



FRIENDS OF THE BRUCE FREEMAN RAIL TRAIL

Construction Begins on Phase 2D in Sudbury

The long wait for construction to begin on the BFRT in Sudbury is over! Construction of the 4.4 miles of the BFRT, known as Phase 2D, started on January 23rd and is projected to be completed by the summer of 2024.

The northern end of this section is at the Sudbury / Concord line. From there the trail goes north into Concord, through the tunnel at Powder Mill Road and continues through West Concord Village. The southern end at Station Road is less than a quarter mile north of Rte. 20/Boston Post Road. The entire rail trail will be a 10-foot-wide paved path with 2-foot shoulders. There will be two brook crossings, Pantry Brook and Hop Brook, and will feature several cattle crossings which will go under the paved trail. When this section is finished, users will be able to walk, run, or ride 20 contiguous miles from Sudbury to Lowell on a first-class ADA accessible, paved trail, through seven towns and past some of the most beautiful forests, wetlands, and farms in Massachusetts.

That is not all. Just north of Rte. 20, the BFRT will intersect with another rail trail, the Mass Central Rail Trail, which is also under construction. The intersection is known as the “diamond.” Watching the simultaneous construction of these two major rail trails is seeing a dream come true. Railroad artifacts and history will be preserved on the corridors and nature’s beauty will be revealed everywhere on the trails.

The Town of Sudbury plans to extend the BFRT south from the diamond, where the two trails cross, a quarter mile down to Rte. 20, and then another 1.1 miles to the Framingham line, for a total of 5.7 miles of BFRT in Sudbury.

The BFRT will be an intra-town and inter-town connector for schools, municipal buildings, athletic fields, parks, the commercial district, and houses of worship. Most of all, it will connect friends and neighbors in a safe, natural setting, drawing people out of their homes in all seasons for exercise and recreation. You’ll be able to leave your car in the garage and get out on the rail trail.



Clockwise from upper left: First day of clearing, Jan. 23, looking north from the diamond. Removing rail spikes south of Morse Road. The diamond has been removed and is preserved nearby. Rails removed north of Old Lancaster Road. Rail removal equipment and rail remains north side of Hudson Road. Tree removal work in progress south of Old Lancaster Road.

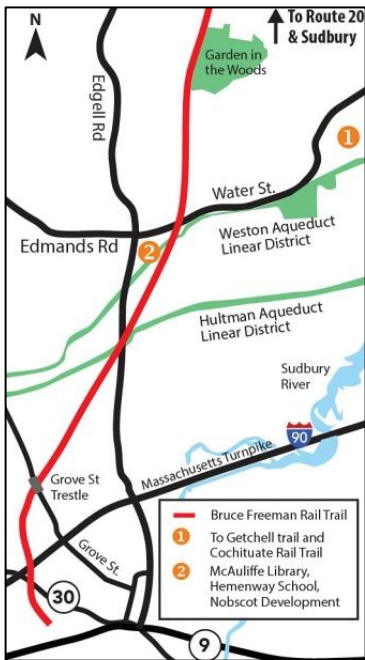
Framingham to Purchase CSX ROW

With much fanfare Framingham's Mayor Charlie Sisitsky signed a \$5M purchase-and-sale agreement with CSX Transportation for the final 3.2-mile segment of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail on Dec. 5 (photo right). For Sisitsky, developing the rail trail was one of his goals as mayor. More than 60 enthusiasts, including several members of the Friends, attended the event.



Conveyance of the former railroad right-of-way likely will be completed in early summer, pending the approval that is required by several city boards and commissions. The city's first step in converting the right-of-way to a rail trail will be to clear the overgrowth so that detailed surveys for the design can begin. The

Friends may be asked to help with this clearing, including removing the litter that has collected over time. Dig out your weed wrenches and pruning shears and stay tuned for calls to action



Route of the BFRT in Framingham.

is an important one. It will be the spine on a network of trails within Framingham, connecting to the Aqueduct trails, which lead to the Carol Getchell trail into Saxonville and then on to the 4-mile Cochituate Rail Trail ending in downtown Natick. If the crossing of Rte. 9 can be conquered, people will be able to connect with the future Chris Walsh Trail around Farm Pond and to the Framingham MBTA

Further connections with the Sudbury Aqueduct and Upper Charles River Trail will also be possible. Kudos to Mayor Sisitsky and all the Framingham officials who, after 20 long years, are finally making this hope a reality.

Concord (starts and stops)

Work on Phase 2B, the bridge over Rte. 2 that connects Concord to Acton, was halted over the winter. The contract for construction has been extended to July 2023 to allow final landscaping and asphalt installation in Acton, plus completion of any "punch-list" items. The bridge is not officially open to trail users until the work is done.

The southern-most half-mile of the trail in Concord (Powder Mill Road south to the town line) is under construction as part of Phase 2D in Sudbury. Work on this section began in January with clearing of vegetation, followed by installation of erosion control barriers and removal of rails and ties. The contractor expects the project to be completed in 2024.



Construction past White Pond in Concord began in January.

The town continues to work on improving the safety for all users in Junction Park with the reminder to "Slow your pace in this special place." Installation of a short-term solution is planned for this spring and summer (after approval of funds at Annual Town Meeting). Planning Division staff are ordering planters this spring, researching pavement paints that are not slippery when wet, and seeking artists to design pavement graphics for areas just outside of the park.

Work Continues on Chelmsford Pocket Park

Last fall the Chelmsford DPW completed the first phase of the pocket park adjacent to the BFRT entrance in Central Square. A concrete pad was constructed with granite curbing and bollards. Also five bicycle racks and a kiosk, which is part of the Center Village wayfinding program, were installed. The Friends have donated a logo sign to be installed when the second phase of the project is completed.

The BPAC has recognized two Chelmsford residents, Karen Spence and Bob Schneider, who have been working to keep the trail free of trash and small branches and limbs. The BPAC also thanks the Mass DOT Highway Division for its prompt response in addressing ongoing graffiti issues in the Rte. 3 tunnel and at the I-495 underpass along the trail.



Karen Spence regularly picks up trash along the trail.



Bob Schneider helps keep the trail clear of fallen limbs and debris.



The dragonfly logo sign, provided by the Friends, will be installed at the new pocket park in Chelmsford center.

Friends' Annual Meeting and 20th Anniversary Celebration

Happy Anniversary



The Friends' annual meeting at Pedal Power on Nov. 20 also celebrated 20 years since the founding of the Friends. Pedal Power Bike and Ski in Acton, which hosted the first official Friends' gathering 20 years ago and the annual meetings since then, hosted the celebration and posted signs to commemorate the anniversary. And, of course, there was cake!

Daphne Freeman's Reminiscences at the Friends 20th Anniversary Celebration

20 years...what an amazing accomplishment!

In 1985 my husband Bruce had his first meeting about the bike path. It was his great wish to see a public bike trail built on the former Penn Central railroad path, similar to the one he had ridden on in San Jose, California, when we were visiting our son and his family out there.

Some of you knew my husband. Bruce was always an advocate for the community. Sadly, as you know, he passed away from cancer in 1986. It was the following year in 1987 that Representative Carol Clevin brought House Bill 1455 to the floor of the House. It was passed unanimously by the House and Senate and signed by the Governor in 1989.

Well...A long waiting game began, BUT, in October of 2002, the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail had its first meeting, right here at Pedal Power. It was then that things really starting moving forward! And the rest is an amazing history!!!

Sincere congratulations to this wonderful grassroots organization, the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, and hooray for this wonderful state we live in where this project has continued to thrive.

So, a huge heartfelt thank you from the Freeman Family, to the members, both past and present, especially to Tom Michelman for his outstanding leadership, Joyce and John of Pedal Power, and the state officials who have stood strongly by this project. I won't mention any more names, as I know I'd miss someone along the way.

Thank you to everyone, for all the hard work, the dedication, and the time you've taken, to make this trail such a success and a vital part of our communities!



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



NON PROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE
PAID
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.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <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!

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:

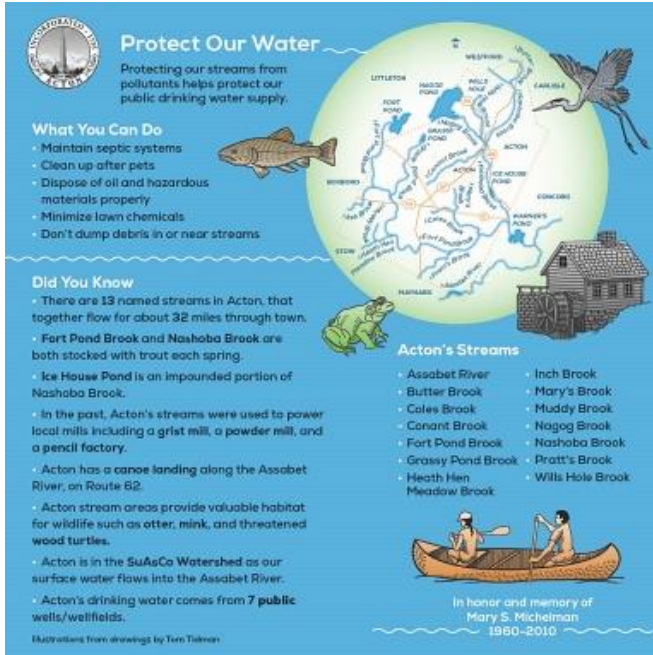
Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail
PO Box 1192
Concord, MA 01742

You may also join online at:

<http://www.brucefreemanrailtrail.org>

Acton Works to Complete Village Green and Improve Road Crossing Safety

Nineteen years after it was included as a key element of Acton's East Action Village Plan, the East Acton Village Green (EAVG) is nearing completion. The 18-month process to convert an overgrown half-acre town-owned lot into a public green linking the BFRT to the east shore of Ice House Pond is in its final stages. The Friends donated money from the Mary Michelman Memorial fund to the town to assist with site improvement and landscaping. This work includes an ADA compliant path and picnic area, as well as a pollinator garden and native shrub border. Signage recently installed in the green includes a history kiosk and a water resources protection kiosk placed in honor of Mary Michelman. A video tour of the EAVG is available at: bit.ly/EAV-Green.



The "Protect Our Water" sign at EAVG was created in honor and memory of Mary Michelman.

Acton is working to repair and improve the five automated BFRT street crossing signals in the town. These flashing lights alert drivers to trail users crossing the street. The Friends donated funds in 2021 to upgrade the signals to operate automatically as trail users approach the crosswalks. The Friends also funded an engineering study of BFRT safety at road crossings.

An ongoing discussion regarding the BFRT in Acton is the subject of "connections." The Friends are actively seeking ideas for safely connecting the existing rail trail to other area amenities and to neighborhoods. Do you have ideas? You can join in the conversation by contacting your town representative listed on the last page of this newsletter.

Tricycle Rentals Available at NARA Park

Acton's tricycle rental fleet has expanded to include two child trikes and five adult trikes. During the summer the bikes can be borrowed at the snack bar window. For the off-season arrangements for renting the trikes can be made by calling the Recreation Department at 978-929-6640. The tricycles are available to interested riders whether or not they need adaptive equipment. Cost for the three-hour rental is free to Acton residents and \$5 to non-residents.

New Map Mural for West Concord



Artist Mike Sprague works on the new mural for West Concord.

A new 24-foot mural showing a map of the full length of the BFRT will be unveiled in West Concord on May 20 as part of the "Spring into West Concord" celebration. It will be attached to the back wall of 40 Beharrell St. facing the trail near the bridge over Nashoba Brook. The design incorporates many visual and verbal descriptions of trail history and landmarks including about 35 8x10 inch paintings along the border depicting plants and animals that live along the trail.

The mural was initiated and carried out by Art for All and sponsored by the West Concord Cultural District Committee with funds from the Mass Cultural Council, Middlesex Bank and several local businesses along with generous funding by the Friends of BFRT. It was designed by Mike Sprague who, with other artists from Art for All, have been creating a series of collaborative public murals in West Concord since 2019.

Margot Kimball, executive director of Art for All in West Concord, is directing the project. "The trail is such a fantastic asset to the cultural district of West Concord; we are thrilled to be making this mural that celebrates its history and benefits. The Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail have been a pleasure to work with: enthusiastic, knowledgeable and helpful."



Artists at Art for All paint tiles for the border of the new mural.

BFRT Community Group

The BFRT Community Group, originally known as the Community Summit, met for the second time on March 23 to finalize a design for uniform rules signs that will be installed along the length of the trail. The meeting was closure for a six-month process to secure uniform rules language and then agree on a design. Most towns will install the signs at major entrance points. The Friends will pay for the signs, and each town's public works department will install them sometime this spring or early summer.

Photo Credits

Dale Freeman, Tom Gazda, Stuart Green, Paul Malchodi, Chris Menge, Betsy Davies Mercier, Judy Perrin, Barbara Pike, Bob Schneider, Len Simon

Join Us at a Friends' Event

Framingham Earth Day

Saturday, April 22 (Rain date: April 29), 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Framingham Centre Common

Carlisle Route to Sustainability Day

Saturday, April 22, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Carlisle town center and school parking lot off Church Street
Friends of BFRT will join other local groups to highlight environmental sustainability issues.

West Concord Mural Unveiling

Saturday, May 20, time TBA
Behind 40 Beharrel St., near the BFRT bridge crossing over Nashoba Brook

Summer Solstice Bike Ride

Tuesday, June 20 (Rain date: June 22), 6 p.m.
Pedal Power Bike and Ski, 176 Great Road (Rte. 2A), Acton
Parking available across Great Road
Come ride or walk on the BFRT.
The Friends will provide pizza for a post-ride party.

Carlisle Old Home Day

Saturday, June 24, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Carlisle school parking lot off Church Street

Go to brucefreemanrailtrail.org/calendar-events for the most up-to-date event information on all events.

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: 978-692-5532

Carlisle: 978-369-6156

Acton: highway@actonma.gov

Concord: 978-318-3220

Trail Safety Tip

Always use a bell, whistle or verbal signal when passing others. An accepted and considerate spoken announcement might be "hi, passing on your left" or other appropriate wording for the situation, spoken in a loud yet kind voice.

Bill Davies: 1933 - 2023



Bill was executive director of the Farmington Canal Rail Trail in Connecticut before moving to Acton. He was a valued Friends board member from Acton for over a decade and shared his considerable knowledge about rail trails. He was also an avid rail fan with extensive knowledge of railroad history.

Thanks to:

To Pedal Power Bike and Ski, 176 Great Road, Acton, for hosting the Friends Annual Meeting yet again, and all their support for over 20 years!



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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