



# FRIENDS OF THE BRUCE FREEMAN RAIL TRAIL

## Phase 2A Status and Plans for Spring / Summer 2016

It is easy to see that Phase 2A of the BFRT is progressing. For more details, we asked Brad Lubenau, SPS New England's project manager for BFRT Phase 2A construction, to answer some questions we had about status and progress of the rail trail. Brad was happy to oblige. (Note: Q&A was conducted in mid-February 2016).

Q: What has been accomplished so far?

A: Completed work includes:

- Removal of railroad tracks and ties: 100% complete
- Tree clearing: 60% complete
- Installation of erosion controls: 75% complete
- Installation of underground conduit for overhead utility wires along Rte. 119/2A (Great Road): 100% complete

Q: What is currently ongoing?

A: We are currently removing granite backwalls at six railroad bridges and making preparations for bridge deck construction.

Q: What comes next? That is, what are the overall plans for the spring and summer?

A: During the spring and summer we will work on the construction of the six bridges, including painting and installation of concrete decks, and construction of substructure of the new bridge over Rte. 2A.



Q: So for the Rte. 2A crossing, when are the expected dates of building the abutments and then installing the pre-fab bridge?

A: Abutments are planned to be installed this summer, and the steel bridge installation is scheduled for late fall.

Q: Is spring construction start date constrained / restricted to protect wetlands and the environment?

A: No, remaining erosion control, silt fence and compost filter tubes will be installed first, and then construction can continue to move forward.

Q: What type of measures is SPS taking to protect the environmentally sensitive areas?

A: As noted above the last of the erosion controls are being installed. There are weekly inspections. Turtle barriers have been installed to keep box turtles out of the work area, and there are ongoing turtle inspections.

Q: What roles do the Towns and State have in oversight and adherence to environmental regulations / permit?

A: Towns conducted a preconstruction walk-through and may do random inspections. MassDOT has daily on site inspectors.



Clearing on the trail extending beyond the temporary terminus of Phase 1 in Westford

Q: What historic artifacts have been (or will be) saved and will be re-installed as part of the project?

A: Two railroad track switches have been saved and will be re-installed onto two railroad ties on the side of the trail. (Editor's note: It is our understanding that means the switch as well as the switch stand.) In addition the granite mile markers and whistle markers will be removed and reset. To date we have not removed any.

Q: Has there been any part of the project that has been particularly difficult?

A: Yes, cooperation from Eversource (the local electric distribution company who is a third party to the construction) to complete the overhead wire relocation along Rte. 2A in a timely manner.

Q: Are you still on target for substantial completion in fall 2017?

A: Yes.

Q: Thank you very much. We hope to see you and your team at the fall 2017 ribbon-cutting party.

A: You're welcome. We are looking forward to it.

Editor's note: For more information, see the Town of Acton's blog on the BFRT (<http://tinyurl.com/BFRT-Phase2>). You can also see a detailed construction schedule at <http://bit.ly/213cnty>.

## Chelmsford BPAC Works with Town on Trail Maintenance & Safety

The Chelmsford Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) continues to work with the Chelmsford DPW, the Town Engineer and the Police Department to address safety and maintenance issues along the trail in Chelmsford.



In late summer and under the supervision of the DPW, solar powered Rapid Rectangular Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) were installed at the crossing of the BFRT on Golden Cove Road (see photo above). The BPAC recommended installation of this system in 2013 based on traffic density, speeds and line of sight issues on the road approaching the trail crossing. Further making the case was an injury to a cyclist in 2014 at this crossing and requests from residents and trail users to improve pedestrian and cyclist safety at this location. It should be noted that this location is not a legal crosswalk, but it is a trail crossing and should be treated much like any other street intersection.

The RRFBs are activated by pedestrians and cyclists simply by pressing the button, just like a pedestrian signal at a traffic light-controlled intersection. This activates the alternating bright yellow LED flashing lights in both directions, alerting approaching motorists that someone is attempting to cross the street so that they can slow or stop if needed. The flashing yellow lights installed as part of Phase 1 were left in place for additional warning to motorists approaching the trail crossing.

BPAC reminds trail users that the trail is a Carry In, Carry Out facility. Please help keep the trail clean by not leaving litter behind and picking up any you find. Dogs should be on a leash. Take litter and dog waste bags with you for disposal with household trash. Please do not leave bags of dog waste behind or toss in the wetlands. It is not the responsibility of others to clean up after you or your pet. Chelmsford bylaws provide for a \$50 fine for failure to pick up dog waste on any public property.

The Chelmsford DPW has hired Arbor East to perform tree removal and pruning along the trail. Work was done along the trail from the Westford town line to a point just past Maple Road. This work turned out to be considerably more time consuming and expensive than anticipated. Work was suspended in mid-September while the budget and funding sources are being reevaluated.

The BPAC completed its work on a detailed Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for the Town of Chelmsford as called for in the updated 2010 Chelmsford Master Plan. The plan will be presented to the Board of Selectmen and the Planning Board this spring.



This year the Chelmsford DPW purchased a blower unit that can be mounted on one of the town's sidewalk plows. This unit greatly facilitates the removal of leaves and other debris from the trail surface and makes it possible to clean the entire Chelmsford section of the trail in approximately half a day. The DPW plans to clean the trail at least twice in the fall and at least once in the spring or on an as-needed basis. The BPAC expresses its sincere thanks to the DPW for this effort in cleaning the trail.

Finally, the Chelmsford BPAC and the Town of Chelmsford wish to express their thanks to the Friends for its funding the placement of portable toilets along the trail at Cushing Place and at Pond Street/Heart Pond again in 2015.

### Phase 2B

(the 'B' stands for 'Bridge' or 'Between' – it's the link between the Acton and Concord portions of the rail trail)

The MassDOT Project Manager expects the 25% design plans to be submitted to MassDOT by AECOM before this spring and the 25% design public hearing to be scheduled for this year in May or June. After completion of the 25% design public hearing, the project will be handed over to the Town of Concord to move forward with the remaining design. Funding for this design work was envisioned by Senator Jamie Eldridge when this project was added to the 2012 and 2014 State Transportation Bond Bills, but these funds have not yet been appropriated. In addition, the Town of Concord will be considering funds from Concord's Community Preservation Fund and the Town's Capital Improvement Program toward this design effort.

The 100% design plans will need to be finalized by the summer of 2018, in order to be able to construct the bridge using the 2018 CMAQ funds identified in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the BFRT Phase 2B. Concord staff also hopes that MassDOT will concurrently consider resurfacing and other roadwork in the vicinity of the BFRT bridge over Rte. 2, since 2018 funds from the Statewide National Highway System Preservation Program have also been identified in the TIP.

## Concord Town Meeting to Vote on BFRT Articles

Concord Annual Town Meeting, which begins Monday, April 4, and continues through Thursday, April 7, will vote on four articles related to the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail:

- Article 20, which will appropriate **Community Preservation Funds** to 16 projects, includes a request of \$125,000 to be used to complete the 100% design plan of Phase 2C, including acquisition of easements, leasehold, license and/or other real property interests of the land in Concord.
- Article 57, **BFRT Phase 2B**, authorizes \$250,000 from the Town Manager's five-year capital plan for completing the design and engineering of Phase 2B, that portion of the trail over Rte. 2 that will connect the trail from Acton (Phase 2A) with the trail in Concord (Phase 2C).
- Article 58, **Land Acquisition for BFRT right-of-way**, authorizes the Select Board to expend up to \$25,000 to acquire permanent and temporary easements for construction and maintenance of the trail in Concord.
- Article 59, **BFRT Easements over Town land**, authorizes the Select Board to grant or deed easements over Town-owned land for the long-term use as a rail trail.

With the 100% design nearing completion, Phase 2C remains on schedule for construction advertising this summer (and no later than September 2016). The public information meeting for the 75% design was held by MassDOT last November. An open house prior to the meeting presented the proposed design.

The design now includes a new trail alignment across the MBTA Fitchburg Commuter Rail line near the existing mini-high platforms. After crossing the tracks, the trail will run between the new Woods Hill Table restaurant and the West Concord Depot and then continue through Junction Park to Main Street.

A new alignment also has been designed for the Commonwealth Avenue and Main Street intersection, creating a "T-shaped" intersection that will enhance safety for trail users as well facilitate traffic flow. The Town is working with the Garden Club to move existing plantings in the traffic island to another location.

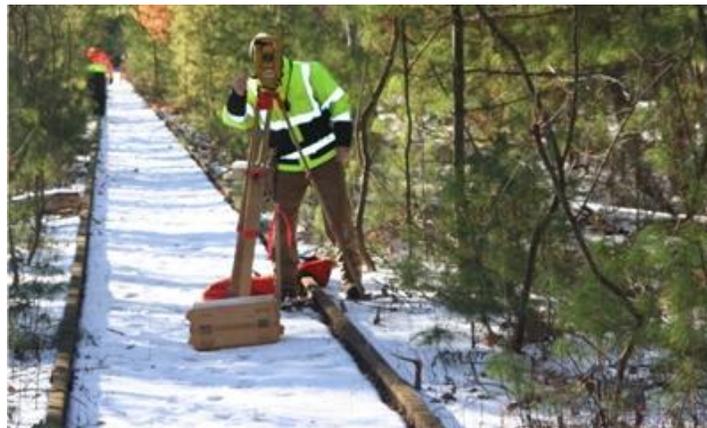
The culvert under Powder Mill Road is scheduled to be replaced during the current phase of construction. However, MassDOT confirmed that the section of the trail from Powder Mill Road to the Sudbury town line will not be built until the trail is built in Sudbury. This delay is necessary because the trail would otherwise have a temporary terminus in the middle of the woods with no outlet at the southern end. MassDOT is exploring installation of erosion control measures along this portion of the trail. However, construction of other amenities such as planting, fencing and signage for that portion of the trail will be delayed.

Senator Michael Barrett hosted a meeting with Representative Cory Atkins, Executive Office of Public Safety Secretary Daniel Bennett and Town officials in early February to discuss proposed legislation that will transfer a half-acre of Department of Corrections land to the Town. This land is necessary for construction of a small parking facility (18 spaces) off Commonwealth Avenue opposite MCI-Concord.

## Sudbury Seeks CPA Funds for Design

Sudbury Community Preservation Committee has approved a Town Meeting article providing \$150,000 for the next stage of the design of Phase 2D of the rail trail (from the Concord/Sudbury town line south to the Mass. Central crossing). If spring Town Meeting approves this expenditure, the 75% design will start immediately after the 25% design is completed. Town Meeting will start on the evening of May 2nd.

In the spring of 2014, Sudbury Town Meeting overwhelmingly approved Community Preservation Committee funding for the initial design study, known as the 25% design. Town funds were supplemented with a donation of \$58,700 from the Friends of BFRT. In the fall of 2014 the firm VHB was chosen to do the design. The MassDOT Highway Division approved the BFRT project in March 2015. Approval of construction funding will wait until after the 25% design has been submitted to MassHighway.



Shortly after VHB began, conditions for performing the survey were published by the Conservation Commission. However, cases filed by a Town resident with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection claimed, among other things, that the Conservation Commission had issued an inappropriate and unlawful Order of Conditions. Although the State rejected the suits, design work was slowed for a number of months.

With legal obstacles removed and the right of way cleared of brush, surveying of the rail trail has resumed. The 25% design is scheduled for submission to MassDOT in this summer or fall.

Meanwhile, Sudbury also has begun to focus on plans for the east-west Mass. Central Rail Trail (MCRT). When it is connected to the BFRT, there will be a network of off-road paths linking Lowell, Sudbury, Berlin, Belmont, Bedford, Somerville and a host of communities in between.



Winter serenity on the trail

*Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail*  
*PO Box 1192*  
*Concord, MA 01742*



NON PROFIT ORG  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT NO.6  
HUDSON, MA 01749

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

### Show your support by joining today!

Members will receive newsletters, notices of upcoming trail-related events and opportunities to actively promote the rail trail through a variety of volunteer activities.

The Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, Inc. is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. Membership fees and donations are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.

Yes! Sign me up as a supporter of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Membership \$10 | <input type="checkbox"/> Conductor \$100  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family Membership \$25     | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineer \$250   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor \$50               | <input type="checkbox"/> RR Tycoon \$500+ |

\*Sponsor and above receive complimentary BFRT cap or T-shirt.

\_\_\_\_\_  
First Name Last Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Contact Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address 1 (Street Address, P.O. Box, company name, c/o)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address 2 (Apartment, suite, unit, building, floor)

\_\_\_\_\_  
City State Zip

\_\_\_\_\_  
Daytime Phone Evening Phone

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email address

YES NO

I would like to receive the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail newsletter.

Send my newsletter via email (include email address above).

Send via postal mail.

I would like to receive email updates from the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail.

I am willing to receive phone calls from the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail.

I am a trail abutter.

I would like to volunteer.

Gift:  Cap  T-Shirt (S / M / L / XL)  No Thanks

Please enclose a check payable to Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail and mail this form to:

**Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail**  
**PO Box 1192**  
**Concord, MA 01742**

You may also join online at:

[www.BruceFreemanRailTrail.org](http://www.BruceFreemanRailTrail.org)



## Westford Steadily Progressing

Westford is still working on getting official approval to place amenities such as benches and an information kiosk within the Phase 1 trail right of way (ROW). A draft Memorandum of Understanding, which addresses amenities such as these in the ROW, has been created by the Town of Westford's legal counsel and has undergone several revisions. This document is (as of February) waiting for approval from MassDOT. We are hopeful that approval will be forthcoming before the spring.

Last fall, the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, Inc. offered a gift of \$15,000 to the Town of Westford to help replace the 2009 BFRT/roadway crossing system at Acton Road (Rte. 27). Bids for replacement systems were solicited by the town, and Electric Light Company, Inc. of Maine has been awarded the contract. The new safe-crossing system will use Rapid Response Flashing Beacons (RRFB) and will be very similar to the system used in Chelmsford at the trail crossing at Golden Cove Road and at the pedestrian crossing in front of the Chelmsford library. We hope that the Acton Road safe-crossing system will be installed early in the spring.

Please check the Town of Acton BFRT blog (<http://tinyurl.com/BFRT-Phase2>) for updates on Phase 2A, which begins in Westford and continues for 4.8 miles through Acton.



## Bay Circuit Trail Presentation in Framingham

The Friends are sponsoring a program about the Bay Circuit Trail (BCT) at The Heritage in Framingham, 747 Water St., on Tuesday, March 8, at 7 p.m. A

video about the BCT will be presented by Bay Circuit Alliance Director of Operations Kristen Sykes and Bay Circuit Trail Representative Laurie Ullman.

The BCT, a recreation trail and greenway through 37 towns in eastern Massachusetts, runs through the northwest corner of Framingham at Callahan State Park. It begins north of Boston at Plum Island and ends 230 miles later in Kingston Bay to the south. In the fall of 2012, the [Appalachian Mountain Club](#) and [The Trustees of Reservations](#), two of Massachusetts' largest and oldest conservation organizations, began working with the Bay Circuit Alliance in the completion, enhancement and long-term protection of the BCT.

Sykes and Ullman will discuss plans to complete the BCT. They also will show where the BCT goes in and near Framingham and where it overlaps with the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail north of Framingham.

All are welcome to attend. The Heritage is located between the fire station and Hemenway Elementary School, opposite the new Christa McAuliffe Branch Library. Light refreshments will be served.

## What's in a Tie?

All of the railroad ties have been removed from the Right of Way in Phase 2. The photo below shows a large pile of them waiting for removal at the intersection of the trail with Great Road (Rte. 119/2A) where a bridge will be built to get trail users safely across the busy road.



Looking north across Great Road (Rte. 119/2A) in Acton

These railroad ties are considered hazardous since they are suspected to have been treated with either creosote, pentachlorophenol and/or chromated copper arsenate. An item in the contract has been included for sampling, laboratory testing, loading, transportation and disposal of all of the removed ties to a waste-to-energy facility that is licensed to burn treated wood. The contractor is required to actually submit manifests and certificates of destruction to MassDOT for the railroad ties.

## "Rail Roads to Rail Trails"



Enthusiasts of rail trails and railroad history attended a showing of the documentary "Rail Roads to Rail Trails," at a Friends' meeting in Concord in February. Featuring the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, the video was produced by Concord resident Electa Tritsch, who has been a practicing archeologist and historian for 30 years.

Following the presentation, a panel of Tritsch, railroad historian Henry Keutmann, Concord BFRT Advisory Committee Chair Kent Carlson and BFRT President Tom Michelman was led by BFRT Board Member Carlene Hempel. The panel answered questions about both the history of the rail trail and current progress in extending the rail trail into Acton, Concord and Sudbury. The 30-minute video is available online at <http://bit.ly/1Q9cfCJ>.

### **Photo Credits**

Thanks to the following folks for contributing photos to this issue:

Dennis McNurland, Tom Gazda, Dick Williamson, Steven Beyer, Stuart Johnstone and Emily Teller

### **Why Do We Love Rail Trails?**

In honor of its 30th anniversary, Rails to Trails Conservancy asked trail enthusiasts around America to share their top reasons for using and loving trails. Here are a few of the responses.

- Trails connect us with fellow trail users.
- Trails give us a glimpse into the past.
- Trails allow us to escape traffic.
- Trails provide us with places to play!
- Trails help us keep our resolutions.
- Trails are places where we can stay healthy.
- Trails allow people of ALL ages and abilities safe places to recreate.
- Trails take us to places we've never been before.
- Trails are peaceful.
- They strengthen local economies.
- Trails are incredible vacation opportunities.
- Trails give us places to escape to.
- Trails let us introduce our children to nature.
- Trails safely connect us to where we need to go.



Attendees at the Friends' annual meeting last November explored the rail trail ROW behind Pedal Power in Acton

### **Annual Summer Solstice Bike Ride!**

**Join the annual FBFRT Summer Solstice Bike Ride on the Minuteman Bikeway on Monday, June 20, at 6 p.m.**

**Start at the home of Tom Michelman, FBFRT President, 20 Everett Street, Arlington.**

**Park on Everett Street.**

**Stay for a BBQ on Tom's deck after the ride.**



Winter on the Trail in Chelmsford



**For Further Information, Visit us at:**

[www.brucefreemanrailtrail.org](http://www.brucefreemanrailtrail.org)

[Facebook.com/BruceFreemanRailTrail](https://www.facebook.com/BruceFreemanRailTrail)

[Twitter.com/FriendsofBFRT](https://twitter.com/FriendsofBFRT)

**Call or Email local representatives:**

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Chelmsford:	Tom Gazda	978-250-0012	<a href="mailto:tgazdap5tmr@comcast.net">tgazdap5tmr@comcast.net</a>
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Westford:	Emily Teller	978-692-6968	<a href="mailto:eteller@earthlink.net">eteller@earthlink.net</a>

**Attend:** Friends meetings

**Send Email:** [info@brucefreemanrailtrail.org](mailto:info@brucefreemanrailtrail.org)