

Paving begins on Rec Path along North-South Road

BY TOM EASTMAN THE CONWAY DAILY SUN

CONWAY — Paving began on the gravel-surfaced 2.9-mile Mount Washington Valley Recreation Path at 8 a.m. Monday, with a crew from Continental Paving Inc. of Londonderry laying down the asphalt, working with a six-man crew from A.J. Coleman and Son of Albany.

Kevin Hamlin, site engineer for HEB Engineers of North Conway, said: “Today, they went from Pudding Pond south to Hemlock Lane (the trail’s southern terminus, just north of Walmart). And they’ll go Tuesday from Pudding Pond north to Thompson Road. Then they’ll take a two-week-ish break while Coleman finishes up some work from Thompson Road over to Cranmore and then they’ll return to pave that.”

Site superintendent for Coleman is Chris Murray, said Hamlin, who noted that the project is on schedule and has progressed well since work began last fall, with a July completion date expected.

Chris Meier, president of the MWV Trails Association, said that due to the cold spring, the contract was extended from June to July 5. That will enable Coleman to add benches at the Pudding Pond Overlook, along the path and at the start at Cranmore. That work is funded by a \$120,000 Connie Davis Watson Foundation grant.

“We’re planning to be open by the second week in July, with a grand celebration sometime in early September,” Meier said.

Meier said that the section from Cranmore to Hemlock Lane was funded by a \$1.6 million matching Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program grant, as well as a \$200,000 Northern Borders grant, along with Community Development Finance Authority tax credits of \$240,000; Connie Davis Watson, \$300,000; Ham Foundation, \$200,000; Gibson-Woodbury Charitable Foundation, \$100,000; River Run Companies, \$100,000; and other local grants.

First came clearing work, done by Tommy Fadden of Fadden Chipping & Logging of Conway, carried out in March 2022 when there was still snow on the ground. Next came the actual roadwork, the cuts and fills, the grading and smoothing.

Coleman and Son submitted a low bid of \$2.6 million for construction.

The Rec Path will have three access points — one next to the new Fairfield Inn and Suites by Marriott, which is having a ribbon-cutting ceremony at 11 a.m. today; a second where the trail crosses Thompson Road; and the third at the southern terminus at Hemlock Lane near the site of the planned Kevin Peare Memorial Skate Park.

It features three bridges over wetland areas, said Burr Phillips of Civil Solutions, LLC of Bartlett, who did the design work. Two will be boardwalks. The one near Cranmore is 96 feet long, crossing a tributary to Kearsarge Brook; the second, 48 feet long, crosses Artist Brook near Thompson Road; and the third is 148 feet long near the northern end of Pudding Pond.

Phillips said the path has a grade of no more than 4.8 percent to comply with ADA accessibility criteria of being under 5 percent, with grades of 3.8 percent on the flatter section on the southern end and a few short sections north of Pudding Pond, where it will be 4.8 percent.

The path features four block walls on the southern end and some fencing near the steeper sections. Bollards at either end will prevent motorized vehicles from accessing the path, Murray told the Sun.

Hamlin said last week, he took part in a walk of the possible route for the planned Phase 2 of the Rec Path,



Construction Manager at HEB Engineers Kevin Hamlin (in orange vest) talks with the crew of Continental Paving of Londonderry, seen on their asphalt paver on the Mount Washington Valley Recreation Path by North-South Road in North Conway on Monday. (RACHEL SHARPLES PHOTO)

