

# Echo Bridge Railing Restoration



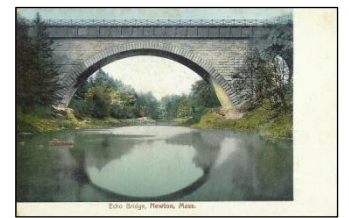
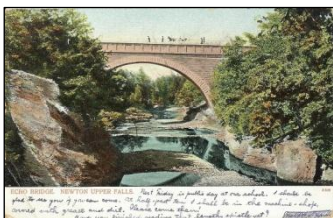
## Historical Significance

Built in 1876, Echo Bridge carries the Sudbury Aqueduct over the Charles River. The largest of its seven arches is 130' in length, which made it the second longest masonry arch in the United States.

The bridge not only delivered water critical to the growing City of Boston but its graceful and handsome granite and brick design contributed to the rugged beauty of Hemlock Gorge.

The Gorge was one of the first of five parks acquired by the former Metropolitan Park Commission, having been praised by Charles Eliot: "At the Upper Falls of Charles River the stream flows darkly between rocky and broken banks, from which hang ranks upon ranks of graceful Hemlocks."

Tourists flocked to Echo Bridge in the early 1900s and sent postcards like these:



## Present Day Significance

The Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) continues to maintain the bridge as a back-up water supply source for the City of Boston, last used in 2010.

Echo Bridge still serves as a recreational destination for hikers, photographers, and nature lovers as well as a gathering place for families and friends.

It also provides a vital transportation resource linking Needham and Newton. It is the eastern terminus of the new Needham Aqueduct Trail and a pathway to the MBTA Green Line for pedestrians and bicyclists

Echo Bridge is an iconic structure reflected throughout our communities in paintings, photographs, and even names of businesses. The Friends of Hemlock Gorge partners with the Dept. of Conservation & Recreation (DCR) on reservation projects.

# The Echo Bridge Promenade Needs Our Support



Copyright 1905 by the Rotograph Co.  
A 6963 Echo Bridge Promenade, Newton Upper Falls, Mass.

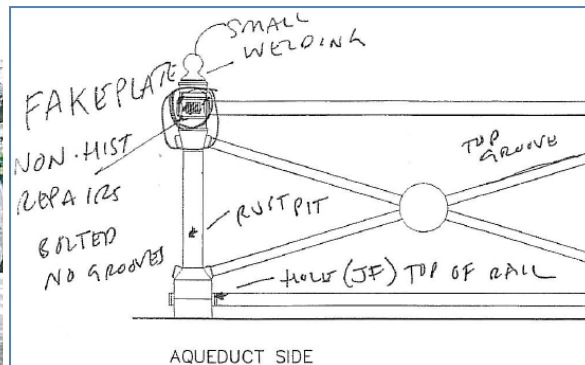
## Historic Railing Replication Project

The historic cast iron railings pictured above are an integral component of the promenade over which pedestrians and bicyclists traverse daily. After 140 years, however, they are now in serious disrepair. In 2008, the MWRA installed a temporary chain link safety fence inside the historic railings to enable the bridge to remain open. But the time has come to either raise the funds to properly replicate the historic railings or to install a more permanent and attractive safety railing system inside the historic railings while leaving the old railings themselves in disrepair. Everyone prefers the former path if at all possible.

While State Rep. Ruth Balser was successful in allocating \$250,000 in a past transportation bond bill for the railing project, full costs for the project far exceed that amount. In response to the fact that the MWRA cannot fund historic preservation projects decoupled from its water supply mission, a group of citizens has joined together to help raise funds to fix the historic railings, and we invite your support.



Spalling Cast Iron at Post Base



The MWRA has performed an extensive survey of the existing conditions of each railing segment.



Inappropriate Repairs & Eroded Paint

## Community Fundraising Support

Funds are being sought from multiple sources via a private/public partnership so that the expense of proper restoration is shared across a variety of stakeholders and contributors. Sources will include State funds, Newton and Needham Community Preservations funds, historic foundations, and private contributors. MWRA, the bridge owner, will be the funding recipient and will provide the engineering, contracting, and project management expertise to conduct the project. Will you join us in a pledge?

Please e-mail us your willingness to pledge to this project: [EchoBridgeRailings@outlook.com](mailto:EchoBridgeRailings@outlook.com)