

Progress Report:

East Lyme's Overlook Park

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

You may have noticed the forest of catenary poles (that hold up the wires that electrify a railroad) as you approach the Niantic River from the west, or as you drive over the Niantic River Highway Bridge heading into downtown Niantic being placed along the tracks adjacent to Route 156.

What you see are two rows of catenary poles parallel to the railroad bed for a distance of 2,500 feet, which is the full length of the Amtrak reconstruction project. This construction project changes as quickly as one phase is completed and the next one begins.

The phase that you see now, which is the first of three phases, is the erection of new and taller poles that are next to the old, shorter poles. About 75 of the ultimate 102 new polls now stand in addition to the pre-existing 97 poles. Therefore, you now see about twice as many polls as were previously present. The old poles continue to carry energized wires (i.e. transmitting 25,000 Volts Alternating Current) that power the locomotives.



In the spring of 2013, however, the train traffic will be shifted to roll over the new tracks across the new bridge. And when the new rails are in place and train traffic is rolling over the new railroad bridge, most of those old catenary poles that you see now will be removed.

The final phase of this work is expected to be completed by May 31, 2013, when about 92 of the original, old poles will be gone, with five remaining for future uses.

The two photographs shown above give you an idea of what your view is now, and what it will be in 2013 as you approach downtown Niantic across the Niantic River Highway Bridge when the project is finished.

*For more information on the East Lyme Overlook project see:
<http://publictrustfoundation.org/news.htm> .*

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