



FACT SHEET ~ MAY 2019

History

- Constructed in 1862 by David Wood as a part of the Virginia Turnpike
- Granted National Historic Designation July 14, 1971
- California Registered Landmark #390, listed August 26, 1947
- American Society of Civil Engineers Historic Civil Engineering Landmark #14-1970

Built to move supplies and people along the Virginia Turnpike toward the gold and silver fields during the late 1800's, a vital link to California's Gold Rush and transportation history.

It is the longest single-span wooden covered bridge remaining in the world.

Over the past 157 years the Bridge has suffered from aging and extreme weather conditions creating dry rot of the structural supports, twisting of the arches, and misalignment of the end supports with the possibility of total collapse of the entire Covered Bridge.

An engineering survey conducted in 2011 found structural problems so severe that the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) determined that the Bridge had to be closed to all visitor traffic.

Financial Summary

- August 2012 engineering estimate \$1.1million for immediate repairs
- DPR, working with CalTrans secured \$545,000 Federal Grant which required matching funds of \$43,000
- South Yuba River Park Association (SYRPA) received \$10,000 Grant from California State Parks Foundation and added \$20,000 for a donation of \$30,000 to the States Donor Match Program; creating a fund of \$60,000 to secure the Federal Grant.

The Governor's Proposed 2014 Infrastructure Capital Funding Plan, which was approved by the Legislature, contained a specific line item for the repair and restoration of the Bridge identifying \$318,000 for 2014-2015 and \$943,000 for 2016-17. The Legislature approved \$1million from Proposition 84 funds and \$318,000 from the General Fund in the 2014-15 Budget to commence work on the Renovation Project.

- Temporary stabilization efforts for the Bridge were completed with a cost of \$268,000. (Phase I). The State budgeted \$114,500 in 2013-14 and covered the remaining cost from a fund provided by in-kind match monies identified for hours worked by Volunteer South Yuba River Park Docents.
- DPR completed the stabilization effort in February 2014.
- In 2016, following an extensive assessment of the condition of the Bridge and the work needed to completely renovate the structure and raise the Bridge by two feet, a new cost estimate for the work stood at \$3.9 million. This was an increase of \$2.6 million over the original \$1.3 million in the 2014-15 State Budget.
- The initial \$1.3 million already allocated was sufficient to cover all of the engineering and architectural plans, the assessment and all permitting processes. The engineering and architectural plans are complete.

- The permit process began in February 2016. The agencies involved include Army Corps of Engineers, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Historical Preservation, CalTrans and a CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) and NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) process. It was completed in 2018.
- The contract was put out for bid in April 2018. The bids for the project came in substantially over the \$3.9 million allocated. The Save Our Bridge Campaign Committee put in extensive efforts to secure the necessary additional funding from the State to complete the project.
- The new total Project Budget is \$6.9 million.

The project is now proceeding with a projected completion date of March 2020.

Current Status

The construction phase of the Project is scheduled to begin in June 2019.

- Temporary stabilization efforts for the Bridge were completed in February 2014; that is the exterior structure you see now supporting the Bridge.
- All permits are in place; a contract has been signed and issued to Spectra Company who will start mobilizing for work on April 30, 2019.
- All funding has been secured; a total \$6.9 million.
- The staging area for material will be on both sides of the bridge. Hikers will have access to the Pt. Defiance trail with some temporary closures.
- The south parking lot may have temporary closures; there will be areas cordoned off for staging by the contractor and for safety.
- Visitor access to the historic area including the Barn, the restored Shell Gas Station and the Visitor Center and Gift Shop will be directed to the Pleasant Valley Road side of the Barn.
- Areas of the river under the Bridge will be closed off during certain construction phases.
- The Visitor Center and Gift Shop will remain open unless temporary closures are issued; the public will be notified by the State.
- A new design to support the Bridge during the whole restoration process is being explored. The proposed new design would be constructing an exterior support system that will encompass and extend beyond the Bridge. This structure will eliminate the need to put support structures in the river under the Bridge and the need to wait for low river flows to begin work. The original plan to place support structures in the river is still being considered.
- The new design, if feasible, would also reduce the need to remove structures in the river before the next high water period. This means the renovation process could proceed with more deliberation and with less pressure to complete any major structural work in a constrained time period.
- All eventualities are being considered to provide an end product that is historically correct, provides for a much more structurally sound Bridge and has the minimum impact on the Park.
- The construction project timeframe is from March 27, 2019 to March 20, 2020. There may be delays due to weather, availability of historically correct materials and other factors.
- SYRPA and Park Volunteers will begin a photographic record of the Project as soon as construction begins. Access to the daily progress photos will be available on a new web page exclusively for the Bridge Restoration Project located on the SYRPA website at <https://www.southyubariverstatepark.org>
- Additionally a new website at https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=29821 has been created by DPR for the Project. It is quite extensive as it has plans, history, drawings and reports related to the Project. It is available for anyone to access.
- The goal is to restore the bridge to as close to original condition as possible and have it safe so that Park visitors can again walk across and enjoy this iconic piece of California history.

*****SPECIAL NOTE*****

The Restoration Celebrations around the Bridge reopening are in the planning stages. The preliminary ideas are for multiple celebration events in Spring and Summer of 2020. If you are interested in helping out with the celebrations, please email: syrpanews@gmail.com and leave your contact information. Thanks!

What you can do:

Spread the word. Make sure your friends, acquaintances, organizations and business contacts are aware of the danger of losing this irreplaceable historic Bridge. Stay informed, check the SYRPA website below for updates on the project and any help that may be needed to ensure the project is funded and completed.

Join the South Yuba River Park Association, see website at www.southyubariverstatepark.org) to lend support to the restoration effort and to assist in providing financial and interpretive material support to the Park.

TOGETHER WE CAN “SAVE OUR BRIDGE”