



# FRIENDS OF THE BRUCE FREEMAN RAIL TRAIL

## Extending the Trail North and South in Concord

Work continued on Phase 2B through 2021 including the 400-foot bridge over Rte. 2 linking Concord and Acton. Four steel support beams were set in mid-July, and the concrete decking was poured in early October. The wildlife culvert under Rte. 2 has been installed, and construction of the approaches in Concord through the agricultural fields and in Acton adjacent to the State Police Horse Barn has begun. This section is expected to be open by July 2022.

In order to help assess the impact on trail usage after Phase 2B and the Rte. 2 bridge are open, the BFRT Advisory Committee, with assistance from the Friends, conducted a trail count in mid-May. Counts were conducted at two locations in Acton and three in Concord over four days. The counts involved 28 volunteers over a total of 76 hours. Almost 3,500 users were tallied, fairly evenly split between cyclists and pedestrians. The intersection of the BFRT and Rte. 62 in West Concord recorded the highest usage. Counters also observed that a number of children were using the trail to commute to school. A trail count will also be held again in May 2022 and after Phase 2B is open.

Concord was awarded funding from a MassDOT Community Connections grant to purchase four shelters with bike racks that will be located near the West Concord Commuter Train Station and the BFRT. Concord Public Works crews are expected to complete the installation before the end of the year.

The last half mile of the trail (from Powder Mill Road to the Sudbury town line), which goes past White Pond, will be constructed as part of Phase 2D in Sudbury. The town and the BFRTAC have had extensive discussions with residents about fencing in this area. Since the state has not yet determined whether this expense can be included in construction costs, the town has submitted a request to the Community Preservation Committee for funding to pay for this fencing that had been part of earlier plans.



### Rte. 2 Bridge Construction

- Clockwise from upper left:
- Steel beams being set by crane in mid-July
  - Decking and center stanchion
  - Preparing for the concrete decking
  - Bridge approach from Acton, looking south



*From the Friends President*

## **Phase 2D: Is The Glass Half Full or Half Empty?**

Phase 2D is a 4.6-mile section of the BFRT in Sudbury from the Concord town line south to Station Road in Sudbury. Also included with the Phase 2D construction is the remaining half-mile section of Phase 2C in West Concord from Powder Mill Road south to the Sudbury town line.

The FBFRT has advocated for funding, design, and construction of Phase 2D for years with the most recent big push being a now-closed [online petition](#) which received 513 signatures advocating for inclusion of the project for [FFY 2022 construction funding in the most current TIP](#). If you search for 608164 in the TIP you will find reference to and confirmation of Phase 2D for federal fiscal year (FFY) 2022 funding.

With FFY 2022 funding in place, Sudbury, with its design consultant [Fuss & O'Neill](#) and in coordination with MassDOT, must now get Phase 2D ready for construction advertisement prior to the end of FFY 2022, which is Sept. 30, 2022.

Some of the major milestones accomplished have been submittal and acceptance of the 25% design, MassDOT Design Public Hearing, MassDEP determination that no additional permitting or licensing is required under [Chapter 91](#), and submission of the 75% design to MassDOT by Sudbury.

Major milestones, still in front of Phase 2D, include: acceptance of the 75% design; submittal, and acceptance of the 100% design and the final PS&E (plan, specification and estimate); signing a lease for the ROW (note discussion of this on the [Sudbury Select Board Oct-5-2021 agenda](#) – page 10 of the PDF); submittal, hearing and approval from the Sudbury Conservation Commission; obtaining construction easements from abutters and approving them at Town Meeting in the spring; and submittal and approval of a right-of-way certificate from MassDOT acquired.

Len Simon, former FBFRT board member and former Sudbury Select Board member, has been the primary squeaky wheel, asking the challenging questions when deadlines change and making sure that the current Select Board members, Town Manager, BFRT Advisory Committee members, and the town residents all know that the Phase 2D timelines are very tight with no room for any significant additional schedule slippage. This [MassDOT Interoffice Memo](#) provides more detail on timelines from their perspective.

The FBFRT has worked behind the scenes to move things forward. Whether the combination of the two approaches has or will result in helping Phase 2D make the FFY 2022 deadline is not known.

Regardless, we are cautiously optimistic that Phase 2D will be advertised for construction by September 2022. What does that mean in practice? It is likely that construction bids to MassDOT will be due late in 2022, and the contract will be signed with MassDOT early in 2023. With good luck, construction will begin in the first half of 2023 and will be completed in 2024, though 2025 construction completion is more likely.

If the Phase 2D project is not ready for advertisement by Sept. 30, 2022, then the Town of Sudbury will have to reapply for TIP funding. There is no guarantee that it will be slotted for FFY 2023 as there are many other projects in competition for funds.

Nonetheless, if this were to happen, we will use as leverage the strong support of thousands of BFRT supporters to advocate again as we have successfully in all the communities to the north. Importantly, we know we can count on Sudbury, because in the last decade Sudbury has shown strong support for the BFRT by passing every BFRT-related article at Town Meetings and town elections, including most recently the authorization to purchase the southern section of the BFRT Right of Way. It passed almost unanimously at the last Town Meeting, and received an 80% favorable vote at the last town election.

Tom Michelman.

*(To follow the links from the president's article, see our online newsletter at <https://bit.ly/BFRT-News-Fall-2021>).*

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## **Wind in the Whiskers** by Nyanna Susan Tobin

Have you noticed that the local paper has been featuring travels along The Bay Circuit Trail? As I ride down the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail in Concord, I wonder if anyone else can see the same full view ahead as I roll along on my three-wheel Tadpole, whom I named Lemmon Drop.

Satisfied with my speed and smooth ride, as the regular bikers pass me calling “on your left”, I wonder how they can see the blue heron, stately waiting in the middle of Nashoba Brook. Do they see the silvery dragon fly as she weaves along the trail just in front of us? I look over my right shoulder to see Ziggy Dawg, wind in his whiskers, content to go along on a new adventure. If I was a biker my handle could be Granny Rides. I would have a bike club, no limitations or fees.

If the men did not want to go by Granny, we could call them Wind in the Whiskers. After 60 years of no biking, I am back in the saddle again. I have always been a home body. But I have dreamed to be a travel writer. So here goes....”Granny Rides with Wind in the Whiskers”... reporting from the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, a windy warm September 1st, 2021.



Nyanna hadn't ridden a bike for 60 years when she started taking riding lessons with AccesSportAmerica on the BFRT last year. During her lessons, she rode past an apartment complex adjacent to the trail in West Concord that she recognized would be an ideal location to live. Since moving to West Concord last July, she has ridden several times a week on the BFRT. Her goal is to ride over the Rte. 2 bridge when it opens next year. If you see Nyanna and Ziggy Dawg on the trail, give them a wave of encouragement.

## Volunteer Opportunities and Updates in Acton

Volunteers are needed to help along the BFRT in Acton. The town is looking for volunteers to help water new plantings at the East Acton Village Green. These plants need to be watered regularly this fall and during dry weeks in the spring and summer of 2022. Please email Bettina Abe in the town Natural Resources offices for more information: [Babe@Actonma.gov](mailto:Babe@Actonma.gov).

Also, the Friends are looking for a few volunteers to help maintain the kiosks on the trail in Acton. Please contact [paulmalchodi@gmail.com](mailto:paulmalchodi@gmail.com) for more information.

At the start of 2021, the Friends made a grant of \$20,000 to the Town of Acton to retrofit the crossing signals at the town's five street crossings to be motion-actuated flashing beacons. The beacons, a pair of rectangular yellow lights, flash in an alternating pattern when activated to notify approaching drivers that trail users are approaching the crosswalk. Initially, these lights required trail users to push a button to activate. However many rail trail users were not using these push buttons before crossing. The newly installed automated system will improve safety at road crossings. It was turned on in late spring and will be adjusted and maintained by the Acton Highway Department.

Please be a good neighbor to our rail trail neighbors. The trail in Acton passes very close to a number of private residences. The Friends have received requests from adjacent residents that trail users refrain from shouting back and forth to other members of their group while near these residences.

Trail users are reminded to stay out of the construction site area for the Rte. 2 crossing until this section has been opened for use, expected by July 2022. As tempting as the fresh asphalt may be, the construction site is a hazardous area until it has been opened by MassDOT. Also adjacent plants and shoulder surfaces can be damaged by pedestrians and cyclists before the trail is ready to be opened. Plans for a ribbon-cutting ceremony will be announced later.



Friends Board members presented Bill Davies with a BFRT vest to honor his decade of service as an Acton board member. Bill (seated left) and his wife Joan (seated center) were also joined by family members at the ceremony outside Pedal Power in October. Bill has shared a wealth of information about a Connecticut rail trail he had worked on as well as extensive knowledge of local railroad history.



Fall twilight over Heart Pond, from the BFRT in Chelmsford.

## East Acton Village Green Almost Ready for Prime Time

Acton is transforming a parcel of town-owned land bisected by the BFRT between Concord Road, Great Road (Rte. 2A), and the Ice House Pond section of Nashoba Brook into the East Acton Village Green (EAVG). The EAVG was first contemplated two decades ago to be a symbiotic amenity with the then-planned Phase 2A section of the BFRT. In 2019 the FBFRT Board pledged to donate \$12,000 from the Mary Michelman Memorial fund to the town to support development of the EAVG. Using FBFRT funds, the site was cleared in early March 2020, and then that pandemic thing slowed down progress.

Fast forward to October 2021 and the EAVG construction is almost complete. The walkway has been installed with a picnic table and the pollinator garden and shrubbery have been planted. Bettina Abe, the town's project manager, is working on a kiosk with educational information panels, benches, and plaques for honoring three deceased Acton environmentalists: Mikki Williams, Carol Holley, and Mary Michelman.



The new pollinator garden at East Acton Village Green.

The focus of the educational panels will be the Stream Awareness Project (Acton Stream Team), which details the value of streams and the importance of protecting them from pollutants and of protecting our public drinking water supply.

Volunteers are needed to water the pollinator garden and shrubs next spring and summer to help it get established. Contact Bettina Abe: [Babe@ActonMA.gov](mailto:Babe@ActonMA.gov) for further information. Note the watering method is by scooping water from adjacent Nashoba Brook in buckets or watering cans, as there is no piped water at the site.

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



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Join us for the **Friends Annual Meeting & Elections**

Sunday, Nov. 21, 2021, 2 p.m.

See last page for more details.

### 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.

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



## Westford: Art, Movie Sets, and Meeting a Cycling Goal

The “Go Out Doors” temporary outdoor art exhibit continued to engage and delight BFRT trail users in Westford and Carlisle. This partnership between the Friends of BFRT and the Umbrella Arts Center in Concord to install seven artist-painted/sculpted doors was something new for our two towns. Thank you to the artists: Sophy Tuttle, Karla Eck, BARD, Jen Fuchel, Caroline Provost, and Rebecca Tuck.



Left: Nicole Harris and Ron Richards from the Umbrella Arts Center after installing Jen Fuchel’s door “Next Door Neighbors.” Right: Rebecca Tuck’s door “Oh, the Things You Will Find,” with a bin for a usable journal.

“Oh, the Things You Will Find,” the door by Tuck, was especially noteworthy. She provided a “journal” notebook in a protected bin with colored pencils and crayons under a flap in her door as a way for people to respond to her door and the others in this installation. By early fall there had been more than 50 entries of text and drawings. Fuchel’s new door designed for Westford, “Next Door Neighbors,” includes many local animals. Thank you to the Select Board and Parks & Recreation Department in Westford for their support of this project. Special gratitude and appreciation to Nicole Harris and Ron Richards from the Umbrella who installed the doors.



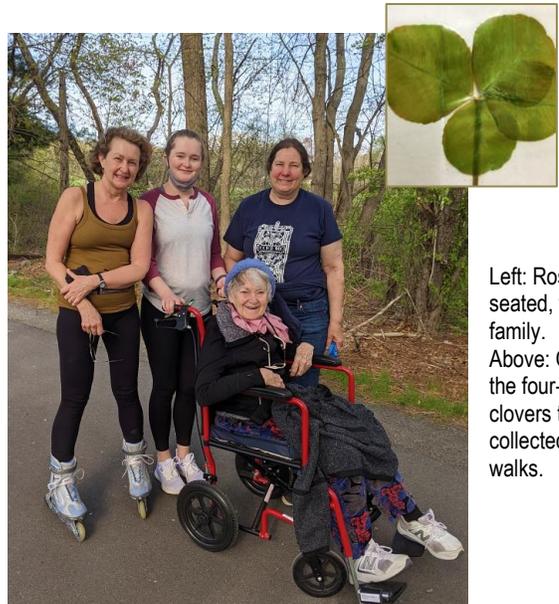
Tom Teller after completing his goal of riding 1300 miles on his “Trigo” this year.

Tom Teller (full disclosure, husband of FBFRT board member, Emily) achieved a “May through September” goal of riding over 1,300 miles, mostly on the BFRT and surrounding streets. The

Tellers live about a mile from the BFRT in Westford. Tom purchased a Hase “Trigo” tricycle because neuropathy prevents him from safely riding a conventional bicycle. At age 73 he is delighted to have discovered this way to enjoy riding again and being outside getting such good exercise. He and a friend also rode a “Half Century” (50 miles in one day) on the Cape Cod Rail Trail in September and plan to return there and ride a “Full Century” (100 miles in one day) next summer.

Warner Brothers filmed part of a movie in Westford adjacent to the BFRT in the fall. One of the film’s producers grew up in Westford and remembered riding his bike around town, so he knew the perfect location for a pivotal scene in this film based on Stephen King’s “Salem’s Lot.” The set was constructed to represent a drive-in movie location and included a ticket booth, concession stand and configuration for 79 “antique” cars. The Conservation Commission ensured that the site work would protect nearby habitat. Also the location manager assured the commission that users of the BFRT would be protected from vehicle traffic where access to the set crossed the BFRT and that Warner Brothers would fund a police officer during filming.

## Rose Ruze frequently visits the BFRT in Concord with her family



Left: Rose Ruze, seated, with her family. Above: One of the four-leaf clovers they have collected on their walks.



A telltale sign of fall along the trail in Acton.

## Trail Repairs in Chelmsford

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

In summer 2020 the Town of Chelmsford was awarded a grant of \$90,000 from the MassTrails Grant Program to repair sections of the trail where root incursions had cracked and heaved the trail surface. Work on the trail resumed in late February and was completed in early May. Sections of the trail near Glen Avenue, damaged when repairs were made to the town's main sewer pump station adjacent to that section of the trail, were repaved separately.



Left: Trail repairs near Chelmsford Center. Right: Enterprise Bank donated \$5,060 to the Friends as part of the bank's "Go Green" initiative. FBFRT Board member Dennis McNurland accepted the funds from Branch Relationship Manager Karen Ano and Assistant Manager Nick Hood.

Although no group events were scheduled this summer, the trail was active with many people using it for recreation. The Chelmsford BPAC conducted a trail count on Saturday, Sept. 11. Total count was 1,577. Bicyclists were the large majority on the trail at 61%, followed by walkers at 21% and runners at 13%. Bicyclists riding without helmets totaled 15%, consistent with recent counts. Thanks to Rob Klinkhammer for coordinating the effort and counting along with Steve Pustell, Mike Carignan, Bob Schneider, Dave Antonelli, Janet Haouchine, and Melinda Goodick.

The BPAC received additional bench donations from Elena Theofilopoulos and Diane Leath. These benches will be installed as soon as the Chelmsford DPW summer work list is cleared. The locations of these benches will be near the 4.0-mile mark north of High Street and south of High Street just past the 4.8-mile mark, respectively.

With the return to in-class learning in the schools, BPAC is working with the Nashoba Tech Carpentry Shop to construct the Pond Street kiosk, which was on hold due to the pandemic. Completion is expected this fall.

Finally, the Chelmsford BPAC and the Town of Chelmsford wish to express their thanks to the Friends for again funding the placement of portable toilets along the trail at Cushing Place and at Pond Street/Heart Pond in 2021. This funding allowed the units to be serviced twice weekly as recommended by the Chelmsford Health Director for the entire April to November season. BPAC appreciates the additional funding to provide this service.

BPAC also thanks the MassDOT for its prompt response in addressing ongoing graffiti issues in the Rte. 3 tunnel and at the I-495 underpass.

### Friends Annual Meeting & Board Member Elections

**Sunday, Nov. 21, 2 p.m.**

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

Please wear a mask when inside the store.

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

Come celebrate the progress of the trail in 2021 and see what to look for in 2022.

Light refreshments will be served.

### **Thanks to...**

Charles River Wheelers for their donation of \$560 as part of their charity donation program. CRW welcomes riders of all ages and abilities to their group rides.

Pedal Power Bike and Ski, 176 Great Road, Acton, for hosting the Friends Annual Meeting and their support throughout the year.

### **Photo Credits**

Tom Gazda, Dennis McNurland, John McQueen, Judy Perrin, Barbara Pike, Rose Ruze, Emily Teller, Tom Teller, Bob Schneider

### **For Further Information:**

Visit us at:

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

### **Call or Email local representatives:**

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