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Press Release

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[Metro-North](#)

IMMEDIATE

### Emergency Reconstruction of the Danbury Branch Completed Trains to Resume Friday Morning

MTA Metro-North Railroad will resume train service on the Danbury Branch on Friday following completion of a major, emergency reconstruction by its forces of the earthen underpinning of a 150-foot-long section of track that had been washed away in a flood.

The torrential rain of Sunday, March 6, caused a washout that left a long section of the single track line, its ties still attached, dangling in mid-air 30 feet above the ground. The washout was discovered before the first train was scheduled to operate Monday morning by a pair of track inspectors who were dispatched in the middle of the storm to ensure the safety of the 24-mile branch.

"In just 10 days, working 16-hour days under lights, the men of our Maintenance of Way group rebuilt the berm, installed a pair of culverts, repaired and resurfaced the track and ran test trains over the new structure to ensure its safety," said Metro-North President Howard Permut. "It is an extraordinary achievement and we are grateful for their hard work and dedication to our Danbury customers. They rose to the challenge and got that track back in service in very short order."

During the suspension of train service north of the Branchville Station, substitute buses were provided in cooperation with the Connecticut Department of Transportation. Off-peak, weekday busing will be in effect for an upcoming improvement project from April 4 through August - installation of a signal system on the branch. (Details below.)

Acting Connecticut DOT Commissioner James P. Redeker commended the team for its remarkable work in getting the Danbury Branch back in service in less than two weeks.

Metro-North forces first built a gently sloping roadway from the tracks down to the bottom of the gully for the parade of heavy-duty earth moving equipment – a grade-all, an excavator, a front-end loader, a backhoe and a bulldozer to move the stone into place.

"We had great cooperation from the Bethel Department of Public Works, which allowed us to use their roadway to access the site. They were terrific," said John Wagner, Metro-North's Director of Track and Structures, who supervised the construction.

Because the area of the washout is adjacent to a wetlands known as Simpaug Swamp, a silt fence of plastic sheeting and hay bales was built. Then came truckload after truckload of stones.

"We knew we needed big stones to build a base," Wagner said. "We called our regular supplier, Tilcon, of North Branford, CT, and told them we needed enough stone to fill a hole 150 long by 30 deep by 50 feet wide."

In all, it took 10 million pounds of stone, 300 truck loads, one truck at a time, to rebuild the right-of-way.

According to the design by the Connecticut DOT, two 36-inch pipes, on a 6-foot foundation, were installed at the bottom of the swale to relieve flooding in the future.

Metro-North crews kept building up the berm until they reached the bottom of the track. Then they began adding stone from the top, tamping it down continually to stabilize the new berm. Finally it was time to reinstall the track itself, to reestablish the curve, and make sure the rails had the proper profile and alignment.

A 30 mph speed restriction will remain in effect until the structure is fully settled. Metro-North will inspect it a couple of times a day and continue to build it up as needed until the structure stabilizes.

#### Signals Coming to the Danbury Branch

The Danbury Branch uses diesel locomotives to run from South Norwalk on the New Haven main line north to Danbury. It is undergoing a \$53 million project to install a signal system. Signalization will allow bi-directional service and provide greater operational flexibility. It will allow for remote control of train movements and switches from Metro-North's Operations Control Center.

Weekday, off-peak busing to support the signalization project resumes on Monday, April 4, and will continue until August. During that period, off-peak, weekday busing will be in effect. There also will be some consecutive weekends of continuous busing beginning approximately May 14 and ending August 27. The Memorial Day and July 4th weekends will not have busing.

During the weekend outages, a plow train with an engine and flat cars holding reels of power and communications cables will bury the cables into the earth next to the track. In areas where there are rock or road crossings, the cables will be put into underground trays. For some places in the city of Norwalk, the cables will have to be strung from poles.

The signal system is expected to be in operation by early 2012.

