



FRIENDS OF THE BRUCE FREEMAN RAIL TRAIL

Celebrating the Opening of Phase 2A Through Acton



Cutting the ribbon: District Three Highway Director Barry Lorion, Friends President Tom Michelman, Former Acton Town Manager Steven LeDoux, MassDOT Highway Administrator Jonathan Gulliver, State Representative Cory Atkins, State Senator Mike Barrett, Lt. Governor Karyn Polito, State Senator Jamie Eldridge, and Josh Bedarian, Legislative Aide to State Representative Jen Benson.

With sunny skies and a festive atmosphere, the ribbon cutting ceremony for Phase 2A of the BFRT was held at Acton's NARA Park on May 11. Nearly 300 trail enthusiasts joined local and state officials to officially open this section of the trail, which runs approximately 5 miles from Rtes. 225 and 27 in Westford to near Wetherbee Street in Acton.

State Senator Jamie Eldridge (right) captured the spirit of the day with his remarks: "One of the proudest moments of my career is the ribbon-cutting for Phase 2A of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail in Acton. The 5-mile extension from Westford to Concord cuts through the gorgeous NARA Park. I first began advocating for this 16 years ago, attending the monthly 7:30 a.m. Boston MPO meetings at the Transportation Building with [Tom Michelman](#) and the rest of the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail."



State Senator Jamie Eldridge addressing the crowd.

Coordinating the pre-season use of NARA Park was greatly facilitated by Acton Recreation Director Cathy Fochtman and Recreation Coordinator Melissa Rier. Also, Joyce Reischutz and her team of...



Obviously, the cake was very popular.



The Friends Board with Len Simon. (Joyce Reischutz's head was edited in because she was busy with the set up at the time of the shoot).

Attendees received commemorative yellow map bandanas.

...employees from Pedal Power set up tents, tables, and chairs for the refreshment area. A corps of volunteers helped with registration, bandanas, setting up, serving, cleaning up. These people all contributed to the celebration's success.



Crowds of trail supporters came to celebrate the ribbon cutting.

New Trail Section Quite Popular

After years of waiting, the questions about Phase 2A in Acton, Carlisle, and Westford of the BFRT: “When will it be built?,” “Will it ever be finished?” were answered when the trail finally opened last spring. Every day, rain or shine, residents and visitors are out enjoying this linear 5-mile park.

The current southern terminus of the trail is near Wetherbee Street and Teamworks in Acton. Phase 2B, which includes the bridge over Rte. 2, will provide the connection between Acton and West Concord (See separate article). Although an off-ramp connection to the School Street playing fields in Acton is not planned for construction at this time, the trail has been designed to accommodate the ramp in the future. To comment on this connection, send email to paulmalchodi@gmail.com.



Butter Brook Pond, from the trail at the small bridge that crosses the Butter and Nashoba Brooks in north Acton.

Safe use of the trail is an ongoing concern. Trail users are courteous, of course, but are reminded to be patient with those who are moving more slowly and leave extra space when passing. All trail users should stop at each street crossing and verify that the way is clear before entering the crosswalk. If there is a flashing traffic beacon, use it before entering the crosswalk to let drivers know you are there. Be aware that the beacon is not a stop sign for vehicles, so use caution before entering the roadway.

In case of emergency, dial 911 and use the nearest quarter-mile post or local business landmark to provide your location. The trail, including the bridges, was constructed for emergency vehicle access. Please stay on the phone with the dispatcher until he or she tells you that you can hang up.

Please remember that the BFRT is a trail through the woods, and you may come upon nature’s flora and fauna on the trail as well. At any time, leaves, ducks, branches, frogs, gravel, snow, or ice might be on the trail in front of you. Be prepared. This summer’s unusually frequent heavy rains have destabilized some of the trail shoulders and left ruts off the edges of the trail as well as stone dust pools at the bottom of the downslopes.

To report a maintenance issue on Phase 2A:

Acton: Highway Department, highway@acton-ma.gov

or Friends’ Acton contact listed in this newsletter

Carlisle: carlisetrails@comcast.net

Westford: Recreation Department, 978-692-5532

The Friends are looking for a small number of volunteers for the trail in Acton. If you are willing to help, please email paulmalchodi@gmail.com.



Fall foliage on the trail near Pedal Power.

Winter is coming! While it will not be plowed, the snow-covered trail can be delightfully beautiful and provide a hint of what pre-industrialized New England roads might have looked like. Walking, snow-shoeing, and cross-country skiing are wonderful ways to enjoy the trail in winter.

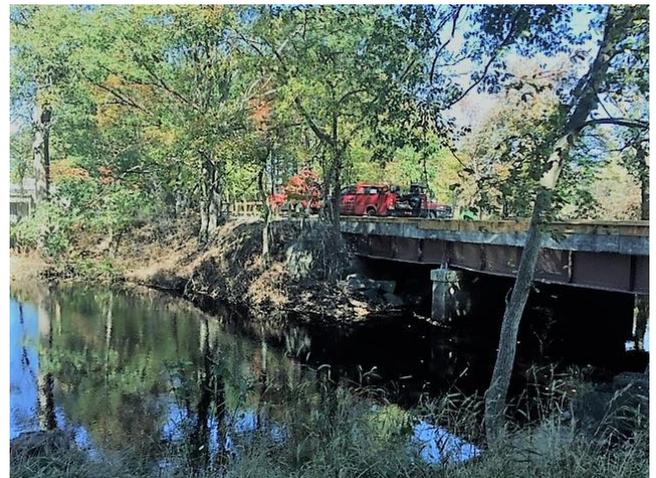
Trail Through West Concord Nears Completion

The eagerly anticipated opening of the trail through West Concord, known as Phase 2C, is still scheduled for 2019. This 3-mile section of the trail runs from near Commonwealth Avenue to the culvert under Powder Mill Road.

The reconstruction of the intersection of Main Street and Commonwealth Avenue will be completed this fall. New traffic signals also will be installed. The new design will reduce the length of the trail across Main Street, creating a safer crossing for trail users while providing for sufficient turning movement for larger vehicles.

The contractor expects to complete paving, fence installation, road crossings, and pedestrian signal installations by mid-November. MassDOT has requested a final inspection at the end of the construction season, with the punch list generated at that time. The Town will then be responsible for maintenance of the trail after the winter season. However, by early fall work on installing the crossing gates and paving the path over the rails where the trail crosses the MBTA Commuter Rail had not been completed.

MassDOT and Town of Concord staff continue to remind residents and visitors that the trail is a construction zone in 2018 and that it is unsafe to use.



Construction on the Nashoba Brook Bridge continued this fall.

Rte. 2 Bridge Plans Submitted

The 75% design plans for Phase 2B, the 0.8-mile bridge over Rte. 2, were submitted to the state at the end of June. The plans have been posted at <http://concordma.gov/980/Bruce-Freeman-Rail-Trail-Committee>. The Phase 2B 75% design is listed on the left side of the page. Many comments from State agencies have been received.

A Special Town Meeting in October approved an article related to the grant of easements needed from the State for the construction of Phase 2B. This additional vote was necessary because of a small portion of Department of Corrections land needed for drainage. Construction on this phase of the trail is scheduled to begin in fall 2019, with a completion date in fall 2021 or spring 2022.

At the Spring 2018 Town Meeting, voters approved funds to acquire 7 acres of land on Warners Pond at 369 Commonwealth Ave. in West Concord. Phase 2B of the BFRT will border the northern boundary of the parcel and provide access from the trail to the property. Known as Gerow Park, it will provide opportunities for activities such as walking, fishing, canoeing, and bird watching.



Sudbury Town Meeting Votes to Fund Design of BFRT



Friends Board member Dick Williamson and Selectman Len Simon advocate for the rail trail in Sudbury

At a Special Town Meeting on October 15, Sudbury residents voted to appropriate \$650,000 from free cash to fund the final design of the BFRT Phase 2D to MassDOT standards. Once the design is finished, the project will move to the construction phase. The funding article was presented as a Citizen Petition by Sudbury Selectman Len Simon.

The article was opposed by a majority of the 5-member Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee. An amendment which would have reduced the funding to \$100,000 was introduced, with its proponents arguing that the Town could not afford to use that much free cash at this time. Friends of the BFRT Board member Dick Williamson gave a moving history of the rail trail, recounting its snail's pace progress for the past 30 years. Dick's remarks drew chuckles of appreciation from the hall and nods of agreement. He urged defeat of the amendment.

Town meeting voted down the amendment and then voted overwhelmingly to support the article for full design funding.

Funding for the construction of Phase 2D is included in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and is slated to receive \$9,684,778 in federal and state

funds for construction in 2022.

Efforts are also underway to extend the trail south toward Framingham. This past August Sudbury received informal notification that its application for a \$100,000 Recreational Trails Program grant to the Department of Conservation and Recreation to purchase a portion of the CSX corridor was approved. This will allow the southern end of the rail trail to terminate at Rte. 20, rather than at a small side street in Sudbury.

The plan going forward is to acquire the rest of the CSX corridor in Sudbury and Framingham to complete the 25 miles of the BFRT. Recently, CSX has shown a willingness to sell its right of way to Sudbury and Framingham for a continuous multi-use path.

Below: BFRT Board members Dick Williamson, Ed Kross (with his Penny Farthing bicycle), and Emily Teller joined Framingham's mayor Yvonne Spicer at Framingham's Earth Day Celebration last spring at the Center Common.



Above: Pedal Power Bike and Ski abuts the rail trail near Concord Road in Acton. The newly created entrance, accessible ramp, and deck welcome trail users to the store, where they may use the restroom during business hours.

Below: Rail Trail enthusiasts, led by Friends Board member Dick Williamson, participated in Sudbury's 4th of July parade for the ninth year.





RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

See Inside:

Festive Ribbon-cutting in **Acton -- Concord** section to open in spring
Rte. 2 bridge design being finalized -- **Chelmsford** Parking restrictions
Sudbury votes \$650,000 for rail trail design

Join Us at the Friends Annual Meeting

Sunday, December 2, 2018, 2 p.m., Pedal Power
 Bike and Ski, 176 Great Road (Rte. 2A), 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.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <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 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. YES NO

Send my newsletter via email (include email address above). YES NO

Send via postal mail. YES NO

I would like to receive email updates from the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail. YES NO

I am willing to receive phone calls from the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail. YES NO

I am a trail abutter. YES NO

I would like to volunteer. YES NO

Gift: Cap BFRT Socks (S/M or 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



Chelmsford: Parking Restrictions, New Benches, Spring Cleanup...

Parking for trail users at Cushing Place in Chelmsford center will be unavailable during construction of the new condominiums in that area. Parking there will be restricted to Brickhouse Sports Grill and the apartment building in Central Square. Trail users may park in the lot behind the Chelmsford Center for the Arts on North Road or in the lot behind Santander Bank on Billerica Road. Work on the project began at the beginning of October and is expected to be completed in 12 to 18 months.

The condominium redevelopment plan includes landscaping, irrigating and maintaining the Art Walk area adjacent to the trail. It also incorporates improvements to parking and traffic flow adjacent to the trail. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) will be working with the developer and its engineering firm and landscape architect to coordinate the landscape plan and to incorporate the Carol Cleven Memorial into the newly created park area along the Art Walk. In addition to a memorial to Carol, this area will have an interpretive sign giving the history of the Framingham - Lowell rail line.

When people think of rail trails, they usually think of walking or biking. But opportunities to rest and enjoy the surroundings are also much appreciated. This year three benches were donated for installation along the BFRT in Chelmsford.

A bench, donated by Alan Fidler in memory of his wife Laurie, was installed on the trail heading toward High Street from Cushing Place (pictured below). It faces the old Mill Pond dam site where there are plans to install a bridge connecting the trail to the path from the Bartlett Woodlot property.



A second bench was donated by Alan and Jane McKersie in honor of their 65th wedding anniversary. It was installed further along the trail toward High Street at the connection with the path to the Bovey Woodlot. A third bench was donated by Scot Lavoie and Linda Gaulin in memory of their son Shaunn. It will be installed soon in the section of the trail behind Dunkin' Donuts between Golden Cove Road and the baseball fields on Chelmsford Street. These donations are greatly appreciated.

BPAC organized a spring cleanup of the Cushing Place/Art Walk area and the section of the trail from Fletcher Street to the Central Square. The work included raking, mowing, weed cutting, and removal of fallen tree branches. Volunteers included Bob Morse, Steve Pustell, Michael Carignan, Karen Taylor, Dylan Petito, Dennis McNurland, Bob Schneider, John Elliot, Steve Minor, Suzanne Boudrot, Tina Williams, and Tom Gazda. Several students also volunteered including Connor Magoon, Devon Crandall, Cameron Hardy, Jaycub Reed, Brody Minor, James Wheeler, and Trevor Jenkins. Over the summer, Steve Pustell, Bob Schneider, and Tom Gazda did periodic mowing and weed trimming to keep the site in good condition.

BPAC conducted the annual trail usage count at the Art Walk/Cushing Place on Saturday, September 8. Temperatures were in the 60s under cloudy skies. The total count was 1,384, which was the highest number in 7 years. About 67% of trail users were bicyclists (up from 50% in 2017), while walkers and runners represented about 30% (down from 46% in 2017). These totals represented a notable change from past counts which averaged about 56% cyclists and 38% walkers and runners. The increase in cyclists may be due in part to the opening of Phase 2A of the trail. The number of cyclists not wearing helmets was approximately 18%, compared to 12% in 2017 but still favorable compared to 25% or more in 2016 and prior years. **All cyclists are encouraged to wear a helmet when riding.** Volunteer counters included Steve Pustell, Bob Schneider, Mike Carignan, Sharon Galpin, Melinda Goodick, Dave Antonelli, Carol Grueneich, Jane Vooyo, and Tom Gazda.

This year the trail was used for several events, including the PMC Kids Ride, Live for Liv, and the PCEA NEEMA Church walking event. BPAC worked with all groups to ensure that they use the trail safely, respect the property of abutters, and obtain the required permission to use town or private property for staging the events.

BPAC and the Town of Chelmsford wish to express their thanks to the Friends for their funding of portable toilets along the trail at Cushing Place and at Pond Street/Heart Pond this season.

Photo Credits

Peter J. Baumgartner, Karl Brocket, Christine Corr, Tom Gazda, Stuart Johnstone, Tom Kelleher, Judy Perrin, Emily Teller, Bob Wilson

Westford Links Old with New

Twelve years ago the Town Meetings of both Westford and Carlisle approved critical articles to provide funding for the design of short sections of the BFRT through their towns. This relatively small expenditure (\$25,000 for each town) ensured that they would be included in the \$9 million Phase 2A construction project. Both of these sections of Phase 2A are now complete and, together, provide a link between the new trail in Acton and the existing trail in Westford north of Rte. 225.

Representatives of the Friends are aware of the concerns of trail users and residents about the safety of the trail intersections in Westford. These concerns are similar to those raised in other BFRT communities. The BFRT is working with state agencies and town staff and committees to develop ways to improve safety at the intersections.

The rest area at the intersection of Rtes. 27 and 225, with benches and a kiosk with trail information, is a popular resting place for trail users. Westford BFRT Board members Emily Teller and Chris Barrett maintain the kiosk. Emily keeps the literature boxes stocked with newsletters and maps, while Chris recently replaced the broken plexiglass window.

Friends of the BFRT are very grateful to town staff, especially the "on-the-ground staff" of both Parks and Recreation and the Highway Department who maintain the BFRT, including keeping it swept and mowed.



Extending Trail Into Lowell

Extending the BFRT into Lowell will be a multi-faceted project since many sections of the original railroad right of way are separately owned. Each section must be addressed with the current owners. In addition, a link to the Concord River Greenway requires the BFRT to leave the path of the railroad right of way and cross Lowell City property and streets. Current efforts are aimed at getting a path from the terminus at the Route 3 tunnel to the railroad right of way at the edge of the Target parking area. There are three ownerships to address: Cross Point Towers, National Amusements, and the Gervais Dealership.

After representatives from the Friends met with the management of Cross Point Towers last spring, they agreed to paint a pathway on the parking area to lead trail users from the tunnel under Rte. 3 in the finger lot to the bridge across River Meadow Brook. (See photo)



This striping marks a pedestrian path from the tunnel under Rte. 3 in Lowell to the bridge across River Meadow Brook.

The next step was to address National Amusements, the owners of the property on the far side of River Meadow Brook, and the City of Lowell. The Friends are working in conjunction with the City of Lowell Department of Planning and Development and the Lowell Parks and Conservation Trust to design a pathway that leads across the parking lot and Industrial Avenue to connect to the Gervais Dealership property on the other side of Industrial Avenue.

Gervais has plans to develop its property along the River Meadow Brook, which is directly on the railroad right of way. The Gervais family has generously granted, and included in their plans, a 10-foot wide easement for the BFRT along this section of their property. Clearing this land along the rail bed is expected to begin this fall.

Although extending the trail into Lowell is complicated, and progress may be slow, the Friends will continue to work with all entities to attain a safe and viable connection to the Concord River Greenway.

Planning an Event on the Trail?

Organizations planning an organized event that utilizes the BFRT need to register it on the BFRT website at least 90 days advance notice. This form is used by the towns to ensure that 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 <https://brucefreemanrailtrail.org/bruce-freeman-rail-trail-event-registration>

Friends Annual Meeting

You are invited to the Friends Annual Members Meeting - Board Member Elections

Sunday, December 2, 2018, 2 p.m.

Come celebrate the progress of the trail in 2018 and see what to look for in 2019.

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

Parking is available at Patriot Square,
across Great Road from Pedal Power

Light refreshments will be served.

Linking Regional Rail Trails

When FBFRT Board members Dick Williamson and Glenn Reed attended the Minuteman Bikeway 25th anniversary celebration in September, the one question they were asked repeatedly was: "How can I link from one rail trail to another?" In Concord, the BFRT lies close to both the Reformatory Branch/Minuteman Bikeway and the Assabet River Rail Trail (ARRT), but no trails join the three routes.

As rail trail construction in Massachusetts has increased in recent years and, as more trails open, the need for connectivity becomes increasingly apparent. In an effort to solve this, Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) bicycle/pedestrian planner David Loutzenheiser held an exploratory ride from West Concord on August 16 with Jeff Collins, chairman of the West Concord Advisory Committee. Close to 20 bicyclists attended, first pedaling west to the ARRT in S. Acton and Maynard and then east to the Reformatory Branch near Concord center in order to scope possible routes, both on- and off-road. While no options appeared to be perfect, it was clear that potential for significant progress exists and that raising awareness of the issue is an important first step.

With potential trail links at numerous points along its route, the BFRT holds the promise of magnifying its benefits to surrounding communities. Trail advocates and the MAPC believe that greater connectivity will deliver a comprehensive network of "active transportation" routes throughout metropolitan Boston, enabling pedestrians and bicyclists to safely access their destinations.

For Further Information:

Visit us at:

www.brucefreemanrailtrail.org

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

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

Call or Email local representatives:

President: Tom Michelman	978-580-6190	tmichelman@gmail.com
Acton: Paul Malchodi	978-406-7264	paulmalchodi@gmail.com
Carlisle: Glenn Reed	978-807-2785	greed@energyfuturesgroup.com
Chelmsford: Dennis McNurland	978-251-0777	djmcn192@gmail.com
Concord: Barbara Pike	978-369-0437	bbpike@aol.com
Framingham: Ed Kross	508-380-6925	ekross1976@gmail.com
Lowell: Sharon Galpin	978-446-8906	sgalpin99@gmail.com
Sudbury: Dick Williamson	978-618-5475	williamson@alum.mit.edu
Westford: Emily Teller	978-692-6968	eteller@earthlink.net

Attend: Friends meetings

Send Email: info@brucefreemanrailtrail.org

