
Springwater Volunteer Covered Bridge Story

In 1989, the very old concrete bridge on 24th Lane, over the Pine River, in the Town of Springwater, needed replacement. An engineering firm was hired to design a new bridge of concrete and steel at an estimated cost of \$100,000.

About the same time, a Springwater Town Board member, Garth Towne, found himself in Pennsylvania for a daughter's wedding. He was intrigued by the area's many wooden covered bridges.

On one of them was a plaque that indicated the bridge was designed and built by Itheil Towne, Garth's great-grandfather's cousin. The idea was born to build a covered bridge back home in Springwater instead of the bridge the engineers had proposed.

After many meetings with the Department of Transportation, engineers and representatives from other agencies, the project seemed doomed. The DOT was insisting on a two-lane bridge, and the covered bridge was a one-lane design. The Town Board decided to drop all state and federal funding and build the structure on their own.

A "Covered Bridge Fund" was set up at a local bank to raise money for the bridge. Funds came in a variety of ways. T-shirts with a drawing of a covered bridge and the logo "Covering the Future with the Past" were sold and many donations from individuals and groups were received.

Demolition of the old bridge began in July 1996. Large Douglas Fir timbers were hauled in from Oregon in August, and construction

began in Garth's pickle shed. The trusses (sides) of the bridge were assembled in the shed. In October, the large trusses were hauled by truck to the site and swung into place with a crane. Rafters were bolted together and the roof set in place before winter. All this was done through donations of labor and equipment.

Construction resumed in the spring of 1997. The average age of the core group of six men (all volunteers) was 74. Four of the six have since passed away.



The Dedication

June 1, 1997, politicians, Ben Brancel, Luther Olsen and Bob Welch were speakers at the dedication. A flag bearer, a horse pulling a doctor's buggy, antique cars, pep-band, barbershop quartet and 450 friends celebrated "Their Bridge". The total cost was just over \$50,000.

Because the bridge was constructed with mainly volunteer workers, the Town Board decided to name it the **Springwater Volunteer Bridge**, the name says it all. The bridge could not have been completed without the scores of people who helped. The short section of 24th Lane, between Hwy. A and Portage Rd., was renamed "Covered Bridge Road".

Meanwhile, Kermit and Shirley Jorgensen were turning their land next to the bridge into a peaceful little park. They bought a gazebo and picnic table, and had a landscaper add flowers, shrubs and build a concrete walkway, turning what was once a barnyard, into a beautiful flower garden on the Pine River.

Visitors from 28 states and five different countries signed the guest book register in just the first year, and when you visit, you will find it located in the gazebo – please sign in.

Over 90 weddings have taken place in the park in the last 18 years. To make reservations for weddings, please see the reverse side for information.

New Ownership

In December 2010, the Township purchased the Jorgensen property for two reasons. They wanted the park to remain open to the public and because the main portion of the Jorgensen home was the old Land Office in Saxeville, which was moved to its present location in 1858. Kermit's Foster Dad, George Rasmussen, was born in the house, lived his entire life there, and was a Clerk of the Town for 42 years – many board meetings were held in this house.





Just as the community joined in the volunteer effort to build the bridge, we hope you will join them in the effort to keep the park open to the public. Donations may be left in the locked box (checked daily) by the entry into the park. Larger donations, made payable to Town of Springwater, can be mailed to:

Everett Eckstein, Chairman
W6771 Alp Ct.
Wild Rose, WI 54984



For weddings, please contact the Town Clerk at 920-622-3808 or email: coveredbridgepark54984@gmail.com

All other uses, such as picnics, require no permission. Donations are always welcome.

To Project Supporters
The Springwater Town Board wishes to sincerely thank all those who have and will, contribute to the construction of the **SPRINGWATER VOLUNTEER BRIDGE**. Your monetary contributions, time, labor, expertise, equipment and materials is most appreciated. Without your support, this project would not have been possible.

Springwater Town Board

Everett Eckstein, Chairman
Paul Zimmer, Supervisor
Ed Hernandez, Supervisor

Park Maintenance

The Covered Bridge Park is now maintained by volunteers from Waushara County Master Gardeners and Town of Springwater maintenance staff, under the guidance of the Town Board Chair.

The park, which has 400 feet on the Pine River, (a Class A trout stream) will continually change as new planting areas consisting of a bog area, native plants and a meadow, are part of the long-range master plan.

You are invited to wander through the park, sit and meditate on a park bench while listening to the murmuring waters, listen to the birds singing and enjoy other wildlife.

Come and enjoy!

WELCOME TO THE TOWN OF SPRINGWATER



Home of the
Volunteer Covered Bridge
and
Covered Bridge Park

*Covering the Future . . .
With the Past*

