



FRIENDS OF THE BRUCE FREEMAN RAIL TRAIL

Ribbon Cutting in Sudbury Anticipated This Summer

Construction of Phase 2D of the BFRT is nearing completion! This 4.9-mile section, which extends from the “diamond” intersection with the Mass Central Rail Trail (MCRT) near Union Avenue in Sudbury north to Powder Mill Road in Concord is waiting on the installation of interpretive panels and final documentation required to be submitted by the contractor, A.A. Will, to MassDOT and the Sudbury Conservation Commission. Once the work has been accepted by MassDOT, maintenance responsibility for the trail will be turned over to Sudbury and Concord. MassDOT is expected to schedule a ribbon-cutting ceremony for June. For updates go to: brucefreemanrailtrail.org.

The infrastructure for two hydration stations, one at Morse Road and the other at Hudson Road, is installed and ready to be activated. Flashing beacons for safe road crossings are operational at five road crossings, and traditional traffic signals are operational at the intersection of Hudson and Peakham roads with a new HAWK signal (High-Intensity Activated Cross Walk) in place at the crossing on Rte. 117 (North Road) near Davis Field. Additional amenities, including tool stands, kiosks, bike racks, benches and wayfinding signs, have been located along the trail.



Constructing the kiosk at Morse Road.

A new parking, rest and recreation area off Morse Road at Broadacres Farm, about halfway between the diamond intersection and Powder Mill Road, will provide trail users with a convenient place to gather and/or begin their exploration of the BFRT.

The Friends of the BFRT have commissioned a piece of art, an iron sculpture, to pay homage to the corridor for the decades it served as a railway and now as a pathway for recreation and transportation. The sculpture is under construction and will be placed along the Sudbury portion of the BFRT at a site yet to be determined.

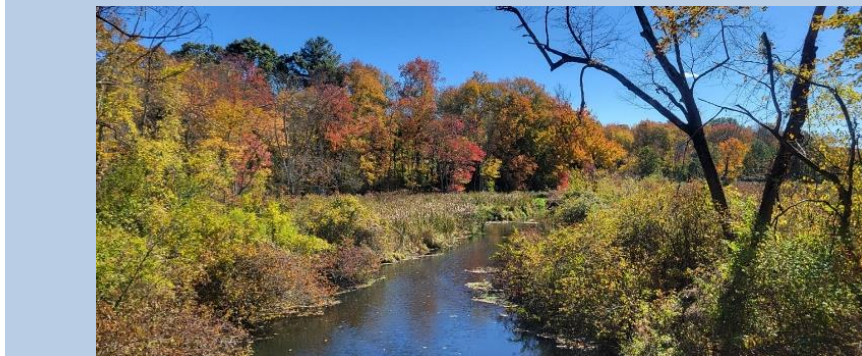


Trail sign for parking and rest area at Morse Road.

BFRT Phase 2D currently ends at the diamond intersection with the MCRT, just west of Union Avenue near a little yellow building that once served as the train station for the Central Massachusetts Railroad, then housed a cookie business and later a limo service. The cross track of the two railroads will be placed at the center of a roundabout where the trails intersect. When this section of the MCRT is complete, BFRT users will have access to more than 7 miles of newly paved trail that runs east-west from Wayland to Hudson, with more to come. More information about the MCRT can be found on page 3 of this newsletter. Connecting these beautiful rail trails is nearing realization.



The trail will provide an ideal vantage point to enjoy the changing seasons in peace and quiet. It will even hold surprises and pleasures for those hearty enough to venture out in winter. (left to right) Spring: Trees turning green on the trail near the turnaround for emergency vehicles (Sudbury). Summer: View from the bridge at Pantry Brook (Sudbury). Fall: Foliage from Hop Brook Bridge (Sudbury). Winter: The trail at White Pond (Concord).



Framingham 25% Design Nears Completion

The Framingham section of the trail has been divided into two parts. Phase 1, which is about 1.4 miles, runs from the Sudbury line south to Frost Street. The remaining 2 miles, Phase 2, will continue from Frost Street to Pleasant Street (near Rte. 9).

Two meetings were scheduled in Framingham during the spring. The first was a neighborhood meeting to update abutters about construction plans and timing. The second was a public information session scheduled by the Friends to discuss development of both phases of the trail. Construction of these 3.4 miles of trail will complete the build-out of the BFRT.

As with the rest of the BFRT, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) will contract out the construction. MassDOT has a long list of transportation construction projects that it schedules under its Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP). Currently Phase 1 in Framingham, along with the final 1.3 miles in Sudbury, is scheduled for the 2029 TIP. However, Framingham Planning and Community Development Director Sarkis Sarkisian, who is charged with coordinating development of the BFRT in Framingham, says he is optimistic that the construction schedule can be accelerated. It is hoped that both the Sudbury section and Phase 1 in Framingham can be constructed concurrently.

Framingham has contracted with the Beta Group to design the trail. The design has been funded by state and federal grants. Several benchmarks need to be met before MassDOT will start construction. The overall conceptual design for the entire trail in Framingham, known as the 10% design, has been completed. The 25% design of Phase 1 is nearing completion. Public hearings will be held at each stage of the design process.

As with any construction project, there are challenges to overcome. Phase 1 crosses Landham Brook several times. The culverts there are inadequate, and improvements will be part of trail construction. There is a road crossing at Water Street. And, as with most rail beds that cross through wetlands, environmental concerns must be accommodated.



The Grove Street Bridge on Phase 2 of the trail in Framingham.

Phase 2 has the added complication of two bridges. The Grove Street bridge will be replaced, and the bridge over the Mass Pike may need to be raised to meet current clearance standards. These are some of the reasons MassDOT decided to break the construction of the trail in Framingham into two phases. Framingham has already requested that Phase 2 be considered by the MassDOT project review committee.

Nearly two decades after the ground breaking in Chelmsford, the Friends' vision of completing BFRT is on the horizon.

Isaac Davis Trail Creates New Trail Connection in Acton

Regular users of the BFRT in Acton have noticed a change along the trail approximately 100 yards south of the Brook Street crossing. A break in the guardrail there, previously noted only with small no trespassing signs, now has a large sign announcing: "Acton Line of March, April 19, 1775, Acton Minutemen." This change, 250 years in the making, signifies a new addition to the BFRT's cross trail connections.



The new sign marks the entry to a 57-acre parcel of land along the west side of the trail, which is now owned by the Acton Water District. The area, scheduled to open this summer, will be available for passive recreation including hiking and cross-country skiing. No dogs, horses, fishing, hunting, camping, e-bikes or other motorized vehicles will be allowed.

The principal trail, the "Isaac Davis Trail," is along a Colonial path from Acton center to Concord. In the dawn hours of April 19, 1775, Capt. Isaac Davis and 30 Acton Minutemen

responded to Dr. Samuel Prescott's alarm and marched along this path to Concord's North Bridge. When smoke made it appear that Concord center was burning, Col. James Barrett assigned Capt. Davis's Acton company, because they equipped their rifles with bayonets, to assault the British regular troops holding the bridge. Capt. Davis and Private Abner Hosmer of Acton were killed by British fire as they advanced on the bridge, making them the first soldiers killed in a deliberate assault on British troops.

Daniel Chester French modeled the North Bridge Minuteman statue after Capt. Davis's descendants' facial features and modeled the statue's plow after Davis's own plow. The path of the "Line of March" was known and handed down through several generations of Acton residents. Each year on Patriot's Day, Acton and Boxborough Minutemen, accompanied by locals and scout troops from around the region, march to the North Bridge along this trail, which crosses the BFRT.

Join Us in Carlisle in April and June

The Friends will again participate in two outdoor events in bucolic Carlisle this spring and summer.

On Sunday, April 27, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. in Carlisle center, the Friends will participate in the Route to Sustainability Day (RTSD). This Earth Day event will be full of environmental information, activities, games, crafts, tasty treats and fun for all ages. This year, RTSD will be graced by the presence of Nibi, the nationally famous rescue/education beaver "pardoned" by the governor. Other live wildlife will be present as well. Also Pedal Power Bike & Ski will provide complimentary helmet and bike checks.

As part of Carlisle's beloved Old Home Day weekend, June 20 to 22, the Friends will have a table at the Country Fair on Saturday, June 21. To keep abreast of the weekend's details as they emerge, including Carlisle's 3rd Annual Music Festival, go to the [Carlisle Old Home Day](#) website.

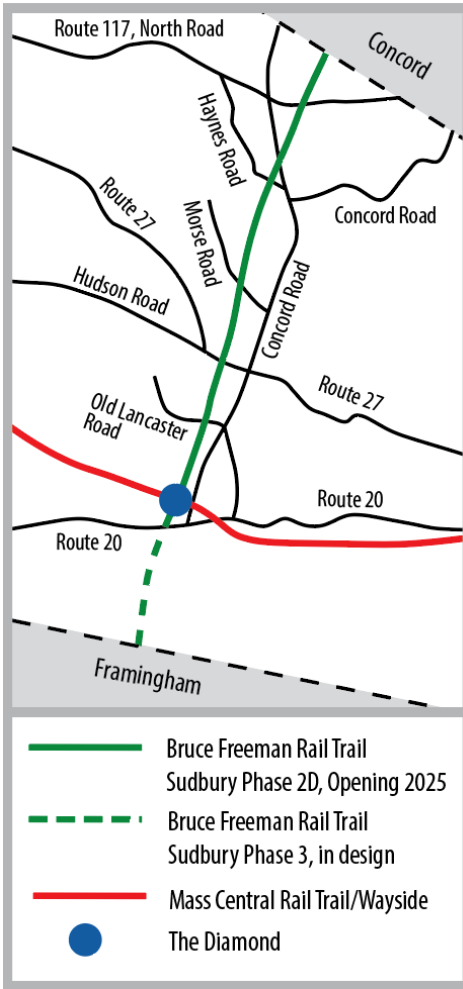
BFRT Connects to the Mass Central Rail Trail

The current southern terminus of the BFRT is located in Sudbury just north of Rte. 20 at the trail's intersection with the east-west Mass Central Rail Trail (MCRT-Wayside). The diamond formed by the rails where these two railroads crossed has been preserved and will be installed in the center of a roundabout when this section of the MCRT is paved.

Development of this 7-mile section of the MCRT began with an Eversource project to bury a high-voltage power line from Sudbury to Hudson (see bit.ly/Sudbury-Eversource). It starts at the Eversource substation in Sudbury, continues 1.5 miles west to the diamond intersection with the BFRT, and continues another 5.5 miles west to the intersection with the Assabet River Rail Trail in Hudson, where a 2-mile section of the ARRT connects to downtown Hudson. The Eversource project was completed in 2024, and the Mass. Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) is expected to complete paving this segment of the MCRT by early summer.

When completed, the MCRT will be the longest rail trail in New England, extending 104 miles from Northampton to Boston. The trail generally follows the route of the defunct Central Mass Railroad that operated across the state from 1887 until it was partially destroyed by a hurricane in 1938. Trail development started in 1980 when the state purchased the westernmost 8 miles of track, gradually building the Norwottuck Trail from Northampton to Belchertown.

In 1995 Wachusett Greenways started to build out the middle section between Barre and Clinton with a stone-dust surface. The East Quabbin Land Trust, Clinton Greenways Conservation Trust and the Belchertown Land Trust acquired some sections that weren't publicly owned and constructed trail in several locations. Most of the eastern 31 miles, from Berlin to Boston (MCRT-Wayside), are owned by the MBTA. Twenty-three miles are leased to DCR, which has collaborated with cities and towns to complete the trail on much of this section. Currently, over 96 miles of the corridor are protected with over 63 miles of completed trail (see: bit.ly/MassTrailTracker). More history is available here: bit.ly/MCRT-site.



The BFRT and MCRT in Sudbury



A growing effort to complete the MCRT has attracted strong support at the local, regional and state levels because a trail across the state has the potential to bring economic development and improved quality of life for those who live in the 26 towns along the corridor. Long-distance trails like this also create substantial new tourism opportunities, providing for safe, long-distance travel by bicycling or walking. The Norwottuck Network recently published a study, “Envisioning a Statewide Connection – Mass Central Rail Trail Benefits Study,” that looked at this potential impact (see bit.ly/MCRT-Report). A map and Google street views are available here: bit.ly/Finish-MCRT.



The MCRT before paving, near Hop Brook Mill Village.



Flowers in the wetlands along the MCRT.

The MCRT has many spectacular features along its entire length, including an iconic bridge crossing over the Connecticut River, pastoral scenes and small towns in central Mass, crossings over the rural Ware River, forests and streams in the Wachusett watershed area, the picturesque Clinton reservoir and dam, and striking urban views near the eastern end in Somerville. The Sudbury/Hudson section features many restaurants and food stores within a half mile of the ‘diamond’, large wetlands east and west of the ‘diamond’, trail connections to Sudbury Memorial Forest, the Assabet National Wildlife Refuge, and Marlborough Town Forest. The MCRT, with connections to other trails such as the BFRT and the Assabet River Rail Trail, offers many miles of pleasurable off-road walking and cycling.

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



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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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Contact Name

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Address 2 (Apartment, suite, unit, building, floor)

City State Zip

Daytime Phone Evening Phone

Email address

- | | YES | NO |
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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:

brucefreemanrailtrail.org

Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail,

As you all know, the BFRT is a great multi-use trail, and there will be even more of a good thing in the coming years when the trail is extended through Sudbury & Framingham. As much as we love the BFRT, it is good to remember that the BFRT is part of a network of existing and proposed trails, both walking paths and multi-use trails.

You can get the picture of the built and planned network of multi-use trails via the MassDOT [Massachusetts Priority Trails Network](#) interactive map (see screenshot of trails nearby to the BFRT).

From north to south, see plans (short-term to speculative) to connect other trails to the BFRT (or BFRT connecting community):

- Lowell: [Concord River Greenway](#)
Chelmsford: [Middlesex Canal](#)
[Yankee Doodle Bikeway](#)
[Narrow Gauge Trail](#)
[Minuteman Bikeway](#) (eventually)
- Acton: [Nashua & Acton Trail](#)
[Assabet River Rail Trail](#)
- Concord: [Reformatory Branch Rail Trail](#)
- Sudbury: [Mass Central Rail Trail](#)
- Framingham: [Weston Aqueduct Trail](#)
[Cochituate Rail Trail](#)
[Boston-Worcester Air Line Trail](#)

If you want to keep track of the development of other Massachusetts shared-use trails, I rely on two additional sources beyond MassDOT's Massachusetts Priority Trails Network map:

1. [StreetBlog Mass](#) covers much more than rail trails, but they have some great rail trail stories, including recently [New Trails We Can Look Forward To In 2025](#).
2. Sign-up for the [Mass Central Rail Trail](#) monthly newsletter and find archived newsletters on their website.

So, get out there and use and support the BFRT, but don't forget to use and support the network of connecting trails that makes the BFRT even better.

Sincerely,

Tom Michelman

President - [Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail](#)

Please Pull Garlic Mustard Along the Trail

Garlic mustard is one of the most invasive weeds that grows along the BFRT. It eliminates native plants, which wildlife depend on, and it can stunt the growth of native trees. It has no predators; no animals will eat it. Even worse, garlic mustard roots produce a chemical that prevent other plants from growing in that soil. One plant can produce up to 6,000 seeds that can remain viable in the soil up to 10 years. Therefore it is important to pull it before it goes to seed.

Garlic mustard can be eliminated by pulling it from late April through May. It is a cool season biennial herb with round/triangular scallop-edged leaves that give off a garlic odor when crushed. Pull it out of the ground at the base with a gentle tug, removing all of the roots and most of the soil.



To identify garlic mustard, look for a plant with round/triangular leaves that have scalloped edges. When crushed, the leaves emit a strong garlic smell. In its first year, it forms a low-growing rosette of leaves, while in the second year, it sends up a stem with triangular leaves and small white flowers, producing long, slender seed pods with tiny black seeds when mature.

The plants can be disposed of in several ways. They can be placed in black trash bags and allowed to sit in the sun until they completely dry out. They can also be left in the "crotch" of a tree to die or on a hard surface (asphalt) to kill the roots. It is important to pull all garlic mustard plants in an area every year until the seed bank is exhausted and seedlings no longer appear.

In spring 2024, the Friends sponsored an information meeting about identifying and removing garlic mustard. However, permanent removal will require multiple efforts each year as rosettes can continue to bolt and produce flowers. Energetic BFRT trail users can help with this effort.



A four-town bike share program is expected to be opened in Acton, Concord, Lincoln and Maynard in April. For further information see visitconcord.org/visit/concord-bike-share.

Tricycle Rentals Available at NARA Park

The Acton Recreation Department is again offering ADA-accessible tricycles for rent, providing an inclusive and fun way to enjoy the outdoors. These specially designed tricycles cater to individuals with mobility challenges, ensuring that more people can experience the joy of cycling in a safe, comfortable and supportive way.

Rentals are available at NARA Park during regular beach hours or by emailing the recreation department in the spring before the beach opens for the summer. Cost for the two-hour rental is free to Acton residents and \$5 to non-residents. Whether for a leisurely ride, exploring the trails or just enjoying the fresh air, these ADA tricycles are great for people with differing abilities. To reserve a tricycle or for more information, please email recreation@actonma.gov or visit actonrec.com. Let's ride together!

Join Us at a Friends' Event

Framingham Earth Day Festival

Saturday, April 26 (Rain date: May 3), 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Framingham Centre Common
Contact Ed Kross: ekross1976@gmail.com

Carlisle Route to Sustainability Day

Sunday, April 27, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.
Carlisle Center
Meet Nibi, the nationally famous rescue beaver
Contact Glenn Reed: greed@gdrconsulting.net

Carlisle Old Home Day

Saturday, June 21, 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Country Fair, Carlisle Center
Contact Glenn Reed: greed@gdrconsulting.net

See article for more details about the Carlisle events.

Summer Solstice Bike Ride

Friday, June 20, 6 p.m. (Rain date, June 21)
Pedal Power Bike & Ski, 176 Great Road (Rte. 2A), Acton
Parking available across Great Road
Come walk or ride on the BFRT
Join the Friends for post-ride/walk pizza
Contact Barbara Pike: bbpike@AOL.com

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



Seasonal restrooms will be open along the trail at Gerow Park near Commonwealth Avenue in West Concord.

Connector Trail Opens in Lowell

The Connector Trail, built by the City of Lowell, is completed and open for use. This 0.35-mile corridor, often used as a connection between Chelmsford and Lowell, begins across Industrial Avenue from Cross Point Towers and extends to the Target shopping center parking lot. The northern end of the trail, which abuts the Target parking lot, is not paved and will remain a gravel/dirt access point. New pedestrian crossing signs along Industrial Avenue mark the road crossing for trail users to access the Cross Point parking lot.



The Friends presented board member Joyce Reischutz with a BFRT vest at the annual meeting. Joyce, her husband John and Pedal Power Bike & Ski in Acton have been enthusiastic supporters of the trail for almost 25 years.

Thanks to:

Joyce (photo above)
& the gang at
Pedal Power Bike & Ski,
176 Great Road, Acton,
for hosting the Summer
Solstice Bike Ride and the
Friends Annual Meeting.



Photo Credits

Keith Bergman, Ralph Hebb, Chris Menge, Judy Perrin, Glenn Pransky, Len Simon

For Further Information:

Visit us at: brucefreemanrailtrail.org
[Facebook.com/BruceFreemanRailTrail](https://www.facebook.com/BruceFreemanRailTrail)
[Twitter.com/FriendsofBFRT](https://twitter.com/FriendsofBFRT)

To register an event on the trail:

brucefreemanrailtrail.org/bruce-freeman-rail-trail-event-registration

Call or email local representatives:

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