

Bridge Replaced at Shiawassee Refuge's Woodland Trail

January 13, 2009

The Woodland Trail at Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge winds through forested floodplain wetlands and past open shrublands, vernal pools, and the Tittabawassee River. This 4.5 mile path is the closest of the refuge's four trails to the population centers of James Township, Saginaw Township, and the City of Saginaw. Consequently, it is the most heavily used public use facility at the refuge. Birders, hunters, and anglers use the trail. But, it is most used by walkers, bikers, cross-country skiers, and snowshoers, seeking to improve their health in a quiet, natural setting.



Bullhead Creek bridge before replacement. Steven F. Kahl/USFWS; 11/2008

An important component of this trail is the footbridge over Bullhead Creek. However, this old wooden bridge had decayed over several decades and required frequent repair. In fact, the bridge was becoming unsafe for visitors. Further, closure of the bridge would have cut off the vast majority of the trail from public access.

The refuge replaced the old wooden bridge with a new structure with cement abutments and steel framing. The new bridge will require far less maintenance and repair and will have a much longer lifespan. Thus, visitors will continue to be able to use this refuge site which is highly valued by the local community.



Bullhead Creek bridge after replacement. Steven F. Kahl/USFWS; 1/2009

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