Canyon Ridge Bridge #11 is Reborn

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Bridge #11 sits just past the 1¼-mile marker on the Canyon Ridge Trail. The time had come to replace this old, worn-out bridge that had undoubtedly seen many footsteps over its lifespan. A main support beam had cracked, rendering it no longer safe for passage. While analyzing the process of the bridge’s replacement,
I couldn’t help but think about the Civilian Conservation Corps and how they would go about such a task. The topography and access to the bridge location proved to be a challenge since we would need to hike in a quarter mile or so from the nearest access point. A quarter-mile hike doesn’t seem far at first, but after numerous trips with lumber and other gear, the trip began getting longer and longer. With the help of Natural Guard volunteers, Recreational Equipment Inc. (REI), and Summer Creek Cadet Corps, the bridge replacement became possible.

On October 4, staff members assessed the site. Plans were drawn up to build 20-foot trusses with ramps on each side, making the overall bridge approximately 30 feet long and close to five feet wide. Staff built the 20-foot-long by four-foot-wide angle iron and rebar frame to bolt together at the site to make the quarter-mile hike easier. On October 14, ten volunteers from REI, four Natural Guard volunteers, and three staff members began installation. Over a five-hour period, the main support posts were driven, much of the reroute was cleared, lumber was hauled in, and the bridge frame was welded into place. Placing the frame was no easy task since the bridge sits eight feet off the creek bed. Three Natural Guard volunteers helped frame the ramps and install most of the deck on November 4. On November 30, 23 youth volunteers from Summer Creek Cadet Corps hauled out the old bridge while staff continued the decking process. Staff finished the deck on December 1, and the next day, four Natural Guard volunteers helped clean up the site and put the final touches on the bridge. A total of 169 volunteer-hours and 86 hours of staff time was put into this project. After four Natural Guard Saturdays and a couple of afternoon trips by the staff, Canyon Bridge #11 was reborn.