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Officials Forming Plan for Bridge; May Go to Park

By BILL ST. JOHN
JM Staff Writer

Prince William County and state authorities are currently working out plans to preserve a local bridge built at the turn of the century and believed to be one of two bridges of its type in the state.

Following a recent survey of bridges in the state, the Fleetwood Drive bridge was determined by the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, according to R.L. Hundley of the state Department of Transportation. In a Nov. 7 letter to the Prince William County Department of Public Works, Hundley sought information for preservation of the Fleetwood Drive bridge over Cedar Run.

"We want to give the county the opportunity to take over ownership of the bridge and move it off the highway system to any location where you feel it may be of some use to the county," Hundley wrote.

The county planning and public works departments and the park authority are now discussing the matter, according to Jan Townsend, county archeologist. Public works has been eyeing the possibility of dismantling the bridge, said Townsend, while the park authority has been exploring where it can be put.

It has been suggested that the bridge could be used as a foot bridge over Flat Branch near Ben Lomond

Park.

"We're preparing a response to the letter," said Uwe Kirste, operations division chief of public works for the county. "We still have to go through some agreement procedures to transfer ownership of the bridge to the county," he said. Kirste said that normally, the state highway department would have a new bridge built by a contractor, who would get to do what they wanted with the bridge, which usually meant destroying it.

Acceptance of the state's offer would commit the county to dismantle and remove the bridge once the new stream crossing is completed. The salvage work would not begin for about a year. VDOT estimates it would pay the county \$20,000 intended to cover costs for the bridge's removal, but not its relocation.

The bridge, which is still in use, is a single-span full-sloped steel pony truss bridge built by Walker Brothers Contractors. A rare design, the only other like it is in Rockingham County.

Cooper Wamsley, VDOT's senior archeologist, said that properties eligible for the national register are treated the same way as listed properties. "The state highway department is looking for ways to mitigate the impact (dismantling and relocation) will have on the old bridge. We have to coordinate our efforts with the Division of Historic Landmarks," he said.

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VDOT puts old Cedar Run span up for grabs

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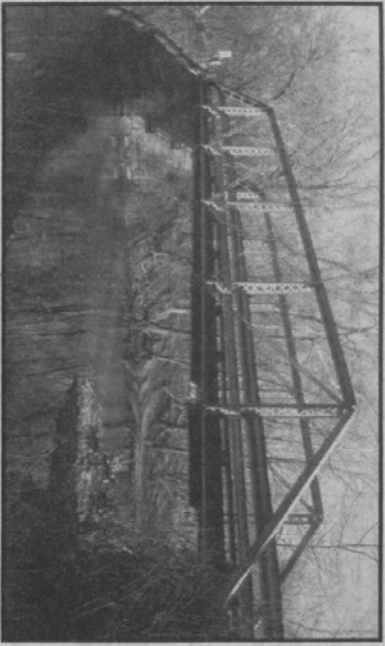
By PAUL DINUCCI
of the Potomac News

The Virginia Department of Transportation is giving away seven of the state's oldest bridges to anyone willing to pay for their removal. One of the free spans is in western Prince William.

The Va. 611 bridge over Cedar Run is available to any individual or group willing to move it. VDOT has put the historic bridges up for grabs because the state wants to replace the old structures.

Individuals or groups volunteering to dismantle and remove the VDOT bridges must pay to have them moved, a sum that could be more than \$150,000 per bridge.

The state is willing to help share in the cost of dismantling the bridges and will pay between \$15,000 to \$30,000, depending on the size of the particular structure. In Prince William, the Cedar



The VDOT wants to give away the bridge spanning Cedar Run in western Prince William. The bridge was built in 1900.

Run bridge would cost about \$150,000 to remove and about \$15,000 to demolish, said John Redmond, a spokesman for the VDOT.

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Whoever volunteers to remove the Cedar Run bridge would have to come up with \$135,000. "A lot of groups would like to have bridges, but they don't have the money to dismantle it, remove it and rebuild it," John Redmond, a VDOT spokesman, said.

"For historic purposes, the highway department wants people to relocate the bridges and keep them intact," Redmond said. "Most of the bridges are 80, 90 or 100 years old."

The 88-foot Cedar Run bridge is the smallest of the seven VDOT bridges, Redmond said. The state erected it in 1900.

To date, no individual or group has expressed interest in the Cedar Run span.

VDOT officials first began giving away the state's oldest bridges in 1976. So far, only Lynchburg has taken VDOT up on its free bridge offer.

Lynchburg used one of the state's bridges as a pedestrian crossing at one of the city's parks.

Anyone interested in VDOT's offer should notify the state agency by Jan. 31.