

Office of Archives and History
Report to North Carolina Historical Commission
June 23, 2021

Budget highlights: Governor Cooper released his 2021-2021 budget recommendations March 24, 2021.

Highlights for the Office of Archives and History included:

- 2.5% raise and \$1,000 bonus for state employees in both years of the biennium
- \$846,000 for America 250th preparations (non-recurring)

Historical Resources:

- QAR conservation and excavation \$500,000 (recurring)
- Highway Historical Markers \$100,000 (recurring)
- ANCHOR \$165,000 in recurring funding (including two positions) and \$28,000 non-recurring
- Extend sunset of Article 3H Mill Tax Credit

Museum of History:

- Cash-Funded Capital Projects for Graveyard of the Atlantic renovation and exhibits (\$4.2 million) and Maritime Museum (\$1.5 million)
- Bond-Funded Capital Projects for Museum of History (\$54 million)

State Historic Sites:

- Maintenance funds, including \$500,000 (recurring) and \$500,000 (non-recurring)
- Resilience funds, including \$1 million (recurring) and \$2.5 million (non-recurring)
- African American History Curator
- Bath High School Preservation (requires match from Town of Bath)-\$280,000 non-recurring
- Cash-Funded Capital Projects at Fort Fisher Historic Site Visitor Center (\$8 million), State Capitol African American Monument (\$2.5 million), Thomas Day House (\$800,000), and Transportation Museum Power House (\$2.25 million)
- Bond-Funded Capitol Projects-\$45 million for colonial and Revolutionary Era sites
- Non-General Fund Capital Authorizations at Edenton, Charlotte Hawkins Brown Tea House, Transportation Museum Southern Railway, Bentonville Battlefield Harper House, Charlotte Hawkins Brown Galen Stone Cottage, Brunswick Town shoreline, and Bennett Place Visitor Center.

American Rescue Plan: Governor Cooper released his proposed spending plan for the American Rescue Plan on May 19, 2021.

Highlights of proposed funding that would impact DNCR and the Office of Archives and History:

- Recovery Grants for Arts, History, Libraries, Science, and Film-\$8.5 million for history
- Rural Downtown Transformation Grants-\$60 million for neighborhood revitalization grants will impact the Division of Historical Resources
- Natural and Cultural Tourism Trails-\$5 million
- Receipt-supported revenue replacement for state agencies

DNCR Strategic Plan: Updated for 2021-2023

Goals

- Expand educational opportunities for children and families by increasing access to our state's innovative, interactive, and inspirational natural and cultural sites, programs, and services.
- Boost economic growth through the "Hometown Strong" initiative to support rural communities, and other efforts.

- Preserve, enhance, and expand North Carolina’s natural and cultural resources in an effective, efficient, collaborative, and customer-friendly manner.
- Promote diversity, equity, accessibility, and cultural inclusion in departmental programs, recruitment, administration, and community engagement.
- Evaluate the impact of climate change and integrate climate change mitigation, adaptation, education, and resilience practices into DNCR programs and operations.

Selected strategies and milestones related to OAH:

- Develop innovative and inclusive DNCR programming and resources for the American 250th commemorative period. Foster and support programming with partners across the state.
- ANCHOR: provide an online resource to every 8th grade teacher.
- Initiate at least 2 historic preservation surveys.
- Eliminate sunset on state historic preservation tax credit.
- Examine and research WAR conservation and excavation project.
- Reduce the deferred maintenance of buildings for State Historic Sites and Tryon Palace.
- Preserve and interpret histories of marginalized communities throughout DNCR.
- Plan, design, and develop an African American Monument on the State Capitol Grounds.
- Add existing programming, exhibits, and content to promote diversity, accessibility, and inclusion throughout DNCR.
- Utilizing the America250 theme of “When Are We US?” the Department will create diverse content and programming to explore and highlight a broad range of people and times when North Carolinians have sought to transform their lives and communities to live into the ideals and promise of the Revolution.
- Develop on-demand training for public records custodians, cultural heritage practitioners, and the public around disaster preparedness and recovery for public records and documentary heritage of the state.
- Protect historic structures and artifacts.
- Complete the relocation of Underwater Archaeology artifacts.
- Conduct environmental reviews and provide assistance to constituents for disaster recovery, response, and mitigation for future events.
- Evaluate off-site storage solutions for collections at risk from triple threats of flooding, heavy precipitation, and sea level rise climate risks.
- Complete the statewide historic resilience project through cooperative agreement between Historic Preservation Office and the UNC School of Government by September 2023.
- Broaden constituent outreach and education for resilience measures, such as restoration workshops on how to floodproof or dry out buildings, CREST-led disaster planning training, and Register of Deeds training, to aid better statewide preparation for flooding event.
- Bring resilience-oriented grant projects (constituent and internal) to completion through State Historic Preservation Office hurricane grant program for Hurricanes Florence and Michael recovery.
- Provide greater services such as resilience-oriented technical assistance to locally owned cultural resources.

Commission of Indian Affairs: Commission members recently reached out to Bill Holmes, coordinator of departmental “Hometown Strong” efforts. They inquired about what programming and outreach is currently underway by DNCR divisions to Indigenous peoples of the state. An internal group is gathering this data and will follow-up with the Commission about additional opportunities for collaboration.

Lord Cultural Resources: DNCR recently contracted with Lord Cultural Resources for the evaluation of the visitor experience, exhibits, programming, and capacity needs at selected locations. Locations included in the contract are Fort Macon State Park, Museum of the Albemarle, Town Creek Indian Mound, Zebulon A. Vance Birthplace, Bentonville Battlefield, and Charles B. Aycock Birthplace. This contract meets some strategic goals of the agency, including the expansion of educational opportunities and the promotion of diverse and culturally inclusive departmental programming. The contract will result in an evaluation of key items for implementation, as well as proposed implementation strategies. This work will serve as a model for similar projects across DNCR locations in the future.

America250: A cross-departmental committee in DNCR is planning a robust program of educational outreach, online resources, exhibitions, and events for the America 250th commemorative period (see attached executive summary). Many of the elements will take place or launch between April 12, 2024 and December 31, 2026 to fit within the time frame of the national commemorations. Additional activities will continue through 2033. Three thematic statements have been developed to frame the DNCR programming.

- Visions of Freedom: The American Revolution was the beginning of a continual journey for North Carolinians to seek true freedom.
- A Gathering of Voices: North Carolina's many voices inspire future generations to create and lead.
- Common Ground: Places carry our stories of struggle, creation, and connection to one another.

We are also leading a statewide group of partners to plan and facilitate programs across the state. The DNCR webpage will be live soon and include links to other resources, including a place for visitors to sign up for updates or ask questions. This will be an evolving site with additional capacity for an interactive calendar, online exhibits, and other features planned for development. Additionally, we hope to begin conversations with members of the steering commissions or committees from neighboring states to explore the feasibility of joint programming during the commemoration.