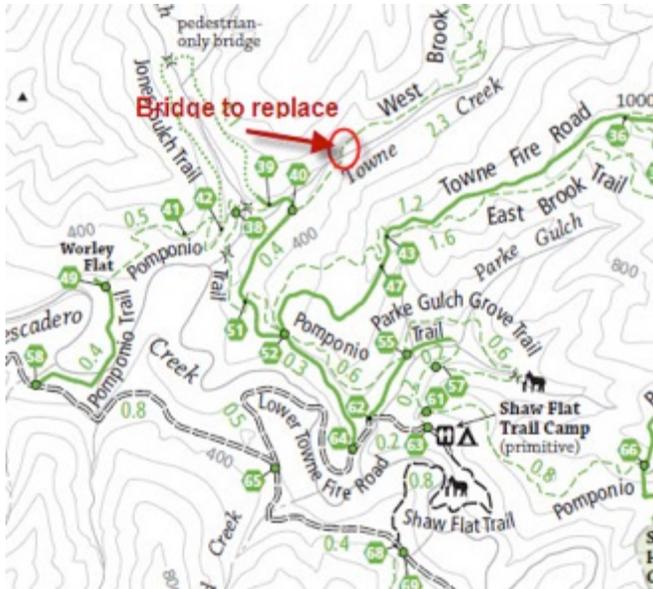


Towne Creek Bridge Replaced By Highly Motivated Volunteers

Located in the beautiful Pescadero Creek County Park, the West Brook Trail has been a favorite of hikers and equestrians for many years. The trail winds down the beautiful Towne Creek valley among towering redwoods and crosses Towne Creek near the bottom on a bridge that was constructed many years ago. The old bridge was 20 feet long and built with abutments at the edges of the creek. Over the years, the creek has eroded the western abutment. This caused the bridge to fail requiring the bridge and trail to be closed. San Mateo County Parks has jurisdiction for this area. They have been dealing with many issues in the parks over the years and they had indicated they could not forecast when the bridge could be replaced. So our equestrian community rallied to see what could be done to help.

The Mounted Patrol Foundation (a 501(c)(3) charitable entity), led by Don Pugh, spearheaded the drive to raise funds to build a new bridge which was estimated to cost approximately \$25,000. Within a short period of time, the funds were sent by generous donors which are listed at the end of this article, and planning began.



Map of Pescadero Creek Park



The old bridge that was replaced.



Walter Gloskowski assessing the bridge site from staging area.

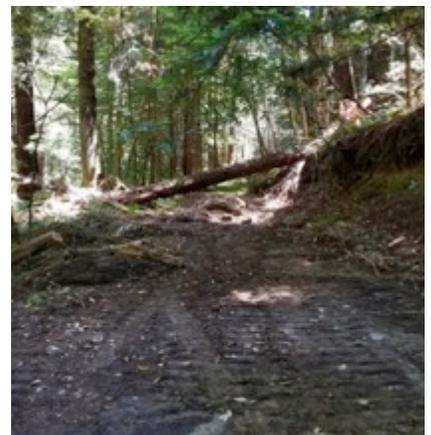


Western abutment showing erosion.

The team from ETRAC (Equestrian Trail Action Committee): Mike Bushue and Walter Gloskowski, designed a new bridge that is 30 feet long, which allowed the new abutments to be set back 5 feet from the creek edges. Because of this, it was not necessary to do any work in the creek. The 30 foot beams are Alaskan Yellow Cedar glue lams, which are stronger than the old bridge. The new bridge is also 1 foot wider to permit County staff to drive small equipment over the bridge in the case of an emergency or fire. The new bridge is in the same location as the old bridge. Engineering drawings were completed and submitted. Environmental approval and permits were issued mid-December 2018 by the county. Budget estimate for the bridge was \$25,000 total: \$15,000 for lumber, \$5,000 for hardware and \$5,000 for All Fence (contractor for foundations) and/or misc. needed. County indicated work could commence April 16, 2019, but the weather had other ideas. The Towne creek was still too high to cross and a major sinkhole had developed on the Towne Fire road which was the access to the site. Finally, vehicle access was granted on June 11th so demolition could begin. And what follows is the rest of the story.....



The material that was ordered, arrives and is unloaded at the Memorial Park corporate yard. Mike Bushue supervising delivery.



Getting the materials to the site was a bit tricky. There is an old logging road up above the bridge site that was used as a staging area for materials but needed to be cleared. The county provided a tractor to get the road cleared.

Demolition on the old bridge commences. We were all so fortunate to have as our main volunteer and leader, Mike Bushue, who among his many other talents that were used in the completion of this project, came up with a rigging/cable system that he hooked up to the trees, with tree savers, around the site so that the old beams could be taken out and the new beams could be set in place.



One side railing demo'd.



Getting rigging set to remove the old beams by Tom Bratton and Mike Bushue.



First beam being removed.



David Vasquez and All Fence employee digging foundations.



All Fence employees finishing digging foundations.



All the concrete for the foundations had to be hand-mixed, see large stack to right, they earned their money that day!



Demolition is completed except for leaving a small section to go back and forth on to start laying the new beams, Tom Bratton on the left, Mike Bushue, Joe Coleman and Tom Bratton center, Joe Coleman on right.

Moving the new beams to the site required some creativity! The access to get to the site has many twists and turns. These beams are 30 ft. long. Mike said if they were 6 inches longer, this would not have worked. It took over an hour to get to the site with each set of beams. Each beam weighs approx. 250 lbs.



Frame set up off the side of Mike's truck to haul the new beams.



Going through Towne Creek on the way to the site.

Now that the beams and all the other wood materials were delivered to the staging area, they now had to be moved to the bridge site which was 50 feet down a steep hill. A chute was developed from the old beams to slide the material down.



Top of chute sliding base planking down by Faye Brophy.



"Catching" at the bottom of the chute by Kirk Lang.

Preparation of the new beams begins by setting long metal rods or “pins” in the ends of the beams to be set in the new concrete abutments that have been poured. These pins are then epoxied in to the beam and the concrete.



Drilling the beams to place the pins by Mike Bushue and Tom Bratton.



Mike placing the first beam!



Two new beams placed, old beams to be removed.



The old bridge has been completely demolished and the new beams continue to go in, Teri Baron assisting placement on the left and Ranger Travis on the right assisting showing the cable/pulley system.



Waterproofing material is laid on top of beams and drainage rock goes in on ends with Mike handling the Canycom.



Base planks are laid on top of beams by Bob Rosenberg.

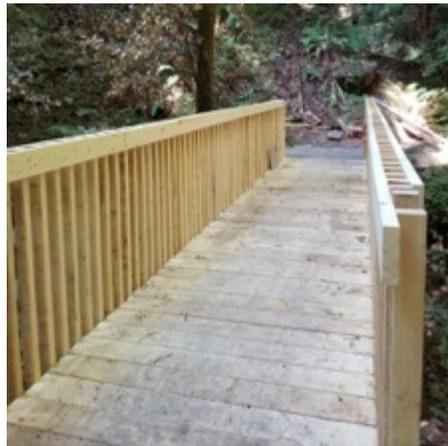
With the base planking completed, the side pickets can now be placed.



One side done!



The side pickets are screwed in and complete, Mike Bushue and Susan Osofsky are happy to have this part done.



Placing the side, top and end rails on the pickets by Ranger Tim, Mike Bushue and Betsy Hart.



Ranger Steve laying the final tread planks.



Putting in the final screw on the tread planks by Mike Bushue.

Our beautiful new bridge, signed off and opened on August 30th! Just goes to show you what a motley crew of volunteers can do, amazing!



Mike giving the thumbs up for a job well done and holding up the original Towne Creek Bridge sign to be placed on the new bridge.



Susan Osofsky testing out the new bridge on Odie, with Mike taking a video on the side.



Well over 600 hours of volunteer time was donated by a magnificent crew of dedicated workers: Mike Bushue, Tom Bratton, Susan Osofsky, Joe Coleman, Teri Baron, Faye Brophy, Emmet Brophy, Kirk Lang, Bob Rosenberg, Betsy Hart, Walter Gloskowski and Rangers Matt, Steve, Dave, Travis, David, Tim and Ronny also worked over 40 hours. A huge thank you to Don Pugh for his fund-raising efforts without which none of this would be possible. Many thanks to all the volunteers, you are the best. The bridge was built on budget--no small accomplishment.

**Thanks to the many generous supporters who donated
\$25,700 to this project:**

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The Don and Carole Tanklage Foundation

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