



## Historic Bridge Foundation Facebook Archives

### Focus Bridges: Western United States Bridge Fires

2020 has been a year of many large, devastating fires in the western United States. As of September 2020, some bridges have already been destroyed or are at risk.

The 1965 Bidwell Bar Suspension Bridge in Butte County, California was the subject of dramatic photos showing the bridge with the nearby mountainside covered in flames. Despite the dramatic photos, the steel and concrete bridge itself appears to be unharmed. This article has a photo showing the Bidwell Bar Bridge: <https://abcnews.go.com/US/oregon-governor-issues-emergency-declaration-wildfires/story?id=72895505>

The original Bidwell Bar Suspension bridge, which dates to 1856 and was relocated to a park setting for pedestrian use, has thus far been spared from the fires, although one fire reportedly was nearby. This bridge contains cast iron tripod towers, and its cable support a timber stiffening truss and deck, putting this bridge at a high risk if fires did in fact reach the bridge.

In Whitman County, Washington, a unique Howe covered bridge noted for its lack of overhead covering and original use as a railroad bridge was burned. The Manning-Rye covered bridge, also known as the Harpole Covered Bridge, was the only one of its kind in the United States. This article has more information including a photo showing the bridge completely destroyed. <https://mynorthwest.com/2149915/history-in-flames-whitman-county-malden/>

In Washington State, a timber trestle approach to a 1941 deck plate girder railroad bridge over Yakima River on Central Washington Railroad in Benton County was burned. This article has a photo: <https://www.tri-cityherald.com/news/local/article245584900.html>

In Lane County, Oregon, the fires have come very close to claiming two covered bridges. Firefighters worked to save the Goodpasture Covered Bridge from destruction. This video shows fires raging around the firefighters as they hose the bridge down. <https://www.facebook.com/100014798942403/videos/939825003187456>

The Goodpasture Covered Bridge is a Howe covered bridge dating to 1938 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register listed 1966 Belknap Covered Bridge, also a Howe truss, was reportedly not so lucky as news reports are indicating that this bridge has been destroyed by fires.



Goodpasture Covered Bridge



Old Bidwell Bar Suspension bridge



Bidwell Bar Suspension bridge