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NYW&B Railway Property listed on the National Register of Historic Places

On August 2, 2016, the New York, Westchester & Boston Railway and Highbrook Avenue Bridge in Pelham were listed on the National Register of Historic Places. A ceremony will be scheduled later this fall. This past March, Governor Andrew Cuomo announced that the property was listed on the NY State Register. “These landmarks are a part of our rich and storied history and helped define what it means to be a New Yorker,” Governor Cuomo said.

The concrete arch railroad bridge was designed by Alfred Fellheimer, a nationally well-known railroad architect who headed the design committee for Grand Central Terminal. It was erected with the approval of financier J.P. Morgan under the management of Leverett S. Miller, President of the NYW&B. The historic rail line, completed in 1912 as state of the art transport, was abandoned in 1937. The bridge stands as the largest work of public art in the village.

In October 2015, the Village Board of Pelham passed a resolution designating a portion of the old New York Westchester and Boston (NYW&B) Railway site, which contains the Highbrook Avenue Bridge, as parkland. The parkland designation was endorsed by Westchester Land Trust and the Lower Hudson Sierra Club.

The Friends of Highbrook Highline (FHH) were assisted by rail fans Robert Bang, Otto Vondrak and historian Dr. Roger Wines. They provided historical photographs and research, which helped with public outreach as well as preparation for the application for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. One third of the NYW&B site was opened as a passive park in 2012 through a joint effort by the Village of Pelham, FHH, a grant by the Junior League of Pelham and support by Pelham Preservation & Garden Society acting as fiscal sponsor. With a landscape company and volunteers, the field near Young Avenue was remediated of contaminated soil and then planted with trees, shrubs and flowers.

The entire NYW&B property represents 22% of Pelham Village’s open space. The FHH and the Village of Pelham are seeking grants to restore the bridge and open a trail with gardens through the property, a rails-to-trails park.

