



FRIENDS OF THE BRUCE FREEMAN RAIL TRAIL

To Show Your Support...

Sudbury: Attend Town Meeting and vote for CPA funding. (starts April 4th)

Acton: Attend Town Meeting (starts April 9th) and vote for CPA funding.

Concord: Attend public meetings for 25% design (Watch for schedule in Concord Journal)

Read the following President's Letter for more ideas!

Letter from the President

Many times I am asked, "How can I help get the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail built?" or, "What can I do to help the Friends?" In an effort to answer these questions and to capture members' energy and desire, the Board of Directors selected the most important goals and tasks for 2007 at our December planning meeting. They are:

- ❖ Creating and implementing a strategy for acquisition of the right-of-way (ROW) for Phase 3 of the trail (4.5 miles, ~ Rte. 20 in Sudbury to ~ Rte. 9 in Framingham) from CSX Corporation
- ❖ Strategizing and implementing of a Web-Based Membership Database. That is, migrating and upgrading member and supporter database to a web based application that has the ability to take payments electronically
- ❖ Single day events. Help out with shorter tasks (e.g., 1 or 2 hours). For example, trail clearings, staffing a table at outreach events, event preparation, making phone calls to drum up support of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (BFRT) at Town Meetings, etc.
- ❖ Fund-Raising for short and long-term goals
- ❖ Non-profit accounting system advice
- ❖ Non-profit tax compliance advice

We already have had over twenty members volunteer their own or their firm's services. Nonetheless, we still need additional help/expertise/resources to accomplish our 2007 goals. Would you consider volunteering to work on one of these tasks (or point us to someone who could help)? Assisting with one of the newly constituted working groups is a concrete way to help out the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (FBFRT) and to help make our dream of a 25-mile rail trail from Lowell to Framingham a reality.

Please contact me if you would like to assist in any of these areas (or if you have other ideas). Of course, if you can't

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volunteer for one of the above, donating money is a pretty good "plan B" Remember, the FBFRT is a charitable organization with 501(c)(3) status; donations are tax-deductible as allowed per law. And if you are not currently a member and have actually read the newsletter this closely you should probably become a paid member or re-up as a paid member (http://www.brucefreemanrailtrail.org/help_bfirt/join.html).

Regardless of whether you give your time or money, please chat about the BFRT and the FBFRT with your family, friends and colleagues. An informed public is our best advocate.

Best regards,

Tom Michelman

President – Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail
tmichelman@comcast.net, 978-580-6190

Phase 1 Roller Coaster Ride Continues

by Cynthia McLain and Emily Teller

For such a level piece of earth, the Phase 1 section of the BFRT has provided a pretty wild ride these past 22 years! In our last newsletter we reported that advertising for construction bids was set for December 2, 2006. Construction was expected to start in Spring 2007. But, when the time finally came to advertise, there was no money for new transportation projects. The Friends have been actively working with MassHighway and our state legislators to get this project moving forward again. At present, advertising for construction bids is set for April 7, 2007. Given that date, construction could start in Fall 2007 at the earliest.

A copy of a letter from MassHighway Commissioner Luisa Paiewonsky to the President of the FBFRT about Phase 1 is included in this newsletter. The letter assures us of MassHighway's commitment to building Phase 1. It also assures us that advertising for construction bids will happen soon. The letter clearly states that Phase 1 construction depends on the Massachusetts State Legislature passing a transportation bond bill. New transportation bonds are needed to fund MassHighway projects, including the BFRT.

If you want to help, please write to your state legislators to tell them you support the Bruce N Freeman Memorial Bike Path in Lowell, Chelmsford, and Westford. In addition, if you are not a member of the Friends, please join. Larger membership numbers give us a stronger and more persuasive voice.

Concord River Greenway

by Betsy Goodrich

Jane Calvin, Executive Director of the Lowell Parks and Conservation Trust (LP&CT), presented the current design and art plan for the Concord River Greenway at the February meeting of the FBFRT. This 1.75-mile section of trail will eventually connect downtown Lowell to the BFRT at Cross Point Towers. Final design of the trail will begin this year.

At the June-16 Riverfest, join Zoar Outdoor and the LP&CT for a mini family flatwater tour of the Concord River where you will learn more about the Trust's work on the river, including the design of the trail. For more information go to www.lowelllandtrust.org.

Happenings in Chelmsford

by Cynthia McLain

On a cold Saturday in January, Phil Stanway of the Chelmsford Open Space Land Stewards met with a group of Chelmsford BFRT supporters, including members of the Chelmsford Land Conservation Trust and the Middlesex Canal Association. We toured several conservation areas along the old railroad ROW in Chelmsford. During the tour, we discussed some of the new trails the Land Stewards are putting in as well as how those trails might access the BFRT. We will be looking into how to build more trails between conservation lands and the BFRT over the coming months.

The Friends are planning to have a booth at the Chelmsford July 4th Country Fair. Last year's booth, shared with the Middlesex Canal Association, was wildly successful. To those who dropped by last year's booth: Thank-you! We hope that everyone will stop by this year and say hello. Although wildly successful, last year's booth was woefully understaffed. If you can spare 1 or 2 hours during the evening of July 3rd or morning of July 4th, we could really use some help. I'll try to avoid getting the spot downstream from the dunk tank again this year! For information or to volunteer, please contact Cynthia McLain at cynthia.mclain@comcast.net or 781-981-3943

2nd Westford Board Member Elected. Westford to host April Friends' meeting!

by Emily Teller

Welcome to Chris Barrett who was elected to the board of directors of the Friends shortly after volunteering to help with our proposed web-based membership project! Chris lives close to the BFRT, and we are very appreciative of his enthusiasm and energy, as well as his high-tech skills and experience in cyberspace. All have already been of significant help!

Greenman Pederson Inc (GPI) hosted a tri-town Phase 2 kick-off meeting on February 13 in Acton to present the schedule for their 25% design work. Christer Ericsson, Branch Manager of GPI's Stoneham office presided, and staff from Westford, Carlisle and Acton participated, as did board members from all three towns. In Westford, the intersection crossing at Routes 225 and 27 will be the most complex aspect. There will be a public meeting at the 10% design phase. You

may see GPI design technicians on the ROW soon, if they haven't been mapping already! Please consider joining the Friends as a member, if you haven't already.

Christer Ericsson will be the speaker at the Cameron Senior Center on April 3 - giving us more detailed information about the 3-town 25% design for Phase 2. See you there at 7:30 pm!! Any BFRT questions, please email me: eteller@earthlink.net.

Rail Trail Activities in Carlisle

by Alan Cameron

Carlisle continues to be very enthusiastic about the coming of the Rail Trail. We recently attended the kickoff meeting for the design of our 800-foot section of trail, to ensure that our concerns have been properly addressed in the design. Everyone in town shows enthusiasm about the trail, even the abutters. There is concern that construction of the first (non-Carlisle) phase has not yet begun after all these years, to which we respond that it is imminent.

We plan to keep publicizing the project at town events. Stop by our booth at Carlisle's Old Home Day in July and get a BFRT balloon! We expect that as soon as any part of the trail is built, Carlisleans will heavily use it. For more information contact Alan Cameron at 978-369-2223.

Acton Update

by Tom Michelman

Plans for the rail trail are moving in Acton! Since our fall newsletter Acton has had two trail clearings. On December 2 over 50 volunteers cleared 1 mile of the ROW from Route 27 south (across from NARA Park) to Route 2A. This area abuts the Nashoba Brook Conservation Area; it is the most secluded and one of the most beautiful sections in Acton. The ROW passes very close to the old Pencil Factory (See <http://town.acton.ma.us/LSCOM/EAPencils.htm>. The photo is taken from approximately the ROW). The clearing was a huge success even though it impinged on the holiday season and the weather was brisk. At the request of the Town we followed with a December 30th clearing. We picked up trash, removed some sparser brush from Wetherbee Street to Concord Road, and then again from Spring Street to Route 2A.



The trail clearings were all done to help facilitate a survey for the 25% design. Lo and behold, surveying began on January 22. In a brief chat with surveyors they did appreciate the wide open swath the Friends provided. The 25% design proceeds ahead. We expect a public meeting will be held at the 10% design phase sometime this spring or summer.

The Town of Acton submitted (another) CPA application for \$202,000 (see <http://www.brucefreemanrailtrail.org/about/phase-two-acton-west-car.html>). This time the funding will be for such items as ROW acquisition (the legal expense, the purchase price is expected to be \$1), environmental liability insurance, trail spurs design, application for Federal funding for 100% design, enhancement funding for 100% design (the 10% local match), and contingency. It looks like the BFRT will receive a recommendation for full funding. Whatever is recommended will be on the Warrant for Town Meeting in April.

On January 22nd, the Town accepted a \$1,000 donation from the FBFRT to help with sundry items (e.g., coordination with Carlisle and Westford on the 25% design, legal fees when responding to concerned citizen inquiries, etc.). The Board of Selectmen and Town staff have been very supportive of the project and were very appreciative of the donation. For more information visit our website at www.brucefreemanrailtrail.org or contact Tom Michelman at tmichelman@comcast.net or 987-580-6190.

Please Join or Renew!

Your membership in the Friends is critical to the trail's success. Unless your address label has "07" next to your name, please join the Friends or renew your membership for 2007. Please return the membership form found on page 6 along with your check. Thanks for your continued support!

Consultant Selected In Concord

by Barbara Pike

Preliminary design work on the Concord section of the Trail approved at the April 2006 Town Meeting has recently begun. Vanasse Hangen Brustlin Inc (VHB), a consulting firm based in Watertown, was recently selected by the town to start work on the project. In addition to preparing a preliminary 25% design, VHB will assess and document environmental issues, recommend "people management techniques," research and inventory historic resources, identify trail surface alternatives, analyze alternatives to passing near White Pond, and coordinate public outreach programs. VHB has two decades of experience planning and designing bicycle and pedestrian projects in Massachusetts and throughout New England.

As background, the Town Selection Committee reviewed proposals for the rail trail from seven firms and selected four for in-depth interviews. The Committee considered VHB to be the most responsive to the needs of the community, focusing on information sharing, community outreach and environmental sensitivity. VHB recently met with the Town BFRT Advisory Committee to outline its community outreach program. Public information meetings will focus on topics such as design criteria, surface treatments, environmental issues, and landscaping. Watch for notices of upcoming BFRT Public Hearings in The Concord Journal. **The Friends need your support and input at these meetings. Please plan to attend at least one of them.**

The Concord Friends, representing over 900 local families, continues to focus on increasing its strong base of support for the rail trail. Opportunities for volunteer participation include the Earth Day parade in April, Picnic in the Park on July 4, the

West Concord Family Festival in September and a proposed Concord trail clearing project. For CCHS students, volunteer work for the rail trail provides community service credits. Please call Barbara Pike at 978-369-0437 or e-mail BruceFreemanRT@AOL.com if you would like to help.

The Friends also strongly support rehabilitation of the West Concord Depot and the related CPA funding request that will come before Town Meeting in April 2007. The renovated depot will be a stunning enhancement to the BFRT and the West Concord business area.

Renovating the West Concord Depot

by Barbara Pike

Built in 1894, Union Station in Concord Junction was located at the intersection of three active rail lines, including one that will be converted to the BFRT. At that time 125 trains per day passed through West Concord.



Although the building was placed on the national Register of Historic Places in the late 1980's, it is currently showing the effects of both deterioration and ill-advised "modernizations." In order to return the Depot to its place as a focal point of the thriving West Concord business area, a group of West Concord residents applied for Community Preservation Act funding to renovate the exterior of the building.

Concord's Community Preservation Committee has recommended the entire \$220,000 that was requested, and final approval will be sought at Concord's Town Meeting this spring. Concord's \$220,000 will be matched by the MBTA, the owners of the building. The renovation will have three major components: repair the slate roof, remove the faux brick exposing the original wood clapboards, and repair and repaint soffits, trim and support posts.

This project has been enthusiastically supported by both the Board of Selectmen and local residents and businesses. A Preservation Architect is already at work investigating the condition of the building and making recommendations for restoration work that will be true to standards established by the Secretary of the Interior.

To ensure that this restoration will be protected and that the building will be properly maintained, the MBTA will retain the building in the condition to which it will be restored and will continue to operate the Depot as an active train passenger waiting room. For more information on the effort to restore the depot contact: dorriekhoe@comcast.net.



Sudbury to Vote on CPA Funding

by Bob Hall & Dick Williamson

The Town's Rail Trail Conversion Advisory Committee (RTCAC) recommended that the Board of Selectmen (BOS) request Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds for three additional studies. The Committee feels that the information to be provided by these studies will be necessary before the Committee can make advised recommendations, on whether to proceed with development of the trail in Sudbury. The BOS approved the recommendations, and in December, the Town Manager presented the three proposed studies to the Community Preservation Committee with the proviso that the first study, a full title review of the ROW, be satisfactorily completed before the other projects are begun. The other projects are a study of the wildlife and rare species habitat along the ROW and a base map of existing conditions, including wetlands delineation. All but the wildlife study are required as part of the 25% design. The requests for the CPA funds will appear in Articles 22-24 in the warrant for the April town meeting.

In an attempt to kill consideration of a rail trail, opponents have submitted by petition Article 35 that asks the Town to postpone any action on a rail trail. **It is very important that Sudbury Friends and supporters of the trail attend town meeting and vote "YES" for articles 22-24 and be sure to stay to vote "NO" on article 35.** Town Meeting starts on April 4th and reconvenes on April 9th and continues on successive evenings until the warrant is completed. Rail-trail-related articles are likely to come up on Tue. 4/10 and/or Wed., 4/11.

The requests for CPA funds for the additional studies followed the completion of the Environmental and Engineering Assessment of the Sudbury section of the trail by Fay Spofford and Thorndike in December. The assessment concluded that development of the trail is indeed feasible, and its "report will begin to assist residents and officials to consider what is the best option for the community." The assessment acknowledges the need for additional studies to resolve some of the issues delineated by the assessment in order to further a "contextually appropriate design that complements the varying commercial, residential, historic and natural areas along the rail corridor." The studies noted above are a first step in that direction.

FBFRT will have a booth at the summer concerts at Haskell Field and at Sudbury Day in September. Help in staffing these booths, handing out BFBRT balloons and talking with folks in Town about the rail trail would be most welcome. If you can walk or ride a bicycle for four miles, please join the group of enthusiastic BFBRT supporters who will participate in the Sudbury July 4 parade.

Contact Dick Williamson, 878-443-8549, Williamson@LL.mit.edu

On the Trail in Framingham

by Susan Haney

Winter snows have revealed a surprising amount of activity on the railroad bed in Framingham. From the crossing at Water Street, I spotted the footprints of many intrepid souls (and their dogs) braving the cold. Also prominent are the tracks of snowmobiles and ATV's. When the trail is constructed, things should quiet down a little, as only the non-motorized people and dogs will be allowed.

The BFBRT project is gaining visibility with town government. The Framingham Selectmen met in January with rail-trail expert Craig Della Penna to learn more about the process of acquiring the ROW for the BFBRT from CSX. The Town Manager is now investigating what will be required for the negotiating process. Thank you to all of who wrote e-mails to the Selectmen in support of the trail.

The Framingham Friends continue our outreach and publicity events. Upcoming events include a trail walk/clearing in the spring, and informational tables at town events like Marathon day and the Concerts on the Green. If you would like to participate in these events, please contact Susan Haney at (508)788-2732.

FBFRT to Host Legislative Briefing

With the help of State Senator Panagiotakos (1st Middlesex: Lowell, Dunstable, Groton, Pepperell, Tyngsborough and Westford) and FBFRT member and State Representative Jamie Eldridge (37th Middlesex District: Acton, Boxborough, Harvard, Lancaster, Lunenburg and Shirley), the Friends have been invited to present a briefing on the BFBRT at the State House in late April. We are very excited about this event, as a chance to educate legislators and others about our vision of a 25-mile rail trail from Lowell to Framingham. Inquiries should be directed to Tom Michelman at tmichelman@comcast.net or 978-580-6190.

CSX and Rail Trails

by Dick Williamson (et al.)

What do the cities of Leominster and Fitchburg along with the towns of Natick, Framingham, Sudbury, Holliston and Sherborn have in common? Answer: They all hope to have rail trails constructed along railroad rights of way in their communities, and those rights of way belong to the railroad company CSX. CSX has no plans for future use of these dormant corridors and is looking to sell the rights of way to the communities. Phase 3 of the BFBRT in Sudbury and Framingham is owned by CSX. However, negotiations with Leominster, Fitchburg and Holliston have floundered because CSX has asked for four to six times the appraised values arrived at by the communities. The other communities are likely to face the same hurdle. A big hurdle would be meeting the high CSX prices out of local taxes.

In order to compare notes and help push the CSX negotiation process along, advocates from the communities met on January 10 to exchange information and initiate collective action. One course of action is to urge the state Executive Office of Transportation (EOT) to buy the rights of way from CSX as was done for Phases 1 and 2 of the BFBRT. Currently, the state is pushing to expand commuter rail service from Boston to Fall River-New Bedford and on the Boston-Worcester line. The key to expanding service is to buy the rail lines from CSX, and serious negotiations have been underway for some time. The rail-trail advocates have drafted letters from the respective communities to their elected state officials urging that the rail-trail corridors be added to the overall "package" of purchases from CSX. In parallel, the communities will continue to negotiate individually with CSX.

Letter from the Commissioner

We thought you would appreciate seeing this letter from the Commissioner of MassHighway that indicates her department's strong support of the Rail Trail and her efforts to expedite construction on the project. According to the Commissioner, Phase I will move forward swiftly as soon as there are new funds for Commonwealth transportation projects.



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF TRANSPORTATION
MASSACHUSETTS HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

EOT

DEVAL L. PATRICK
GOVERNOR
TIMOTHY P. MURRAY
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

BERNARD COHEN
SECRETARY
LUIA PAJEWONSKY
COMMISSIONER

February 23, 2007

Tom Michelman 6 Magnolia Drive Acton MA 01720

Dear Mr. Michelman:

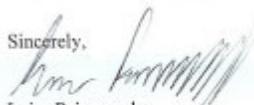
Thank you for your February 20th email regarding the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail and the conference call scheduled for next Monday.

Please accept my assurance that MassHighway strongly supports the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail. We are now moving forward to program its full funding on the 2007 Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP).

As we discussed, we will not be able to initiate construction on this project until funds become available through the Transportation Bond Bill. The passage of this bill is critical for the funding of several MassHighway projects. However, in order to expedite the process for the Rail Trail, we are currently preparing bid documents and will advertise for construction bids as soon as possible.

Thank you again for your continued support of this project. I look forward to speaking with you in our Monday conference call.

Sincerely,


Luisa Paiewonsky
Commissioner

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Nashoba Brook Corridor Meeting

by Emily Teller

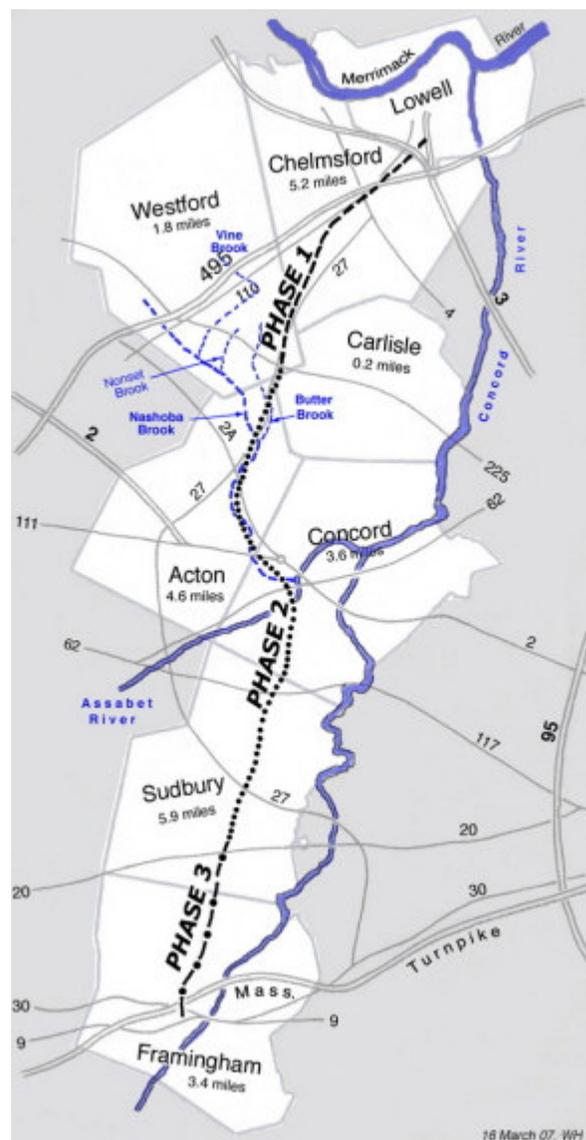
Board members Barbara Pike, Paul Malchodi and Emily Teller attended a “round-robin” meeting at the Acton library on March 1, 2007 for “officials and community activists” from Westford, Acton and Concord – towns through which Nashoba Brook flows. The gathering was an outgrowth of the 5-year Watershed Action Plan developed by the SuAsCo Watershed Community Council (Sudbury, Assabet & Concord Rivers). Several speakers from each town gave presentations that included the history of Nashoba Brook as well as past and current efforts at preservation, water-quality and biodiversity monitoring, capacity, drawdown, pollution and flow issues, and areas of concern and success. Agency and inter-town cooperation was discussed, and plans for a future meeting developed. We were grateful for this opportunity to expand familiarity with the BFRT into another area of towns’ and citizen-activists’ awareness. Paul Malchodi gave a short presentation at the end, and it was very well received because so much of Phase 2 of the BFRT runs parallel to Nashoba Brook (see map - right). He said, “the trail is a conduit of goodwill and education, and it creates advocacy and environmental sustenance.”

Merci Beaucoup

Pedal Power Bike and Ski has stuck by the Friends through thick and thin. Show them your appreciation by shopping for your next bike there! If you bring this newsletter you can get 10% off on parts! 176 Great Road (Rte. 2A) in Acton.

The Friends are grateful for the assistance of **John Kohler and Jet Mail** in the assembly and mailing of this Newsletter. Jet Mail is located at 577 Main St, Hudson MA.

The Friends are grateful to David B. Wilson and Timothy C. Twardowski of **Robinson & Cole LLP Attorneys at Law** (www.rc.com) for providing pro bono legal counsel.



This “map in progress” shows the major crossroads, streams and rivers near the trail. Thanks to Bill Harman for making the updates time for the Nashoba Brook Corridor meeting (described left). This map is a variation of the original created by Friends founder Rob Comer. See the full-size version of this map at: www.brucefreemanrailtrail.org/maps/detail-map.html

*Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail
6 Magnolia Drive
Acton MA 01720*



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.

Yes! Sign me up as a supporter of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail and add my name to your mailing list.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$10 | <input type="checkbox"/> Conductor \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineer \$250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor \$50 | <input type="checkbox"/> RR Tycoon \$500+ |

*Sponsors and above receive a complimentary BFRT cap or water bottle
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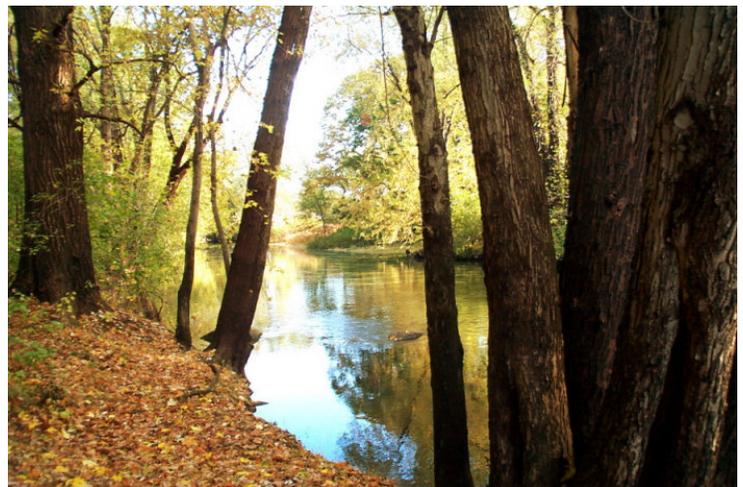
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The Assabet River. Just one of the Enchanting Views seen from The Bruce Freeman Rail Trail

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
118 Border Rd.
Concord, MA 01742

The Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail is a 501(c)(3) organization—membership fees and donations are tax-deductible as permitted by law.

