



Section 106 Consultation Meeting

**Oconto County
Smyth Rd Bridge over the
North Branch Oconto River**

Rehabilitation or Replacement

November 4, 2025

WisDOT Project ID: 9077-04-00

AECOM





Welcome!

James Rhoad-Drogalis, P.E., AECOM Project Manager

John Schuttler, Chronicle Heritage

Nathan Guequierre, AECOM

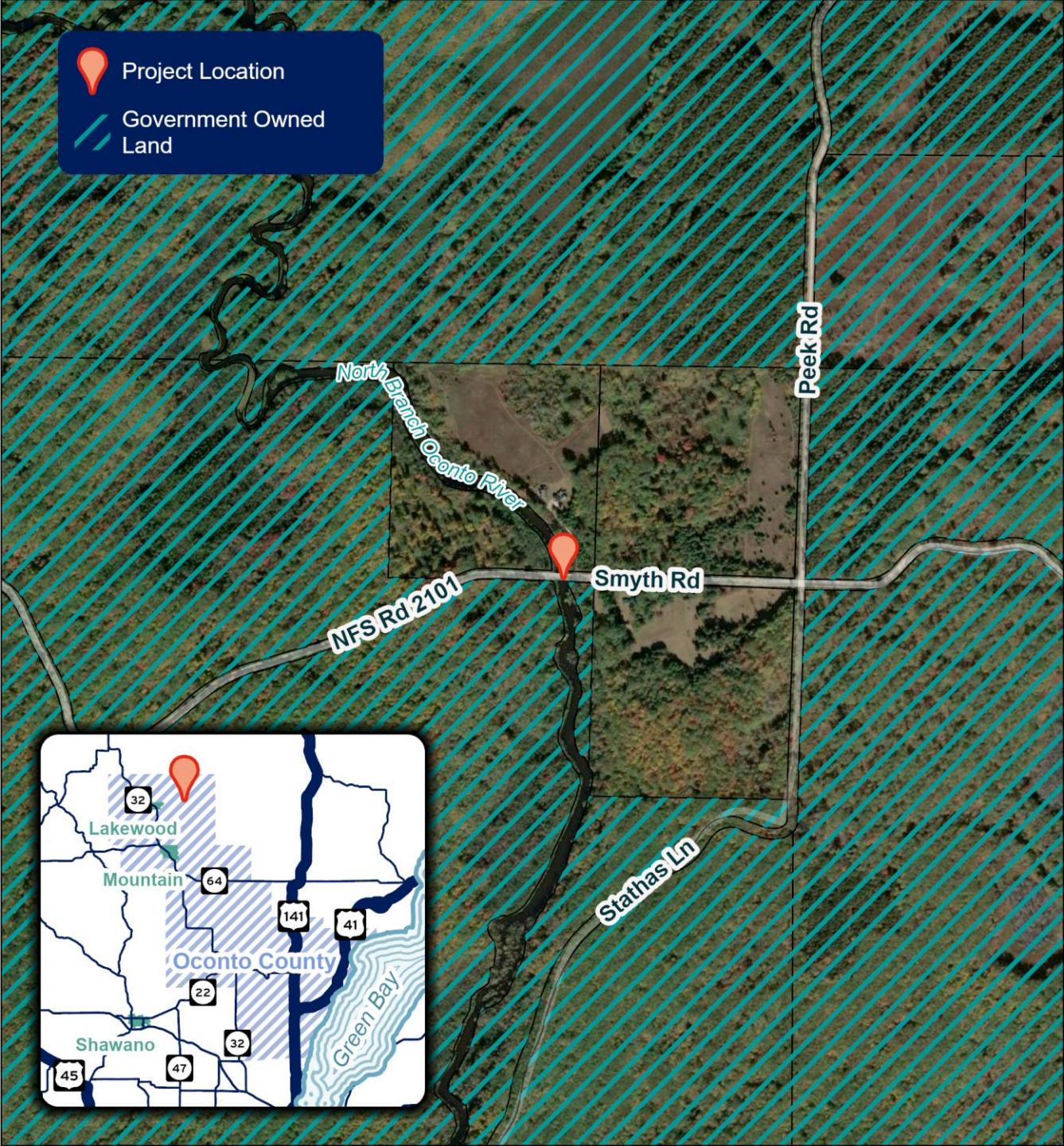
Brandon Hytinen, Highway Commissioner Oconto County





Meeting Agenda

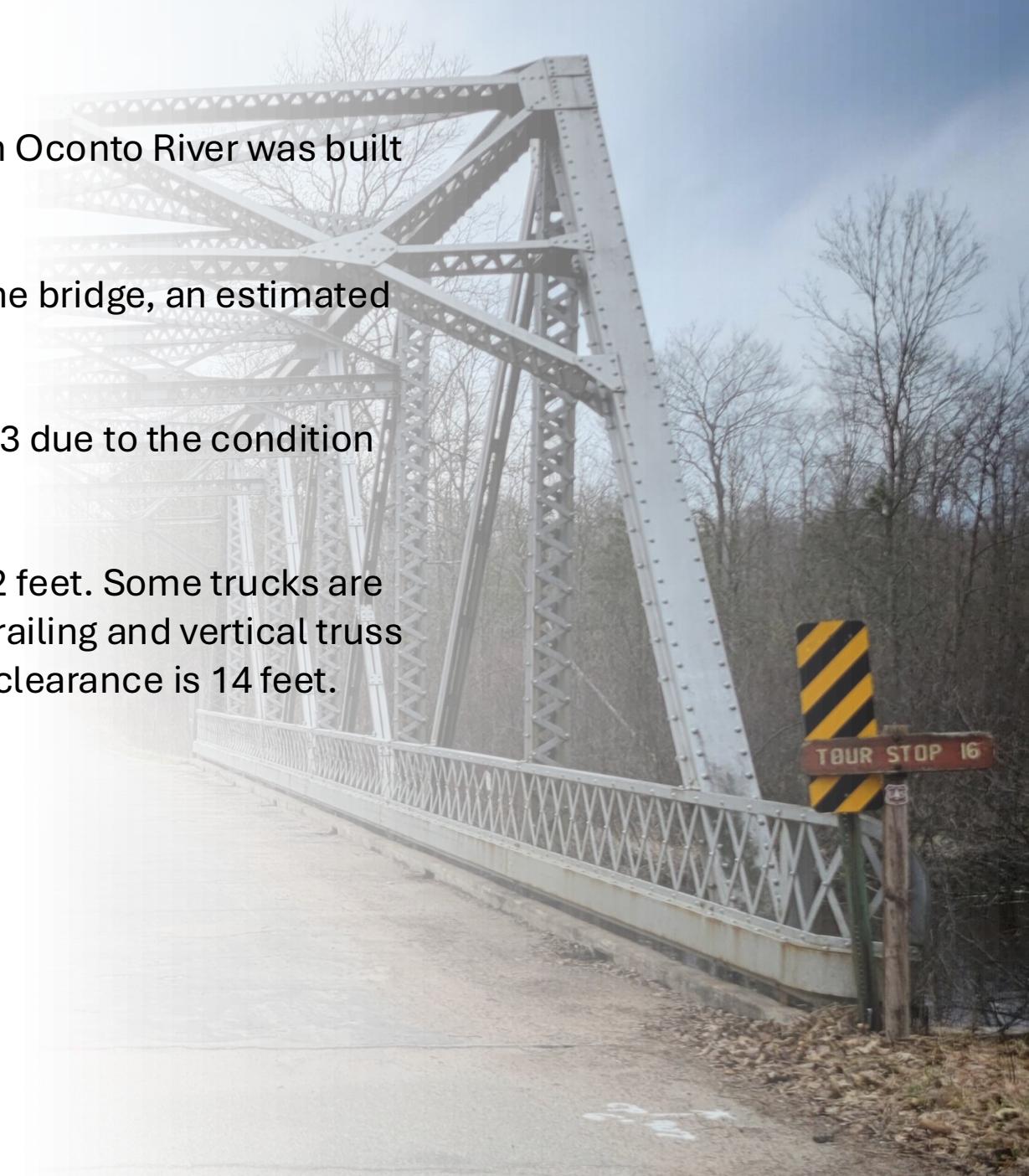
- Project Overview
- Project Purpose & Need
- Alternatives Development & Evaluation Process
- Preferred Alternative
- Historic Bridge
- Mitigation Activities
- Next Steps





Bridge Facts

- The Smyth Road bridge over the North Branch Oconto River was built in 1928. It's 97 years old.
- On an average day, about 50 vehicles cross the bridge, an estimated 20%-25% of those vehicles are trucks.
- The bridge was load posted for 10 tons in 2023 due to the condition of the east abutment.
- The bridge's vertical clearance is limited to 12 feet. Some trucks are too tall for the bridge; there is damage to the railing and vertical truss members from impacts. Standard minimum clearance is 14 feet.

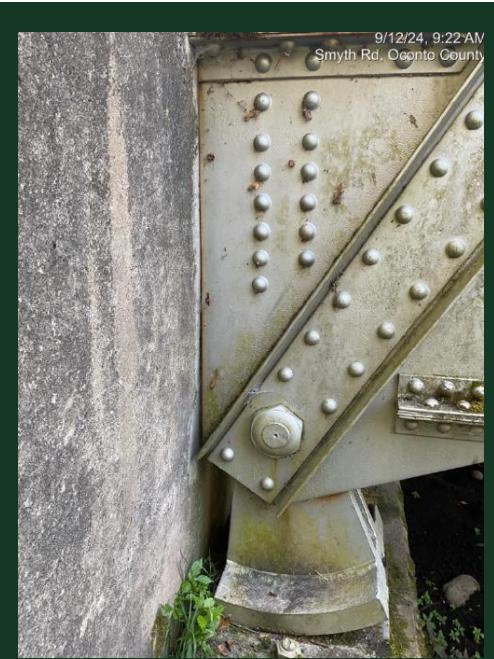




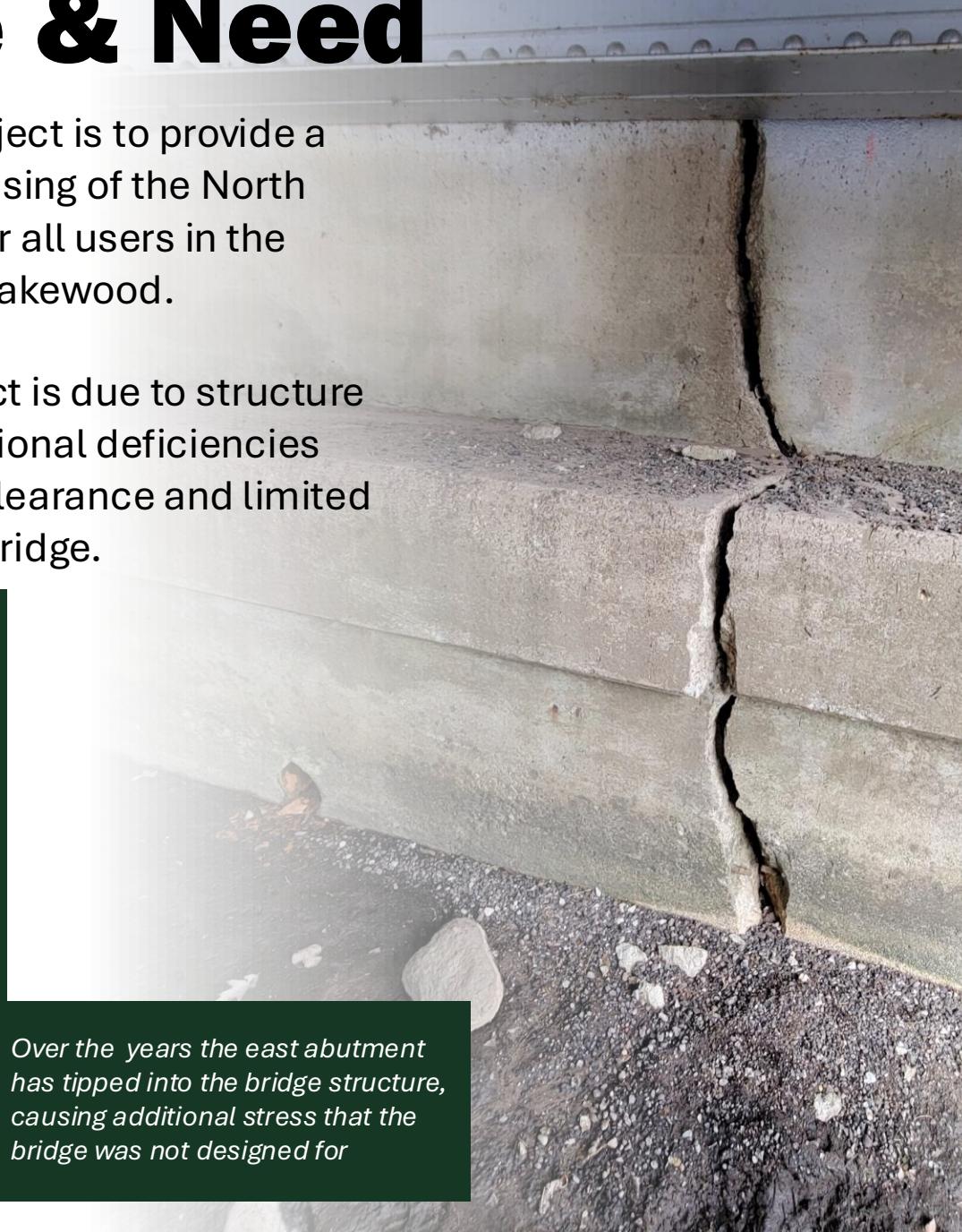
Purpose & Need

The **purpose** of the project is to provide a reliable, long-term crossing of the North Branch Oconto River for all users in the vicinity of the Town of Lakewood.

The **need** for this project is due to structure deterioration and functional deficiencies including low vertical clearance and limited roadway width on the bridge.



Over the years the east abutment has tipped into the bridge structure, causing additional stress that the bridge was not designed for



September 25, 2023 12:56 PM

The bridge's east abutment shows signs of deterioration



Special Considerations

- Local Commuting
- Trucking
- ATV/UTV Route
- River Recreation
 - Paddling
 - Fishing



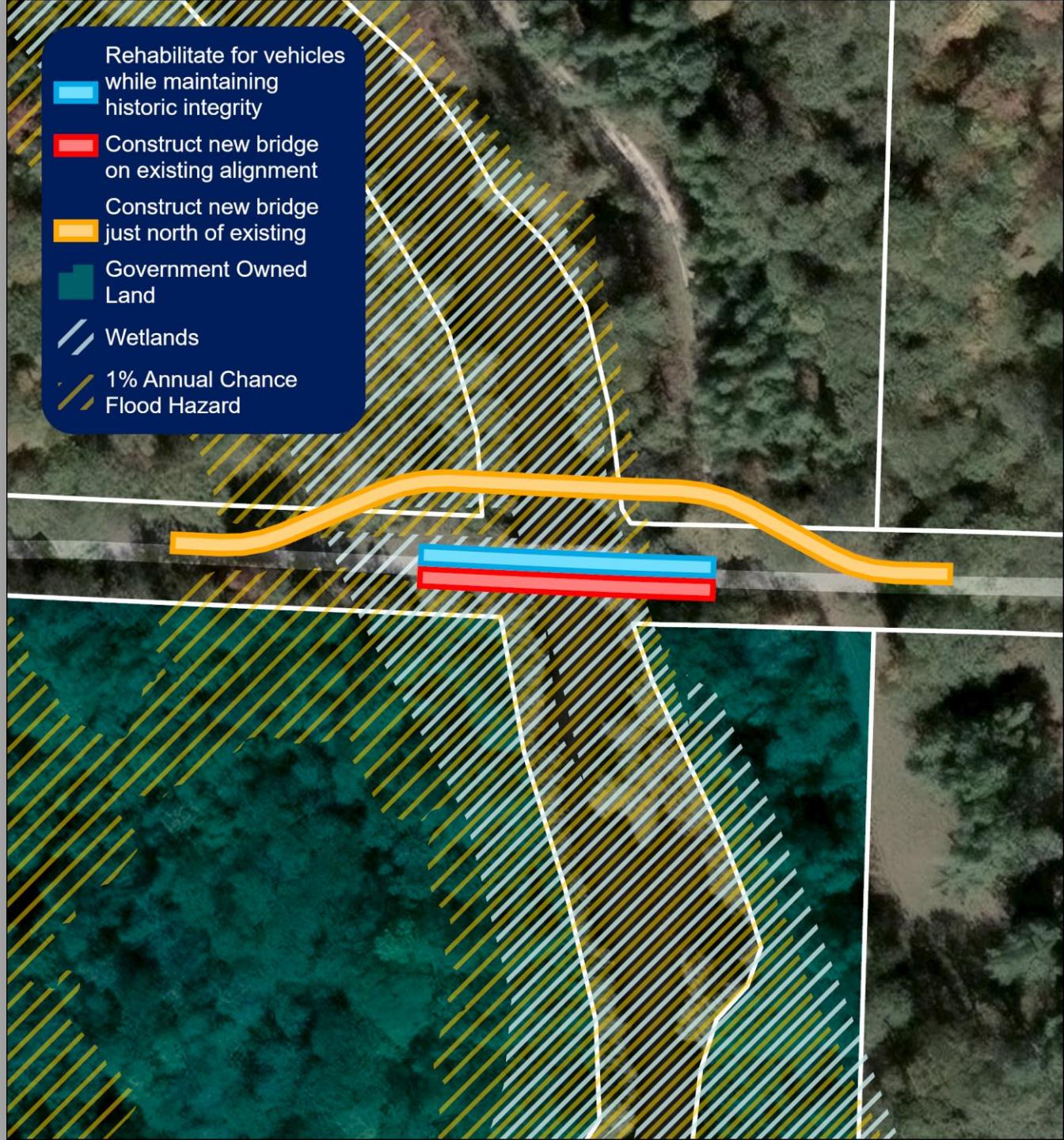


Conceptual Alternatives

Four conceptual alternatives were developed: Rehabilitation, New Bridges at a Variety of Locations.

One alternative was dismissed: New Bridge Adjacent South due to the need for acquiring public recreation land.

Three alternatives were recommended to advance to Detailed Study:
Rehabilitation, New Bridge Adjacent North, New Bridge at the Current Location.





Detailed Alternatives Evaluation

These alternatives were developed to a point that their measurable impacts could be compared.

The factors considered for analysis include impacts to wetlands, floodplain, waterways, wildlife, private property, and expected useful life, in addition to construction costs.

Evaluation Factor	Rehabilitate for Vehicular Use	New Bridge Adjacent – North	New Bridge on Existing Alignment
Permanent Wetland Fill (including in-stream)	0 ac	0.204 ac	0.011 ac
Temporary Wetland Fill (including in-stream)	0 ac	0.003 ac	0.003 ac
Permanent Property Acquisition	0 ac	0.833 ac	0 ac
Property Cost (Permanent)	0	\$2,400	0
Temporary Property Use	0	0	0
Relocations	0	0	0
Expected Service Life	35 years	75 years	75 years
Construction Cost	\$2.45M	\$3.5M (includes rehab of existing bridge)	\$1.05M
Impacts to Historic Resources	No impact	No impact	Adverse impact
Conclusion	Not preferred	Not preferred	Preferred Alternative

Property cost estimate is based on 2024 assessed value of property as listed on the Oconto County land information website and is used only to compare the alternatives. The value for Adjacent Alt includes full acquisition of one parcel (including improvements) and two partial acquisitions. Value for On Alignment Alt includes two partial acquisitions. Actual acquisition costs may differ.



Dismissed Alternatives

Rehabilitate Bridge for Vehicular Use

- Maintains historic resource
- Higher construction cost
- Does not meet purpose and need
- Shorter expected lifespan

The construction cost to rehabilitate the bridge makes this alternative neither feasible nor prudent.

Alternative Dismissed

New Bridge Adjacent – North

- Maintains historic resource
- Requires private property acquisition
- Higher construction cost

To maintain the historic resource, the existing bridge would require rehabilitation as well, more than doubling the project's overall cost.

Alternative Dismissed





Preferred Alternative

Construct a New Bridge on the Existing Alignment

- Meets the project's purpose and need with the least environmental impacts (with the exception of requiring the demolition of an historic resource), making it both feasible and prudent.
- Lower capital cost compared to other alternatives.
- Longer expected service life than bridge rehabilitation.
- Alternatives that avoid adverse effects to the existing historic structure are either unable to adequately meet project purpose and need or generate significantly greater impacts to private property.





Preferred Alternative

Construct a New Bridge on the Existing Alignment

- Two-span reinforced concrete haunched slab bridge.
- Two 10-foot travel lanes with two-foot shoulders adjacent to a 42-inch concrete barrier
- Every effort will be made to avoid or minimize environmental impacts: area of bridge piers in the river, permanent and temporary property acquisition, stormwater runoff into river, bird nesting areas, disruptions during construction, recreation constraints.





Example

Rangeline Road over Little Eau Pleine River, Marathon County



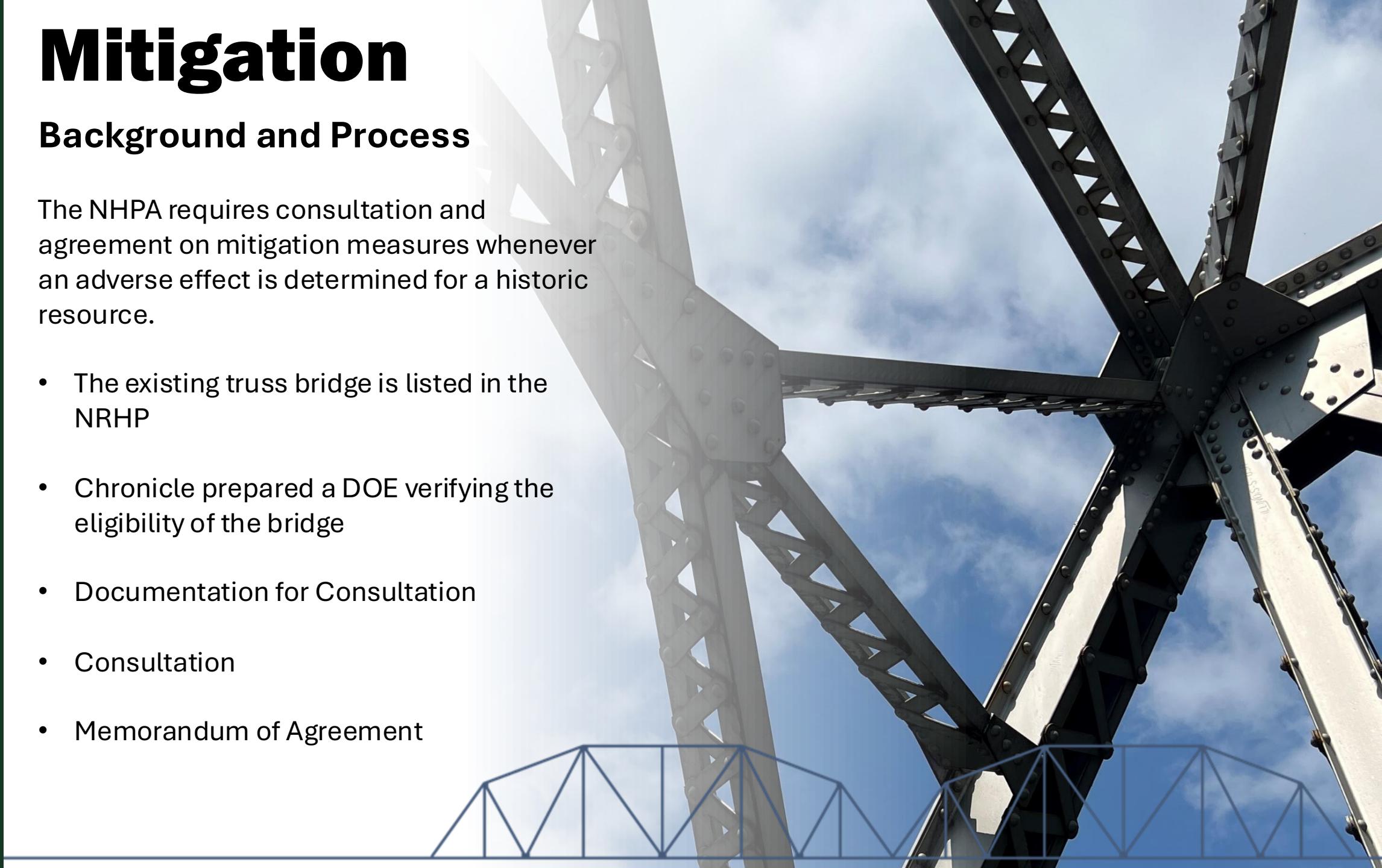


Mitigation

Background and Process

The NHPA requires consultation and agreement on mitigation measures whenever an adverse effect is determined for a historic resource.

- The existing truss bridge is listed in the NRHP
- Chronicle prepared a DOE verifying the eligibility of the bridge
- Documentation for Consultation
- Consultation
- Memorandum of Agreement





Mitigation Measures

The NHPA requires consultation and agreement on mitigation measures whenever an adverse effect is determined for a historic resource.

- Bridge relocation
- Salvage/preservation of a bridge section
- Photo documentation
- Plaque, marker, signage
- Museum exhibit
- Web content





Consulting Party Responsibilities

FHWA, WisDOT, SHPO, and THPO, if applicable –

Determine the role of each consulting party, level of involvement, and sign the MOA

The Project Team - Facilitate the consultation process, prepare Documentation for Consultation and the Memorandum of Agreement, track compliance with the MOA

Consulting parties – Contribute to selection of mitigation measures and decide if they will be signatories to the MOA; other responsibilities may be required based on the specific mitigation measures.



Documentation for Consultation

The Documentation for Consultation (D for C) is a summary of consultation efforts undertaken in producing a Memorandum of Agreement.

- Description of the project
- Identification of historic properties with the project's Area of Potential Effects
- Description of the adverse effect to historic properties
- Proposed alternatives considered to avoid adverse effects
- Mitigation activities
- Record of discussions and correspondence generated during consultation

Correspondence and meeting minutes are included in the D for C





Memorandum of Agreement

Elements of the MOA refined through the consultation process:

- Stipulations
 - Mitigation measures
 - Timing
 - Parties responsible for performing each aspect of mitigation
- Sunset Clause
- Signatories
 - Signatory – FHWA, SHPO and/or THPO
 - Invited Signatory – WisDOT, THPO (if applicable), USACE (if permitting required)
 - Concurring Parties





Next Steps

Project Team refines the language for the MOA stipulations

Consulting parties review draft MOA and provide comments

Project Team produces final version of the D for C and MOA and submits to WisDOT Cultural Resources Team

- If CRT has no comments, the documents are sent to SHPO for review

Project Team makes any requested edits or revisions and updates the D for C to reflect comments received

D for C is returned to WisDOT, who forwards to the FHWA, who forwards to the ACHP for comment

Any comments from ACHP will be incorporated and the D for C updated. Project Team collects local signatures.

D for C and MOA submitted to WisDOT, who forwards to FHWA for final signatures





Project Schedule

Consultation Meeting: **November 2025**

Signed Memorandum of Agreement: **January 2026**

Programmatic Section 4(f) Agreement: **January 2026**

Signed Environmental Document: **April 2026**

PS&E: **November 2026**

Construction: **2027**





Staying Involved

- Visit the Oconto County Highway Department website regularly for updates.
- Provide written comments via email.
- Stay on the call to discuss the project with Staff.
- Tell us about the opportunities to improve transportation in Oconto County with this project.





Thank You!

- James Rhoad-Drogalis, P.E., AECOM Project Manager
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- John Schuttler, Chronicle Heritage
 - jschuttler@chronicleheritage.com

