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East Lyme's Overlook Park Progress Report #38

Robert S. De Santo, PhD., East Lyme Public Trust Foundation

On June 5, 2015, reconstruction of the Niantic Bay "Boardwalk" was concentrated on the midpoint of the 1.1 mile long walkway. That point is opposite Boats Inc. at 133 Main Street, Niantic, 2,778 feet east of Hole in the Wall underpass where the western half of the walkway connects to the existing eastern half.

This midpoint is seen in the accompanying photograph taken on June 8, 2015, at 2:48pm as a south bound ACELA was traveling on Track 2 bound for Washington, DC. The photo also shows the first 7.5 feet of the 2.5 foot wide wall cap of concrete that encases the top six± inches of the steel sheet piles of the bulkhead. Workers are constructing new forms and assembling reinforcement bars for the next segment of wall cap that continues beyond the workers. An important detail in wall cap design is labeled #4 rebar. These ½ inch diameter "dowels" are 18 inches apart and their function is essential because they extend out of the forms and subsequently become imbedded in the walkway concrete. The dowels thus prevent the walkway from moving away from the bulkhead, which might result from storm waves pounding the bulkhead or winter heaves shifting the walkway slabs. The dowels grip the concrete with their surface pattern and thus, help hold the walkway in its position butting tightly against the wall cap of the bulkhead.

Once the wall cap is finished, the walkway foundation will be regraded with granular fill and 12 inches of compacted gravel. Then, a 6 inch thick concrete walkway will be poured with a 2% pitch of its surface in order to drain runoff toward the shore. After that, a 3.5 foot high, tubular steel, gray plastic coated safety rail will be fastened to the center of the wall cap along the full length of the western half of the walkway (see: <http://www.publictrustfoundation.org/docs/Vol-3-No1-ELPTF-Bull.pdf>, Page 3). A 6 foot high, black vinyl coated, steel chain link fence will then be added to the north side of the walkway in order to prevent people from leaving the walkway and trespassing onto the railroad right of way.

Reconstruction of the western half of the walkway was once scheduled to be completed by July 31, 2015. However, reconstruction is now scheduled to be completed by September 30th and, East Lyme now plans a ribbon cutting for October 3rd. As the project continues, we will report the anticipated completion dates as verifiable information becomes available to us.