

kratz road bridge over skippack creek

Location:	Skippack Township, Montgomery County, District 6-0
Completion Date:	5.01.03
Construction Cost:	\$1,800,000
MPMS #:	64335
Contact Information:	Larry Link, PE 610.205.6843 llink@state.pa.us
Themes:	Leverage and preserve existing investments; Understand the context; plan and design within the context

Project Overview: The original Kratz Road Bridge over Skippack Creek was a three-span stone masonry arch bridge constructed in 1909. The bridge is within the boundaries of the Evansburg State Park. In 1994 a portion of the upstream spandrel wall collapsed, forcing the bridge to be closed to traffic. The project team, in collaboration with the community and various agencies set out to design a replacement bridge that would have no adverse effect on the surrounding historic district and would complement the state park. The design goals were to use standard bridge construction methods and materials as much as practical, to mimic elements of the original bridge and provide a safe crossing for traffic and people (and horses) using the bridge.

The project involved considerable input from state and local agencies including PHMC, DCNR, Evansburg State Park, PADEP/ACOE, United States Department of the Interior, Pennsylvania Game Commission, Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory, Skippack Township, and the Montgomery County Conservation District. The District also engaged state and local representatives and the residents of Skippack Township.

As part of a Joint Permit Application, there was a Memorandum of Agreement between the ACOE and PHMC. One stipulation of that agreement required PennDOT to develop a pilot program for stone arch bridge preservation in District 6-0.

Lessons Learned: For any bridge project with possible historic implications, early coordination with the PHMC is recommended. PHMC and BQAD should be consulted regarding their past experiences with similar replacement or rehabilitations and for determining what requirements should be followed when developing the preferred alternative. Also, early coordination with the public and elected officials is recommended to discern their sentiment toward the bridge as it relates to the quality of life within the community.

Flexibility in design is sometimes necessary to arrive at a context-sensitive solution. After studying several alignment alternatives, it was determined that the existing alignment would have the least impact on wetlands and the Park. Maintaining the existing alignment meant that the sharp horizontal curve on the west approach would have to be retained which required a design exception.

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