

# A fish story with history: shad the focus of inaugural event

BY LAUREN OWENS Morning News  
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At the Shad Roe-deo at Odell Venters Landing, event attendees could try two different kinds of Shad and one type of shad roe.

Lauren Owens/Morning News

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JOHNSONVILLE, S.C. – Shad was the topic of conversation Saturday afternoon during the inaugural Shad Roe-deo at the Odell Venters Landing.

The event, which was sponsored by the Haynsworth Sinkler Boyd Law firm with the Friends of Revolutionary Rivers (FoRevR) and the Florence Convention and Visitors Bureau, celebrated the history of shad as a food source for Americans during the Revolutionary War.

“It’s a fascinating aspect of our history,” said Ben Zeigler, the president of the Florence County Historical Society and a former chairman of the Pee Dee Land Trust. “It’s something that represents sort of the natural rhythms we have kind of lost touch with. People used to live by those agricultural or wildlife-related rhythms. When I was growing up in Florence, people still ate shad a lot.”

Zeigler said the shad is an important part of American history. He said Native Americans and colonists both relied on shad every year as a part of their diets.

“The shad run is something that traditionally was something that was a big part in this world,” Zeigler said.

The event was held at the Odell Venters Landing in Johnsonville because of its strong ties to the Revolutionary War. The landing was the location where Gen. Francis Marion took over the Williamsburg Militia and hid from the British troops, said Holly Beaumier, the director of the Florence Convention and Visitors Bureau.

During the event, baked and fried shad was served, as well as shad roe with scrambled eggs, which Zeigler calls the real delicacy.

Food at the event was locally sourced, and the organizers tried to use recipes that were from the Revolutionary War times as well as local recipes.

Johnsonville natives Meck, Patricia and Tracy Hartfield took part in the event with blacksmithing, weaving and woodworking.

Beaumier said she chose the March date because it is during the time the shad “runs” up the river to lay eggs.

The event also raised money through ticket sales and a silent auction to raise money for camping platforms to place along the Lynches River.

Every 10 miles there will be a camping platform for people paddling the river to use for camping.

Beaumier said the first platform will built by the end of the year.

Event organizers expect to find out the totals for how much money raised in the next few weeks, Beaumier said.