

March 16, 2026

To the Brunswick Town Council
To the Topsham Select Board

Those signing below have all been members of the Brunswick Topsham Bridge Design Advisory Committee (DAC). We were appointed in June, 2016 by the Town Council (for Brunswick) and the Select Board (for Topsham). The [preliminary report](#) of the DAC was completed by the end of 2017, and the DAC made a [public presentation](#) of its report and recommendations on February 5, 2020.

We write now to urge that the new bridge, now nearing completion, be named the
Pejepscot Falls Bridge.

A recommendation to this effect, approved by all of us remaining in this area from the DAC, is attached.

It is the Maine State Legislature that has the authority to name a bridge in the state of Maine. We call on the Brunswick Town Council and the Topsham Select Board to consider endorsing this recommended name and to forward that endorsement to the Maine State Legislature via the elected representatives of the two towns.

Members of the Design Advisory Committee

Mike Lyne, Chair
Douglas Bennett, Vice Chair
Larissa Darcy
Margo Knight
Victor Langelo
Gary Massanek
Nancy Randolph
Don Spann
Sande Updegraph
Bruce Van Note, former Chair, DOT (Ret.)
Will Wilkoff

Proposal

To Name the New Bridge Between Brunswick and Topsham

The Pejepscot Falls Bridge

A new bridge needs a new name.

We propose that the new bridge between Brunswick and Topsham be named “The Pejepscot Bridge” or, alternatively, “The Pejepscot Falls Bridge.”

“Pejepscot” is a name that Native Americans in this area, the Anasagunticook, an Abenaki group, gave to the lower parts of the Androscoggin River, the section before it enters Merrymeeting Bay. It roughly means “long rocky rapids part” or “crooked like a diving snake.”¹ The new bridge spans this portion of the river and affords a splendid view. The bridge is located at head of tide on the Androscoggin, just below the last falls on the river. Those falls are today underneath the Brunswick Hydroelectric Dam.

It is fitting that the new bridge draw its name from the language of the Native Americans who have long lived in this area. For generations, those Native Americans gathered at the falls at then location of this new bridge to harvest salmon swimming upriver to spawn, and to harvest other fish as well. The lower falls location is simply the most important single location for the Abenaki in what is now Brunswick and Topsham.

When Europeans began coming into the area after about 1600, they, too, gathered salmon at this location, salted them and sent barrels of fish to Europe. Those Europeans built first a wooden fort and then a stone fort adjacent to the falls on the Brunswick side of the river.

The bridge that this new one replaces, built in 1932, was named the Frank J. Wood Bridge, after the farmer who suggested the course of the bridge. Its predecessor, built in 1897, was named the Brunswick-Topsham Bridge. That bridge replaced one built in 1896, which lasted only a year before being swept away by a spring flood, a freshet. In turn its predecessor, built in 1871, was known as the Free Bridge, because it was the first not to charge a toll for passage. Three bridges at the site before the Free Bridge appear not to have been named.

¹ “Pejepscot History Center, “A Brief History of the Pejepscot Region,” <https://pejepscothistorical.org/local-history/>.