



Progress Report: East Lyme's Overlook Park

by R.S. De Santo, East Lyme Public Trust Foundation, Inc.

Whether or not you are a Niantic Overlook Park Reconstruction Fan, you have missed much of the construction activities since it began on February 4, 2010. Work remains on schedule for completion and public access in mid-2013. However, as you drive past the project on Route 156, or see it from a seat on Amtrak or Shoreline East, you did not see any progress on the steel fabrication. That progress has been underway since the project began.

It has gone on unnoticed by most of us because all structural steel work for the two approach spans were fabricated at Structural Steel in Claremont, New Hampshire.

All structural steel for the bascule span, including the trunnion towers, were fabricated at G&G Steel in Russellville, Alabama. G&G Steel is also responsible for supplying all mechanical components and their mounting assemblies. These parts of the new bridge began arriving at the work site in Niantic on October 19, 2011.

A recent important bench mark in the progress in Alabama, critical to the successful completion and operation of the Niantic Railroad Bridge replacement concerns each of the two heel girders of the bridge that will rotate on trunnion "axles." The axles allow the bridge bascule span to open so that river traffic can pass.

The photo above was taken on October 7, 2011, of the north Hub/Trunnion assembly being readied for installation in the heel girder bore holes. Tolerances of the fit between the Hub/Trunnion assemblies and the heel girders are specified in thousandths of an inch (i.e. 0.001 inch).

The heel girders that will support the Niantic River Bridge were constructed by G&G. These two massive elements support the lift span and its counterweights. Once the lift span is balanced with 2.6 million pounds of lead Balance Plates, 266,000 pounds of 80 pound lead Balance Blocks, and 25 cubic yards of heavy weight concrete (113,500 pounds), the bridge's moveable bascule lift span can be turned up on its axles with a force of approximately 200 pounds provided by a relatively small electric motor!

For more information on progress see: <http://www.publictrustfoundation.org/docs/vol-1-no-4-elptf-bull.pdf>

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