



## Progress Report: East Lyme's Overlook Park

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

In our 29th article in The Post Road Review of July 2013 we reported that the eastern half of East Lyme's Overlook Park, also known as The Niantic Bay Boardwalk, was rebuilt by Amtrak and opened to the public on July 12, 2013.

When Amtrak replaced its rail road bridge, Federal Law required that it replace the impacted public park as it agreed to in the Federal Finding of No Significant Impact of 2002, which states: "... Amtrak will comply with the CTDEP's [Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection] request for in-kind or better replacement of any impacted boardwalk components with one that would be equal or better ..."

Unlike the eastern half of the park, its western half was storm damaged (see: <http://publictrustfoundation.org/StormDamage.pdf>), and that redesign and reconstruction has waited until now for the collection of funds derived from: 1) FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Administration) grants, 2) a long drawn out settlement from the original design firm, 3) two Town insurance settlements, and 4) a state \$500,000 STEAP grant (Small Town Economic Assistance Program). That collection enabled East Lyme to allocate \$4,570,604 for the redesign and reconstruction of the western half (i.e. 2,750± feet) of Overlook Park.

Pile driving began on September 25, 2014 and the photograph seen here was taken on October 5, 2014 at 3:24 pm EST when a New York bound Amtrak train passed the half-way point of Overlook Park. The steel sheet piles seen in the foreground are the first of approximately 635 that will stretch along 2,750± feet from the end of the eastern half of the park, seen on the right of the photograph, to its terminus at Hole in the Wall. They will finally be locked together by a reinforced concrete cap that will run the full length of the steel sheet retaining wall, which will be backfilled with gravel with a maximum stone size of 3.5 inches and compacted in 6" lifts (i.e. layers), then finished with a 6" thick concrete sidewalk. A similar sidewalk on the eastern half of the walkway is seen in cross section in the photograph that shows the end of the existing walkway. Between this point and Hole in the Wall, 9 Gauge, 2" mesh, vinyl-dipped black, chain link fence will separate the walkway from the railroad embankment. A thermoplastic railing system 3' 6" high will extend along the water side of the walkway. When connected to Hole in the Wall, expected in the summer of 2015, Overlook Park will once again provide public access to its original uninterrupted length of 1.1 miles.

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