

# Historic Bridge Park



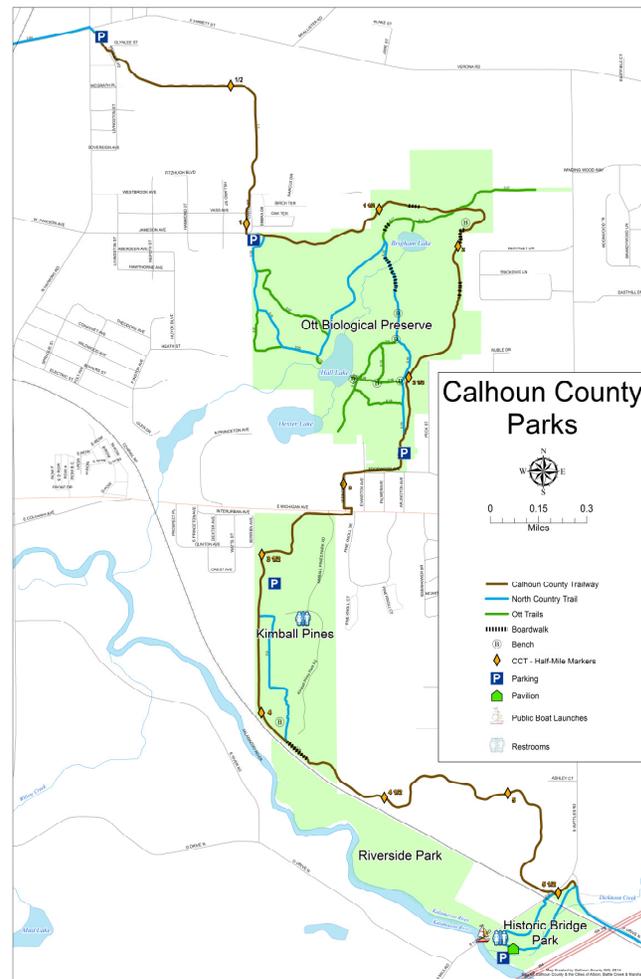
14930 9 1/2 Mile Road  
Battle Creek, MI 49014

Historic Bridge Park is the first of its kind in the United States

Picture source (right):  
Willard Library



Native to Historic Bridge Park is the Michigan Central Railroad Bridge which is known as Dixon's Bridge. This massive stone-arch bridge was built around 1890 and once served as a single lane road for F Drive North and was the original entrance to the park. Dickinson Creek travels through the other arch. The bridge is now a segment of the Calhoun County Trailway, as well as the North Country National Scenic Trail, which is part of the National Park System.



## Park Rules & Regulations

Activities such as hunting, flower picking and firewood cutting are prohibited, as well as motorized vehicles on the trailways, with the exception of wheelchairs or other conveyances for the physically impaired. For complete details of park rules and regulations go to the Calhoun County Parks & Recreation website: <http://tiny.cc/dsf8hy>

For more information regarding the Park, special use permits, or to reserve the pavilion contact: 269-781-0782 or email: [CountyParks@calhouncountymi.gov](mailto:CountyParks@calhouncountymi.gov).



Thank you for your interest in Historic Bridge Park, please also visit the other Calhoun County owned parks; Kimball Pines, the Ott Biological Preserve and the Calhoun County Trailway.

## Having a Celebration?

Rent the Pavilion at Historic Bridge Park!

\$50 secures your use for up to 4 hours

- Covered shelter with picnic tables
- 4 grills in easy access
- Electricity available
- Restrooms within a short walk
- Hours available - 8 am to 9 pm
- Open May 1<sup>st</sup> to October 31<sup>st</sup>

For inquires about renting the pavilion at Historic Bridge Park, call 269-781-0782.



## Park Amenities Include:

- ◆ 5 Historic Bridges
- ◆ Benches
- ◆ Handicap Accessible Canoe/Kayak launch
- ◆ Grills
- ◆ Parking area
- ◆ Pavilion for Rent
- ◆ Picnic tables
- ◆ Playground
- ◆ Restrooms
- ◆ River access
- ◆ Walking trails

# History of Calhoun County's Restored Bridges in Historic Bridge Park



Calhoun County has four parks that offer different outdoor experiences, Historic Bridge Park, Kimball Pines, the Ott Biological Preserve and the Calhoun County Trailway. Historic Bridge Park is the most urban park with a pavilion that is available to rent, a play area for children aged 5 to 12, a handicap accessible boat launch, restrooms, and short walking trails highlighted by refurbished historic bridges that have been reassembled in the park.

Historic Bridge Park is home to five historic road bridges that have been restored and relocated in the park. They feature a variety of truss designs and manufacturing techniques dating back to the late 1800's and 1900's.

Guided tours of the bridges may be arranged by calling the Parks & Recreation Department at (269) 781-0782.

## 133<sup>RD</sup> AVENUE BRIDGE

It has the honor of being the **first** bridge placed in the park. Formerly spanning the Rabbit River in Hopkins Township in Allegan County, Michigan, this bridge was built in 1897 by the Michigan Bridge Company for \$715. This small bridge is only 64' long, and for 96 years, it carried farm residents over the river on its single span.

It was removed from Allegan County in 1998 to the Calhoun County Road Commission shop, where it was repaired, cleaned and repainted. Once restored, the bridge was re-erected in the Calhoun County Historic Bridge Park in 1999 to serve as a pedestrian bridge.



## 20 MILE ROAD BRIDGE

The **second** bridge erected in June 2000, originally spanned the St. Joseph River in Clarendon Township in Calhoun County. Little is known about the history of this bridge. County records date it to 1906, but the Township meeting records were lost in a fire, and there are not any known surviving newspapers documenting the bridge.

Restoration of this bridge required extensive work because of its severe rusting. Forty percent of the 20 Mile Road Bridge is replacement steel, including all four inclined end posts and the top chord cover plate. The vertical members were cut back to good steel and new steel was added. Almost 3000 rivets were used to restore and reassemble the bridge. This bridge was finished with the 3-coat paint system standard for Michigan Department of Transportation bridges.



## GALE ROAD BRIDGE

The Gale Road Bridge was the **third** bridge restored for Historic Bridge Park. Formerly spanning the Grand River on Gale Road in Ingham County, it was built in 1897 by the Lafayette Bridge Company of Lafayette, Indiana.

The bridge is a single span Pratt through truss. It is approximately 122' long, 15' wide and 21' high. It is significant because it was built at a skew of 13 degrees. Typically, bridges were built to cross perpendicular to the river bank. This bridge was much more complicated to restore because the members had to fit the skewed angles. The deck of a straight bridge is rectangular. The deck of a skewed bridge such as the Gale Road Bridge is a parallelogram with no right angles.

The Gale Road Bridge was removed from its original location in 1998 and restored at the Calhoun County Road Commission shop. The bridge was re-erected in the Calhoun County Historic Bridge Park using methods similar to those of the late 1800's including a gin-pole.



## BAUER ROAD BRIDGE

The Bauer Road Bridge is a wrought iron Pratt truss and is approximately 78' long. It was built by Penn Bridge Works in Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania, around 1880. It spanned the Looking Glass River in Clinton County, Michigan, and is the **fourth** historic bridge restored in Historic Bridge Park. It was erected in the park in 2005.

The Tallman Road Bridge also spanned the Looking Glass River in Clinton County and was identical to the Bauer Road Bridge except for its length. It was used for parts in the restoration of the Bauer Road Bridge.



## CHARLOTTE HIGHWAY BRIDGE

In 1886, the Charlotte Highway Bridge was built to cross the Grand River in Ionia County south of Portland, Michigan. It is a single span wrought iron double intersection Pratt through truss with pinned connections and is 180 feet long. There are few double intersection Pratt truss bridges left in Michigan. This bridge was well preserved, and the only major restoration required was the replication of ten riveted floor beams. The original floor beams had deteriorated, and over the years steel plates and angles had been arc welded to the original wrought iron floor beams.

On July 19, 2001 the Charlotte Highway Bridge was removed from its picturesque cut stone abutments. A gin pole was used in the assembly of the Charlotte Highway Bridge. The bridge spans the entrance to Historic Bridge Park and is the show piece of the park. It is a lasting testament to the skills of early craftsmanship of an era gone by. The Charlotte Highway Bridge is the **fifth** historic bridge to be erected in Calhoun County's Historic Bridge Park.

