

Safety Line

Outside Fold-In

Fold

Outside Back

Fold

Outside Front

## Creative Arts at the Bridge

The Lower Elgin Road bridge has been used in several movies during the recent years: 'A Perfect World' (1993, Clint Eastwood and Kevin Costner), 'Exists' (2013, directed by Eduardo Sánchez), and 'Joe' (2013, Nicolas Cage).

It was also used in two music videos and featured in the album art of Grifters & Shills (2010-2016).

The bridge website includes details of these efforts (<http://lowerelginroadbridge.com>).



## Current Status

After the May 2015 flood, area residents began researching the bridge history and working with the County for repairs. The historical information was submitted to the Texas Historical Commission (THC) to apply for an historical designation for the bridge.

On April 10, 2017, THC announced that the Lower Elgin Road bridge had been added to the National Register of Historic Places.

Bastrop County applied for FEMA assistance to repair the flood damage. On April 17, 2017, FEMA notified the County that it would reimburse 75% of the approved repair costs to restore the bridge to its pre-flood condition, enabling it to be used again as a pedestrian bridge.

Area residents have contacted the Bastrop County Historical Society about working through their non-profit organization to raise the remaining 25% of the repair costs. The County is also exploring other funding sources.

The bridge Facebook page includes the latest repair status information (<http://www.facebook.com/LowerElginRoadBridge>).

## Lower Elgin Road Bridge

on

## Wilbarger Creek

## A Piece of Bastrop County History

Facebook:

<http://www.facebook.com/LowerElginRoadBridge>

Web Site:

<http://lowerelginroadbridge.com>

8.5"

10.98"

## Bridge History

The historic Lower Elgin Road bridge is a Pratt through-truss bridge that spans Wilbarger Creek in Bastrop County, Texas. It was constructed with a group of three other bridges by the Kansas City Bridge and Iron Company of Kansas City Missouri in 1888. The total cost for all four bridges was \$12,829.00.

The initial construction of this bridge provided a bidirectional effect on the agricultural, economic, and business development of the area by providing an affordable and easy means of transportation to enable farmers to get their crops to market. The expansion of agriculture in the Utley, Cedar Valley, and Union Hill communities, facilitated by the bridge through easy market access for farmers, provided the farmers with increased income and, consequently, increased ability to purchase goods and services in Elgin. Increased business demands provided entrepreneurial opportunities, leading to the development of additional business and banking establishments and to continued growth in the area.

The bridge was decommissioned in 1997 after the construction of a new bridge and was closed to vehicular traffic. It remained open to pedestrian traffic until the flood of May 2015. Since this flood, a group of concerned citizens has come together to promote the repairs of the bridge.

## Floods of 2015

The central Texas area experienced two major flood events in 2015, both of which damaged the bridge decking. Recorded rainfall amounts ranged between roughly 5.5 and 6.7 in. during one 24-hour period; the Colorado River at Bastrop was 3 ft above flood stage. Wilbarger Creek, which usually flows approximately 30 ft below the bridge decking, went out of its banks and overflowed the bridge. The National Weather Service considers the May 26 flood crest on Wilbarger Creek at Elgin to be an 'historic crest'. As the water receded, the damage to the bridge decking became apparent. After the flood, the bridge was closed to pedestrian traffic because of safety concerns.

Like the May flood, the October flood also resulted in an historic crest on Wilbarger Creek at Elgin at 37.10 ft on October 31; this crest was only  $8\frac{3}{4}$  in. below the crest in May. Although the extent of the October flood would have been sufficient to damage the bridge decking, it exacerbated the damage from the May flood; some of the damaged decking from the May flood washed away in the October flood. The receding floodwaters revealed the new damage to the decking.

Photos on the right show the pre-flood condition of the decking in January 2015 and the decking damage from the May and October 2015 floods.



Pre-flood condition: January, 2015



Decking damage: May 2015 flood



Decking damage: October 2015 flood

8.5"



