

Whether you are a first-time visitor or a long-time resident, we invite you to learn about the Revolutionary War in eastern South Carolina and to explore the unique cultural and natural heritage of the Pee Dee and Santee basins.

In late 1779 and early 1780, British military planners implemented a new strategy to retake the rebellious North American colonies. But by the fall of 1780, the British realized that their hold on South Carolina was far from secure. Along the Pee Dee and Santee rivers, Francis Marion, a Continental officer who had escaped the fall of Charleston by chance, revived the Patriot militias and began attacking British supply and communications lines. With a band of fighters that reflected the ethnic and religious diversity of the province - including Native Americans, English, Ulster Scots, French Huguenots, free and enslaved Africans, and mixed-race people - Marion pioneered a form of guerilla warfare that took advantage of the heavily forested wetland terrain of the Lowcountry. Vastly outmanned and outgunned, Marion and other Patriot militia leaders constantly harassed the British and Loyalist forces in a series of small engagements. By denying the British total victory in South Carolina, Marion's militia helped turn the tide of the war in favor of independence.

Francis Marion obtained his nickname, the "Swamp Fox," because of his elusiveness, using the farms, forests, streams, and wetlands of the Santee and Pee Dee basins to his advantage when attacking or retreating from his opponents. After more than two centuries, many sites associated with Marion have remained largely undisturbed. We invite you to explore seventeen sites along the Pee Dee Tour, the Berkeley Tour, and the Clarendon Tour - and the striking natural and cultural richness of the South Carolina Lowcountry, a region that has played a disproportionate share in the history of the nation from colonial times to the civil rights movement.

Driving Directions for Self-Guided Tour

1. Ox Swamp

The Swamp Fox Earns His Name

a. Route 1:

If you are starting at the historical marker and interpretive sign at Lower Bridge on Hwy. 377, go .5 mile and turn right onto Hwy. 521. Go 10.1 miles on Hwy. 521 into Greeleyville and then bear to the right, still on Hwy. 521 for an additional 15.0 miles to Manning and the intersection with Hwy. 301. Turn right onto Hwy. 301 and proceed for about 1.5 miles (crossing five concrete bridges) until you see a sign for the Pocotaligo Nature Walk on the left side of the highway. Make a left turn onto this very short road and after about 100 yards you will be in a small park, at the beginning of a boardwalk, and will see the interpretive sign for Ox Swamp.

b. Route 2:

If you are coming from either the Charleston area or from the Florence area on I-95, take Exit 122 and go toward Manning. You will pass the Central Carolina Technical College on the right, go through one traffic light, and onto a causeway over a swamp. About thirty seconds after going over the first bridge on the causeway you will see a sign for the Pocotaligo Nature Walk on the right side of the road. Turn right onto a narrow road and you will arrive at a park and the interpretive sign for Ox Swamp after about 100 yards.

2. Wyboo Swamp

The Beginning of the Bridges Campaign

When you are ready to proceed to Wyboo Swamp, leave the nature walk area and turn right onto Hwy. 301 (be sure to stay to the right where the road forks near the Chevrolet dealership) and follow it for 1.8 miles to an intersection with Hwy. 260. (NOT HIGHWAY 261) Turn left onto Hwy. 260 and continue for 10.8 miles and turn right onto State Road 410, also called Patriot Road. Proceed 1.1 miles to the historical marker and the interpretive sign for Wyboo Swamp at a pull-off on the right side of the road. The actual site of Wyboo Swamp is a few hundred yards further down in the direction the road points and is now under the waters of Lake Marion. Marion may have regrouped his men near the marker and sign.

3. Halfway Swamp

In Pursuit of a Brother to Kill Him

When ready to proceed to Halfway Swamp, simply retrace your steps 1.1 miles back up State Road 410/ Patriot Road to the intersection with Hwy. 260 and turn left onto Hwy. 260. Proceed back up Hwy. 260 for 10.8 miles to the intersection with Hwy. 301 and turn left onto Hwy. 301. Go about 10.2 miles to Summerton. Where Hwy. 301 makes a hard left turn in Summerton, continue straight ahead onto Hwy. 26 which is 11.3 miles from the beginning of Hwy. 26 in Summerton to Old River Road in Rimini. Turn left on Old River Road in Rimini and go 1.2 miles to the interpretive sign for Halfway Swamp on the right side of the road at the intersection of Old River Road and the dirt road leading to Elliott's Landing and Campground (large sign marks this intersection and pull-off).

4. Fort Watson

Disrupting British Supply Lines

Leave Halfway Swamp and proceed on Old River Road for 8.4 miles until you come to a "T" intersection with Liberty Hill Road and turn right. Go 1.0 miles and merge right with Hwy. 301/15. Proceed another 3.7 miles until you reach the intersection with Fort Watson Road (on your right) which leads to the Santee Wildlife Refuge. Good signs mark this "T" intersection. Across from this intersection on the left side of Hwy. 301 is a pull-off and the interpretive sign for the Siege of Fort Watson. You may then wish to go back a few yards and follow Fort Watson Road into the Santee Wildlife Refuge. The large (40 foot high) American Indian mound on which the fort was built may be viewed at the end of this road which is roughly 2 miles from the intersection with Hwy. 301. You will pass the Santee Wildlife Visitor's Center on the way to the mound. This road is generally open to the public during daylight hours.

Upon exiting Fort Watson Road onto Hwy. 301/15 bear to the right to access Interstate 95 about 1 mile distant.

Tour Options

If you wish to take the Berkeley tour, turn onto I-95 headed south, immediately cross Lake Marion, and take Exit 98 to get onto Highway 6 toward Charleston. Go approximately 18 miles (through Eutawville) and turn left onto Highway 45 for approximately 10 miles until you see brick pillars on the left side of the road marking the entrance to Marion's gravesite. Turn left and proceed to the gravesite about one mile distant. From here follow the directions to Wadboo as set out in the driving directions for the Berkeley County sites.



South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism

Welcome Francis Marion Trail Commission Swamp Fox country



Maham's tower, from a contemporary mural. Defenseless against the expert marksmen in this hastily-built structure, the British and Loyalist defenders of Fort Watson quickly surrendered. It was the first time Patriot forces in South Carolina had taken a British post since the invasion of the province nearly a year before.

Clarendon Tour

Clarendon Tour with audio CD of Francis Marion stories and anecdotes

his stories

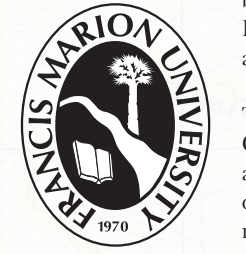
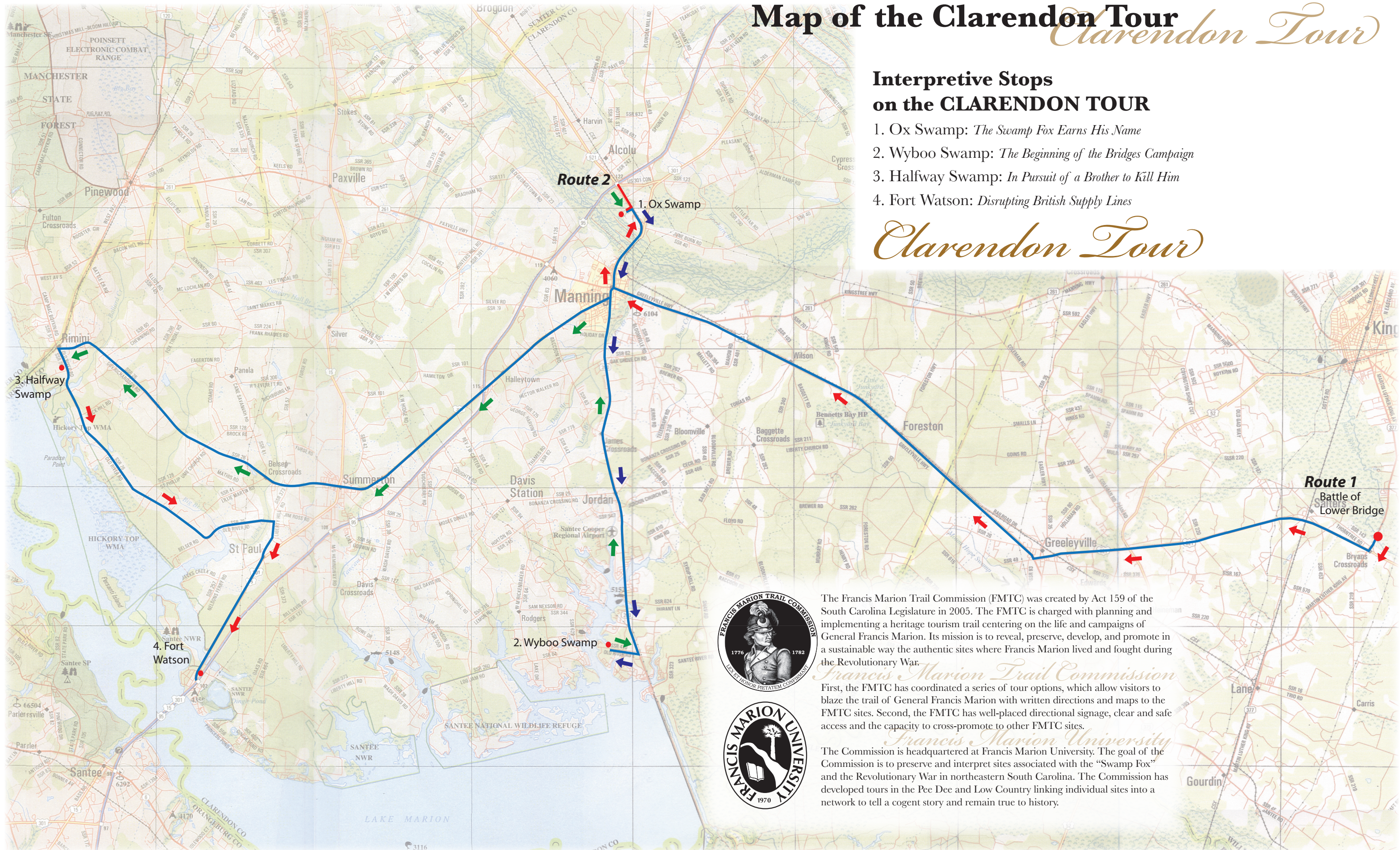
The four sites in Clarendon County include two fine examples of the swampy wetlands that Francis Marion used to his advantage against his adversaries, the Santee Indian pyramid that British forces used as a fort, and an engagement in the Bridges Campaign, Marion's famous running battle with Col. John Watson. Along the way, be sure to stop for a bite to eat in Manning's vibrant downtown; see the beautiful Revolutionary War-themed murals on buildings in Manning, Summerton, and Turbeville; and stop at historic Liberty Hill African Methodist Episcopal Church near Summerton.

Map of the Clarendon Tour

Interpretive Stops on the CLARENDON TOUR

1. Ox Swamp: *The Swamp Fox Earns His Name*
2. Wyboo Swamp: *The Beginning of the Bridges Campaign*
3. Halfway Swamp: *In Pursuit of a Brother to Kill Him*
4. Fort Watson: *Disrupting British Supply Lines*

Clarendon Tour



The Francis Marion Trail Commission (FMTC) was created by Act 159 of the South Carolina Legislature in 2005. The FMTC is charged with planning and implementing a heritage tourism trail centering on the life and campaigns of General Francis Marion. Its mission is to reveal, preserve, develop, and promote in a sustainable way the authentic sites where Francis Marion lived and fought during the Revolutionary War.

Francis Marion Trail Commission

First, the FMTC has coordinated a series of tour options, which allow visitors to blaze the trail of General Francis Marion with written directions and maps to the FMTC sites. Second, the FMTC has well-placed directional signage, clear and safe access and the capacity to cross-promote to other FMTC sites.

Francis Marion University

The Commission is headquartered at Francis Marion University. The goal of the Commission is to preserve and interpret sites associated with the “Swamp Fox” and the Revolutionary War in northeastern South Carolina. The Commission has developed tours in the Pee Dee and Low Country linking individual sites into a network to tell a cogent story and remain true to history.