

Zeitschrift: IABSE structures = Constructions AIPC = IVBH Bauwerke
Band: 12 (1988)
Heft: C-46: Repair and rehabilitation of bridges: case studies I

Artikel: The Sioux Narrows Bridge, Ontario (Canada)
Autor: Dorton, R.A.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-20920>

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 14.12.2025

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>



1. The Sioux Narrows Bridge, Ontario (Canada)

Owner: Ministry of Transportation of Ontario
Design: Structural Office and Research and Development Branch
Work Duration: 6 months
Completion: 1982

The Sioux Narrows Bridge is on Highway 71 linking Fort Frances and Kenora in northwest Ontario. The bridge was constructed in 1936 with a wooden Howe truss main span of 64 m, Figure 1. It is believed to be the longest single span wood highway bridge in North America.

This bridge was one of the first to be listed under the Heritage Bridge Program of the Ontario Government, being an outstanding example of wood bridge construction, built of B.C. Douglas Fir in sizes no longer available. Most timber highway bridges have been replaced after about 40 years. Plans were prepared for the replacement of the Sioux Narrows bridge in 1975 when the deck was showing signs of deterioration, and the vehicle loads greatly exceeded the design loads. A condition survey showed the truss members to be in good condition, however, and studies were started to try to rehabilitate and keep this heritage bridge in service. Analysis indicated adequate load capacity in the main trusses, but a significant overstress in the transverse floor beam king post and tie bars, Figure 2. The floor system consisted of a traverse nailed laminated wood deck on longitudinal wood stringers, which were supported by transverse wood beams every 2.3 m.

At the time of these studies, the concept of a prestressed longitudinally laminated wood deck had been developed by the Ministry. This prestressed deck type acted like a homogeneous slab, and exhibited much better load distributed characteristics than the old nailed laminated decks. It was calculated that the longitudinal distribution would be improved enough to reduce the stresses in the floor beams to acceptable levels. The decision was made to replace the old deck with a new wood deck, with 190 mm deep laminated prestressed transversely with 25 mm bars at 1.525 m centres, tensioned by hydraulic jacks.

The deck was replaced one lane at a time, Figure 3, so the bridge could remain open to traffic. The prestressing bars were coupled together for construction of the second lane. A new asphalt wearing surface was then applied to the wood deck.

Full scale bridge testing using custom designed load vehicles, instrumentation and mobile laboratory for the computerized data acquisition system is a regular feature of the Ministry's evaluation procedures. Load testing of the deck system was carried out before deck replacement and after, Figure 4. Eight floor beams were instrumented by attaching strain gauges to the steel tie bars. The greatly improved longitudinal distribution characteristics of the prestressed deck was confirmed by a reduction of 35% in the truss bar strains for the same tests as carried out on the old deck. No further strengthening of the floor system is needed. The only other members that may need replacing are the main truss hanger bars, which will be tested shortly.



Fig. 1 General view of bridge

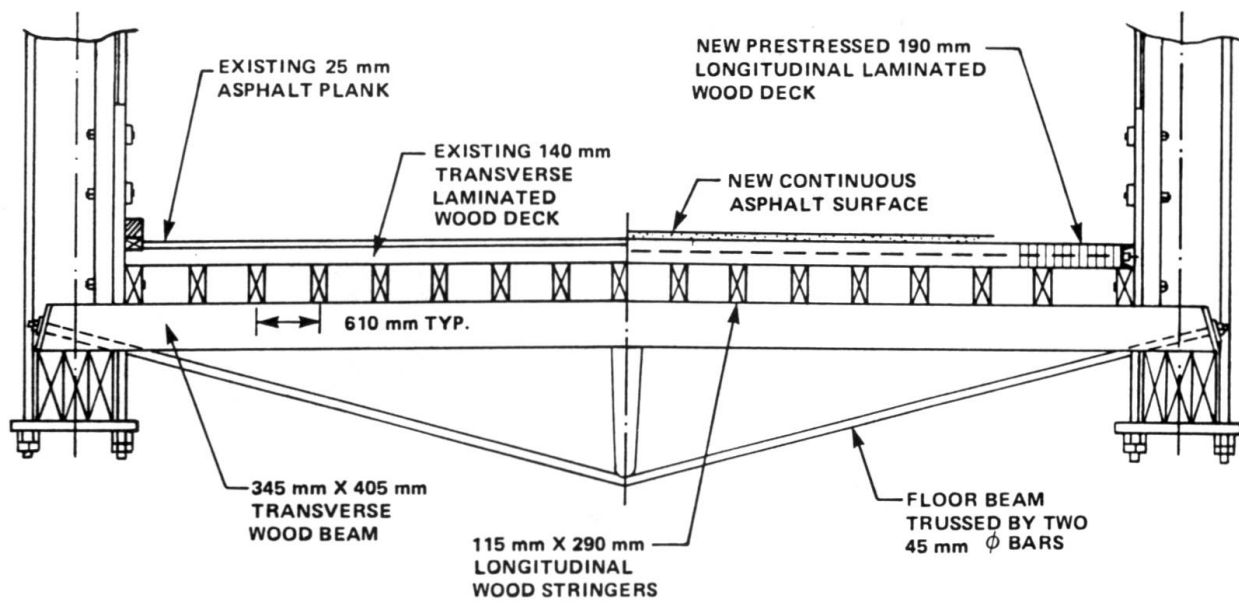


Fig. 2 Cross section of floor system



Fig. 3 Placing prestressed wood deck



Fig. 4 Load testing the rehabilitated bridge

By the application of detailed analysis and testing and the use of an innovative deck rehabilitation scheme, the life of this heritage wood structure has been extended well beyond 50 years, and is performing satisfactorily under full highway loads.

(R. A. Dorton)