Saving The Historic Quaker Bridge
July 9, 2015

The Rest of the Story

Brian S. Yedinak, PE
Williamson Road - Quaker Bridge Preservation – Mercer County

Photo Credit: www.Venangoil.com
Quaker Bridge Preservation

- An Attempt by a Local Group to Preserve In-Place as a Bridge Park
- No Established Process to Follow
- 9+ Years to date
- Encountered Many Road Blocks
- Out of State Owner
- Multiple On-Site Rent to Own Occupants Over the Years

- Bridge replacement underway
  - Upstream of existing bridge
- Nate Clark engages PennDOT
- Spring 2006: New bridge/roadway opens
- June demolition planned
  - Cutting torches on site
2006

- The Historic Quaker Bridge Foundation formed
- Decision made to suspend demolition for 6 months
- Foundation enters into a sales agreement to Purchase 1 Acre
Quaker Bridge saved

By MAGGIE IRVINE
Record Reporter-Staff Writer

Failure is not an option for Nathan Clark of Greenville, who has been working for the past 13 months to save Quaker Bridge on Williamson Road.

With plans for the new bridge currently under construction by Delta Contractors, Inc. of Hermitage, to open tentatively at the end of July, time was running out quickly for Clark.

On Monday, June 5, the contractors at the bridge construction site on Williamson Road were unloading their oxygen and acetylene tanks and stringing hoses to torch Quaker Bridge.

They were literally minutes from torching the historic bridge when Clark arrived on the scene to halt the demolition.

SUGAR GROVE TOWNSHIP — Quaker Bridge on Williamson Road is currently intended to remain in place as a pedestrian bridge and tourist attraction. It was built in
2007

- Step by Step Process Outlined
- Demolition Offset Funds Available
- Public Private Partnership (PPP) Agreement needed
2007

- Foundation Mission Statement:

  “...to own, structurally maintain and aesthetically preserve the 1898 Williamson Road/Quaker Bridge...create and maintain an inviting and accessible visitors’ park for the local community...”
2008

- PPP Agreement Executed Jan. 8th
- Demo Offset Funds Paid: $27,516
- PUC Calls for Field Meeting
  - Bridge was not demolished
  - RR concerns about access to their lands
- Foundation Develops Subdivision Plan for 1 Acre Bridge Park
2009

- PUC Issues Revised Order Allowing Bridge to Remain, but Only After:
  - PennDOT Inspected Bridge to Determine Condition and Needs
  - Foundation provided proof of viable entity
  - Foundation Agrees to perform repairs and fix RR access concerns
- Subdivision Plan Approved
Historic Gravel Run Road Bridge Railings Delivered to Quaker Bridge

Foundation Seeks Partial Lien Release From Chase Bank
Foundation Continues Back and Forth with Chase Bank Regarding Partial Lien Release

- Won’t accept PennDOT ROW Plan
- Won’t accept Approved Subdivision Plan
- Requires Full 12.7 Acre Property Survey
Survey Challenges

- Bordered on all 4 sides by Railroad Property
- RR valuation maps and records dating back to mid 1800s
- Bisected North/South by Shenango River
- Bisected West/East by SR 4006
- Overall Very Challenging and Expensive
2012

- Mercer Pike Historic Truss Preservation MOU
- SR 2003 Crawford County
- To be Removed, Rehabbed, and Reinstalled on Another Local Road
- Construction Determines Truss is in Worse Condition and Cuts Up Key Members
- Restoration Not Possible
2013

- MOU for Mercer Pike Historic Truss Not Achieved
- FHWA and PHMC to Require PennDOT to Perform Other Historic Bridge Preservation
- Discussions on Possible Mitigation
2014

- Foundation Contacts PennDOT Asking to Forget the Whole Deal
- “Giving Up”
- Revised Mercer Pike MOU:
  - Provide Assistance to Foundation with Survey, Subdivision Plan, and Pay $56,000 for Land Purchase (Now 6.8 Acres)
  - Rehabilitate Another Bridge (Marsh Road)
June 17th: Foundation Purchases Land

Next Steps:

- Revise PennDOT’s Waterway Permit
- New Permit for Foundation to Own Bridge
- File Docs in Court to Formally Vacate Old Right of Way
- Issue HOP to Foundation for Park Driveway
Quaker Bridge Preservation
Quaker Bridge Preservation

- 9+ Year process to date
- The Historic Quaker Bridge Foundation established to take over ownership and establish park

Foundation Contact Info:

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Questions?