

NEWS RELEASE – For Immediate Release

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Chestonia Bridge over Jordan River at Old State Road & Cokirs Creek Box Culvert Crossing to Begin

Mancelona, Michigan, January 23, 2017 – Antrim County Road Commission (ACRC) will begin construction of a new Chestonia Bridge on Old State Rd over the Jordan River on February 28, 2017. This project will require a portion of the road be closed to all traffic. A detour route will be signed. Traffic can expect to resume use of this portion of Old State Road in early July 2017, with the exact date to be posted on the ACRC website. For the latest traffic information, please visit <http://www.antrimcrc.org/old-state-road-bridge-over-the-jordan-river-construction/>.

Since 2013, this project has been a joint effort with Conservation Resource Alliance (CRA) and multiple funders and partners to improve fish passage, reduce streambank erosion, and restore a natural stream channel. ACRC has contracted with Prein and Newhof Engineering for design. Grand River Construction will build a concrete full span bridge (90' long deck, 34' clear road width including two 11' wide lanes and 6' wide shoulders) over the Jordan River as well as a concrete box (14' wide, 28' long, 11' high recessed 2' into stream bottom) over the nearby Cokirs Creek in place of the existing snowmobile bridge. Additional work involves slightly widening a total 600' of the approaches to match the bridge width, and re-routing 76' of Cokirs Creek away from the road.

Old State Road may have been a corduroy road at one time and engineers determined that the existing twin 16' wide culverts are actually perched at least 2' above what should be the true stream bottom. With the culverts also being significantly undersized for the Jordan River along with intense recreational use at the outlet, the resulting wide and fast flowing pool has water velocities that measure up to 11.9 feet/second. This velocity is a danger to paddlers and prevents the passage of some fish and aquatic species. With a new bridge that adequately spans the river and floodplain during high flows, velocities will decrease to a more normal speed similar to what is found 1,000' upstream or further downstream at Webster Bridge, where it measures an average 3 feet/second or less.

The new bridge is designed to meet MDOT specifications, thus quality and safety conditions will meet state-level criteria. Cofferdams comprised of sheet piling driven parallel to the culverts will allow pilings and abutments to be built outside of flowing water. Paddling through the project area will be restricted during key work items such as culvert removals, cofferdams, beam and deck setting; updated information will be posted at <http://www.antrimcrc.org/old-state-road-bridge-over-the-jordan-river-construction/>.

The project area will be closed as a launch site to river paddler use after February 28 and may impact the snowmobile trail in late March 2017; exact dates are pending construction progress and weather, and will be posted online at the website previously noted. The required safety feature of a 54" high concrete and parapet tube railing on the bridge deck with guardrail on the approaches, combined with a 90' long bridge will inevitably prevent the continued illicit launch and take-out use of the eroding access way that encroaches onto private land at the northeast end of the crossing. Existing state land at the southwest corner of the new bridge provides an exceptional opportunity to accommodate public use on public land. The construction of a new concrete box culvert at Cokirs Creek will provide a two-lane entrance to a future recreational access site that is usable by various recreationists including paddlers, river guides, and snowmobilers.

This project has been underway since 2013 and marks a major milestone in providing a free flowing Jordan River. Both design and construction of Chestonia Bridge and Cokirs Crossing is estimated at \$1.27M. The Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians is providing \$202,000 through the NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). CRA has secured grants from the Charlevoix County Community Foundation, Frey Foundation, Great Lakes Fishery Trust, Harry A. and Margaret D. Towsley Foundation, Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation, J. A. Woollam Foundation, Michigan Department of Natural Resources Aquatic Habitat Fund, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation – Sustain Our Great Lakes program, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service – Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act and Great Lakes Basin Fish Habitat program. Antrim County Road Commission is providing up to an additional \$75,000 in local match in construction engineering and materials testing. Additional partners include the Friends of the Jordan River, Antrim Conservation District, and Michigan Department of Environmental Quality. Please note that some of the grants will apply to Chestonia Bridge costs, while other funders will help with both Chestonia and Cokirs Creek crossing costs. Cokirs Creek crossing is recognized as essential to developing a future public access site.

Both the health of the river and making this a safe, accessible site for recreationists are top priorities. MDNR is funding recreational access site design with Prein and Newhof, and the Parks and Recreation Division will be holding a public open house in March of 2017 regarding the development of a public access site at the southwest corner of the crossing. Full development of the site is pending final design, permits, and needed funding and MDNR equipment/labor forces to construct the agreed upon amenities for the site.

Antrim County Road Commission will post detour and construction status at <http://www.antrimcrc.org/old-state-road-bridge-over-the-jordan-river-construction/>. CRA is a private, non-profit organization involved with watershed management projects throughout a 13-county region in northwest Michigan; more information can be found at www.rivercare.org.

Caption: Conservation Resource Alliance Biologist Kimberly Balke reads higher than normal water velocities at the double culverts on Old State Rd.



Caption: The current double 16' wide culverts that sit where Old State Road crosses the Jordan River are slated for removal this spring.



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