

Nomination Form



Please be sure you have carefully reviewed the Nomination Guidelines before completing this form at www.preservationnation.org/issues/11-most-endangered.

PART I

1. General Information

Name of Site: Memorial Bridge

City: Portsmouth, NH and Kittery, ME

State(s): NH and ME

Zip: 03801 and 03904

U.S. Congressional District & Representative: NH Dist. 1: Carol Shea-Porter
ME Dist. 1: Chellie Pingree

NH Senators: Judd Gregg and Jeanne Shaheen

ME Senators: Olympia Snowe and Susan M. Collins

2. Nominator Information

Nominator (Organization and/or individual submitting the nomination):

Dr.

Name: Richard M. Candee

Institution/Organization: Portsmouth Historical Society

Institution/Organization's Website: PortsmouthHistory.org

Nominator Title: Vice President

Email Address: rcandee@maine.rr.com

Phone Number: (207) 363-6635

Fax Number: n/a

Street Address (No P.O. Boxes): 6 Scituate Road

City: York

State: ME

Zip: 03909

Did you discuss this nomination with a National Trust for Historic Preservation representative? To contact a Regional Office, go to www.preservationnation.org/about-us/regional-offices.

YES, Wendy Nicholas NERO; also Most Endangered staff in Washington

· If not, who did you discuss the nomination with?

3. Owner Information

The owner's approval is desirable, but not required to nominate a site. The owner should be listed regardless of whether or not he/she endorses the application.

· Is the owner of the property aware of the nomination to America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places? YES

Memorial Bridge is owned by BOTH Maine and NH, although NH has operational control. NH DOT and ME DOT have been informed of this nomination Dec. 2, 2008.

· Does the owner of the property endorse the nomination to America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places?

Neither agency, at this stage, supports the nomination.

Name:

Institution/Organization: NH Department of Transportation

Institution/Organization's Website: www.nh.gov/dot/

Owner Title:

Email Address: RLandry@dot.state.nh.us

Phone Number: 603 271-3734

Fax Number:

Street Address (No P.O. Boxes): Morton Building, Hazen Road [PO Box 483]

City: Concord,

State: NH

Zip: 03302-0483

4. Media Contact Information

· The media contact person should be very knowledgeable about the site and available to answer questions. If the site is included on the list of America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places, the National Trust may give this name to members of the press. **Note: The contact person may be the same as the nominator. You do not need to re-enter the information if the nominator and media contact person are the same.**

· Is the Nominator Contact also the Media Contact? NO

Name: Jennifer Goodman

Institution/Organization: New Hampshire Preservation Alliance

Institution/Organization's Website: www.nhpreservation.org

Media Contact Title: Exec. Director

Email Address: jg@nhpreservation.org

Phone Number: (603) 224-2281

Street Address (No P.O. Boxes): 7 Eagle Square [PO Box 268]

City: Concord State: NH Zip: 03301

5. Stakeholder Information

· What individuals or organizations can be counted on to support this listing?

Marguerite Matthews, President
Portsmouth Historical Society
PO Box 728
Portsmouth, NH 03802-0728
(603) 436-8420

John Grossman
Portsmouth Advocates
170 Mechanic St.
Portsmouth, NH 03801
(603) 436-9485

Greg Paxton, Exec. Dir.
Maine Preservation
500 Congress Street, 2nd Floor
Portland, Maine 04101
Phone: (207) 775-3652
Fax: (207) 775-7737
www.maine Preservation.org

Jennifer Goodman, Exec. Dir.
NH Preservation Alliance
PO Box 268
Concord NH 03302-0268
(603) 224-2281
jg@nhpreservation.org

Historic Bridge Foundation

Kitty Henderson, Executive Director
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ME State Senator Peter Bowman
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Town of Kittery, Maine
Jonathan Carter, Town Manager
200 Rogers Road
Kittery Home: 207 475-1329; Fax 207 439-6806
E-mail: jcarter@kitteryme.org

City of Portsmouth
John P. Bohenko. City Manager
1 Junkins Ave.
Portsmouth, NH 03801
jpbohenko@ch.cityofportsmouth.com
603-610-7202 Fax: 603-427-1526

· What individuals or organizations may oppose this listing?

Undetermined

1. Overview

Summarize your nomination in approximately 250 words, addressing the three primary criteria for *America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places*:

1. The significance of the place.
2. The urgency of the threat.
3. The possible solutions that would remove threats to the site.

You may find it easiest to write the summary after you have completed the rest of the nomination. The summary will be used to catalog the entry and will be included in overview materials provided to the staff and selection jury.

Memorial Bridge between Kittery, Maine and Portsmouth, New Hampshire, was the first major vertical lift bridge in the eastern United States. At its 1923 dedication to those who served in WW I, it had the longest lift span in the country (297 feet), making its Waddell design the prototype for later vertical lift bridges with clear spans of over 300 feet. It has been determined nationally significant and eligible for the National Register.

Metal truss and moveable bridges are an endangered resource in civil engineering, iron and steel manufacturing, transportation, and economics. They revolutionized American transportation as the first to embody the science of structural analysis and to employ wrought iron and steel in large quantities and standard shapes. Despite excellent bridge evaluation programs 50% of the nation's historic bridges have been destroyed in the last twenty-five years. Lack of maintenance and a pervasive preference for replacement among transportation agencies often counters the intention of Congress that historic bridges be preserved whenever possible.

Both state's SHPO, DOT, and FHWA representatives signed a MOA to rehabilitate the Memorial Bridge. As low bid came back \$15 million over estimate, ME DOT refused and both states have since moved to study its replacement. One solution would be inclusion in any Congressional action funding the nation's infrastructure, so that the rehabilitation design can be immediately re-bid. Long-range actions to change federal prohibitions on negotiating with bidders before accepting bids and/ or creating federal funding for long-term maintenance of nationally significant structures would assist more broadly.

2. Additional Site Information

· Date(s) of Construction: 1920 -1923

· Type of Structure/Site (Choose the one that best applies): ☐ ☐

Engineering Work

☐

· National, State and/or Local Landmark Designations (Choose all that apply):

National Register Eligible (National Significance)

· Who is responsible for the site financially? State DOTs of Maine and New Hampshire

· Who has legal control and/or authority to approve projects related to the site?

George Campbell, Commissioner, NH DOT

David A. Cole, Commissioner, ME DOT

· Have you previously nominated the site to the National Trust for Historic Preservation's list of America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places?

NO

If yes, in what year (s)?

3. Description of the Site's Significance

· Describe the site's significance including its historic, cultural, artistic, social, and/or architectural value. Specify if the property is unique, but representative of many similar types of sites. If applicable, to what other sites could it be easily compared?

Memorial Bridge, across the Piscataqua River between Maine and New Hampshire, was the first major vertical lift bridge in the eastern United States. At its 1923 dedication as both states' War Memorial to WW I, this bridge had the longest lift span in the country (297 feet), making it the direct prototype for later vertical lift bridges with clear spans of over 300 feet. Its patented Waddell vertical lift, with towers extending 201 feet above mean high water, was the highest in the nation, and its 150-foot vertical clearance above mean high water, achieved through a 129-foot maximum lift, was one of the highest. Today, Memorial Bridge is one of the oldest operational lift bridges in the United States. It retains physical integrity, with alterations having been limited largely to decks, railings, and mechanical systems. It and a related historic district have been determined eligible at the national level for listing on the National Register of Historic Places,

The history of transportation in the United States is written all across our landscape. Among the most evocative embodiments of that history are our metal truss and moveable bridges. Whether rusting as ruins or carrying us safely over the greatest rivers, these structures proclaim our endeavor, extending from the mid-1800s to the mid-1900s, to cross obstacles of an ever more formidable scale. Though most are rooted motionlessly in the earth, metal truss bridges are among the most dynamic of human creations.

Metal truss bridges represent human thought given physical expression. These spans embody the early professional maturity of American civil engineering. They express nineteenth-century engineers' newfound ability to analyze the precise compressive or tensile stresses in a complex structure, and to design a bridge that would carry a specific load with a known factor of safety. They owe their physical existence to improved manufacturing techniques for wrought iron and steel. Because iron and steel are strong both in tension and compression, the earliest metal trusses, designed in the age of horse-drawn and early automobile traffic, were almost ethereal in appearance, echoing in their thin metal sections the delicate lines of the engineer's stress diagrams.

Metal truss and moveable bridges reflect a crucial chapter in American economic and transportation history. In the late 1800s, rural roads in the United States were a national disgrace, rutted and dusty in the summer and a sea of mud in the spring. Our poorly-maintained highway system isolated rural residents, cut them off from potential markets for their produce, wasted the energy of draft animals, and worsened the pervasive problem of farm abandonment.

Beginning in the 1880s, roads in the United States began to be transformed by the "Good Roads" movement, a campaign for reform of rural transportation to improve highways and rebuild their bridges. A number of enterprising bridge companies began to market iron and steel truss spans as substitutes for deteriorated wooden bridges. The resulting legacy of metal bridges is reflected in a number of truss designs, most of American

origin. Some are high or “through” trusses, with overhead lateral bracing. Others are low or “pony” trusses, open at the top. Differing arrangements of the web members of the trusses result give specific names to recognizable truss designs (“Pratt,” “Parker,” “Warren,” etc.), and allow these designs to perform their structural functions in a variety of ways.

Rarest of these metal truss bridges, and often the hardest to preserve, are those with moveable trusses, whether vertical lifts like the Memorial Bridge or the dozens of others bridge types with rising or swinging sections to permit through navigation of the nation’s rivers, canals and other waterways.

4. Description of the Site's Threat

- Describe the major threats to the site. Threats can be divided into two categories: Natural and Human. Natural threats may include flood, fire, or erosion. Human threats include sprawl, inadequate maintenance, neglect, and lack of financial resources. Your site may have other threats beyond those listed here which can also be described in your response.

Our legacy of bridges, and the intelligence and enterprise they embody, is at risk. That risk can be measured with a degree of accuracy because most states began to inventory their National Register-eligible bridges during the 1980s under directives from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Using the baseline documentation provided by these state bridge surveys, a workshop on historic bridges, held in Washington, D. C., in December 2003, came to a dire conclusion:

Since 1991, federal legislation has inspired an important transformation within the transportation community, broadening its mission from the traditional task of providing a safe and efficient highway system to acknowledging that these activities play a critical role in preserving our nation’s natural and historical heritage. Despite this cultural shift, recent statistics suggest that half, if not more, of our Nation’s historic bridges have been lost in the last twenty years—two decades in which transportation and preservation consciousness was at a high level. This is an alarming and sobering statistic.¹

The “alarming loss” of historic American bridges is occurring despite the intent of Congress and the stated positions of several influential entities. Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 allows the federal Secretary of Transportation to approve a transportation project that requires the “use” of a historic resource *only if* (1) there is no feasible and prudent alternative to such “use,” and (2) the project includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the historic resource resulting from such “use” (49 U.S.C. 303 §771.135 Section 4(f)).²

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 similarly requires that every federally-funded or -permitted project avoid doing harm to National Register-eligible resources whenever possible. If harm cannot be avoided, it must be minimized and/or mitigated. The public must be invited to participate in the process of planning for preservation

- Type of Urgency (Select the one that best applies):

☐ **Destruction (with or without replacement) is being proposed** ☐

¹ Eric DeLony and Terry H. Klein, *Historic Bridges: A Heritage at Risk. A Report on a Workshop on the Preservation and Management of Historic Bridges, Washington, D.C., December 3-4, 2003* (2004), p. 1.

² With reference to historic resources, “use” means either a “taking” or the adverse effect of a project upon the resource.

- Describe the current physical condition of the property, threats to the property, and the rate of deterioration.

The Memorial Bridge, while but one of three highway bridges spanning the Piscataqua river between Maine and New Hampshire, is the only bridge to permit pedestrian and bicycle traffic. Its loss would destroy the local bike trail and prevent pedestrian crossing of the river at any point. It plays a critical role in the economic development of both the historic Portsmouth's downtown and Kittery Foreside's recent economic revitalization.

Memorial Bridge is not only #1 on the NH DOT "Red List" of Bridges in New Hampshire in need of major repair, but it attained the highest significance score (30) for eligibility. Earlier efforts to modify and improve the bridge have made it impossible to save and rehabilitate the central lift span, as new steel has been welded over previously rusted original members and cannot be expected to last the estimated 50 years that a major rehabilitation will extend the life of the bridge. If the rehabilitation plan remains unfunded for another 5 years the bridge will be closed, the lift section raised or removed for ship traffic, and the bridge ultimately lost.

After Commissioner Cole's decision that it did not rank high in Maine's overall bridge inventory and at \$60 to 70 Million that rehabilitation plan was no longer prudent to ME DOT's bridge needs, the bids were rejected Dec. 1, 2008. NH DOT's proposal to reduce the project scope and focus on the 3 critical spans of the bridge, as originally defined, was not accepted given Maine's apparent opposition to financial responsibility for maintenance of all three bridges. However, NH DOT moved swiftly toward keeping the bridge operating from two to five years. Moreover, both state's DOTs are beginning a joint transportation study that threatens total removal and possible replacement of Memorial Bridge (or one of the other two bridges over the Piscataqua River) with an entirely new structure..

- Explain the obstacles to implementing effective site protection.

Money. The nearest low bid for the total state project was at least \$15,000,000 higher than the NH DOT and its consulting engineers had estimated. That variance was likely due to the limited number of bridge construction companies with expertise with vertical lift bridges of this sort, as well as high steel and other costs during that bidding period.

Re-bidding Process: NH DOT was forbidden by Federal DOT rules to further negotiate with the low bidder, Chianbro Corp. of Maine without first signing the contract or the State would lose its 80% Federal funding. Now that that bid has been rejected NH DOT has verbally agreed to explore a forensic review with the contractors to discover whether significant saving could have been made, or might yet be made were the original or a scaled back project for the three central spans to be re-bid.

5. Advocacy & Engagement

- Describe any previous measures that government officials, community activists, and other groups have taken to protect the site. Note to what degree these measures have or have not been successful.

The directive in the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 to the Federal Highway Administration to work toward bridge preservation was strengthened in 1987 with the passage of the Surface Transportation and Uniform Relocation Assistance Act (STURAA). This act created a historic bridge program that codified a Congressional finding that it is in the national interest to encourage the rehabilitation, reuse, and preservation of bridges that are significant in American history, architecture, engineering, and culture (23 U.S.C. 144(o)).

The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) has likewise developed a policy on the rehabilitation of historic bridges for continued vehicular use when possible, noting that

historic bridges are important links in our past, serve as safe and vital transportation routes in the present, and can represent significant resources for the future. . . . Bridges are the single most visible icon of the civil engineer's art. By demonstrating interest in the rehabilitation and reuse of historic bridges, the civil engineering profession acknowledges concern with these resources and an awareness of the historic built environment.³

Perceiving the gap between these theoretical commitments and the catastrophic losses in the field, the Standing Committee on the Environment of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) entered into an agreement with the National Cooperative Highway Research Program of the Transportation Research Board to produce general guidelines for bridge rehabilitation and replacement, hoping that such protocols might be adopted across the nation. The resulting report, *Guidelines for Historic Bridge Rehabilitation and Replacement* (March 2007), states that

while the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (amended) and Section 4(f) of the U. S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966 specify nationally applicable processes for considering preservation or replacement of historic bridges (defined as those that are listed in or have been determined eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places), there is no corresponding protocol that ensures a nationally consistent approach to determining when rehabilitation is the appropriate decision or when replacement is justified. State and local transportation agencies have developed a wide variety of approaches for managing historic bridges . . . but few of the processes are founded on written protocols or guidelines that ensure balanced decision making that spells out to all stakeholders when rehabilitation is the prudent alternative.⁴

Guidelines for Historic Bridge Rehabilitation and Replacement is a recent offering that so far is unsupported by any mandate or initiative from AASHTO. As yet, it has had little impact on individual states and certainly has not yet had the anticipated effect of standardizing the treatment and preservation of historic bridges across the nation.

Instead, state and regional highway agencies, many intent on building anew instead of preserving, and often constrained by budget considerations, often allow inadequate maintenance to ensure the preservation of historic bridges. When the resulting deterioration reaches a critical stage, agencies commonly ignore the Congressional mandate to engage in all possible planning to avoid harm to historic bridges. Moving quickly, often with minimal public participation, to a decision that there is no "prudent" alternative to the removal of a bridge, these agencies consistently condemn historic bridges to oblivion. Despite the laws and studies cited above, this pattern of behavior has been recognized among transportation agencies nationwide. In some states, two-thirds of metal truss bridges have been lost since 1984.⁵

³ DeLony and Klein, *Historic Bridges: A Heritage at Risk* (2004), p. 25.

⁴ J. Patrick Harshbarger, Mary E. McMahon, Joseph J. Pullaro, Stephen A. Shaup (Lichtenstein Consulting Engineers, Inc.) in association with Parsons Brinkerhoff Quade & Douglas, Inc., *Guidelines for Historic Bridge rehabilitation and Replacement* (2007), p. A-2.

⁵ DeLony and Klein, *Historic Bridges: A Heritage at Risk* (2004), p. 8.

⁵ J. Patrick Harshbarger, Mary E. McMahon, Joseph J. Pullaro, Stephen A. Shaup (Lichtenstein Consulting Engineers, Inc.) in association with Parsons Brinkerhoff Quade & Douglas, Inc., *Guidelines for Historic Bridge rehabilitation and Replacement* (2007), p. A-2.

⁵ DeLony and Klein, *Historic Bridges: A Heritage at Risk* (2004), p. 8.

All this regulation is threatened by lack of funding for continued maintenance of such bridges, which leads to a culture of much more expensive total replacement or removal. The 1923 Memorial Bridge could serve as the most timely ‘poster child’ for this well-understood problem with the nation's infrastructure,

- Identify key decision-makers in determining the future of the site and provide any information related to timing in the decision process.

George Campbell, Commissioner NH DOT and David Cole, Commissioner ME DOT represent their offices to their respective Governors and the Congressional delegations of both states.

The first joint meeting of representatives from Maine and New Hampshire DOT, SHPO, and FHWA agencies and consulting parties including the Portsmouth Historical Society on December 2, 2008 explored all these and related issues.

Both state’s DOT have now agreed to a connectivity study of all transportation needs of the area. Unfortunately, this seems primarily headed toward removing one of the two National Register eligible bridges from Maine’s inventory. New Hampshire seems to remain more open to using additional Federal funding if it can be found to rehabilitate, and with such aid might even be willing to acquire sole long-term management or even ownership of the Memorial Bridge.

- Describe **at least three advocacy/engagement steps** for preservationists or the general public to take on behalf of the endangered site in your region. Examples may include sending a letter, signing a petition, making donations, or taking a poll. Each of these steps should include specific information such as desired outcome, target audience, and contact information for recipients of any advocacy actions. For more examples, click here to see what past 11 Most Endangered Historic Sites have done.

One step for the Memorial Bridge would be advocacy by local state and federal government representatives and municipal officials for funds to complete the original project as part of the national focus on infrastructure. As it now stands the project could be quickly re-bid, perhaps with some design savings, and the MOA amended.

However, the larger issue provides a menu of needed lobbying efforts in a review of government regulation and support for our most significant bridges.

In fulfillment of the will of Congress, the United States must develop a national strategy for and commitment to the preservation of historic bridges. The upcoming reauthorization of the federal Transportation Act in 2010 offers an opportunity to reshape bridge preservation practices of the United States. Among the steps that have been suggested to accomplish this goal are:

- An FHWA mandate, with funding, to develop statewide bridge preservation programs
- AASHTO backing for preservation and better maintenance, with further studies like *Guidelines for Historic Bridge Rehabilitation and Replacement* (2007).
- Congressional appropriation for the preservation of historic metal truss bridges comparable to the National Historic Covered Bridge Preservation Program, including funding for study, planning, development of a national database of National Register-eligible bridges, and identification of national “best practices” for bridge preservation
- Enhancement of the provisions of Section 4(f) to allow 200% of the estimated cost of demolition (rather than 100%, as at present) to be applied toward the preservation of historic bridges that are bypassed, and

to encourage the use of those bridges for alternate transportation uses such as hiking, bicycling, and off-highway recreational vehicles.

- Provision of dedicated Transportation Enhancement funding specifically for historic bridge preservation.

· Excluding financial support and publicity, describe how inclusion on the list of America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places might assist in the efforts to safeguard the site. Include any ideas for possible forms of collaboration between the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the site nominator - including outreach to non-preservation organizations and diversity groups.

The inclusion of a nationally significant metal truss highway bridge located on the first US. Interstate (Route 1), that has, since its construction 85 years ago, been subject to imperfect maintenance, and now tops the list of bridges in need of immediate repair in the state with operational control over its repair, can be a symbol of the dangerous state our national historic highway infrastructure has fallen.

As Congress considers an economic stimulus package for Federally and State funded infrastructure projects across the land, the unexpectedly higher cost of the Memorial Bridge rehabilitation project illustrates a much larger problem with bridge and highway repairs throughout the United States.

Designation as one of the 11 Most Endangered Historic Sites would allow committed and concerned local and state stakeholders to work with the National Trust for Historic Preservation and other national stakeholders as represented by the attached letters of support to use the fate of this landmark to assist others who lobby in support of infrastructure funding that can assist historic metal truss bridges with well-designed projects ready for implementation. The fact that both Maine and New Hampshire Congressional delegations include preservation-conscious Senators and Representatives, who have often come together over BRAC review of the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, should potentially give this much needed bi-partisan support.

6. Disclaimer

The undersigned hereby gives the National Trust for Historic Preservation a non-exclusive license to use, and allow others to use, in whole or in part, in whatever manner the National Trust may desire, including (but not limited to) use for publicity, audio visual presentation, and/or promotion, all photographs, videos, and other materials submitted to the National Trust in connection with the America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places nomination. The National Trust is hereby given permission to make any editorial changes and/or additions to the materials referred to herein as it may deem necessary or desirable for production purposes. The undersigned hereby agrees that it has the authority to grant these rights, that it has obtained any such rights necessary from third parties, including, without limitation, models, creators, photographers, writers, and producers, and that it will hold harmless and indemnify the National Trust from and against any claim brought against the National Trust from third parties that may arise out of violation of this paragraph.

Type or sign your name here to approve the disclaimer: Dr. Richard M. Candee

7. Photography Release

All images submitted with this nomination must be free of copyright restrictions. Securing reproduction rights and permissions is the responsibility of the nominator. The National Trust for Historic Preservation reserves the right to reproduce and make available to the press all images submitted. Images will not be used for commercial purposes. Photographs and beta footage (b-roll) cannot be returned.

This nomination requires 5-10 high resolution (minimum 300 dpi, 2MB in size) jpeg images with captions and credits. Broadcast (beta) footage submitted as b-roll is also strongly recommended. Please review the Nomination Guidelines for more information about submitting images.

I hereby give my permission for the submitted images to be reproduced to publicize America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places. If photographer(s) is unknown or cannot sign, nominator takes full responsibility. If more than one photographer's work is submitted, please label each image individually.

Nominator's Name/Signature: Richard M. Candee Date: Dec. 2, 2008

Photographer 1 Name/Signature: James L. Garvin, NHDHR Date: Dec. 2, 2008

Photographer 2 Name/Signature: Lynne Emerson Monroe Date: Dec. 2, 2008

Photographer 3 Name/Signature: _____ Date: _____

8. Deadline & Mailing

Complete nomination packages must be received by Friday, December 5, 2008.

Please email, fax, or send via regular mail all additional materials including letters of support, images, and footage. Contact Joelle Schatz, Special Projects Coordinator, with any questions.

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