

= Blackledge River Railroad Bridge =

The Blackledge River Railroad Bridge is a Warren truss bridge that was built on the site of a c . 1870 railroad bridge . The original bridge was completed and opened by August 3 , 1877 . Likely built by the Colchester Railway Company , the bridge was part of the 3 @. @ 59 miles (5 @. @ 78 km) of track from Colchester , Connecticut , to Turnerville (now known as Amston , Connecticut) . The line was leased to the Boston & New York Air Line Railroad and reported improvement in 1879 and a new 110 @- @ foot long (34 m) iron bridge by 1881 . The line was leased to the New York , New Haven and Hartford Railroad in 1882 . After dominating the region , the New York , New Haven and Hartford Railroad petitioned for changes to the Air Line and the approval came on July 7 , 1911 .

The historic Blackledge River Railroad Bridge was constructed c . 1912 as an improved version of the previous bridge . The new 108 @- @ foot long (33 m) bridge integrated the previous abutments into the design and was elevated a further 5 feet (1 @. @ 5 m) above the Blackledge River . The railroad bridge was abandoned in the 1960s and sold to the Connecticut Department of Transportation . The bridge was added to the National Register of Historic Places on July 31 , 1986 . The bridge is now located in Airline State Park . By 2007 , a wooden pedestrian bridge was built atop the railroad bridge and crosses over the Blackledge River .

= = Previous bridges = =

According to the National Register of Historic Places nomination , the first bridge was constructed in the early 1870s by the New York and Boston Air Line Railroad . The details on this bridge are largely unknown , but contradictory evidence exists placing the construction of the bridge between 1876 and 1877 . According to Marshall , the Air Line Railroad was completed in 1873 and the Colchester branch was completed in 1877 .

Organized in 1876 , the Colchester line was completed by the Colchester Railway Company . The line operated 3 @. @ 59 miles of track from Colchester , Connecticut , to Turnerville (now known as Amston , Connecticut) and it opened on August 3 , 1877 . The line was leased on April 3 , 1878 to the Boston & New York Air Line Railroad company for 999 years . In January 1879 , the Air Line reported that the Black Ledge bridge had 25 @, @ 000 yards of earth moved to replace a high piling and 2 @, @ 500 cubic yards of masonry added in preparation for the installation of a new bridge . In 1881 , the Air Line announced the replacement of the Howe truss and the installation of a new 110 @- @ foot long (34 m) iron bridge . On October 1 , 1882 , the line was leased to the New York , New Haven and Hartford Railroad for 99 years . The Air Line reported to the Railroad Commissioners in 1899 that a bridge over Blackledge River was completed . The New York , New Haven and Hartford dominated the region by 1905 , having acquiring over three dozen railroads . In 1907 , the company sought to improve and modernize the Air Line . On April 17 , 1911 , the company petitioned the Railroad Commissioners for alterations and changes . The approval for the changes came on July 7 , 1911 .

= = Second Bridge = =

The Blackledge River Railroad Bridge was rebuilt to increase the flood clearance and the load @- @ bearing capacity of the bridge , but its abutments were integrated into the new bridge . Completed c . 1912 , the replacement Blackledge River Railroad Bridge is a riveted steel , double @- @ intersection Warren deck truss . The original granite stone abutments which supported the previous bridge was reported to be five feet lower , were integrated with the brownstone abutments of the rebuilt bridge . The bottom chord of the span is 32 feet (9 @. @ 8 m) above the Blackledge River . The truss is 108 feet (33 m) long and about 18 feet (5 @. @ 5 m) deep . The top and bottom chords are typical box girders with diagonal members and the deck is open . At some point , the bridge was altered with the addition of a sewer pipe .

= = Fate = =

The line continued to serve local passenger and freight trains for decades , but flooding in August 1955 destroyed the critical bridge work in Putnam and lead to its closure in the 1960s . Several years after its abandonment the railroad was sold to Connecticut 's Department of Transportation . By 1983 , the abandoned railroad bridge had its span sealed off and its tracks lifted . The bridge is in the Salmon River State Forest and is a part of the Air Line State Park Trail . A new wooden bridge allows transportation over the Blackledge River . Constructed prior to 2007 , the new wooden bridge decks the railroad bridge . The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection was assisted by the Coast Guard Academy and the 192nd Engineering Battalion of the Connecticut National Guard .

The National Register of Historic Places nomination lists the Blackledge River Railroad Bridge under both criteria A and C. Criterion A requires the property must make a contribution to the major pattern of American history , and criterion C concerns the distinctive characteristics of the building by its architecture and construction . The basis for its criterion A , is that it was part of a major improvement to the engineering and lines under the operation of the New York , New Haven and Hartford Railroad . The bridge was listed under criterion C as " a representative example of the typical medium @-@ length railroad bridge of the early 20th century . " The bridge was added to the National Register of Historic Places on July 31 , 1986 .