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The Iron Horse

Prior to the 1800s, travelers came to East Lyme by boat or horse and wagon. With the advent of the steam train, countless horses were replaced by the "Iron Horse." The railroad connected people and towns like never before.

Built between 1850 and 1852, the New Haven and New London Railroad connected with the railroad between Stonington and Boston. The passenger station once stood where Pennsylvania Avenue and Main Street intersect. A nearby freight station allowed for convenient transport of goods in and out of East Lyme and the region.

In 1872, the railroad became part of the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad. Many visitors came to the area to enjoy the Niantic Bay and beaches. A second rail station was built at the end of Lake Avenue in Crescent Beach due to the popularity of that beach community.

The railroad through Niantic has been owned and operated by Amtrak since 1976. In 1999, the shoreline route between New Haven and Boston was electrified. This completed an all-electric high-speed mainline between Washington D.C. and Boston. The 460 mile Northeast Corridor is the busiest in the United States.



This sign has been made possible by a donation from The Gada Family. Educational Signs along the Niantic Bay Boardwalk are provided by the East Lyme Public Trust Foundation, Inc. Artwork by Larry C. Ayer.

East Lyme's Overlook Park Progress Report #46

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

Delays in completion of the Niantic Bay Boardwalk reconstruction of its western half have accumulated since site work started in September, 2014. It was then predicted that the project would finish in July, 2015. The project has so far continued beyond that predicted end date by more than seven months.

The most recent construction delay of some weeks resulted from a design change required by the Town to improve structural characteristics of 800 feet of pedestrian guard railing that runs along the water side of the Boardwalk, which is several feet above the adjacent rocky shore. All the delays were unfortunate and this one is probably the last. Be patient!...it provides what would be an otherwise critically missing safety factor.

Once the railing is completed, eight educational signs will be placed on the western half of the Boardwalk. Each full color sign is 24" x 19" and gives information about the nature and community that comprise the Niantic Bay coastline.

These new signs were revised and reconstructed by the East Lyme Public Trust Foundation, Inc. and, they replace similar ones that were at the same approximate locations but were lost due to storm damage.

Their restoration was sponsored by local individuals or businesses. An example of which is seen in the photograph above of one such plaque that was made possible by a donation from the Gada Family of East Lyme. Such generosity enabled the East Lyme Public Trust Foundation to again commemorate the coming of The Iron Horse to the former train station at the foot of Pennsylvania Avenue (i.e. Route 161) in Niantic.

The inset on the sign reads: "This sign has been made possible by a donation from The Gada Family. Educational Signs along the Niantic Bay Boardwalk are provided by the East Lyme Public Trust Foundation, Inc. Artwork by Larry C. Ayer."

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