

SAVE OUR COVERED BRIDGES

I have recently heard the news that the Vaughan Creek Covered Bridge (Irish River #1) in St. Martins is to be replaced.

The covered bridges of St. Martins are well-known tourist attractions and heritage structures which should be protected and preserved. Destroying one of them and replacing it with a modern bridge is eliminating a piece of New Brunswick's history. The recent work on the Bayswater Covered Bridge (Milkish Inlet #1) proves a covered bridge can be restored to accommodate today's traffic demands.

I am addressing this letter to both the provincial and federal levels of government because of the concern with traffic to the Fundy Trail. If both levels of government wish to promote the Fundy Park and the Trail, why would you want to destroy one of the main features of the trip. Not everything has to be new! I also have concerns about the safety of visitors to St. Martins. Visitors typically park their cars and walk to the various shops and attractions. The increase in large commercial vehicles resulting from upgrades to the road will likely cause conflicts with the substantial pedestrian traffic in the heart of the village.

I believe there are alternatives.

- Two-way traffic seems to be a major concern. If I may be so bold to suggest that a second low profile bridge be built alongside the existing covered bridge and proper restoration be done to the covered bridge to accommodate traffic. The Vaughan Creek Covered Bridge would carry one lane of traffic and the new bridge the other lane. This method was successfully used at the Green Sergeants Covered Bridge in New Jersey.
- Could a new permanent two-lane bridge be constructed at the location of the current temporary bridge alongside the Vaughan Creek Bridge as was done at the Sawmill Creek, Darlings Island, and the Kennebecasis River #7.5 Covered Bridges? Then the covered bridge could be used as a walking bridge for tourists to appreciate.

At least these options would preserve the only place we know of where one can take a photo of two covered bridges and a lighthouse in the same frame. Truly a unique scene.

What will happen to the existing Vaughan Creek Covered Bridge should the decision to replace it be final? Will it be destroyed as in so many other cases or will it be repurposed?

It will be a tragedy if the province's rural history continues to be discarded. As someone interested in the future of the area, I sincerely hope the decision will be reconsidered. I urge you, as a representative of the area, to speak on my behalf and have all parties take a second look at saving this beautiful piece of the province's heritage.

Signed,