

= Pleasure Beach Bridge =

The Pleasure Beach Bridge is a movable Warren through @-@ truss bridge in Bridgeport , Connecticut . Completed in 1927 , it functioned as a toll bridge until the Great Depression , when it was transferred to the city of Bridgeport . Its service life came to an end after it was badly damaged by fire in 1996 , cutting off access to Pleasure Beach . In the decade following the fire , several bonds to fund a new bridge were proposed , but ultimately fell through . Pleasure Beach has become the subject of debate , whether it will become an undisturbed protected salt marsh or be revitalized . An alternate method of access via water taxi service , first made possible by a grant in 2009 , was not realized until 2013 .

= = Construction = =

Pleasure Beach Bridge is a riveted Warren through @-@ truss , consisting of longitudinal members joined only by angled cross @-@ members , forming alternately inverted equilateral triangle @-@ shaped spaces along the length . The bridge is supported by timber pilings . The swing span is made of two separate Warren through @-@ trusses that pivots on concrete pier . The operator 's house is located on the mainland approach . The bridge spans a length of 105 ft (32 m) , by 20 ft (6 @. @ 1 m) wide , and was rated with an eight @-@ ton limit . Its wooden construction resulted in the timbers creaking and shifting under the weight of passing cars .

= = History = =

Prior to the bridge 's construction , Pleasure Island was accessible only by ferry . In 1907 , the Pleasure Beach Ferry Company was given the rights to build a movable toll bridge . A series of trestles were built across the tidal flats with a swing span across the dredged channel . The swing span was constructed in 1927 , but in the Great Depression the Beach Ferry Company transferred control of the bridge to the city of Bridgeport . The tolls were removed and the bridge continued to be used after Pleasure Beach 's closing in 1968 , until the 1996 fire . Repairs were made to the bridge in 1988 with money from the state . In 1994 , the need to replace the bridge resulted in a state and federal promise of \$ 20 million , but this was rejected by the Connecticut Department of Transportation in 1995 .

The bridge caught fire on June 16 , 1996 , when a cigarette butt or match ignited the wooden structure . The fire began around 2 : 20 p.m. and burned for over three hours . The bridge was raised to an open position ; but the fire badly charred a 200 ft (61 m) section of the bridge . The bridge and Pleasure Beach was then closed . Estimates of the cost of constructing a new bridge or causeway varies between \$ 9 million to \$ 26 million .

= = Aftermath = =

The reconstruction of the bridge has been a perennial subject . George Gunther , strong advocate for a new Pleasure Beach Bridge , petitioned for the eight consecutive years to replace the bridge . In 2005 , the bridge was slated to have \$ 13 @. @ 5 million bond grant by the State of Connecticut that was termed " legislative pork " . In 2007 , a bond for \$ 4 million to build a retractable pedestrian bridge was highlighted , but not constructed .

The damage and closure of the bridge resulted in concerns over Pleasure Beach 's fate . The Connecticut Audubon Society seeks to create Connecticut 's largest , undisturbed protected salt marsh . The area has been designated an " Important Bird Area " and the purchase of surrounding land is underway . A local firm , Stantec , has been retained for a study for revitalizing Pleasure Beach ; the accessibility to Pleasure Beach is a key issue . In 2009 , the city of Bridgeport received a \$ 1 @. @ 9 million grant for a water taxi service that was delayed repeatedly into 2013 .