Farmers Market** (September 13) The North Carolina Museum of History will host a pop-up at the Durham Farmers Market featuring the Wheel of History, reproduction touch items, and information about the museum building renovation. Visitors can enjoy hands-on activities, learn something new, and explore North Carolina's rich history in a favorite community setting.

**NCMH Pop-Up: Falling for Local at Dorothea Dix Park.** (October 4) We're popping up to bring the North Carolina Museum of History to you! Join us at Falling for Local at Dorothea Dix Park. Hear about the museum's building renovation, spin the Wheel of History, and explore reproduction touch items to further your knowledge of our state's fascinating history!

**Capital City Scavenger Hunt (October 25)** Join the NC Museum of History downtown for a team scavenger hunt! Explore Fayetteville Street and its immediate side streets to track down buildings and landmarks to uncover details about the capital city's business district from the 18th century to the present. Be the first to solve all the clues and win the grand prize.

**Crafting at the Cinema: Casablanca at Garner Performing Arts Center** (November 6)

**AIHC Virtual Education Day** (November 21)

**30th Annual American Indian Heritage Celebration** (November 2)

## Regional History Museums

### Museum of the Albemarle

**Tot Time: That Ship Has Sailed** (September 11) Children ages 3–5, accompanied by an adult, will explore the boatbuilding traditions and maritime history of northeastern North Carolina through the exhibit *Rock of the Eye*. The program includes a story time and a hands-on activity.

**History for Lunch: "Through My Grandmother's Eyes – The Veit Simon Family during the Holocaust"** (September 24) Courtney Doi will share her grandmother Judith Klein's story of survival as a teenage refugee on the Kindertransport in 1938, alongside her extended family's experiences in Europe during WWII. Featuring photographs and personal writings, the talk will also reflect on preventing future genocides.

**Tot Time: First Communities.** (October 9) Program for ages 3–5 with a focus on Algonquian-speaking Native Americans.

**Elizabeth City Ghost Walk.** (October 11) The museum will serve as one of the stops.

**History for Lunch: Unleashing Potential: Generative AI and Large Language Models Transforming the Digital Landscape** (October 15) Dorothy Hunderson Bell, PhD, Elizabeth City

State University, will explain the intersection between generative artificial intelligence (GEN-AI) and large Language models (LLMs). Traverse the beginnings of neural networks to today's contemporary machine learning. Discover practical applications across the industries, technical implications, and forward-thinking perspectives on how the applications will impact our lives.

**Albemarle Craftsman's Fair** (October 25-26)

**Take It, Make It: Halloween Fun & Treats**  
(October 25)

**History for Lunch: The Furious Fall of '75**  
(November 5)

**Tot Time: Christmas in the Colonies**  
(November 13)

**Designers' Workshop: Alcohol Ink with  
Laura Denunzio** (November 15)

**Lunch & Learn with Digital Commons**  
(November 19)



*Figure 3. A family enjoys the exhibits at the Museum of the Albemarle.*

## NC Maritime Museum at Southport

**Friendly Fly Traps** (September 6) Join the museum staff to create a puppet version of everyone's favorite carnivorous plant (and southeastern North Carolina native): the Venus fly trap! This features hands-on activities and take-home crafts focusing on combining arts and history. Lights will be dimmed and interactives muted during the first two hours to provide a calmer environment for those with sensory sensitivities.

**Anti-Aircraft School Program** (September 20) North Carolina was home to several anti-aircraft artillery training centers during World War II. Join a costumed interpreter to learn about the role they played in aerial combat. The program is part of the museum's *Deep Dive into History* series, designed to give visitors a deeper understanding of our shared past through costumed interpretation.

**Port Brunswick Day programming at Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson** Site staff will be assisting Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson State Historic Site with their Colonial Heritage Days programming over the next three weeks. During this program series, all Brunswick County 4th and 5th graders will be onsite at Brunswick Town. Staff will be providing educational outreach during this event.

**Phantasmagoria at Duke Homestead State Historic Site** (October 24) Assisting Duke Homestead State Historic Site in their yearly Phantasmagoria event for kids and families.

**A250 NC booth at the North Carolina State Fair** (October 25) Site staff assisting.

**Southport Wooden Boat Show** (November 1) Site staff assisting at the boat show.

### NC Maritime Museum at Beaufort

**Diamondback Terrapins: Uncovering Their History and Shell-Ebrating Their Future** (September 4) This program is part of the museum's Maritime Heritage Lecture Series, informal lectures focused on North Carolina's rich maritime history, coastal environment, and culture. The programs are being held at Fort Macon while the museum is closed.

**Introduction to Wooden Boat Building** (September 6-7) Explore the art of boatbuilding — beginning with lofting, and moving on to the setup, steam bending and different methods of creating the backbone of small boats — in this two-day, hands-on course. You'll also learn planking methods, both carvel and lapstrake, and use of appropriate fasteners. The course is designed for participants to leave with the knowledge, skill, and confidence to choose a design and style of boat to build.

**Kids' Cove: Sailor's Life** (September 10) Kids' Cove is a free-play program designed for children ages 0-5 and their caregivers with a different maritime-themed craft and wiggle activity each month. This is a screen-free program meant to help caregivers connect with their little ones, each other, and their local maritime heritage.

**Bonehenge Public Tour.** (September 12) A 40 to 60-minute walking tour of Bonehenge Whale Center, led by Natural Science Curator Keith Rittmaster and Associate Education Curator Christine Brin. Bonehenge Whale Center operates as a partnership between the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources and the Carolina Cay Maritime Foundation.

**Kayak the Salt Marsh with the NC Maritime Museum in Beaufort** (September 24) Learn about salt marshes and wildlife while on the water during this educator-led tour. Basic kayaking instruction and safety lessons on shore are followed by a 1.5-mile paddle through the salt marsh in the museum's sit-in cockpit touring kayaks.

**Exploring Coastal Habitats on the Rachel Carson Reserve with the NC Maritime Museum in Beaufort** (September 25) Discover the plants and animals of the salt marsh and tidal flats at the Rachel Carson Reserve. The guided hike will take you through the different habitats and the sandy, muddy, and wet terrain found on Town Marsh and Bird Shoal.

**Kids' Cove: Maritime Masks.** (October 8) Free-play program for children ages 0–5 and their caregivers, held at the Beaufort Train Depot.

**The Story Behind Echo the Whale**, (October 9) Maritime Heritage Lecture by Museum Natural Science Curator Keith Rittmaster. Program held at Fort Macon.

**Sea Monsters lecture at Fort Macon** (October 16)

**Bonehenge Public Tour** (October 17)

**Introduction to Wooden Boat Building course** (October 18)

**Kayak the Salt Marsh tour** (October 22)

**This Collection Will Kill You** (October 23) conservation lecture at Fort Macon

**Whales of North Carolina** (November 6) Lecture, Fort Macon State Park.

**Kids' Cove: Talking Turkey** (November 12) Program for children at the Beaufort Train Depot

**Introduction to Wooden Boat Building Workshop** (November 13-14) See description above.



*Figure 4. Salt marsh exploration outreach in partnership with Hammocks Beach State Park, 2025.*

## Mountain Gateway Museum

**One Day Wonder: “To Preserve the Blessings of Liberty: State Constitutions of North Carolina”** (September 17) In partnership with McDowell Public Library and the State Archives of North Carolina, the museum hosted an exhibition and special field trip for 8th graders of Foothills Community School. The program included additional stations around town staffed by volunteers from the Town and County.

**Construction Progress Meeting, Mountain Gateway Museum 78-C Catawba Ave. location** (September 23) First construction progress meeting for Phase 2 of museum repair work.

**Mountain Stories Book Club – *The Road* by John Ehle (September 24)** The fourth meeting of the Mountain Stories Book Club. September’s book, *The Road*, is a work of historical fiction focused on the construction of the railroad through the highlands of western North Carolina.

**Old Fort Art Walk** (October 10)

**Mountain Stories Book Club Meeting** (October 29)

**Old Fort Boo Bash** (October 31) Halloween event.

## Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum

**Day of the Docks** (September 20) Attended the Day at the Docks in Hatteras Village to promote the museum.

## Museum of the Cape Fear Historical Complex

**Sewing Saturday** (September 20) Visitors will explore early 20th-century textile history through original clothing and textiles from the collection and participate in hands-on stitching demonstrations.

**Halloween Revels: Seance and Secrets Night Tours of the 1897 Poe House** (October 10, 11, 17-19) This event features historic theater in a historic home and is done in collaboration with Sweet Tea Shakespeare

**Missing Man Table** (November 1–30) Display in the museum lobby honoring POW and MIA military members.

**Holiday Costumed Tours** (November 24–January 6) Tours of the 1897 Poe House, offered on select dates.

**Holiday Jubilee at the 1897 Poe House** (December 7) featuring live music, a cooking demonstration, and visits from Santa and Mrs. Claus. Admission is free. Sponsored by the Arts Council of Fayetteville/Cumberland County and the MCFHC Foundation, Inc.

## Tobacco Farm Life Museum:

**Hands on History: Object Investigation.** (October 4) Visitors will use their senses to explore objects from the education collection and consider what they reveal about people from the past.

**NC State Fair Tobacco Looping Contest** (October 17)

**Sewing Saturday** (October 18) textile history and stitching program  
Saturday, November 8, 10 a.m.–3 p.m. – Harvest Festival featuring antique tractors, demonstrations, crafts, and DNCR Education programs

**TFLM Harvest Festival** (November 8) Festivities will include Antique tractors, historic demonstrations, crafts, games, and information tables from local organizations including DNCR education team.

## News from the Division of State Historic Sites and Properties: December 2025

Michelle Lanier, Director

### Overview

- North Carolina Historic Sites reported total onsite visitation of 696,604 for Fiscal Year (FY) 2025-2026 to date (an 8 percent increase from the same period in FY 2024-2025). During this calendar year, 1,696,558 people have visited our sites (an 18 percent increase from calendar year 2024).
- During FY2025-2026 204,319 school aged children participated in tours, events, and programs at our Historic Sites. During this calendar year, 673,863 youths participated (a 27 percent increase from calendar year 2024).
- Historic Sites had 291,845 website visitors in FY 2025-26 to date and has a total of 448,238 followers across all social media platforms.

### Personnel

- **Dakota Sheets** joined the staff at **Aycock Birthplace** as Historic Interpreter I.
- **Laurie Stinson** joined the staff of **Somerset Place** as Historic Interpreter II.
- **Marisa Balatico** joined the staff of **Duke Homestead** as Historic Interpreter.
- **Tim Prey** joined the staff of the **Thomas Wolfe Memorial** as Maintenance Technician.
- **Lori Townsend** joined the **Curatorial Services section** as Interpretive Curator.
- **Matt Abbott** joined the staff of the **NC Transportation Museum** as Collections Manager.
- **Susan Huynh** joined the staff of **House in the Horseshoe** as Historic Interpreter.

### America 250 NC

Historic Sites Education Supervisor Andrew Duppstadt coordinated 11 volunteers and 17 staff members from the department and division to participate in the State Fair's Military Appreciation Day. This program has been an annual event for the department since 2014. Participants dressed in military uniforms spanning the Age of Exploration in the 1500s to Operation Iraqi Freedom in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. The participants marched in the parade around the fairgrounds in the morning and performed a military uniform review program on the Waterfall Stage beside Dorton Arena. (Throughout this document you will see other America 250 NC related updates, denoted by this blue star. [\\*](#))

### Curatorial Services

The Collections Branch has released their FY2025-2026 schedule of Collections Care and Management (CCAM) workshops. These internal workshops are aimed at educating our 26 Collections Stewards who manage the artifact collection at their respective sites. The slate of workshops includes:

## News from the Division of State Historic Sites and Properties: December 2025

Michelle Lanier, Director

- That's Quite an Undertaking!  
Learn practical strategies for tackling large, time-consuming collections projects like inventories, storage reorganization, and incomplete records.
- Loan is a Four-Letter Word  
Explore the ins and outs of the loan process, including how to manage paperwork, track borrowed items, and anticipate lender concerns.
- Not an Easy Target  
Discover how to assess and improve your site's collections security through awareness, planning, and practical risk-reduction strategies.
- Piece it Together: Emergency Response  
An interactive emergency response scenario that builds your skills in decision-making, communication, and team coordination under pressure.

Robert Bemis, Heritage Trades and Education Specialist, has been invited to co-chair the Historic Trades Professional Interest Group within the Association for Living History, Farm, and Agricultural Museums (ALHFAM). The group serves as a collaborative space for public historians to share knowledge and resources across sites in the U.S. and Western Europe. In this new role, Robert will help identify skilled tradespeople to present at national and regional meetings, as well as lead classes himself. This opportunity not only expands the professional network of Robert but also raises the division's visibility within the broader field of living history.

Education & Interpretation Supervisor Andrew Duppsstadt conducted a three-day Historic Weapons Certification Course in November at Fort Macon and Camp Lejeune. This session focused specifically on artillery training and was designed to ensure staff proficiency in accordance with Division standards. Participants received instruction on a range of critical topics, including artillery demonstration protocols, required safety equipment, interpretive best practices, appropriate period clothing, causes of artillery-related accidents, and procedures for transporting cannons and powder. The course also covered artillery nomenclature to support accurate and informed interpretation. The training concluded with hands-on firing drills and a written examination, both required for certification.

### **Priority to Update State History (PUSH)**

The PUSH Project continues to make significant progress across multiple sites. Horizon Productions is actively filming scholars and historians for orientation videos at Bennett Place, Historic Edenton, Fort Fisher, Historic Halifax, and Town Creek Indian Mound. Development is underway on a voting rights interactive at the Aycock Birthplace, aimed at deepening visitor engagement with this critical aspect of history. Horizon is also nearing completion of a mobile app that will provide visitors with access to the project's digital

## News from the Division of State Historic Sites and Properties: December 2025

Michelle Lanier, Director

content. Additionally, three touchscreen interactives are in development for Bennett Place, focusing on the lives of the enslaved in the South, Confederate surrenders across the United States, and Reconstruction in North Carolina.

### Digital Opportunity Grant Program

Progress continues on the DIT/ODEL Grant project, which focuses on expanding digital access to North Carolina's history. We are currently developing and refining virtual tours for seven historic sites associated with the America 250.\* All necessary equipment for this work has been purchased, and we have begun capturing 3D scans of key artifacts to enhance the virtual experience. In addition, we are initiating a collaboration with Christie Norris and her team to design teacher workshops, which are scheduled to take place in summer 2026. These workshops will support educators in integrating the virtual content into classroom instruction.

### West Region

**Michelle Lanier** was a featured panelist and discussant at the 2025 Annual Meeting of the American Folklore Society in Atlanta, where she contributed offerings related to Southern Folkways particularly of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 2026, the 138<sup>th</sup> convening of the AFS will be held in downtown Asheville, NC, which will bring important tourism dollars into the Hurricane Helene-impacted region.

### Fort Dobbs

Fort Dobbs recently participated in the "Carolina BalloonFest," a major regional event held annually in Statesville, North Carolina. While the balloon festival itself is hosted off-site, several balloons were launched from the site. The site welcomed guests with special programming and extended hours, offering a unique historical complement to the festival's modern attractions. This alignment with a high-profile community event supports Fort Dobbs' mission to educate the public about North Carolina's colonial and military history while fostering broader community connections.



Michelle Lanier, Director

### **Horne Creek Farm**

The Southern Heritage Apple Orchard (SHAO) building, at Horne Creek Farm, is nearing completion. SHAO is composed of 450 varieties of old southern apples and is now regarded by many apple experts as being the most important collection of apples in the United States. The new facility includes workspace for our horticulturist, Jason Bowen, equipment storage, a walk-in cooler, a kitchen, an exhibit area/ tasting room, and handicapped accessible restrooms. The Southern Heritage Apple Orchard is living history at its very best. When you bite into an Esopus Spitzenburg apple from our orchard, you are eating Thomas Jefferson's favorite apple. When you taste Hewe's Crab, you are tasting the most celebrated cider apple ever grown in the South.

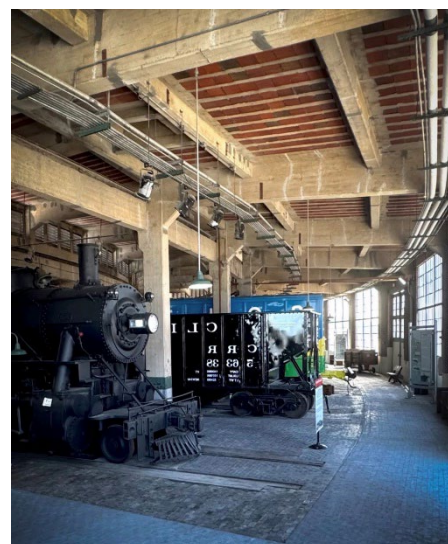


### **Reed Gold Mine**

As of October, Reed Gold Mine has temporarily closed the mine to prepare for an upcoming project that will address critical structural and safety restoration needs. We look forward to reopening and welcoming visitors once this important work is complete. In the meantime, the HS Craft Services team is evaluating options for a temporary solution that would allow limited operations to continue until a permanent fix can be designed and implemented.

### **North Carolina Transportation Museum**

The 1924 Bob Julian Roundhouse officially reopened to the public in October, following more than a year of closure for critical preservation work. The project included a full roof replacement and extensive concrete repairs, both essential to ensuring the long-term structural integrity and safety of this historic facility. As one of the largest remaining roundhouses in the United States, the Bob Julian Roundhouse is a centerpiece of the North Carolina Transportation Museum and a vital part of the state's industrial heritage.



The reopening marks a significant milestone in the site's ongoing preservation efforts and allows visitors once again to experience the unique architecture and interpretive exhibits housed within

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the roundhouse. The restoration work not only protects the building but also enhances the visitor experience by providing a safer and more stable environment for tours, programs, and special events.

The Museum was also pleased to host the first of three regional State Employees Combined Campaign appreciation events on October 27.

### Piedmont Region

#### Historic Stagville

On Sunday, October 5, Historic Stagville hosted its Full Moon and Freedom Stories Night Hike, offering visitors a unique interpretive experience focused on the themes of refuge and resistance. The guided night hike began at the historic Horton Grove slave quarters and continued along a nearby wooded trail. Historic interpreters led participants in sensory engagement with the nighttime environment encouraging them to see, listen, and feel the forest as it might have been experienced by enslaved individuals. Throughout the hike, guides paused for moments of reflection, reading excerpts from North Carolina slave narratives that highlighted how the night served as a time of resistance, escape, and spiritual refuge for enslaved people. The program concluded with a viewing of the full moon rising over Horton Grove, creating a powerful and contemplative end to the evening.

#### House in the Horseshoe

In September, staff from the Division of State Historic Sites, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), and Oppermann Architects conducted an on-site investigation at House in the Horseshoe State Historic Site to further assess the historic structure. During the visit, former Site Manager Amanda Brantley used a fiber-optic scope to examine interior wall cavities and discovered a musket ball lodged within one of the walls, an exciting and rare find that may date back to the Revolutionary War-era skirmish at the site! The musket ball was left in place, and SHPO has recommended that the State Bureau of Investigation's ballistics team return to conduct a detailed analysis. \*



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The site also hosted a groundbreaking ceremony on Monday, December 1 to celebrate the beginning of the new visitor center. We are honored that Secretary Cashwell and Senator McInnis were able to be a part of the celebration. This transformative visitor enhancement project will bring a new 4,000 square foot facility and fresh exhibits to the site, along with needed restoration and repair work at the 1772 Alston House.



Designed by Hobbs Architects, PA, the visitor center project is funded by the NC General Assembly in support of North Carolina's multi-year commemoration of the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the United States.★

### North Carolina State Capitol

The North Carolina State Capitol is preparing to welcome the public for its annual holiday celebration, featuring the traditional State Tree Lighting Ceremony. Scheduled for Thursday, December 11, the event is hosted in partnership with Governor Josh Stein and marks the official start of the holiday season on Capitol Square.

Festivities begin at 5:30 p.m. with luminaries and a performance by the Raleigh Concert Band. Around 6:00 p.m., the Governor and other dignitaries gather on the south grounds to lead the tree-lighting ceremony. The illuminated tree is visible along the length of Fayetteville Street, and Santa Claus is scheduled to make a special appearance. Following the ceremony, guests are invited inside the Capitol to enjoy its festive holiday decorations. The 2025 State Tree is generously sponsored by the State Employees Credit Union. The event is free and open to the public, with no reservations required.



### East Region

#### Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson

Conversations continue around the remarkable shipwreck recently discovered along the banks of the Cape Fear River at Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson, a find that has captured

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international attention. This significant archaeological discovery, now officially referred to as the Midnight Channel Shipwreck, offers a rare and exciting opportunity to deepen our understanding of maritime history in the region.

In October, a cross-divisional team from the Division of State Historic Sites and the Office of State Archaeology convened on-site to begin exploring the long-term research potential of the wreck. These early discussions are laying the groundwork for future investigations, preservation strategies, and public interpretation efforts. The collaborative approach reflects our shared commitment to responsible stewardship and to uncovering the stories this vessel may hold.

On Friday, November 14, the Cape Fear Scottish Immigration Memorial Fund dedicated a new memorial at Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson. Modeled after traditional Scottish stone markers, the memorial honors the Highland Scots who immigrated to the colony during the 18th century and recognizes their lasting impact on the development of North Carolina. The memorial was placed near the banks of the lower Cape Fear River, a historically significant location where many Scottish immigrants first arrived in the New World. The dedication ceremony marked an important moment of commemoration and connection to the region's colonial and cultural heritage.



### Fort Fisher

Fort Fisher received the “Visitor Attraction of the Year” award from the N.C. Travel Industry Association’s Tourism Leaders Conference.

The award recognizes a visitor attraction in our state that exemplifies excellence and sets the standard for an exceptional visitor experience. This recognition comes just one year after the site opened a new \$25.5 million visitor center, complete with new exhibits and reconstructed earthworks. “We have had a fantastic first year,” says site manager Jim Steele. “What an honor for this historic site.”



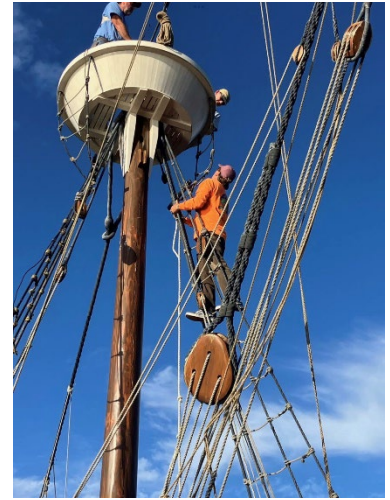
Since opening on October 29, 2024, 1,095,475 people have visited the museum and grounds.

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### Roanoke Island Festival Park

In October, Roanoke Island Festival Park initiated collaboration with Dare County to begin the permitting process for dredging efforts that will enable the Elizabeth II to depart Manteo for scheduled repairs and maintenance. This process includes securing the necessary regulatory approvals and coordinating with local partners to identify funding sources for the project. The goal is to have dredging to begin in Fall 2026, with plans to haul out the vessel in January 2027. In parallel, we are coordinating with the North Carolina Department of Transportation to secure space for the ship at the Mann's Harbor Ferry Yard. The Elizabeth II was last hauled out in 2021.



This month for Crew Weekend, volunteers worked to downrig the ship. Downrigging is removing the sails, lines, spars, and topmasts from the ship. This is something the Crew does every year for the winter season. Then in the spring, our crew will get it all back in place for our school groups and visitors!