



## FRIENDS OF THE BRUCE FREEMAN RAIL TRAIL

### Bringing the Trail to Framingham

Continuing the BFRT into Framingham faces one major hurdle: right-of-way (ROW) acquisition. Unlike the rest of the BFRT where the right-of-way is owned by the State, Phase 3, the southern-most 4.6 miles of the BFRT, is still owned by the rail company CSX. Although the City has expressed a desire to purchase the ROW and CSX has acknowledged its interest in selling it to the City, the critical issue is funding. The trail would start at the Sudbury town line and end just north of Rte. 9.



The BFRT in Framingham would provide easy off-road access to the McAuliffe Library (photo left). The trail crosses over Grove Street where the original granite abutments create a squeeze for traffic on the street (photo above).



### Celebrate Another New Trail Section

Another section of the BFRT will open this spring! A 3-mile section through West Concord (Phase 2C) is nearing completion. The main remaining piece is for Keolis to complete construction of the new commuter rail crossing for the trail near the depot in West Concord.

The ribbon-cutting ceremony is expected to be held this spring or summer. Setting a date for the ceremony will require input from Town officials, MassDOT and the contractor, along with the schedules of any State officials invited to attend. Details of date, time, location, parking information and bike access will be posted here when they are available: <http://bit.ly/2C-Ribbon-cutting>.



Cyclists are asked to walk their bikes in the Junction Park area.

This festive event will feature local and state officials, live music, Phase 2C map bandanas for all attendees and, of course, cake and ice cream. West Concord merchants have donated prizes for a free raffle. The Friends look forward to welcoming the many trail supporters who have been waiting more than 15 years for the BFRT to come to West Concord.

This section of the trail will begin at a new parking lot on Commonwealth Avenue near the Rotary, go through West Concord Village and end at Powder Mill Road. Construction has included rebuilding a bridge over Nashoba Brook, creating a new crossing of the commuter rail, constructing a new bridge over the Assabet River and reconstructing the culvert/tunnel beneath Powder Mill Road.

The trail south of Powder Mill Road in Concord will be constructed as part of Phase 2D in Sudbury. A map of the trail in West Concord is available here <http://bit.ly/BFRT-Concord-Map>.

### Rte. 2 Bridge Plans Complete

A bridge connecting Phase 2A in Acton with Phase 2C in West Concord will be constructed over Rte. 2 (Phase 2B). The 100% design for the bridge was submitted to MassDOT in early February. The plans have been posted to the BFRT Advisory Committee's web page on the Concord town website.

This section of the trail will begin at Wetherbee Street in Acton, cross Rte. 2, pass the new Gerow Park on Warner's Pond and end near Commonwealth Avenue in West Concord. The bridge has been designed to manage water runoff. It will slope to one side and carry the full width of pavement to the end of the wall. A stone swale will guide the water down the side slope to a bioretention area. Pavement milling mulch will be used for the shoulders

Construction is expected to begin this fall or next spring. Watch for an announcement of the ground-breaking ceremony.



MassDOT rendering of proposed 300-foot bridge over Rte. 2.

## Acton, Carlisle and Westford Celebrate Trail's First Anniversary

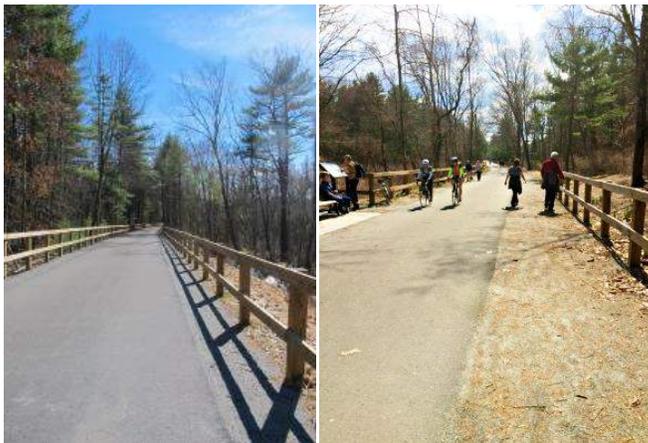
The new section of the trail in Westford, Carlisle and Acton (Phase 2A) has been very popular with trail users during its first year. However one concern frequently raised is the hazard created when stone dust washes onto the trail surface. Over the next few months, the Town of Acton is planning to remove the stone dust shoulders where they are washing out and replace them with a more stable material.



A short section of the trail through Carlisle connects Westford to Acton.

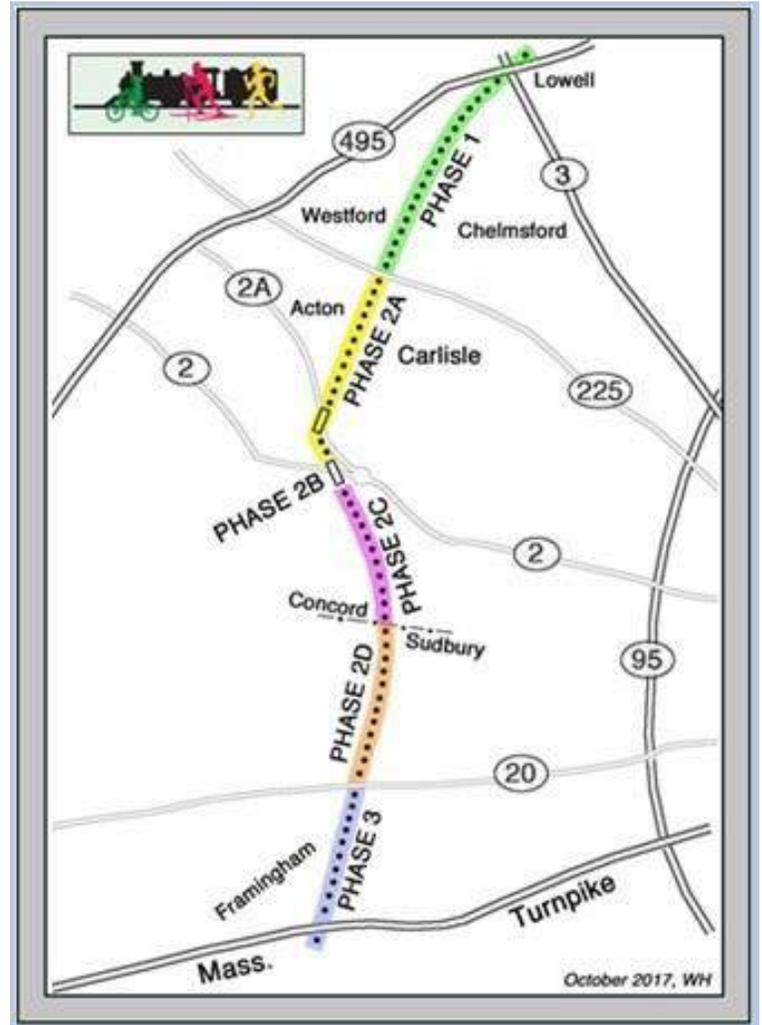
**Safety on the trail is everyone's responsibility.** All trail users should keep to the right whether on foot or on wheels. Travel at a similar speed to other trail users when the trail is busy. At crosswalks, follow the safety signage, **come to a full stop** and activate the rapid flashing caution beacons. Be aware that cars in the road may not stop.

Trail parking is available at several locations in Acton: across from 1000 Main St., NARA Park off Rte. 27, Gould's Plaza behind Donelan's and the Ice House Pond historic site on Concord Road. Parking is also available at Patriot Square, 179 Great Road, across from Pedal Power Bike and Ski on weekends and holidays only. On busy summer weekends, when the NARA lake area is in heavy use, trail users should park only in the designated area. A map showing these locations is available at <http://bit.ly/BFRT-Map-201901>.



(left) The trail looking south near the North Acton parking lot.  
(right) The trail in Acton near the Pencil Factory on a busy early spring day.

## The Phases Explained



- Phase 1** (6.8 miles in Lowell, Chelmsford and Westford) opened 2009.
- Phase 2A** (4.9 miles in Westford, Carlisle and Acton) opened 2018.
- Phase 2B** (Approx. 0.8 miles: Bridge over Rte. 2) design complete. Construction start expected in late 2019 or early 2020.
- Phase 2C** (3.0 miles in Concord) open in spring/summer 2019.
- Phase 2D** (4.5 miles in Sudbury) in design stage.
- Phase 3** (4.8 miles in Sudbury and Framingham) right of way still owned by railroad company CSX.

### Planning an Event on the Trail?

Organizations planning an organized event that utilizes the BFRT need to register it on the BFRT website with 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:

<http://bit.ly/BFRT-Event-Registration>

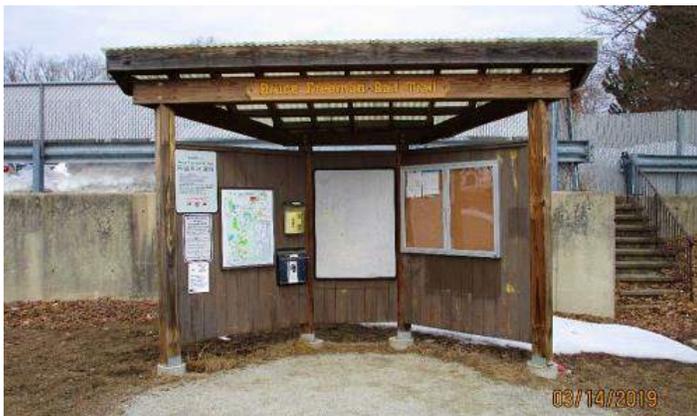
## Construction Large (Condominiums) and Small (Kiosks) in Chelmsford

The Chelmsford Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) continues to work with the Chelmsford DPW and the Chelmsford Police Department to address maintenance and safety issues along the trail in Chelmsford. Thanks to Bob Schneider for his continuing work on clearing larger branches to keep the trail accessible. The BPAC will organize its annual spring trail cleanup to clear winter debris.

Construction of the condominium building at Cushing Place adjacent to the rail trail in Chelmsford Center began last autumn. The 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 the memorial to Carol, an interpretive sign will give the history of the Lowell – Framingham Rail Line, and amenities will be relocated and added. The landscaping work on the entire site likely will begin in late summer when the building is near completion and all utility work is finished.

**Important Note:** Due to the construction at Cushing Place, parking adjacent to the trail will be difficult and extremely limited throughout the summer and into early autumn. Trail users are requested to use the public parking lots behind the Chelmsford Center for the Arts at 1 North Road and behind Santander Bank at 5 Billerica Road. In addition, the trail is not accessible from the lower part of Central Square opposite Fishbones Restaurant. Please do not park near Brickhouse Sports Grill, and do not create a dangerous condition by parking along the construction fencing.

The Chelmsford BPAC is working on installing a second trail kiosk at Pond Street. With funding provided by FBFRT, the kiosk will be built by the Carpentry Shop at Nashoba Valley Technical High School in Westford. The site was cleared last fall, and a determination by the Conservation Commission indicated no impact on adjacent wetlands. The Chelmsford DPW will start site preparation in early spring and assist with the installation. A donation of funds for bicycle racks at the site is being sought. A bench will also be installed as the BPAC continues to receive interest from residents willing to donate benches for installation along the trail.



The BPAC purchased and installed a new display case in the kiosk at Cushing Place. It will be used to post information of a more permanent nature such as event registration procedures, trail safety and other pertinent trail-related information. The installation was completed by Dennis McNurland and Tom Gazda.

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

## 25% Design Nearly Complete in Sudbury

Sudbury continues to make progress on the design of Phase 2D of the BFRT. Last October's Town Meeting overwhelmingly approved a Citizen Petition by Selectman Len Simon to appropriate \$650,000 of free cash to fund the remaining 75% and 100% design. Friends of BFRT Board member Dick Williamson spoke eloquently in support. An attempt by opponents to reduce the design funding to \$100,000 was soundly defeated. 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.

In January and February the Conservation Commission gave the green light to Jacobs Engineering Group, the design contractor, to proceed with field work to obtain geotechnical data needed for the 25% design submission. The borings will be done on the north and south sides of Hop Brook and Pantry Brook. The test pits for the boardwalk section, about 700 feet, will be dug just south of Hudson Road. New England Boring Contractors has been selected for the geotechnical work.



The partially destroyed rail bridge over Pantry Brook will be replaced.



Damaged and collapsed bridge abutments at Pantry Brook will be redesigned.

A survey of Pantry Brook and the adjacent area is needed to collect data to design the replacement Pantry Brook bridge abutments and for the design of the new bridge. A similar survey will be done at Hop Brook, but those abutments are intact and will not need replacement. The flood plain elevations adjacent to both brook crossings will be delineated. This survey work is actively in progress.

The geotechnical data for the boring and test pits, along with the bridge sketches, are the last pieces of information needed to complete the 25% design. They will be submitted to MassDOT by the end May for review and comment, after which the Design Public Hearing will be held in Sudbury.

The day when the Sudbury portion of the BFRT links up with the completed sections in Concord and further north is drawing closer. With 21.3 miles of unsurpassed scenic beauty for exercise and recreation that connects towns and people, who could ask for anything more?

On a separate note, last year Sudbury received a \$100,000 Department of Conservation and Recreation Recreational Trails grant toward acquiring the CSX right of way, Phase 3 of the BFRT. The Town has applied for an additional grant to further that acquisition. A decision is expected in late summer/early fall. Stay tuned.

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



NON PROFIT ORG  
 US POSTAGE  
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 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.

- 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>



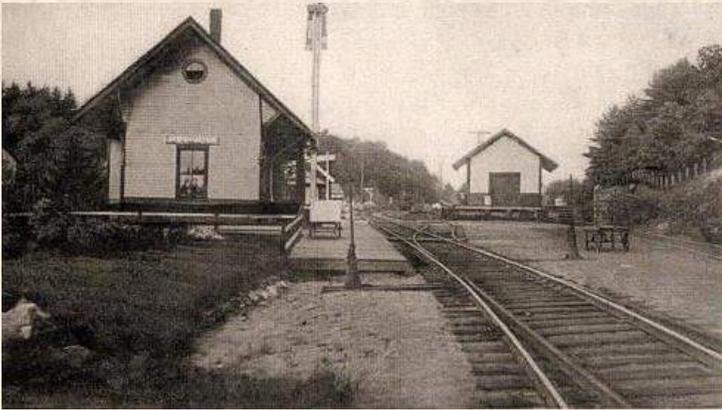
## Historic Sites along the BFRT in Acton - Part I (Courtesy of the Acton Historical Society and Doug Herrick)

With the opening of the Acton section of the BFRT last year, several historical sites and areas have become more accessible. Some of these sites and buildings have visible remains while others are just memories.

Much of this trail section runs north to south along the Nashoba Brook within East Acton. It follows an old Native American trail, sometimes referred to as the original Mohawk Trail, to Western Massachusetts. It was designated as Route 2A when the new Route 2 was constructed in 1950.

Much of East Acton's development was linked to this road, along with the building of the BFRT roadbed, the Framingham and Lowell (F&L) railroad, in 1871 to service the Lowell mills. A few years later the Nashua, Acton and Boston Railroad (NAB) installed parallel tracks along the F&L roadbed, providing service from West Concord to Nashua, NH, and points north. So despite its modest size and population, East Acton had passenger service to Boston and New York, frequent freight service and easy access to markets for its farm produce and light manufacturing.

The F&L and NAB tracks divided at North Acton (around mile marker 10 near NARA Park), one set going to Lowell and the other to Nashua, NH. The NAB was referred to as the Red Line because it never made money. The North Acton station (below left, looking north) was located at the south end of Harris Street formerly known as Depot Street. Route 27 would be less than a quarter mile ahead where the Acton Monument Company is located. Notice the two sets of tracks.



Former North Acton Station



Former Pencil Factory & Mill Dam

This was a busy depot for passengers and especially freight. The nearby quarries shipped granite, and a corral was located nearby for a local cattle importing business. Nothing remains of this depot today, and Harris Street ends at a dirt berm just before the rail trail.

Across and down from the site of the North Acton Station is a small trail on the east side that leads to the restored stone chamber ("the Potato Cave"). This is part of the Nashoba Brook Conservation Area and the historic "Trail Through Time," one of the best documented and most scenic walking trails in Acton.

Heading south along the trail at mile marker 10.5, just south of NARA Park, are the remains of the Ebenezer Monroe (1792-1880) pencil factory and mill dam. The photo (above right) shows the F&L crossing Davis Road looking west. Concord and Acton were the center of the early pencil-making industry in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and this is one of several mill sites still visible along the Nashoba Brook. It had a separate graphite (plumbago) grinding mill, which was used by Henry David Thoreau's father John, who was a pencil maker in Concord.

This mill complex (1825-1898) was once beside Davis Road and crossed over Nashoba Brook and the railroad connecting to Wampus Road. There is a very informative kiosk and bench along the rail trail and people are encouraged to explore the ruins. Click here <http://bit.ly/BFRT-Map-201901> for a map of the trail with mileage markers.

*(To be continued in the next issue of the newsletter.)*

## A mini tour of Phase 2C in West Concord



The trail offers beautiful views of Mother Nature, like this one of Jennie Dugan swamp.



Fences have been constructed to help protect a sensitive wildlife area near Jennie Dugan swamp.



The Phase 2 southern terminus is on the other side of this tunnel where the trail exits up a ramp to Powder Mill Road.

### **Photo Credits**

Acton Historical Society, Tom Gazda, Ed Kross, Dennis McNurland, Barbara Pike, Pedal Power, Judy Perrin, Len Simon

### **Accessible Bike Demo Day**

The Greater Acton Adaptive Bike Coalition is sponsoring an accessible bike demo day at Pedal Power Bike and Ski in Acton on May 5 from 1 to 5 p.m. AccesSportAmerica will have a variety of bikes available for participants to try including handcycles, recumbent trikes and Darby trikes with two front wheels. Staff will adjust the bikes and teach riders how to use them.

Demo day is free and open to people in the community with disabilities or those who are not comfortable riding a two-wheeled bike. The day will kick off a project to make adaptive bikes available for rent by Pedal Power on a regular basis.

For further information or to register contact Leslie Johnson at 978-618-1812, [lesliej961@yahoo.com](mailto:lesliej961@yahoo.com). Drop-ins are also welcome. Refreshments will be served.

AccesSportAmerica inspires higher function and fitness for children and adults living with disabilities through high-challenge sports and training. The national non-profit organization is based in Massachusetts.

Demo Day is funded by a grant from the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail.



Recumbent trikes are a good option for cyclists who are not comfortable riding two-wheeled bikes.

### **Merci Beaucoup!**

**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

### **Please Join Us at a Friends' Event!**

#### **9th Annual Framingham Earth Day Festival**

Saturday, April 27th, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
Framingham Center Common  
or Fuller Middle School in case of rain.  
Contact: Ed Kross, [ekross1976@gmail.com](mailto:ekross1976@gmail.com)

#### **Accessible Bike Demo Day**

Sunday, May 5, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.  
Pedal Power Bike and Ski, 176 Great Road (Rte. 2A), Acton  
See article left for more details.  
Contact: Leslie Johnson to register.  
[lesliej961@yahoo.com](mailto:lesliej961@yahoo.com), 978-618-1812

#### **Summer Solstice Bike Ride**

Friday, 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](mailto:tmichelman@gmail.com)

#### **Carlisle Old Home Day**

Saturday, June 22, 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
Food, entertainment and more right in Carlisle Center.  
Contact: Glenn Reed, [gred@energyfuturesgroup.com](mailto:gred@energyfuturesgroup.com)

#### **Sudbury 4th of July Parade**

Assemble by noon, parade starts at 1 p.m.  
Contact: Dick Williamson, [williamson@alum.mit.edu](mailto:williamson@alum.mit.edu)

See [www.brucefreemanrailtrail.org/calendar-events](http://www.brucefreemanrailtrail.org/calendar-events)  
for up-to-date event information.



### **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:**

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

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