

Waterford Township

WHERE THE PATH FROM THE PAST AND THE FUTURE MEETS *Minnesota*



Waterford Bridge at the Cannon River *Restoring a Legacy*

For over 100 years the Waterford Bridge has provided a river amenity and identity for the Township of Waterford. This project, to rehabilitate the bridge, will secure this amenity in perpetuity for future generations of residents and visitors. As part of the Wild and Scenic Cannon River, this bridge spans one of the most beautiful areas of the river, offering visitors opportunities to experience a bridge from a bygone era, while connecting communities along the river corridor.

The Bridge was closed in 2018 due to safety concerns



Historical Significance

Until it was closed due to safety concerns in 2018, the Waterford Bridge carried a paved bike and pedestrian trail across the Cannon River in rural Waterford Township. Constructed in 1909, the bridge consists of a 140-foot steel, riveted and bolted, Camelback truss on concrete abutments. The Waterford Bridge is one of the earliest remaining bridges with rigid connections in Minnesota and is the only known metal through truss bridge in the state featuring a limited number of bolted connections. As a unique structure of historical engineering significance, the structure was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2010. With the full restoration project, the bridge will continue to serve as a historic structure, namesake landmark for the Waterford community, and continue to carry pedestrians and bicyclists safely across the Cannon River.

Historic images of Waterford Bridge

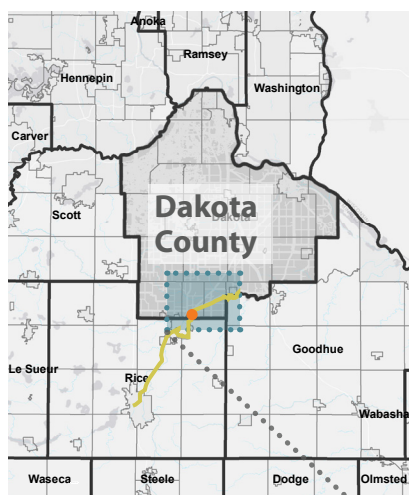


Connecting Across and To the River

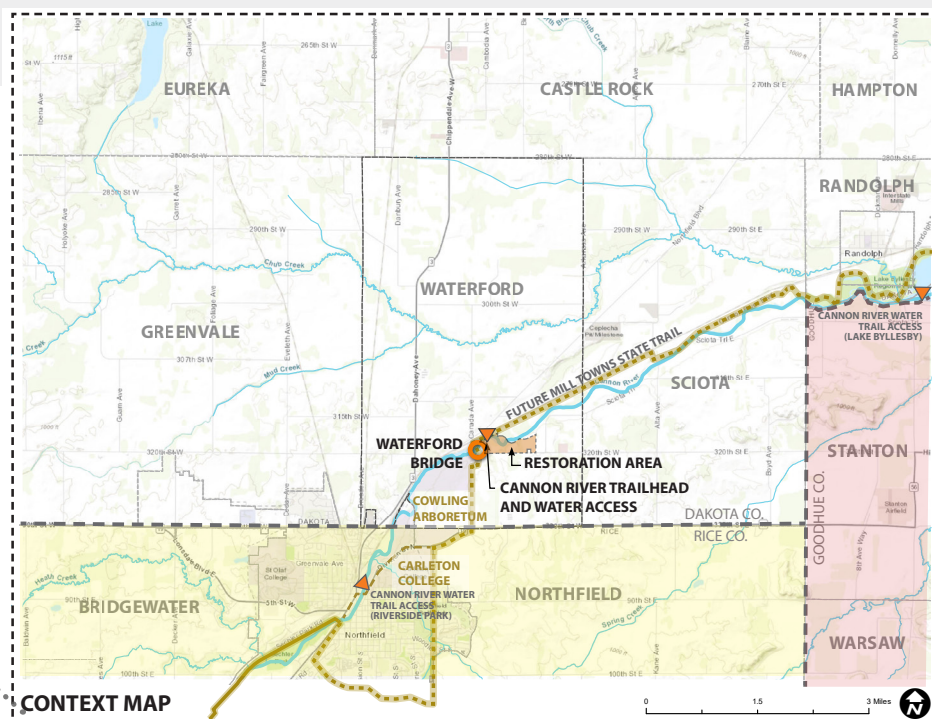
The Waterford Bridge will play an important role in the future trail alignment for the Mill Towns State Trail. Starting at Faribault Junction and the Sakatah Singing Hills State Trail, the trail will extend through the towns of Faribault, Dundas, Northfield, Waterford, and Randolph. The Mill Towns State Trail will meet the Cannon Valley Trail in Cannon Falls, connecting pedestrians and bicyclists to Red Wing and the Mississippi River.

Rehabilitation of the Waterford Bridge will complete an enjoyable 6-mile local trail loop around the Cannon River between Northfield and Waterford, connecting the Carleton College campus. This project will provide a tourist attraction and contribute to the future of active living in multiple communities.

There is now opportunity for the bridge to play a key role in the Cannon River Water Trail. Dakota County, Waterford Township, and MnDNR are working together to create a trailhead and water access point, along with a larger effort to restore land adjacent to the Cannon River and Waterford Bridge.



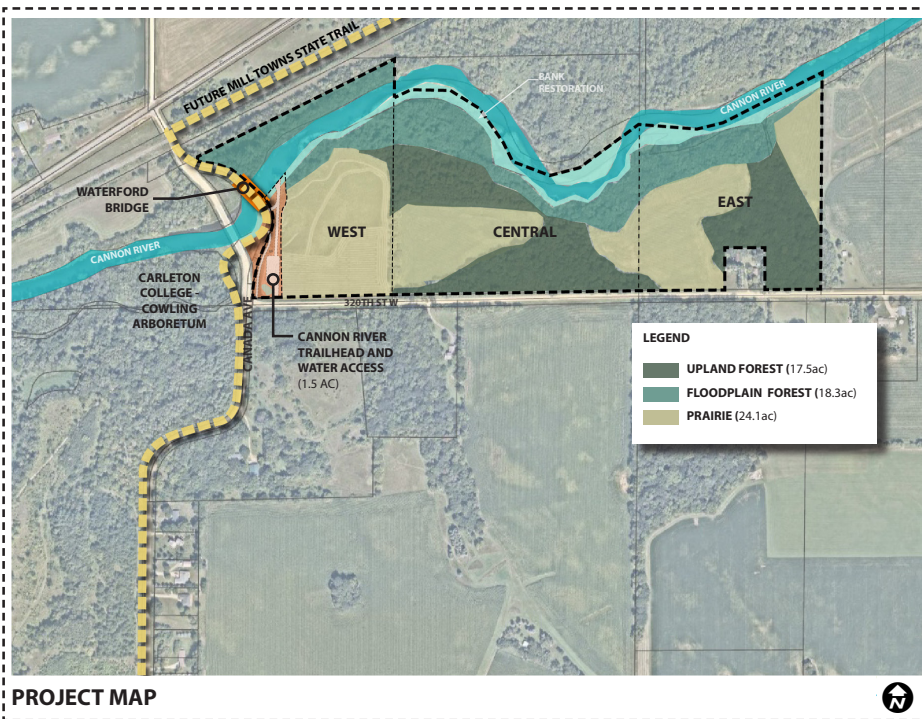
Regional Context



CONTEXT MAP



Waterford Bridge
(2020)



PROJECT MAP

Project Benefits

The historic Waterford Bridge is a vital connection to the history of the community and is loved by the people who continue to use the bridge to connect to the Cannon River and to the surrounding area. Preservation of the structure includes restoring the safety and load capacity to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists. Without this proper repair and rehabilitation of the bridge, the structure will continue to fall into disrepair and will ultimately need to be removed.



Health

The rehabilitation of the bridge will provide a continuous trail connection and opportunity for people to engage in active living, whether biking, walking, or rolling across the river.



River Access

The bridge provides visual access to the Canon River. A new railing, which will compliment the historic structure, will further enhance wildlife viewing from the bridge. A future trailhead and water access to the Cannon River will complement the bridge as a destination.



Tourism

The bridge has served as a local destination for many generations, and links to many other local tourist destinations, such as Lake Byllesby Regional Park, Cowling Arboretum, and the Cannon River Water Trail.



Heritage

Without the bridge, a significant historical landmark for both Waterford Township and for the state of Minnesota will be lost. This unique and historically progressive structure has served the community for over a century.



Recreation

With continued preservation of the bridge, the connection across the Cannon River for pedestrians and bicyclists will provide year-round recreational access for years to come.



Rendering of the future rehabilitated Waterford Bridge

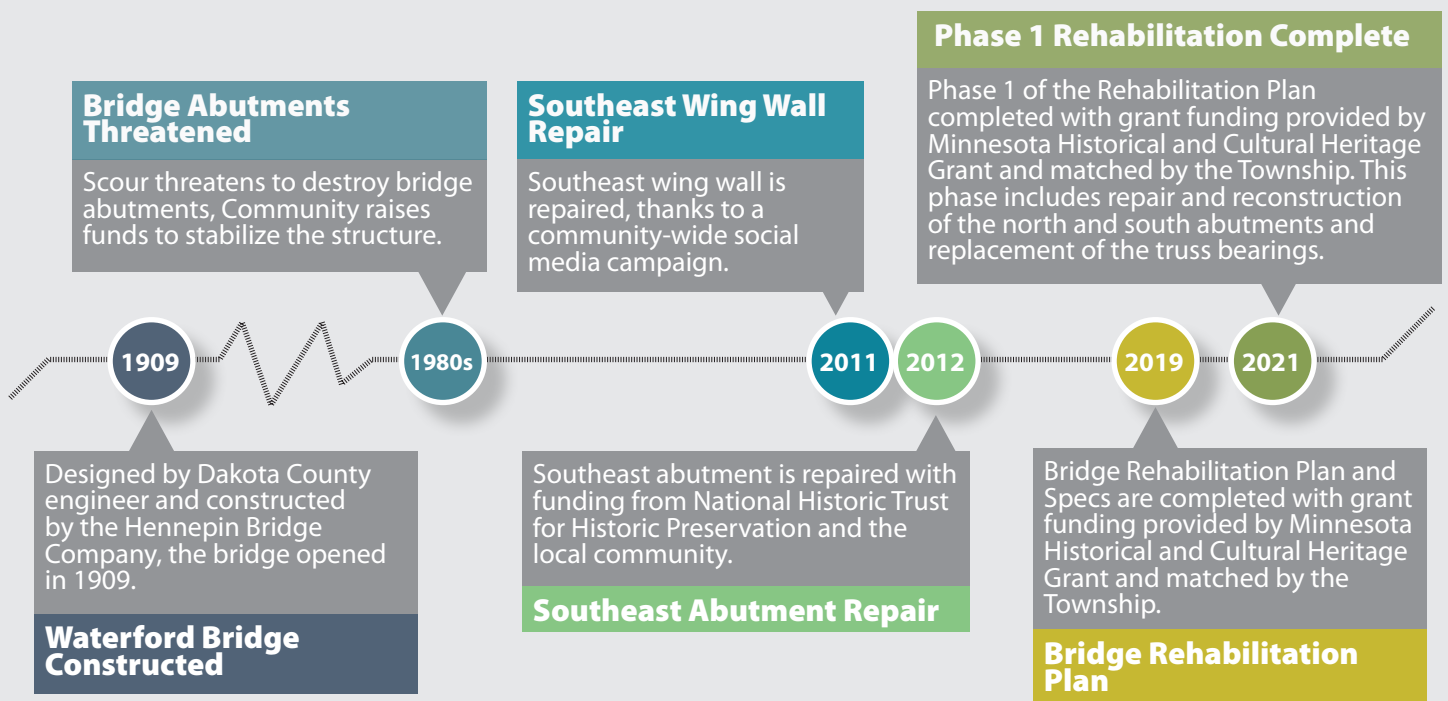
Project Readiness

To date, Waterford Township has worked collectively to keep the bridge intact. Multiple campaigns over the last few decades have demonstrated the power of stewardship and commitment of a small community to come together for a common cause. Carleton College, the Mill Towns Joint Powers Board, the City of Northfield, the Department of Natural Resources, and the Friends of the Mill Towns Trail have expressed their support for preservation and repairs to this bridge.



Effort To-Date

When Waterford Township received the National Trust for Historic Preservation grant in 2011, the Township provided an in-kind match with widespread community support to complete the repair of the southeast abutment. Through grant funding with Minnesota Historical and Cultural Heritage Grants, and further matching community contributions, bridge rehabilitation plans and specifications were completed in 2019, and the first phase of restoration work is underway this year.



Cost to Complete

To finish subsequent phases and complete the restoration project, additional funds are needed.

	Year	Description
2025	2025* (funds permitting)	Phase 2: Truss Strengthening
2026	2026* (funds permitting)	Phase 3: Deck Replacement to be completed, allowing the structure to be completely open for use by pedestrians, bicyclists, and for other non-motORIZED recreation.
2027	2027* (funds permitting)	Phase 4: Truss Painting, Railing and Plaque to be completed for the full bridge rehabilitation

*Phases can be combined to complete the project earlier if sufficient funds can be secured.



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