



FRIENDS OF THE BRUCE FREEMAN RAIL TRAIL

Celebrate With Us

Join the Friends for the MassDOT ribbon-cutting ceremony on Friday, May 11, at 3:30 p.m. at NARA Park in Acton. After many years of waiting and nearly three years after the ground breaking in June 2015, this section of the trail will be officially opened. The Friends are planning a festive celebration after the ribbon-cutting ceremony. In addition to refreshments and live music, all attendees will receive a commemorative yellow bandana with a map of the trail. (And of course, there will be cake!)

See <http://bit.ly/2A-ribbon-cutting> for information about date, time location, directions and parking information.

Phase 2A Opens

News that Phase 2A would be completed and ready for use on April 3 was greeted with widespread enthusiasm. The Friends' Facebook post (right) reached more than 11,800 people, and, at the time of writing, it had received 298 "likes", 46 comments and 72 shares.

This section of the trail begins at the intersection of Rtes. 27 and 225 in Westford, runs a short distance through Westford and Carlisle and ends 4.9 miles further south near the Teamworks Building in Acton.

Parking for this section of the rail trail is available at several locations: (north to south) across from 1000 Main Street (Rte. 27), NARA Park off Rte. 27, behind Goulds' Plaza on Great Road (Rte. 2A), and Patriot Plaza, 179 Great Road, across from Pedal Power Bike and Ski.

After so many months of viewing the trail from outside the barricaded area, you are now invited to come with your family and friends to enjoy it.

Bob Hall 1929 - 2018

Sudbury representative Bob Hall was a valued member of the Friends' Board from its inception until he retired in 2013. He lent his talents in many ways: meticulously proofreading the newsletter, helping to set up the first database, staffing information booths at town events. He also advocated for the trail for many years as a member of the Town's Rail Trail Conversion Advisory Committee.



Bob Hall with Sudbury Board member Dick Williamson.

We will miss Bob's steady vision and unwavering friendship.

Bruce Freeman Rail Trail
March 8 at 4:26pm

Although it's snowing today, spring is just around the corner. In a few short weeks on April 3, 2018, Phase 2A will officially open. Phase 2A passes through the towns of Westford, Carlisle, and Acton, and it will extend the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail an additional 4.9 miles. This section of the trail begins at Rte. 225 in Westford. The trail crosses Rte. 27 twice before it reaches Rte. 2A/119 where there is a bridge for trail users to cross the street. There will be a trail par... See More

Like Comment Share

You and 298 others Chronological

72 Shares

- J This is gonna be so great! 3
- E Absolutely fantastic! 3
- C ready to do the full trail and back?! Woo! 4
- M So excited! 1
- A YAY!! 1
- L Thank you for the update - I have been so anxious to find out the opening date as I plan to commute to work from near ice house pond to Westford 1
- A Thank You for the update. So looking forward to the LONGER ride! 1
- S So looking forward to biking it. 1
- B More running! 1
- C Thank you - looking forward to biking the new extension to this trail! 3
- J Fantastic! 1
- L Great news! Good job all the folks who kept with it to make this happen. Thanks. 3

This Friends' Facebook post reached over 11,800 people, and has garnered many likes, happy comments and shares.

Phase 2B 75% Design Nears Completion

Greenman-Pedersen, Inc. (GPI) staff has been working on the 75% design for Phase 2B, the bridge over Rte. 2. GPI expects to submit the 75% design package to MassDOT in May. The Environmental Notification Form was submitted to the Massachusetts Environmental Protection Agency (MEPA) on February 28, after MassDOT completed its review. MEPA scheduled a site meeting/consultation for the first day of spring with Town staff from Concord, Acton and Sudbury and representatives from MassDOT and MEPA attending. The group walked through the snow to view the intermittent stream that flows from the State Police Horse Barn site through the BFRT right-of-way and drains into the wetlands on adjacent State land.



Concord Natural Resources Director Delia Kaye, GPI staff Project Engineer Lindsey Barbee and Assistant Environmental Scientist Samuel Campbell are on the MEPA site walk near the State Police Horse Barn.

Phase 2C Construction Continues

The preliminary signal work for the rail trail crossing of the MBTA Fitchburg commuter line has been underway on weekends this winter. This work is being done by Keolis' "force-account" crews.

The Concord Green Thumbs gardening club is working with Public Works Engineering Division to design improvements in Junction Park and is assisting with maintenance of plantings in the park. Town staff from Public Works and Planning have been meeting with members of the group to discuss the revised Commonwealth Ave./Main St. intersection and extension of Junction Park. A new landscape plan is expected to be developed for discussion and possible implementation as part of the construction activity this year.

MassDOT and the contractor will schedule a meeting this spring to discuss the project construction schedule. The next major activity is expected to be the installation of new traffic signals and reconstruction of the intersection at Main Street and Commonwealth Ave. The redesign will eliminate the small triangular-shaped traffic island in front of the 99 Restaurant and extend Junction Park into Main Street to reduce the distance across the street, thereby creating a safer experience for pedestrians and bicyclists.



The bridge over the Assabet River in West Concord was installed last fall. Photo was taken from the back of Westgate Park car wash site.

The Phases Explained



Phase 1 (6.8 miles in Lowell, Chelmsford and Westford) opened in 2009.

Phase 2A (4.9 miles in Westford, Carlisle and Acton) opened on April 3!

Phase 2B (Approx. 0.8 miles: Bridge over Rte. 2) is currently being designed.

Phase 2C (3.0 miles in Concord) is scheduled to open in spring 2019.

Phase 2D (4.5 miles in Sudbury) is currently being designed.

Phase 3 (4.8 miles in Sudbury and Framingham) Right of Way is still owned by the railroad company CSX.

Looking for Something?

Are you no longer receiving Friends' e-mails?
If your e-mail address has changed, let us know.

Please update your e-mail address by logging into your profile, click "edit/edit my account" and enter the new address, then click "save changes."

Or you can send your name and new e-mail address to info@BruceFreemanRailTrail.org

Thanks so much for helping us keep our contact information current.

Volunteers Help Clear Trail in Chelmsford

Late last fall the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) organized a major cleanup of the trail along the Art Walk and behind the gas station near the center of Chelmsford. The work included cutting down the weeds along the railing and the adjacent parking area. A very large amount of leaves, brush, tree branches and other material was generated. (See photos.) Many thanks to the volunteers who helped finish this large task in fewer than four hours. Volunteers included Siegmur Schmidt, Lori Schmidt, Patrick Latham, Steve Pustell, Jeannie Pustell, Robert Morse, Dave Antonelli, Bob Schneider, Robert Klinkhammer, Jim Kelsey, Mike Carignan and Tom Gazda. BPAC has also planned a spring cleanup of this area in April in conjunction with Earth Day.



L: Piles of brush and leaves generated during Chelmsford trail clean up.
R: Bob Schneider of Chelmsford diligently keeping the trail clear of branches.

Last winter's weather provided opportunities for a variety of trail activities. At times there was sufficient snow for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. Between snowstorms walkers, runners and cyclists took over. Spring cleanup of the trail may be delayed due to the extensive tree damage from the severe March snowstorms. Everyone's patience on this matter would be appreciated.

The redevelopment of the Cushing Place property into high-end apartments by Winstanley received approval of a Modified Plan in 2017 from the Chelmsford Planning Board. In the original plan Winstanley had agreed to provide landscaping, irrigation and ongoing maintenance of the grassy area along the Art Walk section of the trail, and this condition remained intact in the Modified Plan. The Chelmsford BPAC will continue to work with Winstanley and the Town to turn this area into the Carol Cleven Park.

However, in late autumn, Winstanley's partner, Princeton Properties, backed out of the project. Although Winstanley wants to see the project move forward, as of early spring the status of the project was uncertain. BPAC will continue to proceed with plans for the park, including the memorial to Carol Cleven, interpretive signs and other amenities to enhance the site.

BPAC wishes to thank the Chelmsford DPW for its efforts to clear the trail of leaves twice in the autumn and make the trail safe for all activities. Also the Chelmsford BPAC and the Town of Chelmsford wish to express their thanks to the Friends of the BFRT for their ongoing financial support for signs and portable toilets.



Snow lingered on the trail this spring near Heart Pond in Chelmsford.

Westford Improves Safety at Intersection

A new electronic safe-crossing system was erected at the Griffin Road trail crossing last fall. The need for safety improvements at that crossing came to light during a meeting regarding road safety between town officials and Griffin Road residents. The Friends provided the funding for the equipment, and Westford's Highway Department oversaw its installation. The trail crossing system, coupled with extensive landscaping by the Highway Department, has vastly improved the safety for trail users at this intersection.

We are also very grateful to both volunteers and our highway crews for keeping the trail clear after "spring" blizzards this past winter. The Highway Department workers do not plow, but they do clear tree limbs! They also cut down a few unsightly dead trees near the southern end of Phase 1.

Pat Savage, Westford's Director of Parks and Recreation and a longtime supporter of the BFRT, retired last October after over a decade and a half of service. The Friends are very appreciative of her help on many BFRT projects during her time in Westford, and we wish her well in retirement. Westford's new Director of Parks and Recreation is Jim Duane. Jim was the Assistant Town Manager for Framingham and also held positions in Framingham's Recreation Department. We look forward to seeing Jim out on the trail.

Those Pesky Sudbury Beavers

After a series of delays, the 25% design of Phase 2D in Sudbury (Concord town line south to Station Road near Rte. 20) was submitted to MassDOT in 2017. Celebration of that milestone was premature as MassDOT required drawings of bridges and a boardwalk before the 25% design could be accepted and the Design Public Hearing scheduled. The Town will need to identify a contractor to do this additional design work. As soon as it can be completed, it will be submitted to MassDOT. They can then complete their review then move the BFRT forward once again.

So what does this have to do with beavers? These busy creatures were hard at work building an impressive dam a short distance upstream of where the BFRT crosses Pantry Brook. The abutments for the bridge consisted of stacks of sizeable granite blocks. The beaver dam was so effective that it created a large upstream flowage that eventually crept into the back yards of homes along Woodmere Drive. After getting state authorization, a brontosaurus-style earth-moving bucket was brought in to clear the dam. However, after taking out a small section, the entire dam gave way, creating a major flood suddenly draining the entire back-up. This deluge undercut the granite blocks of one of the bridge abutments; thus creating the need to generate drawings for a new bridge structure. More time. More money.

Last February the Town submitted a grant proposal to the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation's Recreational Trails Advisory Board for \$100,000. The proposal requests most of the funds needed to buy from CSX the northernmost quarter-mile of rail bed from Station Road south to Rte. 20. This section is key to connecting the BFRT and the eventual Mass Central Rail Trail to Sudbury's business district. A decision on the grant application is expected by November. Acquiring the first part of the CSX rail bed would open the gate to work on Phase 3, the last phase of the BFRT that terminates in Framingham.

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



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Come **CELEBRATE** the opening of **PHASE 2A** at the **RIBBON-CUTTING** ceremony on Friday **MAY 11** at 3:30 p.m. at **NARA PARK** in Acton.

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.

- Individual Membership \$10
- Family Membership \$25
- Sponsor \$50
- Conductor \$100
- Engineer \$250
- RR Tycoon \$500+

*Sponsor and above receive complimentary gift.

 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. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Send my newsletter via email (include email address above). | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Send via postal mail. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I would like to receive email updates from the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I am willing to receive phone calls from the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I am a trail abutter. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I would like to volunteer. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Gift: <input type="checkbox"/> Cap <input type="checkbox"/> BFRT Socks (S/M or L/XL) <input type="checkbox"/> 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:

<http://www.brucefreemanrailtrail.org>



Dear Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail,

March 31, 2018

I'm writing this note after enjoying a lovely walk on a beautiful early spring day just three days before Phase 2A of the BFRT officially opens. This milestone, not surprisingly, leads one to reminisce. The opening of Phase 2A has been a long time coming. For example, take a look at the [January 2004 Bruce N. Freeman Memorial Bicycle Path Acton, MA Feasibility Study](http://bit.ly/2004-BFRT-study) (<http://bit.ly/2004-BFRT-study>) for a 4.6-mile bicycle path. To provide some perspective, see the following two quotes from the Feasibility Study.

- “The Town appropriated funding to complete this study in response to the strong interest of the residents and municipal officials to construct a shared-use path within the Town of Acton. Funds for this feasibility study were appropriated at Acton’s Annual Town Meeting in April 2000.”
- “The Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, an ad-hoc group of residents representing towns along the corridor, are gaining momentum as they educate themselves and continue their outreach activities in an effort to make the 22-mile bicycle path a reality.”

So what can we glean from the Feasibility Study. First, it's out-of-date. The FBFRT goal is not for a pathetically short trail of 22 miles (☹️) ending in Sudbury, but for the trail to span the entire 25-mile stretch of the right-of-way from Lowell to Framingham. Second, the Acton Feasibility Study did not include the Carlisle or Westford portions of Phase 2A. Those segments had to be included later in the 25% design phase and incorporated together into funding requests. (For an example of the complicated nature of this process, see the FBFRT Newsletter article from Spring 2008 – [Phase 2A: 75% Design – Next S.T.E.P.s](http://bit.ly/Spring-News-2008) at <http://bit.ly/Spring-News-2008>.) Third, you might note it has been more than 18 years since the Acton Feasibility Study was funded to Phase 2A construction completion. Fourth, the Friends of the BFRT is still around, still gaining momentum, still educating ourselves and still making an effort to make the shared-use path a reality. And some days, like April 3, 2018, as Phase 2A construction is officially complete, we actually can point to that updated reality.

We hope you can join us at the Phase 2A ribbon cutting on Friday, May 11, at 3:30 p.m. at NARA Park in Acton to help us celebrate the new five-mile segment of the BFRT.

Best regards,

Tom Michelman – President, Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, Inc.



The new pedestrian bridge over Rte. 2A in Acton is a critical component of the newly opened trail section in Acton. Clockwise from upper left: Bridge with BFRT sign from Rte. 2A, on the bridge looking east, s-curve approach, and ramp to Rte. 2A.

Photo Credits

Larry Bruns, George Demetriou, Andrew Ells-O'Brien, Sharon Galpin, Tom Gazda, Judy Perrin, Barbara Pike, Marcia Rasmussen, Emily Teller

Extending Trail Access into Lowell

While one can't see much progress on the ground, there actually is progress on the extension of the BFRT into Lowell. It is anticipated that the Gervais Kia/Volkswagen dealership on Industrial Avenue will begin construction sometime late this spring or early summer. In preparation for having a paved trail easement along the Gervais property, the Friends have had a preliminary meeting with the property management, CBRE, at Cross Point.

The goal of discussions with Cross Point is to plot a crossing of their property, linking the current trail end at the Rte. 3 tunnel with the future paved section along the Gervais property. The preliminary meeting was positive, with the management at Cross Point appreciating the rail trail as an asset. Any route would have to meet with the approval of the owners and the management team, but the Friends are hopeful that a workable plan can be designed.

Minuteman Bikeway Celebrates 25th Anniversary

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the Minuteman Commuter Bikeway's official opening in the fall of 1992 in Arlington and in the spring of 1993 in Lexington and Bedford. As the Minuteman Commuter Bikeway celebrates 25 years, take a look back at how it all began in "Revival: The Story of the Minuteman Commuter Bikeway." View video here: <http://bit.ly/mm-bikeway>.

Planning an Event on the Trail? Don't Forget to Register

Organizations planning an organized event on the BFRT need to register it on the BFRT website with at least 60 days advance notice. This form is used by the towns to ensure event organizers have adequately planned for the event, to reduce the chance that multiple large events will be held on the same section of trail on the same day and to provide a consistent set of questions and guidance for all municipalities impacted by the event. To register an event, go to: <http://brucefreemanrailtrail.org/bruce-freeman-rail-trail-event-registration>.

Thank You!

Bill Harman, for designing the ribbon-cutting ceremony souvenir map bandana

Pedal Power Bike and Ski, Acton, for hosting the annual meeting and their on-going support

Jet Mail, Hudson, for their assistance in printing and mailing this newsletter

United Site Service, Chelmsford, for helping sponsor toilets on the trail

Join Us at a Friends' Event this Summer

Framingham Earth Day, April 28, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Framingham Center Common (Vernon Street)
[or Framingham High School in the event of rain]
Stop by and visit our booth!

www.framinghamearthday.org

Contact: Ed Kross edward.kross@rcn.com

Summer Solstice Bike Ride, June 21, 6 p.m.

Pedal Power Bike and Ski
176 Great Road (Rte. 2A), Acton

Come ride or walk on the newly opened section of the BFRT. The Friends will provide pizza for a post-ride party!

Contact: Tom Michelman

tmichelman@gmail.com, 978-580-6190

Carlisle Old Home Day, June 23, 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Food, entertainment and more right in Carlisle Center.

Contact: Glenn Reed

greed@energyfuturesgroup.com, 978-807-2785

Sudbury 4th of July Parade, July 4, 12 p.m.

Assemble by noon. Parade starts at 1 p.m.

Contact: Dick Williamson williamson01773@yahoo.com

Acton's 19th Railroad History, May 20, 4 p.m.

Acton Public Safety Building, 371 Main St. (Rte. 27)

Bill Klauer & Z Doug Herrick, Co-presidents of the Acton Historical Society, will present a program about how Acton's 19th century history and economy were affected by its four railroads. Special focus will be given to the Framingham and Lowell section of the BFRT Phase 2A.

Contact: Doug Herrick doug.herrick@rcn.com

See www.brucefreemanrailtrail.org/calendar-events for up-to-date event information.



For Further Information:

Visit us at: www.brucefreemanrailtrail.org

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

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

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Westford: Emily Teller	978-692-6968	eteller@earthlink.net

Attend: Friends meetings

Send Email: info@brucefreemanrailtrail.org