

Whiteface Veteran's Memorial Highway

Historic Roadway Reconstruction

Location: Wilmington, NY

Client: New York State Department of Transportation

Value: \$12 million

Overview

Whiteface Veteran's Memorial Highway, one of the top scenic roadways in the U.S., takes visitors to the mountain's peak and 360-degree views of the Adirondack Park stretching into Vermont and Canada. Rifenburg Construction made this historic roadway accessible and functional, while retaining its unique significance. Rifenburg reconstructed the eight-mile highway (with an 8-10 percent grade) and selectively removed trees while protecting rare specimens. The project included replacement of culverts, pipe lining, ditch cleaning, repair and restoration of historic quarry stone walls, and installation of a new water supply line between the pump station and the top of the mountain.

Challenge

The road to the summit had to remain accessible to vehicles seven days a week during the peak summer visitor's season and on weekends through October. Endangered plant species needed to be identified and relocated for protection. In addition, the mountain's unpredictable weather meant scheduling had to be flexible, with the option for nighttime work if needed.

“Working on this historic highway, in the majesty of Whiteface, is an unforgettable experience.”

Solution

Working closely with NYSDOT and ORDA, Rifenburg managed all major construction without interrupting full access to the summit during peak seasons. Working within strict environmental guidelines, we preserved unique and endangered tree species. Check dams were installed to prevent erosion of ditch lines, and topsoil and ditch line seeding further reduced erosion impact. Tuck pointing and stone repair/replacement of walls using historic quarry stone were completed, as well as the installation of septic tanks near “the castle” at the summit. Roadway construction was paved to the binder course each Friday to allow for public access every weekend. To expedite construction, Rifenburg excavated the asphalt and macadam and hauled it to a temporary waste area on the mountain. We limited the exposure of milled surfaces by closely sequencing binder paving operations, reducing the impact of truck traffic and construction activity to the surfaces.

Result

From its start at the toll plaza, the newly-constructed highway rises over 2,300 vertical feet to the spectacular summit. Motorists can discover nine designated spots with information signs explaining the site's historic significance. The location now boasts the best of modern construction and natural heritage.

Rifenburg Companies, founded in 1958, is an expert in highway construction and restoration, landfill technologies, environmental clean-up, site development, utilities installation, mining, and airports.

