



Fuller Covered Bridge: Saving a Vermont Treasure

Full Mitigation Best Practice Story

Franklin County, Vermont



Montgomery, VT– In the northern tier of Vermont close to the Canadian border, the rural town of Montgomery is home to one of Vermont’s treasures. The Fuller Covered Bridge, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is one of the town’s six remaining covered bridges out of an original thirteen. Brothers Savannah and Sheldon Jewett built the covered bridge in the later half of the 1800s.

These covered bridges are an important part of Vermont culture and history. Tourists attracted to the bridges help support many local businesses in the Montgomery community, with a population just shy of 1,000.

In early July 1998, heavy rains deluged the town of Montgomery. Water levels in the town’s rivers and tributaries rose at a rapid rate. Debris from fallen trees and other objects accumulated in the rising waters exacerbating the problem. Riverbanks swelled to capacity and began to overflow. Water carrying mud and debris swept down Main Street causing damage along its path. Homes along the river were washed away; a motel along the riverbank was lost; and the town hall and local church sustained significant damage. The fast moving floodwaters and debris caused significant damage to the Fuller Covered Bridge. Access to town was restricted to a single road due to damage to several bridges.

President Clinton declared a Disaster, making Federal Individual and Public Assistance monies available. Public Assistance covers the repair of damaged public facilities such as roads and bridges.

The town was faced with a decision – whether to rebuild, restore, dismantle and/or install a modern replacement bridge. The town chose to rebuild.

A preservation specialist was brought in to help. Soon after, the bridge was removed and hauled to another location for restoration and repairs and a temporary bridge was installed at the site. During the repair phase the stone abutments were refaced with concrete, reducing their future vulnerability to debris such as trees, wood, and other floating objects carried by floodwaters. In August 2000, following completion of the restoration work, the Fuller Covered Bridge was returned to the repaired abutments.

This past August and September, residents of Montgomery watched as a series of severe storms deluged their town once again. The results of Montgomery’s mitigation efforts were a success. The Fuller Covered Bridge remained intact, as did the other repaired structures from the 1998 storm.

Activity/Project Location

Geographical Area: **Single County in a State**

FEMA Region: **Region I**

State: **Vermont**

County: **Franklin County**

Key Activity/Project Information

Sector: **Public**
Hazard Type: **Flooding**
Activity/Project Type: **Retrofitting, Structural**
Structure Type: **Wood Frame**
Activity/Project Start Date: **10/1998**
Activity/Project End Date: **08/2000**
Funding Source: **Other FEMA funds/ US Department of Homeland Security**
Funding Recipient: **Local Government**
Funding Recipient Name: **Town of Montgomery**

Activity/Project Economic Analysis

Cost: **Amount Not Available**

Activity/Project Disaster Information

Mitigation Resulted From Federal
Disaster? **Yes**
Federal Disaster #: **1228 , 07/01/1998**
Federal Disaster Year: **1998**
Value Tested By Disaster? **Yes**
Tested By Federal Disaster #: **No Federal Disaster specified**
Year First Tested: **2004**
Repetitive Loss Property? **Unknown**

Reference URLs

Reference URL 1: <http://www.fema.gov/>
Reference URL 2: <http://www.floodsmart.gov/>

Main Points

- The Fuller Covered Bridge, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is one of the town's six remaining covered bridges out of an original thirteen.
- In early July 1998, heavy rains deluged the town of Montgomery. Water levels in the town's rivers and tributaries rose at a rapid rate. The fast moving floodwaters and debris caused significant damage to the Fuller Covered Bridge. Access to town was restricted to a single road due to damage to several bridges.
- The decision was made to restore the covered bridge and with the help of a preservationist, the bridge was removed and hauled to another location for restoration and repairs and a temporary bridge was installed at the site. When site and structural work was done, the bridge was returned to the original site.
- Residents of Montgomery watched as a series of severe storms deluged their town once again. The results of Montgomery's mitigation efforts were a success. The Fuller Covered Bridge remained intact, as did the other repaired structures from the 1998 storm.



The Town of Montgomery proudly displays its historical covered bridge on the welcoming town sign.



The covered bridge was returned to its original site following restoration and structural retrofitting. The site was also strengthened.