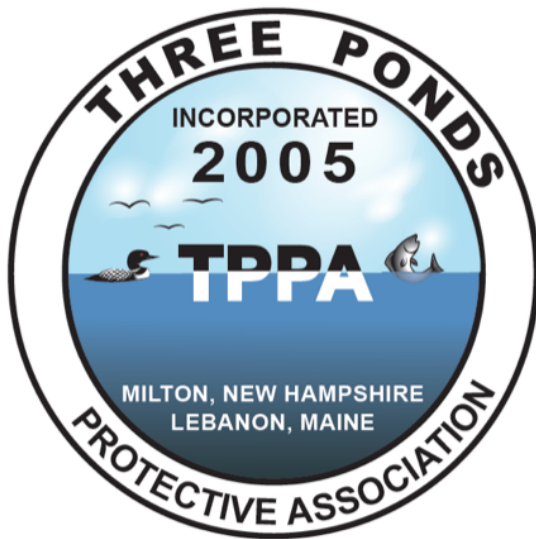


Bridge Survey



A Report Regarding Some of
the Issues Relating to the
Proposed Replacement of
the Bridge between Milton,
NH and Lebanon, ME
prepared by the Three Ponds
Protective Association

October 2022

Introduction

The Three Ponds Protective Association [TPPA] conducted a survey regarding the proposed replacement of the bridge between Milton, NH and Lebanon, ME. The original bridge was removed more than a decade ago after being determined to be structurally unsafe for vehicular traffic. Recently, the NH Department of Transportation proposed replacing the bridge that connects the end of Townhouse Road in Milton to New Bridge Road in Lebanon. While TPPA has no formal role in providing feedback regarding this proposed project we, as a local organization concerned with the environment around Milton Three Ponds, wanted to be prepared should we be asked to provide feedback. The Board of Directors of TPPA has not taken a position on any of the issues relating to the proposed bridge replacement. The survey began as a way to allow our membership to express their views regarding the proposed project but later evolved to allow any interested party to respond to the survey.

The survey was published on TPPA's website www.threeponds.net and was available for approximately two weeks, from mid-September to September 30th. An announcement about the survey was sent to subscribers of TPPA's newsletter, via email, and shared on our Facebook page.

The results of the survey will be shared in two formats, general results consisting of responses from all respondents and a more detailed breakdown of the responses in which the results are presented by disaggregated subgroups.

This summary will be available on the TPPA website, www.threeponds.net.

General Results

The survey generated 161 responses of which 97 (59%) were from members of TPPA and 68 (41%) were from non-members. Of the 165 respondents 56 (34%) were full-time residents of Milton; 43 (25%) were seasonal residents of Milton; 27 (17%) were full-time residents of Lebanon; 34 (21%) were seasonal residents of Lebanon and 4 (2%) were neither full-time or seasonal residents of either Milton or Lebanon. None of the residents identified as campers at Yogi Bear Campground.

Nearly all (94%) of the respondents were aware of the proposed bridge replacement with only 9 who were not.

Of the 165 respondents, 129 (78%) preferred to have the bridge rebuilt with 25 (15%) preferring that the bridge not be rebuilt and 11 (7%) not having on preference either way.

On a question asking about potential environmental impact as a result of the bridge replacement; 71% believed that the project would not have any environmental impact on the Ponds or they reported that they didn't have any knowledge regarding the potential for an environmental impact, while 9% believed that the replacement would have significant impact on the environment and 5% did not respond.

There has been considerable public discussion and concern about the height of a new bridge; 126 (76%) of the survey respondents expressed concern about the height of a replacement while 39 (24%) either had no concern or said that they were not sure or didn't know.

When asked about the height of a new bridge and consideration that should be given to boat passage under the bridge, 65 (40%) reported that they believed the bridge should be replaced at a height of 10' higher than the old bridge, 52 (32%) felt that a replacement height of 5' higher than the old bridge was more appropriate, 31 (19%) felt the bridge should be replaced at its original height, even if it impacted boat traffic. Finally, 14 (9%) again expressed a preference not to have the bridge replaced.

Respondents were given the option to comment and 53 (33%) took advantage of this option, two-thirds did not. Comments are published in Appendix 1 at the end of this report.

The survey was anonymous but respondents were given the option of sharing their email address if they wanted to receive this summary of the results, 42% took advantage of his option.

Responses by Subgroup

The following section offers a cluster breakdown of the survey items base on TPPA membership, non-member responses, home location and full-time or seasonal residency. The data is displayed in a series of charts, without interpretation, so that each reader can draw their own conclusions.

Member vs Non-Member Responses on Preference for Rebuild

	<i>Rebuild</i>	<i>Don't Rebuild</i>	<i>No Preference</i>
<i>TPPA Member</i>	77	13	7
<i>Non-Member</i>	52	12	4

Location and Type of Residency on Preference to Rebuild

	Rebuild	Don't Rebuild	No Preference
Milton Full Time	44	11	2
Milton Seasonal	32	8	3
Lebanon Full Time	24	3	2
Lebanon Seasonal	29	3	4

TPPA Member vs Non-Member and Preferred Height of Replacement

	Original Height	5' Higher	10' Higher	Not Replaced
TPPA Member	17	32	39	7
Non-Member	14	20	26	7

Location and Type of Residency on Height Preference

	Original Height	5' Higher	10' Higher	Not Replaced
Milton Full Time	6	14	23	5
Milton Seasonal	7	12	18	5
Lebanon Full Time	4	7	11	2
Lebanon Seasonal	13	8	11	1

TPPA Member vs Non-Member and Belief for the Potential of Environmental Impact

	No Impact	Slight Impact	Significant Impact	No Knowledge to Determine Impact
TPPA Member	33	14	8	35
Non-Member	28	11	7	21

Appendix 1

Comments

Respondents were provided an open-ended opportunity to comment. What follows are all of the actual comments, as submitted. These have not been edited for clarity, typos or misspellings.

90% of bridge traffic is pontoon style boats which all have Bimini's. I generally use the bridge 5 times a week and it is difficult to raise and lower the bimini each time in and then out of under the bridge with 2 people. I cannot raise and lower it by my self--very dangerous. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to have it at a proper height at high water that allows all pontoon style vessels to cross unimpeded. My guess is that 1,000's of vessels cross under on a busy day.
All for it
Build the damn thing. It's been long enough. All of this crap should have been sorted out years ago.
Consider that kids will be jumping off the bridge and hanging out on it at night
Get on with it.
Get on with it.
I believe that more than concerns about the water quality issues, the concern for traffic conditions on Lebanon's "too small" roads is a HUGE issue that will result in more accidents on New Bridge Road and reaching further into Lebanon as the mega-RVs, traveling on small, curvy roadways, will be a danger.
I don't believe tppa should be issuing a survey that covers topics other than environmental concerns. The public hearing for the project should be the place where public comment is made.
I have been coming to this pond for 30+ years I miss the bridge it was a treat to go the long way visit 4 corners and then go home and the kids loved going under it in the boat
I know some pontoon boat owners are concerned about the height of the bridge limiting their passage under the bridge.....if possible, construct bridge to accommodate them.....but we need a bridge regardless of height.

I think it's dangerous for TPPA to give suggested height changes in this survey without supporting facts, information, and costs for those changes. With height changes, although great for boat traffic, TPPA does not seem to be aware of the possible loss of property for home owners or the Marina near the bridge or the fact that a height change could increase the costs to residents and change the current agreement which would need to take place. These considerations come directly from the project manager at NHDOT. The fact that these concerns have not even been addressed in your survey I believe is irresponsible and potentially leading to detrimental results for some homeowners and a business, including some TPPA members. The phrasing of answer choices is extremely leading, noting the environment impact question was not required to be answered yet the question about boat traffic was a required answer. This survey does not give members knowledge of all the facts going forward and not sure TPPA should be giving input on this subject without consideration of some of its members. Full disclosure helps people make smart, thoughtful decisions. The biggest questions should have been to NHDOT prior to this survey: 1. How much higher, if at all, can the bridge be without impacting property owners on either side or the cost? 2. What are the costs associated with increased height? How much for 5 feet? How much for 10 feet? How might this impact taxpayers and/or will a change require a vote by the taxpayers? 3. Would the current agreement need to be changed and how long would it take to change the agreement for the project? How long will this delay the project? Very disappointed in this survey as so much important information was omitted. People will want the height increased without understanding possible/potential impacts. Survey results could be quite different if people knew what impacts there could be.

I would rank the environmental safety of the lake over height of the bridge. I'd rather take down my bimini and have a healthy lake than get to leave it up but risk the health of the lake. I've answered as if I can have both bimini height and lake health, but I don't have enough information to know if both are possible.

If the justification for building the bridge is to allow emergency vehicles to pass, then the bridge height should accommodate this requirement, not giving priority to boats that can pass underneath. If the bridge is built, then a few higher to accommodate small boats should be given.

it is about time to replace this bridge

It is essential that the bridge be rebuilt. Without it, residents of Townhouse Rd, St James Ave, Micah Terrace, and Pineland Park are essentially on an island with only one way of egress. Townhouse rd has been impacted multiple times over the years when construction/maintenance is performed on the culvert near the Pineland Park Beach. I'm 100% in favor of rebuilding the bridge but also at a height that allows for boat traffic to pass, as boats generally have progressed from shorter ski boats and runabouts to taller pontoons and cruisers with large Biminis and wake towers over the last 20 years. Rebuilding at a lower height would have a significant economic impact on the New Bridge Marina. Thank you.

It is important that boat traffic is not impacted by the new bridge. The bridge will benefit the marina positively and provide an alternate route for emergency vehicles but not much else.

It was supposed to be done years ago. Should have been done already.

<p>Its time for a bridge. Having spent the last 10 summers without it is ridiculous and a safety hazard for the Maine side residents. The fact that stupid people have put boats on the lake that are far to big for the lake is not my problem.</p>
<p>Let us get this bridge replaced. We have waited way too long. Also let's ban the wake boats.</p>
<p>Money has been allocated to replace the original bridge. Increasing the height will add substantial costs and delays and has the potential for requiring the taking of private property. It's easy to say "Sure! LET's increase the height of the bridge" without knowing all the facts. The costs and potential delays and the potential for taking property should be disclosed before offering to increase the height of the bridge. The survey is very misleading.</p>
<p>Most important is the accessibility for emergency personnel to get to either side, should there be a time when there's an evacuation, fire, medical calls, etc. For the bridge not to have been rebuilt immediately, is beyond me, for the above reasons. As far as bridge height, ideally, 10' higher to provide clear access for traffic with tall structures. The lake brings much commerce to both NH & Maine and accessibility to NE Pond is a desirable ride for most boaters.</p>
<p>My primary concern that the bridge be replaced in not for convenience, but for safety concerns (emergency response).</p>
<p>none thanks!</p>
<p>Not one question on this survey asks about the impact of easy traffic access between ME and NH, and the amount of extra time now required to travel around the missing bridge. The ten years our bridge has been missing has been painful for travel by land, and for easy access to the marina by land from the Milton side. The sooner there is a new bridge, the better!</p>
<p>Please distribute a summary of all responses to your email distribution list.</p>
<p>Please note since the bridge was taken done there has been significant improvement to pontoon boats - (ie tri-toons)-Because of the improvements the pontoons are larger in scope and sit higher on the water- they would not pass through the old bridge. The height of the old bridge also was restrictive to pontoon boats and their biminis -Every time you passed under you would have to take down bimini and put back up clearly the original bridge was not high enough so the new bridge would have to be significantly higher</p>
<p>Question #5 . I assume the 5' higher than the old bridge will give approximately 10 feet of clearance.</p>
<p>Realize a rebuilt bridge will make life much easier for a lot of people.....but traffic on Townhouse Road is already heavy and crowded with speeding inattentive drivers who toss all sorts of disgusting litter on the side of the road where we walk our dogs! We took a day this spring to clean up the trash along there, wearing gloves, filling 2 large bags. A few days later the sides of the roadway were once again covered with garbage.</p>
<p>Replacing the bridge after 10 years of clearly not needing it would significantly negatively impact the environment and watershed of the wonderful resource</p>
<p>Replacing the bridge will have a significant negative impact on the environment including the ponds, land, neighborhoods, residents and roads and should not be replaced. In the event the bridge is replaced, consideration to an acceptable bridge height in which a boat, such as those commonly seen on M3P (ie: pontoon), is able to safely navigate under the bridge to access and enjoy the use of all three ponds as is today, must be a priority.</p>

Residents' enjoyment of the entire lake and surrounding area would be severely limited if they only have access to half of Milton response. This will also affect property values and tax revenue.
since the glut of pontoon boats now dominate water traffic, the bridge clearance should be at least 12 feet above the water level.
The bridge is a very crucial part of this community. There are Milton businesses that suffer from it not being in place. The marina and campground are both under new ownership and are bringing a lot of money into our towns with tourism. The back road that's being heavily used in place of this bridge is in very poor condition and will soon be another large expense for the town to repair. Milton town beach and the former icecream shop have obviously suffered from this bridge being down as well, as all of the traffic is being diverted to the back side of the lake.
The bridge should allow a pontoon boat with Bimini up to pass. Pontoon boats in length of 20' to 28' will have a standard clearance requirement and represent the majority of the lake traffic. A bridge that did not allow the passage of a typical pontoon boat would be short sighted. I would even state that residents would find raise to cover any incremental costs if needed.
The bridge should be replaced higher than the previous bridge - newer boats sit higher in the water and need to be able to pass through
The bridge should have been replaced when they took it down with a bridge that met weight ,structural concerns as that was the reason it was removed in the first place
The Bridge should not be so low that it separates the Ponds. Pontoon diameter is much larger than seven years ago - and now most new are Tri-toons. Hoping the new bridge is arched to accommodate
The height of bridge should be determined by what is the most economically feasibility for the location and what is environmentally sensitive to our ponds. It should be at least the clearance of the prior bridge. Milton three ponds are small, overcrowded ponds. Rebuilding the bridge to allow very larger crafts will the increase environmental problems and greatly increase the cost of the bridge to all.
The height should allow boats with biminis. If not, the value of all properties on both lakes will be greatly diminished. This is coming from a real estate appraiser.
The original bridge was 12" higher between the sides next to the center brace. That allowed all boats with normal, collapsible Biminis, to pass beneath the bridge. Any height much higher than 12 inches will require considerable cost increases which would probably derail the project.
The previous bridge was VERY NOISY. Constant annoyance to nearby property owners. PLEASE make the replacement MUCH QUIETER!
The replacement of the bridge is a major safety concern to us that live in Lebanon as an alternative in case of emergency
the sooner they replace it the better
There are too many big boats on the lake now. We should be in the business of limiting them. Their huge erode the shoreline and interrupt the lake activities of homeowners not in boats. Not enough supervision of boats on lake, ie., who has a license to operate their boat? Or are those standards for those who "want" to follow them? Not your jurisdiction, I know. But the right bridge could help regulate the traffic. Thanks for asking.
There will be a temporary environmental impact from the construction disturbance but it will quickly recover.

<p>This bridge addition will cut down drastically the traffic on Champion St. , that road is dangerously narrow, curvy for regular traffic, never mind the boats and larger vehicle that have to use it to get to the other side and the marina.</p>
<p>This has been a safety since was took out. If there was an event and that closed off townhouse road and was impassible, what would us people do that live in between the road and the bridge ?</p>
<p>This is long overdue. Very excited to get our bridge back!</p>
<p>We all need to consider the height here... I love the idea of the bridge coming back, but only if its done so that there is no impact to the boats on any of the connecting ponds</p>
<p>We are concerned with increased traffic in Town House Road.</p>
<p>We have not needed the bridge for over 10 years and it should not be replaced at a height that would impact boat traffic.</p>
<p>We should take out the dam and let the river come alive again. Once the dam is gone they can install a several large culverts for the river to flow through. Rivers needs to flow and be free. Let's do the proper environmental thing for once! The lake is NOT natural....</p>
<p>Well past the time for this to have been replaced. There is adequate space on either side to have an extended, low profile, raised arch style bridge that will allow for pontoon boats, with raised biminis, to pass beneath. Sidewalk(s) should be provided and possibly raised chain link fencing on both sides to attempt to prevent youngsters from climbing and jumping or dropping debris on passing boats.</p>
<p>What will be the impact on our tax rate?</p>
<p>wife recalls the original bridge - I don't - google street view (choosing which version) allows viewing of the bridge which gives me an idea of what height it was at - but the question on height would have been hard to answer without that 'view'</p>