

EI-21128

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EA - Kinzua Bridge Foundation - Kinzua Bridge State Park

Mary Ann

to:

Ms. Nadals

09/23/2015 06:33 PM

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History: This message has been replied to.

1 Attachment



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Catherine Nadals
 Environmental Protection Specialist/Archaeologist
 Office of Environmental Analysis
 Surface Transportation Board
 Washington, DC 20423
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Ms. Nadals!

RE: Docket No.AB 551 (Sub-No. 2X)

Kinzua Viaduct/Bridge - Kinzua Bridge State Park

The Kinzua Viaduct/Bridge, "One of a Kind", A historic structure no one else has. - Internationally visited as few state parks are in any state. . The visitation numbers are greater than they have ever been as visitors are coming to view the destruction of this Pennsylvania engineering marvel that was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1977 and as a National Historic Civil Engineering Landmark in 1982. July 21, 2003 an

F-1 tornado, with winds calculated at 94 miles per hour, partially destroyed the viaduct. Eleven of the twenty towers lay in the valley below. To that day, the Kinzua Viaduct was considered the fourth highest in the world.

July 21, 2004 the Kinzua Bridge was removed from the National Register of Historic Places due to the tornado destruction.

Pennsylvania released \$700,000 to design repairs on the remaining towers and plan development of the new park facilities.

In late 2005, the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) put forward an \$8 million proposal for a new observation deck and visitors' center, with plans to allow access to the bridge and a hiking trail giving views of the fallen towers.

The Kinzua Sky Walk was opened on September 15, 2011 in a ribbon-cutting ceremony. The Sky Walk consists of a pedestrian walkway to an observation deck with a glass floor at the end of the bridge that allows views of the bridge and the valley directly below.

The walkway cost \$4.3 million to construct, but is estimated to bring in \$11.5 million in tourism revenue for the region.

Visitors challenge the walkway carefully in walking out on the new skywalk making this historical viaduct/bridge "One of A Kind"

Kinzua Viaduct Historical Marker**The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission**

Dedicated: Sunday, August 15, 1982

County: McKean

Marker Type: City

Categories: Business, Industry, and Transportation

Location: Kinzua Bridge State Park, off SR 3011, 3.5 miles NE of Mount Jewett

Marker Text: *Originally begun in 1881 for the New York, Lake Erie & Western Railroad to ship coal, lumber, and oil, it was once the world's highest and longest rail viaduct.* Rebuilt in 1900 to carry heavier loads, it was in service until 1959. Kinzua Bridge State Park was created here in 1963. In 2003 an F-1 tornado partially destroyed the viaduct. Remaining towers were restored and the skywalk constructed in 2011.

Please see Photo Attachment

The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission administers a program of historical markers to capture the memory of people, places, events, and innovations that have affected the lives of Pennsylvanians over the centuries since William Penn founded his Commonwealth. More than 2,000 cast aluminum markers tell the important and interesting stories that are part of the history of Pennsylvania.

I respectfully challenge the Surface Transportation Board, Headwaters Charitable Trust, or Kovalchick Corporation to tell me or the hundreds of thousands visitors that read the PHMC Marker. take photos of it, have their picture taken with it, with it clearly stating on the engraved marker "New York, Lake Erie & Western Railroad", as we know it to be the historic first and the original Rail Line

from Mt. Jewett to the Kinzua Bridge in the year of 1881. Also very significant fact is the "Cornerstone for the Kinzua Viaduct/Bridge" was placed in the very same year, Yes 1881.

Therefore I ask you, why was this phenomenal architectural structure, the Kinzua Bridge built? Reason being, one reason & one reason only, because this historic rail road the "New York, Lake Erie & Western Railroad " needed a Bridge built to span the Kinzua Valley, and at the time the Kinzua Bridge was the highest in the world and quickly recognized as the "Eighth Wonder of the World."

As we who value the history of this amazing historical site the Kinzua Bridge, the center piece of the state park that is visited not only locally, regionally, nationally but internationally visitation and placing it in the "Top Ten" must see state parks in Pennsylvania.

We are deeply shocked and disagree of the Surface Transportation Board and the Office of Environmental Analysis decision that the proposed abandonment would not have the potential to affect this historic properties.

To tear up the original " New York, Lake Erie & Western Railroad ", now known as the " Knox & Kane Railroad" you are eliminating a Rail line that is rich in history that has connected and shaped our communities well over a hundred years. Not only a critical part of history but concrete plans are in the making for usage that would be an economic asset in the present and future.

With the million of dollars the state of Pennsylvania is spending on this Historical State Park any decision to dismantle this Historic Bridge or the Railroad Line that has taken thousands of famous dignitaries world wide for over 100 years to see and ride across the historical viaduct.

President Ulysses S. Grant himself road the rail line to see the viaduct during the time it was the highest in the world. History tells of his visit with General Thomas L. Kane, president of the New York, Lake Erie, and Western Coal and Railroad Company, stayed at the Kane Estate, Kushequa Village which lies in the Kinzua Creek Valley beneath the viaduct.

General Thomas L. Kane was the first to create the railroad tracks from Mt. Jewett to the Kinzua Bridge making them one of the first railroad lines in McKean County, Pennsylvania. The building of this historically important Railroad Line in 1881 was the main reason that brought about the construction of this phenomenal architectural structural, the Kinzua Viaduct-Bridge, which was quickly recognized as the "Eighth Wonder of the World" as stated prior the Cornerstone of the viaduct was placed coincident with the beginning of laying the rail tracts from Mt. Jewett to the Kinzua Bridge.

This railroad provided the rails for the critical bridge crossing during the war with guards in transporting Oil, military tanks, equipment and during the night time there would be "Black Outs" at homes, to all in the valley village of Kushequa so there would not be any light up to the Bridge when trains were crossing in preventing bombings.

The Knox and Kane Railroad neglected to consider the historical value of the rails when they filed their Historical Report as part of the Knox and Kane abandonment process for this last stretch of the Knox and Kane Corridor. We firmly believe that without the testament of the tracks from Mt. Jewett leading up to the Kinzua Bridge the historical context of the bridge is compromised and inaccurate.

Without the rails it will be visually impossible to put the Kinzua Bridge into the proper historical perspective it deserves as one of the most critical factors in the economic and industrial development of this area. Dismantling these rails will destroy that context forever – for the current generation of visitors to the Bridge and for all generations to come.

Please visit www.kinzuabridgefoundation.com

2011 - Sept 15, 2011 - "Kinzua Viaduct Re-Opening" Ribbon cutting was held DCNR.

2012 - Kinzua Bridge State Park - State Park of the Year - PPFF one time award.

2013 - Kinzua Bridge State Park 50th Anniversary (1963 -2013)

2014 - Ground Breaking for a Seven Million Dollar Office & Visitors Center

2015 - Construction of the new visitors center well underway

2016 - Proposed Grand Opening of the New Visitors & Office Center

Question or concerns, please contact me.

Kindest Regards,

Mary Ann Burggraf

Mary Ann Burggraf – Executive Director/Vice President

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