

TECHLINE

Properties and Use of Wood, Composites, and Fiber Products

Wood in Transportation



The Wood In Transportation (WIT) program seeks to improve rural transportation networks and revitalize rural economies by encouraging the effective use of wood for bridge construction. Since the beginning of the program in 1989, 375 vehicular and pedestrian timber bridges and 76 special projects have been funded in 48 states.

Formerly known as the National Timber Bridge Initiative, the WIT program started with a focus on vehicular highway bridges. The direction now includes portable bridges for timber harvesting, pedestrian and trail structures, retaining walls, box culverts, sound barriers, and marine and railway structures.

The primary program goal is to diversify local economies by several means:

- Improving rural transportation networks
- Expanding the range of markets for wood products
- Creating service industries for wood in transportation structures
- Commercializing modern timber bridge technology
- Promoting innovation that leads to cost-saving strategies and improved performance of existing designs
- Improving America's forests through stewardship

These objectives are being achieved through four distinct, yet interrelated, efforts:

Wood In Transportation Demonstration Projects— These projects improve rural transportation networks, expand the range of markets for wood products, and create service industries for wood in transportation construction.

Research—Research investigates the use of wood as a construction material. Much of the work is in cooperation with universities, other federal agencies, and state and local governments, with a common goal that the Nation will benefit from newly developed technology.

Technology Transfer and Information Management—The National Wood In Transportation Information Center (NWITIC), Morgantown, WV, provides to customers information acquired from demonstration projects and related research. It also administers the demonstration grant program.

Rural Revitalization—Many WIT projects are constructed with locally available timber using local resources. This emphasis can help stimulate local economies.

Program accomplishments include the following:

- More than 240 modern bridges constructed
- Other applications of timber, such as retaining walls, portable bridges, and marine structures, demonstrated
- Informative, easy-to-understand timber bridge manual and related technical information made available free of charge
- Designs utilizing local underutilized timber developed
- Hardwood species certified for structural uses
- “*Crossings*” newsletter, which provides short, informative articles on the use of wood in transportation structures and information on current research (distribution averages 5,200 copies quarterly)

For additional information, contact:

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