



November 28, 2025

Tony Randazzo
Hamburg Twp. DPW
10405 Merrill Road
Hamburg, Michigan 48139

RE: Boardwalk Evaluation
Manly Bennett Park
Hamburg, MI
IMEG #25006430.00

Dear Tony:

On Tuesday, November 11 2025 I conducted a structural observation of the Manly Bennett park boardwalk with a follow-up visit on November 28. The boardwalk is a timber structure approximately 1,000 ft. long originating at a paved maintenance trail and extending across a section of low land to the edge of the Huron River. It is currently closed to public access (Fig. 1). The diagram below summarizes my field observations (Fig. 7).

The typical cross section consists of pressure-treated wood with 6x6 posts embedded in the soil with small cast-in-place concrete surrounds. Two 2x12 crossbeams fastened with two carriage bolts sandwich each post and support 2x stringers which in turn support 2x deck boards. A 2x8 cap rail and 2x2 pickets form handrails on each side.

The concrete surrounds are typically shallow and do not extend to frost depth. As a result, many of them have been heaved up above grade, in some cases completely exposing them (Fig. 5). This action has similarly affected many posts, leading to substantial humps along the length of the boardwalk (Figs. 2,3,4).

The post heaves have led to large cross-walk slopes in some areas (Figs. 3, 5). I also noted the section approximately 200 – 400 feet from the boardwalk start has a pronounced lean to the south (Fig. 2).

A series of posts approximately 700 feet from the walk end have been repaired by splicing new segments above heaved footings (Fig. 5). A particularly sharp hump occurs here.

A T-section occurs where the boardwalk meets the Huron River. The north portion of this has collapsed, apparently due to a tree fall, and is blocked off (Fig. 6).

The overall condition of wood members is typically good. The deck boards are in generally good condition but loose and popped-up deck boards were observed at various locations (Fig. 4). Some posts had small amounts of sponginess near the soil line but were in general fairly sound despite frost heave. No significant degradation of cross beams or stringers was noted. Handrails were typically in good condition.

Based on the above observations I conclude that it should be possible to re-open boardwalk for public access with a limited range of immediate repairs. Any loose or popped-up deck boards should be replaced or re-fastened to eliminate all trip hazards. The more extreme humps and dips associated with high cross-walk slopes should be leveled. The simplest method for this may be to re-set the cross beams lower on the heaved posts by re-drilling holes for the carriage bolts and trimming the post top. Alternately, at the repaired posts, the post may be trimmed at the splice, lowered and re-fastened with new wood or steel straps.

The observed side-lean does not appear to be extreme enough yet to compromise lateral stability but should be monitored over time to note if the condition progresses. Short of re-framing this section, some type of wood or steel braces or kickers might be considered as a less expensive solution.

The collapsed portion at the river verge is in a challenging location for replacement. Full repair may be costly so the township may consider abandoning this portion.

The observations and conclusions expressed in this report are based on visual observation with no demolition or removal of finishes to expose hidden areas. Concealed conditions or hidden damage may be present but are beyond the scope of this report. Please contact our office if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Mark B. Stevenson, PE, SE
Senior Associate
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Figure 2: Beginning of boardwalk, currently closed to public access



Figure 1: Sidesway displacement, towards right in photo





Figure 4: Humps and excessive cross-slope



Figure 3: Trip hazard at raised deck board





Figure 6: Existing post repairs with heaved concrete surrounds



Figure 5: Collapsed end at river



**FIGURE 7: MANLY BENNETT PARK BOARDWALK
CONDITION SURVEY**
Nov. 28, 2025

