

The Restoration of the Long Pond Ironworks Bridge

The rebuilding of the bridge at Long Pond Ironworks State Park crossing the Wanaque River—washed away in 2011 by Hurricane Irene—was finally completed at the end of 2016. How could a “simple” hiking trail footbridge take so long to rebuild? We break down the process.

► **FEBRUARY 2012:** The Trail Conference works on a New Jersey Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grant application to help fund construction of a new bridge. Due to bank erosion, the old, 30-foot crossing now needs to be 70 feet long.

► **JANUARY 2013:** The RTP is awarded by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP). Staff turnover at the Trail Conference puts the project on hold for several months.

1. APRIL 2014: Scouting begins to plan construction. This photo shows the crossing of the Highlands Trail, Sterling Ridge Trail, and Hasenclever Iron Trail from the western bank of the Wanaque at that time. Your ankles would get wet without a bridge, to say the least!

2. JULY 2015: Volunteer and professional engineer Tibor Latincics provides the ability to survey the site and prepare permits. His expertise is critical at every stage of the project.

3. DECEMBER 2015: Trail Conference staff, volunteers, and NJDEP partners compile the large permit packet for final submission and approval. It contains

professionally engineered bridge blueprints, a topographic site survey map, river cross-section, soil information, letters of support from local archaeologists, environmental impact assessments, and more.

4. APRIL 2016: The final permit is received. The following month, Tibor fords the river for measurements while Steve Bianco of Marlboro Mountain Construction assists.

5. SEPTEMBER 2016: Ground is broken for the project. Marlboro Mountain Construction, with help from Trail Conference staff, begins construction of the abutments. Paul Frost, President of the Friends of Long Pond Ironworks, is on hand to ensure that nothing of historical or archaeological significance is disturbed.

6. OCTOBER 2016: The abutments, now completed, are almost 10 feet tall. Much of these structures will be buried underground and invisible to hikers.

7. NOV. 7, 2016: Trusses are delivered by Tahawus Trails. Cold temps and rain don't stop volunteers, including several members of the Long Distance Trails Crew, from contributing nearly 100 hours to the project.

8. NOV. 15, 2016: After years of work, the bridge finally stands completed. Hikers can once again utilize the long-distance Highlands Trail, access the historic Hasenclever Iron Trail, and follow the Sterling Ridge Trail into Sterling Forest State Park. 🌿 Peter Dolan

PHOTOS: TRAIL CONFERENCE; CENTER: KEVIN SIMPSON



Though the bridge is restored, we still have lots of need for volunteers in the area. If you're interested in giving back to the hiking community, we'd love to hear from you! Email us at volunteers@nynjtc.org.

