

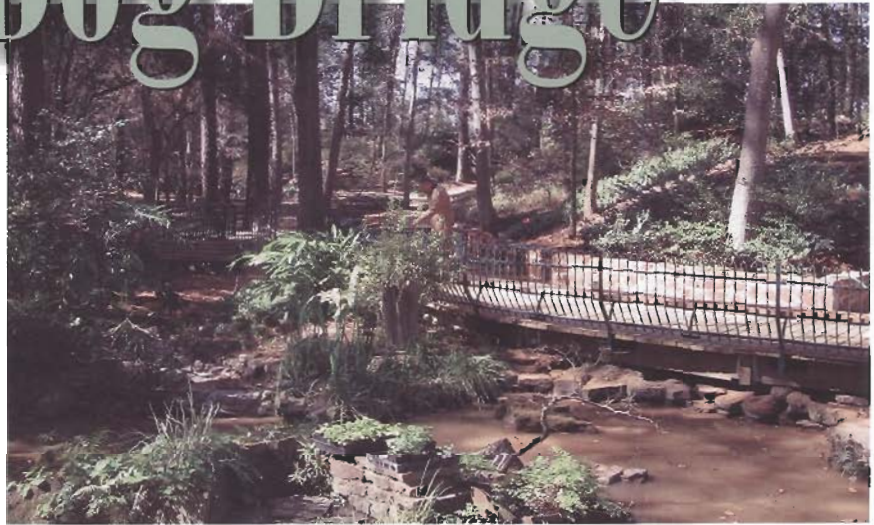
Shade Bog Bridge

Environmental Concerns Shape Unique Replacement Project

Staff members at Mercer Arboretum and Botanic Gardens in Harris County are driving their maintenance vehicles and carts across Shade Bog Bridge, preparing for spring and for visitors who enjoy the flora. Today there are no concerns about safety on the curved bridge, as the concrete piers and timber beams supporting the decking are all new.

Working in a water-blocked creek bed while avoiding tree trunks, trees and vegetation, Centennial Contractors Enterprises Inc. completed the following:

- ▶ replaced Shade Bog Bridge;
- ▶ built a retention wall that doubles as a seating area and holds back the sloping hill next to the bog;
- ▶ installed a concrete culvert area; and



Shade Bog Bridge was constructed as part of the Job Order Contracting Program approved by Harris County in December.

- ▶ covered the crossover with stone and masonry.

Because it is a botanic garden site, concern for the environment is high on the list of priorities.

"Centennial was very environmentally conscious about our garden, not damaging the trees and plants," said Linda Gay, director of Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens.

Tim Murphy, Centennial Contractors

Enterprises Inc. project manager, noted that the creek bed and unique environmental needs required extra steps and paperwork.

"We were constantly changing the layout because they didn't want to lose trees and vegetation," said Murphy. "Even at the last when we were building handrails... we were still tweaking the design."

In addition, while the job was in progress, the threat of Hurricane Rita caused a mass exodus out of Houston, which created another set of issues with subcontractors and suppliers.

Centennial constructed about 50 drilled concrete piers and used heavy duty 4'x12' timber beams to support the 2'x6' wooden deck portion of the bridge. A new culvert was constructed where the bog empties back into the creek, where the earthen gully created by severe washout had previously threatened the old bridge structure.

"This will withstand time and flooding and allow efficient water flow," Murphy said.

Although it is called Shade Bog Bridge, it is possibly as much an elevated walkway, as it is 18 inches above the natural bog area next to Cypress Creek.

"Sometimes the whole bridge will be under water," said Harris County project manager Terry Jones. "So it is designed and built with products that will handle that."

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Photos by John Murawski



KERR COUNTY CELEBRATES 150 YEARS

Kerr County kicked off its Sesquicentennial Celebration April 7 with a special ceremony on the steps of the Kerr County Courthouse. Some 300 guests were on hand as Gov. Rick Perry presented a state proclamation to Kerr County recognizing the 150th anniversary of the county's founding.

The celebration continued later that day with historical pictures on display in the Union Church building and additional exhibitions featuring a wire fence-making machine, old farm machinery, a chuck wagon, and sheep shearing.

The next day found residents lining the streets for the Kerr 150 Parade:

"Our Roots Run Deep," followed by a citywide birthday party at Louise Hays Park complete with music and fireworks.

Other activities included children's games from the turn of the century, singing and clog dancing demonstrations, and a presentation of the history of the Lawson Store and native tribes of the Hill Country.

On Sunday residents gathered for a memorial service remembering the founders and residents of Kerr County at the Schreiner University Dietert Chapel Auditorium.

The lead organization in the Kerr 150 celebration was the Kerrville Area Chamber of Commerce. ★

