

Readfield's Mill Stream Footbridge Replaced

Early this fall Larry Dunn said, "We should get the job done before snow flies." As it turned out, the Town had a new footbridge across the Mill Stream at Factory Square just one week before the late October snowstorm. His goal was met, but just barely.

On Saturday, October 22, almost twenty volunteers showed up at the end of Mill Street to tackle the tasks of removing an old bridge (built by the National Guard in the 1980's) and putting together a new and attractive replacement. By 5:30 that afternoon, the work was complete.

Former contractor Larry Dunn had taken on the job for the Select Board. He designed the bridge (with advice from engineers Doug Riley and Jim Tukey,) ordered materials (funded through the Capital Improvements budget approved at Town Meeting,) provided his own tools and equipment, organized the workers, and oversaw the whole project.

Steve Monsulick of Kents Hill Lumber Company brought down the company boom truck, another key to the operation. Steve not only delivered the materials, but spent the afternoon lifting out the old bridge, putting new girders precisely in place, moving boulders, and hauling away the old structure for disposal at the lumber yard.

Volunteers worked steadily through the drizzly afternoon. Under Larry's direction, teams divided up and cooperated on the sometimes-complicated processes of dismantling the old bridge, preparing pieces for the new one, assisting in tricky lifting, and assembling the finished product.

Helpers other than Larry and Steve included Larry's son-in-law Dan Gould and grandson Shane, Milt Wright, Jim Tukey, Andy Tolman and his daughter Laurie and son-in-law Andrew, Bruce Hunter, Will Harris, Bob Mohlar, Greg Durgin, John Perry, Jym St. Pierre, Ben Sniffen, Tim Sniffen, and perhaps others. Their time and energy was essential for the project.

The new footbridge is a link in Readfield's growing network of attractive walking or biking trails. It gives a pleasant view of the Mill Stream and of the historic Factory Square Dam area where many mills operated in the 1800's.

Many thanks go to Readfield's Select Board and especially Larry, for seeing this through, to Steve (who lost his hat down the stream.) to members of the Trails Committee, Conservation Commission, and of course to all other volunteers.

(Submitted by Tim Sniffen, 11-14-11)