

State Legislative Priorities 2023-24

Save Wyse Fork Battlefield

Legislative Mission Statement: The Save Wyse Fork Battlefield Commission, as a part of the Historical Preservation Group, is committed to seeking legislation and policies that coincide with our mission to preserve the tract of land known as the Wyse Fork Battlefield, located in Jones County, North Carolina.

Our State Legislative Priorities for this session of the North Carolina General Assembly is:

Support Efforts to Preserve the Core 55 Acres of the Wyse Fork Battlefield located near the Intersection of United States Route 70 and Wyse Fork Road in Jones County, North Carolina.

- From March 7-10, 1865, one of the most consequential battles of the tail end of the Civil War occurred on a battlefield located in Jones County, where troops from nearly 20 states fought and died.
- This site – part of North Carolina’s second largest battle – remains largely as it appeared in 1865, and could be permanently lost due to a proposed highway interchange on the future Interstate 42.
- We believe that the North Carolina General Assembly should support efforts to conserve and preserve the area of the core 55 acres of the Wyse Fork Battlefield, located in Jones County, North Carolina, as an important place related to the history of North Carolina and the United States, and as a place that could spur heritage tourism and economic development.

Resolution in Support of the Efforts of the Save Wyse Fork Battlefield Commission and Historical Preservation Group to urge Congress to pass HR 3448, the American Battlefield Protection Enhancement Act:

- We believe that it is paramount that there be sites recognized by the National Park Service/U.S. Department of the Interior that highlight important moments, times, eras, and subjects in American History.
- Wyse Fork Battlefield is in a unique position where it is a site that touches upon several important times, eras, and subjects in American History all within the confines of the Battlefield Site.

- We believe this site warrants Federal recognition because it has direct connections to the Revolutionary War, the American Civil War, Native American indigenous peoples, and enslaved peoples.
- HR 3448 would provide the National Park Service the ability to step-in to save and/or conserve lands that are considered at-risk for permanent destruction from being lost due to development or other encroachment.
- We believe that the Wyse Fork Battlefield is an important piece of the history of North Carolina, and the history of the United States, especially as it relates to the story of North Carolina in the Revolutionary and Civil Wars.
- We further believe that the State of North Carolina has shown its commitment in being supportive of other sites that memorialize the those who fought in these wars, thus there is established precedence for the North Carolina General Assembly to be supportive of these efforts.
- Due to the Wyse Fork Battlefield also being the location of remains of Native American Indigenous Peoples and enslaved people, in addition to its importance in the aforementioned wartime eras, we believe it merits recognition by the United States Congress as a Federal Public Land. We hereby request that the North Carolina General Assembly take an official position in support of these efforts by passing an official resolution in both the North Carolina House of Representatives and North Carolina Senate stating such.
- We would also welcome letters of support from Members of the North Carolina General Assembly, as well as Statewide officials that would be supportive of our efforts.

Protection of Cultural and Historical Sites; Strengthening of Penalties for those who Vandalize or Damage Cultural and Historical Sites:

- Within the past several months, a significant number of historical and cultural sites, as a result of civil unrest, were damaged – sometimes permanently and irreparably – or destroyed, and in most of these instances, those who committed the crime were never caught. Legislation at the Federal, State and Local levels (that would be consistent with Federal statutes against these types of crime) to punish those who damage these Sites would serve as a deterrent for these types of crimes. Legislation would seek both enhanced penalties, but the allowance of Judges to have options when sentencing those who commit these types of crimes.

Support for America250

- Support for efforts geared towards the 250th Birthday of the United States of America in 2026, including resource, material, and financial support to States, Local Governments, and Historical Organizations, to facilitate patriotic, historical, and other educational programming.
- Wyse Fork Battlefield is an important place related to the history of the United States, as it has direct connections to the Revolutionary War, Civil War, Native American and Indigenous Peoples, and enslaved peoples.

For Additional Information, please contact:

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