2015 Technology Innovation Showcase

Georgia Department of Natural Resources:
Camp Lawton Augmented Reality

An aging constituency is one of the critical challenges facing historical sites and museums in Georgia. Younger visitors expect an interactive experience, as opposed to a passive experience. Officials at the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) faced an intriguing question: How do we engage and encourage younger, more technology savvy citizens to visit historical sites? The answer, it turns out, lies in the innovative use of technology.

DNR is deploying Augmented Reality in order to provide an enhanced, and ultimately, more compelling connection to the state's cultural and historical heritage. It's the kind of experience that can excite people of all ages, but it's especially appealing to younger visitors.

During the American Civil War, Camp Lawton, a Confederate military prison, was constructed in east Georgia, between Savannah and Augusta. From October to November 1864, Camp Lawton housed more than 10,000 Union prisoners. In 2010, archaeologists from Georgia Southern University discovered artifacts at the site of Camp Lawton.

Today, visitors to the Camp Lawton History Center, located in Magnolia Springs State Park, can view an exhibit of Civil War artifacts using Quick Response (QR) codes to access information beyond the scope of the displays, including media, interactive tables and links to primary and secondary codes. The QR codes are posted at 25 points of interest. With smartphones and tablet computers, visitors can also take advantage of Augmented Reality to view a three-dimensional reconstruction of the prison stockade. Through Augmented Reality, DNR is able to layer historical drawings, archival photographs, sound, video, graphics and GPS data onto Camp Lawton's physical, real-world environment.

As a result, visitors achieve greater insight into what Camp Lawton was actually like during the Civil War, and DNR believes the experience encourages younger citizens to discover more of the history existing around them.