

## BRIDGE DEDICATION TALK

WE ARE HONORED TO HAVE JACK WILLIAMS, REGIONAL DIRECTOR OF DOT AND MATT DRISCOLL, DOT COMMISSIONER HERE AND PLEASED. THEY HAVE ALL PLAYED SUCH AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN RESTORING THIS BRIDGE.

IF IT HAD NOT BEEN FOR FUNDING THROUGH THIS ADMINISTRATION, THIS MAGNIFICENT STRUCTURE WOULD NOT HAVE HAPPENED.

THIS BRIDGE IS THE MOST ORIGINALLY RESTORED COVERED BRIDGE IN MEMORY AND IS NOW THE STANDARD FOR RESTORATION. WE ARE ALL VERY PROUD. IT STARTED WITH GOVERNOR PATAKI BACK IN THE EARLY 90'S AND OVER THE PAST 20 YEARS MANY DEDICATED INDIVIDUALS HAVE DILIGENTLY WORKED TO RESTORE THIS BRIDGE WITH HISTORICAL INTEGRITY. *BILL RUDGE REGIONAL DEC DIRECTOR AND OUR NEPHEW, MCCRAE BURNHAM, WHO WORKS AT DEC, KEPT AN EYE ON THE HISTORIC APPLICATION TO MAKE SURE IT DIDN'T GET BURIED.* JOE MARTENS, WHO SERVED AS DEC COMMISSIONER AND IS BACK NOW WITH OSI, WAS ALSO ESSENTIAL COORDINATING THE MULTIPLE FACTORS IN THIS PROEJECT AND MOVING FORWARD.

THE TEAM FROM DOT GAVE US EVERY POSSIBLE COURTESY THEY COULD. IT'S BEEN OVER TWO YEARS WITH MANY DIFFICULT AND TIME CONSUMING DECISIONS, PERMITS AND ENGINEERING CHALLENGES FOR JEREMY AT DOT AND JOE BORIS AND KEN BOWDREN OF SULLIVAN COUNTY PAVING. WE ARE AWED BY THE WORK OF THE CONSTRUCTION TEAM. BRINGING ON PATRICK KELLY TO DO THE STONE WORK WAS BRILLIANT.

THE COVERED BRIDGE IS ONLY PART OF THE STORY. THE TANNERY WAS HERE IN 1830 - AND WAS TANNING HIDES 30 YEARS LATER WHEN THE BRIDGE WAS BUILT IN 1860. THEN, BEAVERKILL WAS A TOWN—WITH 3 CHURCHES, A SCHOOL, BLACKSMITH SHOPS AND STORES AND POST OFFICE. .

WHEN THE HEMLOCK RAN OUT SO THERE WAS NO MORE TANIC ACID TO CURE THE HIDES HERE, BEAVERKILL BECAME A FARM TOWN WITH FARMERS OPENING THEIR HOMES TO SUMMER VISITORS - PRIMARILY FISHERMEN. BUT ALSO GOLFERS - THERE WAS A 9 HOLE GOLF COURSE JUST DOWN THE RIVER HERE, WHICH WAS PART OF TROUT VALLEY FARM, A MAGNIFICENT VICTORIAN HOTEL.

THEN, IN THE 1930'S, UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT, HUNDREDS OF YOUNG MEN CAME TO THE CATSKILLS WITH THE CIVILIAN CONSERVATION COOP. THEY BUILT THE CAMPSITE, PICNIC AREA AND MOST OF THE CABINS YOU SEE HERE TODAY. (POINT TO RANGER CABIN, BATH HOUSE NEARBY)

IN THE EARLY 1990'S, THERE WAS A GRET DEAL OF CONTROVERSY ABOUT WHAT TO DO ABOUT THE TWO HISTORIC BRIDGES ON THIS PART OF THE RIVER. THEY HAD BECOME UNSAFE AND UNABLE TO CARRY THE HEAVY LOADS OF MODERN DAY TRAFFIC. SOME WANTED THEM IMMEDIATELY REPLACED AND BROUGHT UP TO CODE, OTHERS WANTED TO SEE BOTH MADE SAFE BUT ALSO RESTORED WITH HISTORICAL INTEGRITY.

MY WIFE, PATRICIA AND OTHERS WORKED TO BRING THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER TO ADDRESS THESE ISSUES. THEY FORMED THE FRIENDS OF BEAVERKILL COMMUNITY. WE HAD FOUR EARLY GOALS. THE COVERED BRIDGE WAS IN DANGER OF BEING TORN DOWN AND REPLACED WITH A MODERN ONE. THE CAMPSITE, ALSO AN HISTORICAL PLACE, NEEDED ATTENTION.

THE BEAVERKILL METHODIST CHURCH NEEDED EXTENSIVE REPAIRS. THE FRIENDS RAISED MONEY FOR PAINTING AND ROOFING AND NOW OWNS THE LITTLE ONE-ROOM CHURCH DOWN THE ROAD FROM HERE. THE METAL BRIDGE DOWN RIVER IN CRAIGIE CLAIR, WAS REPLACED WITH A BRIDGE THAT IS SAFE FOR LARGER VEHICLES BUT IS AESTHETIALLY PLEASING. .

I WANT TO THANK THE LEADERSHP OF FOBC, MANY OF WHOM ARE HERE TODAY. DAVID BARNES, THE VICE PRESIDENT, AND PATRICIA.

LES MATTIS YOU WERE AN EARLY ADVOCATE OF GETTING THE BRIDGE ON THE HISTORIC REGISTER. FOBC MEMBERS CAME TO MEETINGS, DONATED MONEY AND DID EVERYTHING IT TAKES TO MAKE A COMMUNITY BEAUTIFUL.

IT'S NOT JUST A BRIDGE - IT'S A PARK - A PARK OPEN TO ALL, IN FACT THE ONLY OPEN PUBLIC WATER ON THE LITTLE BEAVERKILL ABOVE HODGES—2 MILES HERE FOR FISHING, (MADE FAMOUS BY THEODORE GORDON, WHO CAST ONE OF THE FIRST AMERICAN MADE FLIES HERE,) SWIMMING, PICNICING, CAMPING. WE WANT TO ESPECIALLY THANK JOHN AND HIS

**ASSISTANT, DARLENE, FOR SUCH A GOOD JOB PREPARING THE AREA FOR TODAY'S CERMONY AND THEIR EXCELLENT WORK SUPERVISING THE CAMPSITE.**

**ALSO I WANT TO THANK BERT DARROW, PRESIDENT OF THEODORE GORDEN FLY FISHERS, WHO DONATED THESE TWO LOVELY BENCHES.**

**IT IS- A PLACE TO FIND QUIET AND BEAUTY - A PLACE TO GET CLOSE TO NATURE.**