

## Old New Richmond station sidings put back in place

Gilles Gagné

NEW RICHMOND – From the beginning of 1890s until 1972, the New Richmond Station was located just north of what is the Highway 132 overpass today, east of the roundabout. Even though the former Paspébiac train station was moved to the current location close to Saint-Edgar road, it was still called the New Richmond station.

For years, the siding at New Richmond Station remained active, mostly because of the linerboard mill activities, as empty boxcars were often parked there.

After the closure of the mill in August 2005 and given the diminishing freight activities in the area, the siding switches were removed and the siding itself more or less

fell into oblivion, as grass, hay and earth accumulated over it for 16 years.

Considering the rejuvenation of freight activities in New Richmond starting in December 2016 with the windmill blade traffic and, joined by the McInnis Cement traffic in July 2017; the operator of freight trains, the Gaspésie Railway Society, recently decided to put back in place two tracks that had already existed at New Richmond Station.

One track, on the east side, was uncovered, cleaned and will be upgraded and lengthened from 1,000 to 1,500 feet.

The other one, on the west side, was removed shortly after the Highway 132 overpass was built. It will be rebuilt from the east side of the overpass and west, stretching



*New Richmond station sidings: The old siding on the east side was still in place, but buried in grass, hay and earth.*

Photo: G. Gagné

in total over 2,500 feet.

“It will give us some buffer space for the empty windmill blade flatcars and the cement cars. We are always reaching our limits in the current yard and it is com-

plicating our shunting operations. The lack of space often forces our train crews to make six stops between Matapédia and New Richmond to leave cars in different sidings. The windmill blade traffic contract is expiring at the beginning of 2023 but we are interested in getting other contracts in that field and we have other projects as well,”

explains Luc Lévesque, director general of the Gaspésie Railway Society.

The new sidings will have a capacity of about 40 windmill blade flatcars and a few over 80 cement cars.

They will be operational before the Christmas break if the new switches are delivered before mid-December. It is a \$500,000 project.