



Burlington Charter for the Preservation of Historic Covered Bridges

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First National Best Practices Conference for Covered Bridges, Burlington, Vermont

Covered bridges are vitally important cultural, economic, educational, aesthetic, and historic resources. Although public support for preserving them is strong, many are vulnerable to the effects of deterioration due to neglect, limited funding, and limited knowledge of appropriate treatments. Consequently, their structural, material, and functional integrity is often at risk. This charter establishes the following goals for insuring the long term safeguarding of historic covered bridges.

1. To preserve the historic structural and material integrity of covered bridges to the maximum extent possible, consistent with public safety.
2. To identify, document, and preserve examples of covered bridge design, ingenuity in timber and masonry construction, and unique practices or solutions to specific problems, and to encourage future generations to summon similar ingenuity.
3. To retain covered bridges for in active use for transportation, with the least possible compromise to their structural and material integrity.
4. To identify, document, and preserve all surrounding features that define the historic character of covered bridges and their settings, including approach roads, historic cultural landscapes, and views.
5. To interpret and publicize individual covered bridges and the overall importance of the covered bridge to the history of transportation, engineering, and community life.
6. To establish partnerships among bridge owners; local, state, and federal governments; non-profit organizations; design and construction professionals; craftspeople; and others in order to provide the best opportunities for cooperative stewardship of covered bridges.
7. To undertake research to develop tools essential to the preservation of historic covered bridges, including studies of appropriate treatments of historic materials; methods of structural analysis; techniques for repair and strengthening; and the economic benefits of preserving historic covered bridges.
8. To develop management practices that ensure timely identification of needs and prioritization of treatments.
9. To encourage government agencies and other public and private entities to provide adequate and effective funding to implement the above goals.

Resolved: Participants of the First National Best Practices Conference for Covered Bridges hereby adopt this Burlington Charter for the Preservation of Historic Covered Bridges. Be it further resolved that we respectfully ask the U.S. National Park Service to develop guidelines that apply and adapt the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Preservation, Rehabilitation, Restoration, and Reconstruction to historic covered bridges in a manner consistent with these goals and objectives, and to present these guidelines at the Second National Best Practices Conference for Historic Covered Bridges, time and place to be announced.