



Photo: G. Gagné

Caplan's Ruisselet rail bridge likely ready before the end of June

— Gilles Gagné

CAPLAN – The replacement of the Ruisselet bridge in Caplan is progressing at an accelerated pace. The contractor, Hamel Construction, was chosen in the summer of 2020 after submitting a bid of \$5,751,288 and started work in September.

The old wooden bridge was first demolished and since then, the pillars were erected and the spans were added. The third span was added over the first days of April. The old bridge was 65 metres in length. The new bridge is 74 metres in length and 17 metres in height. Its

bearing capacity will be double the old bridge's. "It should be completed by the end of June," says Luc Lévesque, director general of the Gaspésie Railway Society, the operator of freight trains on the Matapédia to Gaspé line.

The section of the network east of that bridge has been in a dormant state since the acquisition of the line by Quebec's Department of Transport in 2015.

The total cost of the Ruisselet bridge will reach \$6.7 million when the supervision costs are included. Hamel Construction was originally supposed to deliver the bridge over the fall but the management of the

company has opted to work during the winter months and deliver ahead of schedule. It represents a way to avoid demobilizing its working crew between June 24 and September 1, a condition imposed by Transports Québec because of the nearby campground.

The passage of trains, except for test purposes, will not resume on the Ruisselet bridge until the replacement of the nearby Ruisseau-Leblanc bridge at the municipal limit of Caplan and Saint-Siméon. The call for tenders for the Ruisseau-Leblanc structure is expected to be issued in the coming weeks. Its length is similar to the Ruisselet bridge.