

NNEC 2007 Spring Tour

The Northern New England Chapter held its spring tour in Lincoln and North Woodstock, N.H.. This location contains four different railroad entities, making it a good stop for rail fans.

Our first site was the former Parker-Young pulp and paper mill which operated from the 1890's until 1980. Demolition of the mill began this year and a hotel will be built on the site, reflecting the change in Lincoln from a mill town to a tourist destination. A high grade bond paper was made here. Most of the mill is empty now, although large block tanks which held dye and chemicals still remain. A unique feature of this mill was a basement under the papermaking machinery, the only one in New England. The walls were reinforced with iron to withstand the weight and vibrations of the heavy equipment. There remains a large multi-storied 1950's mill addition that will be demolished next year. This was once the site of a water-powered sawmill and we had a glimpse of the penstock and turbines at this location.

Next on the agenda was a tour of the "Flying Yankee" at the Hobo railroad. Work continues on

the restoration of the oldest diesel-electric streamliner in the U.S., with the middle passenger car almost completely finished. The NNEC donated one-half of the money raised from the spring tour to help continue the restoration work. Many other railroad cars and engines can be seen, with repair and restoration work currently taking place.

A look at Clark's Trading Post's collection of railroad engines and equipment followed the "Flying Yankee" tour. They have several steam locomotives, including a 1915 Lombard log hauler that ran on its own tracks off the railroad lines. A stop at the small brick railroad shop was included. There is a 1904 Howe truss covered bridge over the Pemigewasset River, the only one still in use, which is crossed by the White Mountain Central Railroad tourist ride.

The afternoon had two options. A small group had lunch aboard the Hobo railroad on a 80 minute ride along the Pemigewasset River. Next they viewed an excellent display on local history and sites put together by Rick Russack. This was at the Lincoln Mall which once was a brick pulp mill plant built in 1902. Back at the Forest Service visitor center a parade of 30-40 railroad inspection cars went by as the group prepared to depart.

The majority of the afternoon participants toured the ruins of the Matson Manufacturing Company's hardwood kiln. The still standing concrete abutments look out of place pointing skyward in the forest. The last stop was the site of Woodstock Lumber Company, manufacturer of hardwood flooring. A century ago this was reputed to be the largest lumber mill in the country. Located alongside the Pemigewasset River, the mill pond location and other features can still be seen on the landscape. This day gave us a sense of what life was once like in northern New Hampshire a century or more ago.

Dave Coughlin