



This bridge is in harmony with its setting. Photo 85 with Wawayanda Mountain in the background shows how the solid and rustic bridge blends with the landscape. As one worker said while leaving on the last day, “It looks as if it’s always been there.”

A valid criticism from an aesthetic perspective is, of course, the height of the bridge, but this is absolutely necessary for environmental and durability reasons. The bridge does end abruptly; however. The engineer was advised on numerous occasions that handicap ramps up to the bridge platform are phase II of the project. These ramps shall serve to improve the geometric aesthetics of the bridge as well as its functional convenience.



Photo 85. View of bridge looking east. Wawayanda Mountain is in the background. *Photo courtesy of Mr. Stephen Klein, Jr.*

Project Supervision and Labor Force

The project was fortunate in that it had in essence four construction supervisors who worked cooperatively. Each had an area of responsibility but routinely consulted one another. This resulted in someone always being available to direct the volunteer labor force in a productive manner. These were hands-on working supervisors, which contributed to morale and productivity. The supervisors, in alphabetical order, were:

- Mr. Paul DeCoste, NJ Appalachian Trail Management Committee of the NY-NJ Trail Conference
- Mr. Tibor Latincics, P.E., Conklin Associates
- Mr. Pete Morrissey, GPU Energy
- Mr. Wes Powers, NJ State Park Service

As indicated in the “Peoplepower Breakdown” discussion on page 87-88, the labor force was a unique public-private partnership grounded in volunteer spirit. As the bridge rose out of the Pochuck Quagmire, the days grew shorter and colder, and site access deteriorated, but the work force’s interest and enthusiasm only increased. The NY-NJ Trail Conference volunteers handled a large quantity of diverse tasks from site access to carpentry. Mr. Powers, Project Site Manager, brought to the project his 27 years of experience with the New



Photo 86. “Project Principals” Standing (left to right) Tibor Latincics, Anne Lutkenhouse, Pete Morrissey, Paul DeCoste, Kneeling - Paul Bell, Wes Powers. *Photo courtesy of Ms. Marcy Dubinsky.*

Jersey State Park Service. Mr. McCurry and the Waway-anda State Park staff provided a skilled labor force for work that could only be performed during normal business hours. The state correctional inmates provided a great deal of hard work, such as moving concrete. The expertise, material, and machinery of GPU Energy, under the supervision of Mr. Morrissey, made the tower and wire work a reality. Mr. DeCoste provided people management skills and community coordination. The organization of the volunteer workforce was due to Mr. DeCoste’s countless phone calls. Mr. Bell brought to the project his unique networking abilities, statesmanship, and a deep, personal interest in the project. He originally approached the Trail Conference concerning a memorial donation in the name of his son, Duane Bell, who was



an avid Appalachian Trail hiker who died tragically in a car accident. Ms. Anne Lutkenhouse, the Project Director of the NY-NJ Trail Conference, provided critical behind-the-scenes administrative support.

A true cooperative public-private partnership, the bridge construction would not have been completed as quickly nor successfully as it was without each partner's contribution.

Site Access

The project received a major boost from Mother Nature in the summer of 1995, for it was North Jersey's driest summer in the past 100 years. Areas of the project site that are normally inundated were bone dry. At the start of the project, access to the site was achieved by cutting back the weeds, incorporating stone wheel blankets, and using stone and temporary culverts in major low points. In addition, two adjacent property owners graciously allowed temporary construction vehicle access across their property. From the east, John Hill Corporation allowed use of a 2,500-foot long dirt road that led directly from a paved road to the "east meadow." From the west, Mrs. Esposito allowed traffic across her property. This provided the only possible route across the west quagmire for the tracked construction equipment. These three factors made construction access significantly easier than ever imagined. After the first eight weeks, the weather turned for the worse. While the heavy rains slowed the project, the subsurface work was already complete.

Public Safety, Worker Safety, and Project Partner Risk Management

As stated earlier, the primary project goals were to eliminate the dangerous 2.1 mile roadwalk along the heavily traveled county road and to place the Appalachian Trail, for aesthetic reasons, within the designated and previously purchased trail corridor. This would require the construction of a safe, practical, cost-effective, and durable bridge over the Pochuck Creek. The responsibility for placement of the trail within the corridor and over the creek crossing lay with the NJ Division of Parks and Forestry. The NY-NJ Trail Conference and other project volunteers were more than willing to assist with the planning, design, and environmental permits for what was essentially a public works project. This involvement focused the project, gave it a specific direction, and stretched public funding. By taking an active role in the elimination of a dangerous roadwalk and creek crossing, the project partners were exposing themselves to risk (liability).

The conundrum of public safety and elevated suspension bridges is demonstrated by the 1973 Appalachian Trail tragedy at Clarendon Gorge in Vermont. Clarendon Gorge is an awe-inspiring rocky gorge of the Mill River. It has sheer rock walls of 100 feet or more in height. The Appalachian and Long Trails pass over the Gorge via the Robert Brugman Memorial Suspension Bridge. The combination of the rocky gorge, tumultuous waters below, clifftop conifers, the bridge height, and narrow walkway make for a beautiful but eerie crossing. The bridge is 32 feet above the river, but the sensation one gets is that it is significantly higher. The first suspension bridge over Clarendon Gorge was designed and built by Emile Boselli of the Green Mountain Club. It was opened to foot traffic in 1958. The 55-foot span suspension bridge, 32-feet above the river replaced log bridges down in the gorge. The rudimentary log bridges were routinely washed away, leaving hikers to negotiate a dangerous ford. In late June 1973, several heavy rainstorms in a short period of time hit Vermont resulting in severe flooding. The north tower of the Clarendon Gorge Suspension Bridge gave way to high water on June 30, 1973. The bridge cablework held together and slapped against the south wall of the