



FRIENDS OF THE BRUCE FREEMAN RAIL TRAIL

Construction of Phase 2D in Sudbury Moves Into High Gear



Phase 2D of the BFRT runs 4.9 miles north from Station Road near Rte. 20 in Sudbury to Powder Mill Road in Concord. Construction of this section of the rail trail started in January 2023, has made excellent progress and is moving ahead of schedule. Since construction began, vegetation has been removed, rails and ties have been taken up and the corridor has been widened to accommodate the 10-foot wide paved travel surface with 2-foot shoulders.

Between April and September the rail bed was leveled and graded, and sub-base was installed in preparation for paving. The first 2.2 miles of asphalt were laid during the last week of September, from Station Road at the diamond, which marks the intersection of the BFRT and the Mass Central rail trail, to Morse Road. An additional mile of paving was laid during the second week of October, from Powder Mill Road, Concord, to Rte. 117 in Sudbury. The remaining 1.7 miles, from Rte. 117 to Morse Road, likely will not be paved in 2023 due to high water conditions. After the initial 2 ½-inch base layer of asphalt is set, the top 1 ½-inch layer of asphalt can be installed.

The old railroad bridge over Hop Brook has been removed. In August steel girders were installed across Hop Brook to support the new decking. The new wood travel surface will enhance the historic character of the bridge. The old Pantry Brook Bridge has been removed, and work is underway to rebuild the south abutment for the new bridge. In addition to the reconstruction of the two bridges, work planned over the next several months will include installation of traffic and crossing signals, parking areas, screening for abutters, safety railings, signage and other amenities. Now completion of Phase 2D of the BFRT is now being measured in months.

The BFRT now under construction, from Powder Mill Road in Concord to Station Road in Sudbury, is an active construction site and unsafe to enter. The public is asked to refrain from accessing this area.



Clockwise from upper left: Removing rails, south of Hudson Road. Paving the trail, by White Pond in Concord. Surveying and trail surface preparation, north of Codger Lane. Hop Brook Bridge replacement, south of Old Lancaster Road. A rail rest-storage south of Hop Brook is being preserved; extra rails were kept here to facilitate quick track repairs. Recovering rails for reuse or salvage, at Ti-Sales north of Hudson Road.

Groundbreaking in Sudbury

On May 20 a groundbreaking ceremony for Phase 2D at Parkinson Field featured remarks from Mass DOT Secretary Gina Fiandaca, state and local officials and FBFRT Board members. This marked the 'official' start of construction. A short connector path will link Parkinson Field with the rail trail. The Parkinson Field site, just off of Hudson Road (Rte. 27) will have parking, bike racks, benches, an information kiosk and other amenities.



Janie Dretler, Chair of the Sudbury Select Board, presented a BFRT spike plaque to Len Simon at the Phase 2D groundbreaking ceremony in Sudbury. It read: "For your dedication to and support of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail. FBFRT Board Member 2012-2013 then Board of Selectmen 2013-2019. You were always "there" and working harder than anyone to get to this day!!"



Officially breaking ground for Phase 2D in Sudbury were Pete Sutton, Mass DOT Bike and Pedestrian Coordinator; Dick Williamson, FBFRT Board; Len Simon, former Sudbury Selectman; Andy Sheehan, Sudbury Town Manager; John McQueen, FBFRT Board; Janie Dretler, Chair of the Sudbury Select Board; Gina Fiandaca, Mass Secretary of Transportation; Chris Menge, FBFRT Board; John Drobinski, Chair of the Sudbury Rail Trails Advisory Committee; Jamie Eldridge, State Senator; Carmine Gentile, State Representative; and Wade Blackman, District Director for U.S. Congresswoman Katherine Clark.

Extending the Trail Through Sudbury and Into Framingham

Phase 3 of the BFRT is located in Sudbury and Framingham. The northern 1.3 miles are in Sudbury and remaining 3.4 miles are in Framingham. Sudbury will use a \$192,000 Mass Trails grant plus its own funds for a total of \$232,000 to pay for the 25% design of this section of the BFRT. Fuss & O'Neill is continuing its work to design/engineer this next phase.

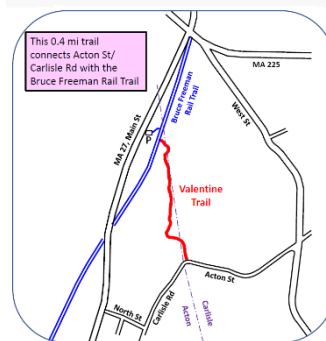
Framingham has signed a Purchase & Sale agreement with CSX Transportation for its 3.4-mile segment of the former rail corridor. The city has been waiting for a letter from the Federal Surface Transportation Board that would allow the transfer of ownership. Despite this delay city officials have started planning the final leg of the BFRT.

When this final section is complete, the BFRT will connect eight municipalities along 25 miles of beautiful rail trail from Lowell to Framingham. Many years of negotiation, planning and building the BFRT are reaching fruition. What seemed like an impossible dream years ago is steadily becoming a reality.

Mass Central Rail Trail Corridor

Eversource is installing 4.6 miles of underground transmission line beneath the former east-west Mass Central railroad corridor from the Sudbury substation to Hudson. When construction is complete in about a year, the Mass. Department of Conservation and Recreation will pave the corridor to make it into a rail trail and create another section of the Mass Central Rail Trail (MCRT). The MCRT will intersect the BFRT at the diamond, ¼ mile north of Rte. 20 business district. The actual diamond track has been preserved and will be reinstalled with a roundabout, marking the intersection of two of the longest rail trails in the Commonwealth.

New Connector Trail in Carlisle & Acton



The new Jack and Betty Valentine trail connects Acton Street in Carlisle near the town line to the BFRT in Acton. The intersection is about 150 feet south of the ramp from the BFRT parking area on Rte. 27.

This 0.4-mile trail utilizes an easement across private property that was permanently protected from development by a

Conservation Restriction from the Valentines. The Conservation Restriction is held by the Carlisle Conservation Foundation (CCF), Carlisle's non-profit land trust. Last October CCF, with help from the Carlisle Trails Committee and other volunteers, built a long boardwalk and bridge to cross wetlands on the trail.

The trail is now part of the Bay Circuit Trail, a long-planned reroute. Note that bikes are not allowed on the Valentine trail.



Enhancements in Chelmsford

The town of Chelmsford and the town DPW continued to work on improvements at Central Square along the BFRT. As part of the wayfinding program, a kiosk was installed in Central Square near the trail entrance toward Brickhouse Sports Grill. The town also has plans to enhance the area near the station master sculpture.

A bench, donated by the Charles River Wheelers in memory of Gardner “Sandy” Gray, president emeritus, was installed on the trail near the 6.8-mile marker. Although it was vandalized with silver spray paint, Chelmsford’s Bob Schneider restored it to near perfect condition.



The fall trail count was cancelled this year due to the threat of severe thunderstorms on subsequent weekends in September. The Bike and Pedestrian Advisory Committee plans to resume the count next September.

Safer Earbuds

Wearing headphones or traditional earbuds on the trail is unsafe, because people using them cannot hear audible warning signals, such as “on your left.” However Acton FBFRT Board Member Jeff Bergart recommends wireless bone conduction headphones which rest on the listener’s cheekbones. Since these don’t seal around or even touch the ear canal, they allow users to hear other pedestrians, passing cyclists and other potential hazards. Music and phone calls are routed to pads in front of the ears via Bluetooth on the phone. Jeff uses a Shokz headset although other brands are also available.

Concord Section Extended North & South

When the Rte. 2 bridge on the north end of the trail in Concord officially opened in the spring, this 0.8-mile section connecting Acton and Concord quickly became very popular with trail users. MassDOT held the ribbon-cutting ceremony on Oct. 31.



And of course there was cake for the ribbon-cutting!

Meanwhile construction began on the southern end, a 0.5-mile section from Powder Mill Road south to the Concord/Sudbury town line as part of Phase 2D. The first layer of asphalt was installed on this section in October, and the project is scheduled to be completed by mid-2024. (See page 1 for a photo of the asphalt installation).

East Acton Village Green Rededicated

The East Acton Village Green (EAVG), located at the corner of Concord and Great roads and adjacent to the BFRT, was officially rededicated at a ceremony on Sept. 9. The park posthumously honors three community members for their contributions to the environment and the town: Mary Michelman, Micki Williams and Carol Holley.



Jim Snyder-Grant, Acton Select Board Chair, welcoming attendees to the newly rededicated East Acton Village Green

A special ceremony was performed by Strong Bear Medicine of the Nashobah Praying Indians and his family. Nashoba Brook was a Native hunting and fishing corridor and was a major link between Musketaquid (Concord) and Nashobah Village (Littleton). His performance was sponsored by the Friends.

EAVG has panels with information about protecting water resources, early mills in Acton, the Framingham and Lowell Railroad and the role of transportation in the development of East Acton. The redevelopment was made possible in part by a grant from the Friends.

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
Sunday, Nov. 19, 2023, 2 p.m. at Pedal Power in Acton
Get updated on construction progress. 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+* |

*Conductor (\$100) and above receive complimentary gift!

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| 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 would like to volunteer. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

If you are donating \$100 or more, please choose a complimentary gift:

- BFRT 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:

brucefreemairailtrail.org



Bike Share in Acton & Concord

The towns of Acton and Concord have partnered to host the Minuteman Bike Share in 2023, with two stations in each town. Locations in Acton are on the trail at Brook Street and Concord Road at East Acton Village Green. In Concord the stations are at the Visitor Center in Concord Center and along the trail near the Nashoba Brook Bridge.



Each station has five bikes with an additional pair of trikes in West Concord. Cycles can be returned to any of the four stations, but the rental does not stop until the bike has been locked successfully. Rentals are \$2 per hour; a credit card is required to register and rent the bike. The bikes will be put away for the season at the end of November. Despite the rainy weather, the program had over 750 rides totaling over 2,500 miles ridden during the season. Bike helmets are not included in the rental. (However Pedal Power Bike and Ski on Great Road in Acton, adjacent to the BFRT, has a supply of less expensive NIPS helmets for sale.) More information can be found at the website: minutemanbikeshare.square.site.

We ❤️ Our Public Works Departments

The dedicated service by all of the towns' public works departments is greatly appreciated and never taken for granted. They have mowed weeds, removed obstructions, installed signs and patched the asphalt - all to enhance trail safety and enjoyment for trail users of all ages and abilities. Individual citizens also donate their time and efforts to keep the trail and shoulders clear.



Westford DPW workers Jacob Rowe and Rick Savory removed a downed tree that was blocking the trail after a late summer storm.



Westford resident Bill Harman has used his superior mapping and design skills to create all four of the yellow FBFRT map bandanas that have commemorated milestones such as ground breakings and ribbon cuttings. Bill and Westford FBFRT board member Emily Teller display two of his designs. Also of note: Bill was the first Westford person to be involved with the BFRT in the 1980s!

Norwegian Foot March on the BFRT

Last April Boston Area Medical Recruiting (BAMR) hosted a Norwegian Foot March (NFM) on the BFRT through Chelmsford, Westford, Carlisle and Acton. Participants were required to walk a total of 18.6 miles (30 kilometers) and carry a pack of canned goods weighing 24 pounds. Of the 94 participants from local colleges and various Army commands, 65 successfully completed the march.



More than 2,500 pounds of their canned goods were donated to the Westford Food Pantry through the efforts of Sgt. First Class Anthony Ezman and Westford Friends Board Member Emily Teller.

The first NFM march was held in 1915 as a test of marching endurance for soldiers in the Norwegian Army. The NFM supports healthy competition and brings awareness of the need for medical providers in the U.S. Army. The NFM is sponsored by the Norwegian Embassy in the U.S. and traditionally is attended by a Norwegian official.

Photo Credits

Keith Bergman, Christine Corr, Tom Gazda, Marian Harman, Chris Menge, Barbara Pike, Len Simon, Emily Teller, Tom Teller

Friends Annual Meeting

Sunday, Nov. 19, 2 p.m.

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

Come celebrate the progress of the BFRT and hear about trail construction in Sudbury.

Parking is available at Patriot Square, across Great Road from Pedal Power. Light refreshments will be served.

Book Donation



In memory of former Acton FBFRT board member Bill Davies, the Friends donated copies of the book "Minuteman Railroad, Boston & Maine's Lexington Branch" by William M Deen to the Acton library, both Concord libraries and Pedal Power Bike and Ski. Pictured here are (from left to right): Acton Memorial Library Assistant Director Kerry Darcy, AML Director Maria Palacio, Bill's wife Joan Davies and Bill's daughter Betsy Davies Mercier.

See something? Say something!

In case of emergency, dial 911

Non-emergency safety issues:

- Chelmsford: 978-250-5228 (weekdays)
978-256-2521 (nights & weekends)
- Westford: 978-692-5520
- Carlisle: 978-369-6156
- Acton: highway@actonma.gov
- Concord: 978-318-3220



A group of cyclists attending the Summer Solstice Bike Ride last June paused while crossing the new bridge over Rte. 2. Participants were treated to pizza and cookies at Pedal Power following the ride.

Uniform BFRT Trail Rules

Welcome to the
Bruce Freeman Rail Trail

- Yield to Pedestrians
- Keep Right, Pass Left
- Give Audible Signal When Passing
- Do Not Block Trail
- Wear Helmets
- Leash Pets, Remove Waste
- No Littering - Carry In, Carry Out
- Respect Property Adjacent to the Trail

In Emergency, Dial 9-1-1

Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail

Updated, uniform trail rules will soon be posted on the completed sections of the trail. Representatives from all of the BFRT towns attending a community summit last year agreed on the new rules. Concord board member Carlene Hempel has guided this project from the initial meeting to delivering the signs.

Thanks to:

To Pedal Power Bike and Ski, 176 Great Road, Acton, for hosting the Summer Solstice Bike Ride and the Friends Annual Meeting.



For Further Information:

Visit us at: brucefreemanrailtrail.org
Facebook.com/BruceFreemanRailTrail
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@gdrconsulting.net |
| Chelmsford: Patrick Lewis | 978-431-2187 | pat@cleanairlawncare.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 |