

SOUTH MILLS, N.C. — Civil War Trails has teamed up with Camden County Tourism Development Authority, Visit North Carolina and the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources on an exciting new sign. The Georgia Capital Museum and underwater archaeologist Philip Madre helped bring history to life by offering images of two rare artifacts which have been reconnected with this site after 150 years.

The historic Dismal Swamp Canal is 22 miles long and was hand dug by slave labor in the late 1700s, opening to navigational traffic in 1805. Because the swamp lies above sea level, multiple locks facilitated the “steps” to connect the Elizabeth River, on the northern Virginian end, to the Pasquotank River via the South Mills Lock in North Carolina. Within eye shot from the South Mills Lock, a dramatic series of events unfolded in 1862 including the battle of South Mills, and the harrowing escape of several Confederate ships. Today, this waterway is an alternate route for recreational boaters in the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway and a part of the North Carolina and Virginia Civil War Trail.

South Mills is one of over 1,550 sites on the Civil War Trail which now includes six states — the world’s largest “open air museum.” Supported by communities, municipalities and tourism agencies, the program is marketed internationally for the benefit of local businesses and visitors. The program does not commemorate or memorialize but allows visitors to stand in the footsteps of soldiers, citizens, of those seeking their freedom and to imagine the historic events swirling around them.

The sign was installed earlier this year off Canal Dr. and Highway 17. More information can be had by calling the Dismal Swamp Welcome Center at 877-771-8333 or by visiting www.visitcamdencountync.com. Learn more about Civil War Trails Inc. by visiting www.civilwartrails.org or contacting Drew Gruber, Executive Director, at 757-378-5462. Check in at your favorite site and use hashtags #civilwartrails #openairmuseum #dismalswampwelc.

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CONTACT:

Donna Stewart
252-771-8333

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