

DNREC Division of Parks & Recreation installs refurbished historic bridge on Yorklyn trail

The McIntyre Bowstring Bridge, formerly located in Iowa, touches down on its new abutments, and will serve as a critical connection between the Yorklyn Bridge Trail and the Auburn Heights Trail in Yorklyn. DNREC photo.

YORKLYN – DNREC’s Division of Parks & Recreation installed a pedestrian bridge on a trail near Auburn Heights in Yorklyn by reusing a restored historic bridge today. The replacement bridge, The McIntyre Bowstring Bridge, was built in 1883 and set into place originally in Iowa.

The refurbished bridge placement is part of the Auburn Valley Master Plan project in Yorklyn, a multi- year project designed to remediate and repurpose the former NVF paper mill site while connecting new and existing trails in the region.

The bridge is 120 feet long and 15 feet wide. It was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1998, although it was removed from the register in 2013 after it was damaged in a flood and removed from the water for restoration. It is still eligible for reinstatement on the register following its completion at Yorklyn.

Eighty percent of the original structure has been retained, including four original wrought and cast iron piers. The new bridge will carry pedestrians, bicyclists, equestrians, and antique cars, and sits on the approximate location of the former West Chester, Kennett & Wilmington Electric Railroad, and the Kennett Trolley that ran through the NVF site from 1903 till 1923. The bridge is being set into place to connect a new

trail on the NVF side of Red Clay Creek and existing trails there, to the Auburn Heights side, including the Auburn Heights Mansion and Museum and the trails located there.

“This restored bridge will create the critical link between the NVF site and the Auburn Heights complex,” said DNREC Secretary Shawn M. Garvin. “We are really pleased to be a part of this historic bridge being relocated, seeing new life, and becoming repurposed for the public’s enjoyment.”

The new bridge’s parts have been on site for about two weeks, and have been assembled on the ground by Workin’ Bridges, a non-profit company under contract with the Division of Parks & Recreation to provide restored historic bridges for the Auburn Heights project. The work is being supervised by the Division. The abutments were built by Mumford and Miller, as part of the Division’s current Bengue Road trail connector project.

This is the first of four total bridge projects to be done over the next two years. Two other refurbished historic bridges will be set in new locations and one existing bridge will be replaced with another refurbished historic bridge. Each bridge will be from the late 1800s, coming from different states with different styles. These will tie into the other historic bridges in the area.

Contact: Beth Shockley, DNREC Public Affairs, 302-739-9902

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