

Temporary Skidder and Truck Bridges at Stream Crossings

It has been clearly demonstrated that loggers will use temporary bridges, when they are available, in place of less suitable practices to cross streams. The State of Maine developed a cost share program using an all-steel modular bridge that is a more modern version of the wooden laminated bridges that are typically used in Vermont. Benefits of this type of bridge over laminated wood structures are: versatility (rated for the weight of either logging equipment or fully loaded log trucks), longer spans over wider streams and durability. The approximate cost of a 20' bridge as shown below is \$12,000, plus fees for delivery from the manufacturer. Bridges could be purchased and, with the appropriate funding source, be sold to logging contractors through an 80/20 cost share that would reasonably lower the cost of entry and continue to improve practices and access on logging operations.



FPR's recently developed Truck Bridge Rental Program could be expanded by adding more of these easy to use and transport structures that are rated for fully loaded log trucks and span large crossings. These types of bridges are not readily available for loggers and landowners and the rental program could fill that gap. Currently FPR has a 30' and 40' bridge, paid for through an agreement with the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service. So far, feedback from the public has been very positive. The delivered cost of the bridge is approximately \$30,000. FPR will initially rent them for \$100 per month with a deposit or bond to cover incidental expenses that could occur as part of the use. The first two bridges FPR obtained are primarily intended for use on State Land timber sales, which will have priority over private lands use.



Wood over steel skidder bridges: FPR has three 25' long, 2 section steel I-beam bridges that have wooden decks. These bridges have engineered load ratings and will hold a 30,000-lb. skidder and a 40,000-lb. forwarder over a 23' span. These bridges have been used for trucks with additional support under the bridge. They are heavy and take larger equipment to move, but work very well and FPR will be offering these bridges to rent in the future. These bridges cost \$6,500 when first constructed (2005) and each section weighs 5,000 - 7,000 lbs. depending on the deck.



Our goals for any expansion of the bridge program or combinations of bridge types are to:

- Continuously improve practices through expanded use of bridges instead of less suitable methods or structures at stream crossings on logging operations.
- Provide access to structures that are simple to install and move between locations utilizing commonly available equipment.
- Provide affordable access to higher cost, durable, structures to incentivize use.