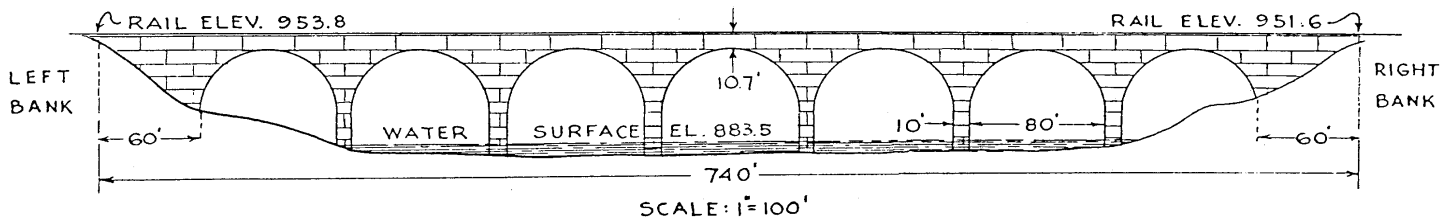


# WEST PENN TRAIL at BRIDGE NO. 5



PENNSYLVANIA R.R. DECK BRIDGE NO.  $\frac{12}{13}$   
RIVER MILE 41.27, STONE MASONRY, 34 FEET WIDE, TWO TRACKS, 6 PIERS  
EACH 10 FEET THICK, 7 ARCHED SPANS EACH WITH 80 FEET CLEAR WIDTH

This hiker-biker trail crosses five bridges. As built originally, the West Penn Railroad (and the canal before it) ran along the bank of the river, going around hills, rather than through them. In those days (before steam-powered equipment was available), all digging was done with pick and hand shovel, so long and deep cuts were not made.

By 1903, when the railroad grade was relocated onto this line, steam shovels were available and were put to work excavating a new corridor for the railroad. Instead of following every curve of the river, the new rail bed would run on a straight line, in cuts through hills and crossing the meandering river six times between Saltsburg and Blairsville.

For those crossings, it was necessary to build six bridges, five of them are stone arch structures. The bridges have been numbered 1 to 5, from west to east. Bridge No. 1 is at the west end of the tunnel through Bow Ridge. You are on bridge No. 5.

The roadbed ballast on each bridge is contained in a concrete trough that is drained through holes located at the top of each arch supporting the roadway. The troughs are exposed, for viewing, at the ends of the bridges.

The arches forming bridge No. 4 can be viewed from an overlook at the west end of that bridge.