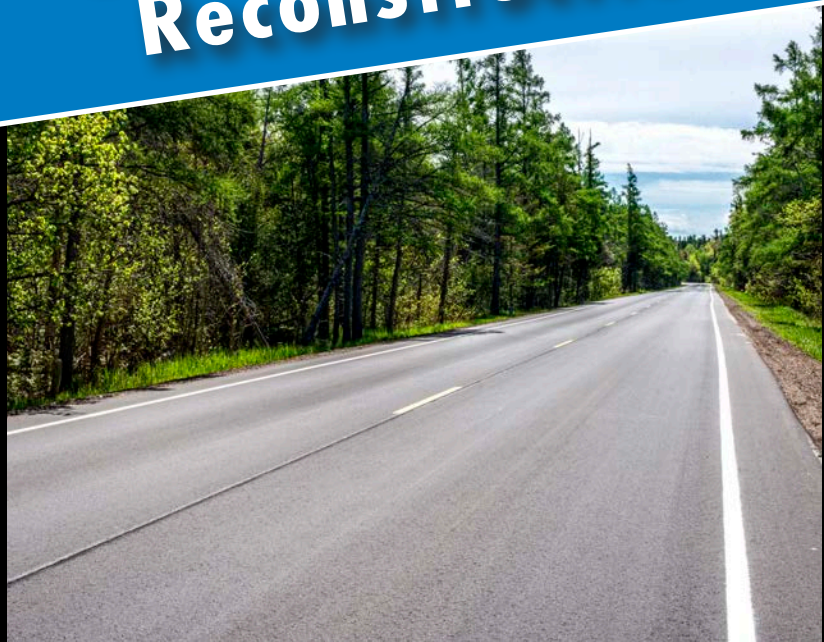


Deadstream Road Reconstruction



PROJECT: Deadstream Road

CHALLENGE: Working with concerned residents; delicate tree removal; maintaining access for owners.

SOLUTION: Continuous communication with owners, USPS, and crew; collaborating to maintain access

OWNER: Benzie County Road Commission

CONTRACT AMOUNT: \$1,147,339.40

DESIGN ENGINEER: Heather Jamison, PE, Benzie County Road Commission

LOCATION: Deadstream Road, connecting US-31 and M-22

DATE STARTED: April 2015

DATE COMPLETED: July 2015

SELF-PERFORMED: 80%

PARTNERS: MDOT, Grant's Stump Removal, J&J Contracting, C&C Land Surveying

Picture the site: Deadstream Road, a gorgeous old two-lane roadway in Benzie County that connects US-31 and M-22. The road itself is short — only about 4.43 miles between those two major northern Michigan highways. For many local residents, though, it's long been one of the most beautiful drives in the area. Tranquil and serene, the road runs through a heavily wooded area, with some of the biggest and most established trees dating back as far as 150 years. For much of its length, Deadstream Road also runs along the narrow bridge of land that separates Platte Lake and Little Platte Lake, offering glimpses of water on both sides. It's not difficult to see why Deadstream Road is so familiar and beloved among local residents.

Unfortunately, "beloved," "tranquil," and "beautiful" are not the only words that described Deadstream Road until recently. On the contrary, other terms that could have been used included "treacherous" and "in disrepair." Littered with potholes and too narrowly curved to be safe,

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Deadstream Road even earned the mantle of being “probably one of the worst roads in the county” from Benzie County Commissioner, Vance Bates.

Team Elmer’s competitive low bid for the \$1-million-plus state-funded project tasked our crews with widening and repaving the road to make it a safer connector from US-31 to M-22. On paper, the job sounds easy: 4.43 miles of road, straight through a wooded area and without a lot of traffic. However, because of how beloved Deadstream Road is, the project initially drew some opposition from local residents. In order to widen the road, Team Elmer’s and the Benzie County Road Commission had to clear 78 trees and considerable amounts of brush. To add to the difficulties, many residents actually live on Deadstream Road — meaning that their day-to-day lives were going to be disrupted by the two-month project.

Through explanations and workarounds, Team Elmer’s was able to partner with local home owners during the Deadstream Road reconstruction. We were able to minimize disruption to Deadstream Road residents by removing and replacing their mailboxes each day to ensure that mail delivery went ahead as scheduled. We even spoke to the local post office on a daily basis to coordinate delivery times.

Finally, Elmer’s foreman, Jeff Putney, worked hard to maintain a courteous and respectful crew at all times. From helping residents with their mail to chopping cut trees into neatly stacked piles of firewood, Putney’s team performed with grace and care, and almost all negative feelings about the project were turned around. Lake Township Commissioner and State of Michigan House Representative, Ray Franz, wrote a letter explaining the success he observed of the project. Ultimately, Team Elmer’s succeeded in widening the roadbed to 32 feet all along the 4.43-mile expanse. Previously, the roadbed had measured anywhere from 16 feet to 24 feet. Team Elmer’s and partners also installed new guardrails and shoulders, crushed and shaped gravel for the expanse of the road, and repaved with hot mix asphalt to provide a smooth, pothole-free drive. Now, Deadstream Road is as beautiful and serene as ever before, and much safer to boot. Way to go, team!



Deadstream Road By The Numbers

- Tree Clearing & Stumping: 4 acres
- Large Trees Removed: 78
- Road Widening: Up to 32 feet
- Slope Restoration: 25,000 sq yds
- Hot Mix Asphalt: 12,500 tons
- Crush & Shape: 69,000 sq yds
- Gravel: 12,200 tons

