

Working to return bridge to brilliance

Submitted
FOR THE CASTLEGAR CITIZEN

Brilliant Suspension Bridge is one of BC's oldest suspension bridges. It was built in 1913 by the member's of the Doukhobor, Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood ("CCUB") organization, to provide a

Since 1991, the Working Group has received support from local private donations, the British Columbia Heritage Trust, BC Hydro, Pope & Talbot, Kalesnikoff Lumber, Teck Cominco, Selkirk College, Columbia Power Corporation, RDCK, local engineers and designers, and others, which enabled diverse phases of the

become part of the Trans-Canada Trail network and emergency egress for the residents of Brilliant.

The last phase of the restoration required is the construction of the approach on the Brilliant side and the replacement of the bridge deck materials. This is the most problematic due to contractor liability issues associated with

advised that they are prepared to render whatever assistance they can with respect to providing equipment, etc., provided they are not the contractor for the project with responsibility for the liability aspects of the construction.

The Honourable Sandy Santori, was approached to help determine if the Ministry of Transportation, who still have jurisdiction over the site, may be able to provide some assistance with respect to the afore-mentioned issues as the

bridge is still part of their inventory.

Mr. Santori, and local Regional District directors, John Voykin and Gordon Zaitsoff have been diligent in their efforts in helping to facilitate a solution to this matter.

It is also anticipated that a project manager will be retained shortly to help complete the final phases of the restoration.

Community support for the project has been unwavering since its inception in 1991.



**BRILLIANT BRIDGE AS IT WAS
...AND WILL BE AGAIN!**

Photo Submitted

transportation link across the Kootenay River to Brilliant and the road to Nelson.

The members of the CCUB provided all of the labour and raised more than 2/3 of the costs of the bridge to provide a very important permanent transportation link for use by everyone in the area.

A public works grant provided the balance of funding for the bridge construction.

The bridge was a vital transportation link to the Castlegar Airport and the community of Ootischenia until it was decommissioned in 1968 when a new highway bridge was built.

In 1991, the Brilliant Suspension Bridge Restoration Working Group was formed to consider restoring the bridge which has been recognized by historians, engineers, local and regional officials, numerous heritage, historical, and cultural organizations as deserving a place of honour for its role in the development of the West Kootenay area.

The bridge has also been recognized as being of "national historic significance and should be commemorated" as such by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada. In considering this designation the Board noted:

"...The bridge ranks as a symbol of Doukhobor culture and is one of the few remaining resources connected with this culture... Its construction, almost entirely by Doukhobor settlers, was a major accomplishment for a pioneer community..."

restoration work to proceed.

The work completed to date includes:

- inspections and testing of all the structural components;
- engineering and preparation of restoration working drawings;
- design and construction of complex reinforcing cable clamps;
- acquisition of timber and custom manufacturing of all bridge deck and approach wood materials;
- plans to include the bridge in a regional park;
- plans for the bridge to

this part of the project.

Arrow Lake Generating Station contractor, Peter Kiewit Sons Co. Ltd., was prepared to complete the restoration, as a community contribution, if they were the successful bidder on the Brilliant Expansion Plant ("BEP") Project. Unfortunately for the project, they were not the successful bidder.

Meetings have been held with representatives of the firm that was awarded the BEP contract, Skanska-Chant JV/SNC Lavalin Inc., and they