



FRIENDS OF THE BRUCE FREEMAN RAIL TRAIL

Rolling Along in Phase 1

As construction progresses on Phase 1, the old railroad right of way is starting to look like a real rail trail! Curbing for the trail was installed in the Chelmsford downtown area between Rt. 110 and Village Square in July (see photo below right). Installation of the trail sub base began at Rt. 3 in July and proceeded toward Westford. Excavation, installation of a gravel base, and grading behind Old Town Hall in Chelmsford was completed by the beginning of October. By the time you read this article, the gravel base should be installed from end-to-end with application of the binder course following behind. The contractor began applying the binder course on October 21.

Construction is slated for completion in summer 2009, with the installation of landscaping, signage, road markings, and the top layer of asphalt. FBFRT will continue to work with MassHighway, the Towns, and residents as construction proceeds. During construction, the trail is closed to use. Road intersections are unmarked and hazards may exist along the trail. Temporary fencing has been installed at selected road intersections to restrict access.



A cat overseeing Phase 1 construction in Chelmsford.

Tsongas Pledges Support for Rail Trails

After meeting with local, state and federal officials recently in Acton to discuss rail trail projects, US Congressional Representative Niki Tsongas wrote in a letter to her constituents, "I pledge to work with officials at the local, state, and federal levels to help keep these important rail trail projects moving forward...I believe that these projects are an example of how local, state and federal governments need to partner to advance the vision of communities, and I intend to continue to work with all parties involved."

Phases 2A and 2C Moving Forward

Even though Phase 1's construction is far more visible (and exciting!), progress on the BFRT has been happening "all along the trail!" On September 24, by a unanimous vote, the Statewide Transportation Enhancement Program Steering Committee moved forward the BFRT application for funding the future design of Phases 2A (Westford, Carlisle, and Acton) and 2C (Concord). Once approved by the Secretary of Transportation, the Statewide Transportation Enhancement Program will help fund the designs "to the 100% and mylar stage," which is the final stage of approved design (both at the town and state levels) before the project can be advertised for construction.

Both state and federal legislators are actively requesting complete financial support and commitment by the Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) as well as the Executive Office of Transportation (EOT). The Friends' Board also is working hard to ensure that the BFRT is on everyone's radar, lists of upcoming projects, and agendas.

The Friends are grateful to Greenman-Pedersen, Inc., the Phase 2A contracted design firm that oversaw the presentation to the Steering Committee and compilation of application materials, town staff who wrote letters of support, and state legislators and officials who provided critical support during this process.

All four towns involved in Phases 2A and 2C have recently corresponded with the EOT, and each will be contacted by EOT to begin lease negotiations for the Right of Way (ROW). The EOT owns the BFRT ROW in these towns, and legal agreement must be executed prior to opening the rail trail to the public.



In Chelmsford looking towards Westford. The old mile post shows 3 miles to the switchyard in Lowell. The rail trail with curbing is behind the chain link fence. The trail runs behind the Old Town Hall in the downtown historic district; its roof can be seen to the left of the flag pole. Village Square is to the right.

Dear Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail,

Many, many thanks to the more than 250 of you who responded to my e-mail plea of October 21st to write to David Mohler (by 5:00 p.m. October 22nd) and ask that design funds for Phases 2A and 2C be included in the Boston MPO's Transportation Improvement Program amended 2007-2010 plans. It was incredibly gratifying to see all the caring, well-argued notes to Deputy Secretary Mohler. It has to be crystal clear to the MPO that the BFRT has overwhelming public support. So I appreciate the response even more because virtually all of us have busy lives and just don't have the time to volunteer for the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (FBFRT) on a regular basis.

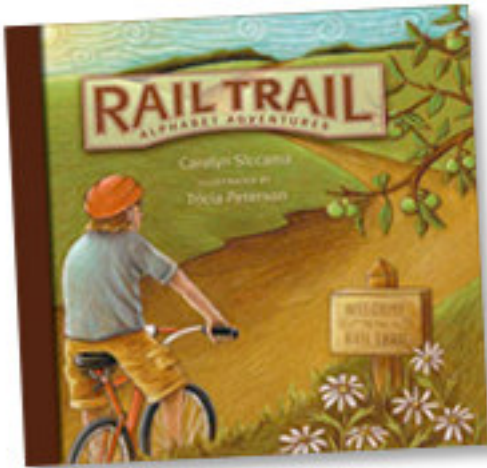
The content of this newsletter illuminates, if it wasn't already apparent, that there has been and will continue to be a tremendous amount of work done by dozens of FBFRT volunteers to make the entire 25 miles of the BFRT a reality (remember the Friends is an all volunteer organization – no paid staff). What makes it easier for the FBFRT volunteers, what gives us freedom to support activities that will support the trail, what in part makes the FBFRT such a strong organization, is a strong bank account. Yes, cold-hard cash. Money speaks. The FBFRT Board has been able to authorize donations to support the inaugural meeting of a statewide rail trail group coalition, provide refreshments for the Phase 2A public hearing and Uniformity Committee, purchase banners and educational material for our many outreach events, purchase amenities on Phase 1, and pay for the printing and mailing of this newsletter. You will be reading about all of these efforts throughout this newsletter. The Board can authorize such worthwhile expenditures without the additional pain of digging into our own pockets, because many of you have paid your dues (literally).

So when you get an e-mail or postcard asking to become or renew as a dues paying member, please do give. If you are not already a member, we invite you to join us. Membership is available either through the FBFRT website or by using the form included with this newsletter. Your dues provide us with the freedom (and reduced angst) that only cash in the bank can provide.

Sincerely,

Tom Michelman

President - Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail



Carolyn Siccama's children's book inspired by a local rail trail.

Friends Donate Books to Local Libraries

The Friends have donated hardback copies of *Rail Trail Alphabet Adventures*, written by Carolyn Siccama, to each library in all eight of the towns along the BFRT. Until recently Carolyn lived adjacent to the Minuteman Bikeway in Lexington. She was inspired to write this book after enjoying daily jaunts along the trail with her young daughter.

Each letter of the alphabet has a page with rail trail-related imagery, such as K is for "Keep right to share the path" and M is for "Mile marker along the way." The images show people of all ages and abilities enjoying the rail trail - children, adults, people in wheelchairs, rollerbladers, walkers, pets - the full spectrum through all seasons!

Carolyn and her husband, both avid cyclists, purchased their home in Lexington because it abutted the trail. They enjoyed having a safe, car-free place to walk or bike to all of the places they needed to go: to town, farmers market, library, pool, grocery store. They felt that it was a magical gem to have in their backyard. Copies of the book can be ordered at Siccama's website: www.railtrailalphabetadventures.com.

Hope to see you using the trail soon...

WESTFORD – Construction is progressing in Westford with the binder course expected to be completed by Thanksgiving. Now you can see how this shared-use path will look where it crosses various roads: Griffin Road near Rt. 27, Acton Road (Rt. 27) near Shelly Lane, and at the Rt. 225/Rt. 27 intersection looking northward. The trail is closed to all users until construction is completed.

Westford Friends were a very successful presence at the June Strawberry 'n' Arts Festival on the Town Common. Eighty-eight people indicated their support and interest in the trail, greatly expanding our numbers in Westford. In October the Friends staffed a table at Westford's Transportation/Safety Day. This is the second year we have participated, and we were glad to talk with many families about the progress of Phases 1 and 2 in our town and surrounding towns and to continue to solicit memberships and interest in the Friends.

The Town of Westford's website will soon have a sub-site for the BFRT. It will link to the Friends' website and will include contact information for the two Board of Directors members who live in Westford, Emily Teller and Chris Barrett. This site will be an evolving project, but we are excited and grateful that this multi-use transportation and recreation project means so much to the Town that there is dedicated space and information for electronic readers and potential trail users!

The J.V. Fletcher Library now has a copy of *Rail Trail Alphabet Adventures*, donated by the Friends – "check it out"!

Progress Continues in Concord

CONCORD – Concord's BFRT Advisory Committee has submitted an application for Community Preservation Act funding of the 75% and 100% BFRT designs. The Board of Selectmen ranked the BFRT 2nd (out of 7) in priority for Town projects. If the request is approved by the Community Preservation Committee, it will be voted at the April 2009 Town Meeting. Citizens will have an opportunity to comment on the project at a public hearing to be held in early 2009.

After Concord's April 2008 Town Meeting voted to approve the 25% design, it was submitted to the MassHighway Project Review Committee (PRC) last spring. The Selectmen and Town staff are working with the committee to help ensure that the design is accepted for review at its next meeting this fall.

As part of the Rt. 2 Rotary Reconstruction project, MassHighway will design and construct the BFRT from Commonwealth Avenue in Concord to Wetherbee Street in Acton, following the historic right of way. At a MassHighway Public Workshop earlier this fall conceptual designs for both an underpass and a bridge were available for public comment. These designs are available on the Friends' website: www.brucefreemanrailtrail.org/rotarydesign.

Recent studies have found that building the trail in Concord would have a minimal environmental impact. Surveys of salamanders, plants, and dragonflies have been completed by the Town's Department of Natural Resources. The salamander and plant surveys concluded that no rare species were found. Of the three rare dragonflies, one species was observed at the Assabet River crossing. This is not expected to impact construction of the rail trail.

PUBLIC HEARING AN IMPORTANT MILESTONE FOR PHASE 2A

The MassHighway Public Hearing held in Acton on October 29 was an important milestone for the continued progress of the design of Phase 2A (Acton, Carlisle, and Westford). MassHighway provided this opportunity for the public to make comments, ask questions, and voice support for the design.

Sudbury to Purchase Railbed

SUDBURY – Town meeting in April 2008 voted to approve the use of up to \$420,000 of CPA funds to complete the purchase of the 1.3 miles of the CSX railbed that runs from the crossing of the proposed Mass Central Rail Trail and the BFRT just north of Rt. 20 to the Sudbury-Framingham town line. This followed the award of a \$247,000 grant to the town by the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority, the main purpose of which was to protect the drinking water that comes from five wells in the wetlands surrounding the right of way. That purpose does not preclude use of the path for recreational activities. This 1.3-mile long section will constitute the Sudbury portion of Phase 3 of the BFRT, which is envisioned to terminate near Rt. 9 in Framingham. Rails and ties were already removed from the right of way by CSX before the purchase. The amount of the purchase has been settled, but other conditions are still under negotiation. The hope is that it will be complete by June 2009.

The three studies of the Right of Way that were funded by CPA funds voted at the 2007 Sudbury Town Meeting (title search, survey of existing conditions with wetlands delineation, and wildlife study) are nearing completion. The results of the wildlife study are expected to be available in February. The results of these studies should provide critical information in determining whether there are any significant impediments to development of the trail that will have to be addressed.

In June 2007 the Sudbury Board of Selectmen (BOS) had indicated they would make a recommendation in the fall about proceeding with developing the rail trail. However in October, the BOS said that they will put off this decision until fall of 2009. If the BOS makes a positive recommendation, it is expected that a request will be made to the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) for funds for the 25% design. If approved by the CPC, an article to approve design funds will be on the warrant for the 2010 Town Meeting.



Part of the Phase 1 progress, a reconstructed bridge in Chelmsford has new concrete wingwalls and deck on pre-existing repointed granite abutments. Railings and curbing will be installed after the trail surface is completed.

Fund Established for Trail Amenities

CHELMSFORD/WESTFORD – The Friends hope that you are as excited as we are about the opening of Phase 1 of the trail in Chelmsford and Westford in 2009. In anticipation, we are preparing for the addition of amenities, such as benches, bike racks, and signs along the trail. Historical, educational, and beautifying enhancements also being considered include flowers and landscaping, painting of the underpasses and concrete walls along the trail, kiosks with local and/or historical information, and mileage signs. Larger projects, such as overlooks for viewing the local conservation land, may be considered in the future.

To fund this effort, the Friends are soliciting donations from citizens and businesses in the region as well as investigating grant opportunities. Donors may specify that their contributions be used anywhere on the trail, in Chelmsford only, in Westford only, or for a specific project. Donations for specific projects may include a plaque in recognition of the donor or in honor or memory of a special person.

Contributions for amenities should be mailed to: Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, PO Box 1192, Concord, MA 01742. Please include your name, address, e-mail, phone number, whether your donation is for the general fund or a specific town and if you want to remain anonymous. If you have ideas for projects that you would like to have considered please email the Friends of BFRT at Chelmsford-amenities@brucefreemanrailtrail.org for Chelmsford or eteller@earthlink.net for Westford. For more information about the amenities, please visit www.brucefreemanrailtrail.org/amenities.

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



FBFRT Annual Meeting

Sunday November 23, 2 p.m.

Concord Children's Center

(See inside 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.

☐ Individual Membership \$10

☐ Conductor \$100

☐ Family Membership \$25

☐ Engineer \$250

☐ Sponsor \$50

☐ RR Tycoon \$500+

*Sponsor and above receive complimentary BFRT cap.

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 e-mail (include e-mail 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 authorize the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail to use my name for promotional efforts to support the trail.

☐ ☐

I would like to volunteer.

☐ ☐

☐ I prefer not to receive the complimentary gift.

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

You may also join on-line at www.BruceFreemanRailTrail.org



Uniformity Committee Coordinating Across Towns

LOWELL/CHELMSFORD/WESTFORD/CARLISLE/ACTON/CONCORD/SUDBURY/FRAMINGHAM – What happens if someone is injured on the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail and calls for help? How will they know where to tell emergency responders to find them? How will they even know what town they are in? Will similar safety features, such as intersection warnings, be used throughout the trail?

In May the BFRT Coordinating Committee (BFRTCC) discussed the need for some level of consistency from town to town along the trail. While uniformity in some design features is desirable, it was also felt that the trail should reflect the local character of each town. In order to address these issues, Lawrence Cash, P.E., the chairman of the BFRTCC, created an *ad hoc* subcommittee, the BFRT Uniformity Committee (BFRTUC), with representatives designated by each of the eight towns. The BFRTUC is charged with creating a document to provide guidance for selected design elements, such as location and type of safety markings.

Each town will be asked to approve the final uniformity guidelines document, which will be used for guidance when installing way-finding markings and enhancements to the rail trail property, most immediately in Phase 1. It also will provide guidance to the design consultants for Phases 2 and 3. Information about the Uniformity Committee can be found at www.brucefreemanrailtrail.org/uniformity.

Concord River Greenway

LOWELL – Construction has officially begun on Concord River Greenway (CRG) in downtown Lowell. The CRG will be a multi-purpose trail constructed primarily on an unused railroad right-of-way paralleling the Concord River. One of the goals of the project is to provide a connection with the northern terminus of the BFRT at the Lowell/Chelmsford line. The CRG and BFRT will be integral parts of the Bay Circuit Trail.

A long-range goal of the Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust is to create a greenway park along the Concord River. The park will link the city's largest park area, Shedd Park and Rogers Fort Hill Park, to the center of the city and a network of walkways that have been developed by the Lowell National Historic Park.

On October 4th US Congresswoman Niki Tsongas hosted a series of events to celebrate the rivers in the 5th Congressional District. FBFRT was invited to speak about the CRG Connector Trail during her stop in Lowell. A map showing possible routes for the Connector Trail was unveiled for the event, which was held on the future site of the CRG. We appreciated the opportunity to speak about how people will someday be able to walk from the northern terminus of the BFRT at Cross Point Towers to enjoy the Concord River in Lowell.

FBFRT thanks Representative Tsongas and her staff and Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust for their support and for giving us an opportunity to speak at the River Day event in Lowell. To read more about the CRG, visit www.lowelllandtrust.org.

Framingham Completes ROW Appraisal

FRAMINGHAM – Last April the Framingham Board of Selectmen authorized an appraisal of the Framingham portion of the BFRT Right of Way. The appraisal has been completed and will be released once it has been reviewed by the Board.

October's monthly Friends' meeting was held in Framingham at Garden in the Woods. Craig Della Penna of the Northeast Greenway Solutions presented updates on the major rail trails in the region including the Mass Central Rail Trail which will intersect the BFRT.

Annual Meeting

Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail

When: Sunday, November 23th, 2 pm

**Where: Concord Children's Center
1300 Main Street (Rt. 62)
West Concord**

(The center is on the corner of Main St.
& Church St. Park in the Church St. lot)

What: We will conduct a short business meeting, hear town updates, partake of light refreshments and walk a section of the trail.



Over \$5000 raised in honor of Howard Krueger, seen here with his dog Heather.

Spin-Yogathon Benefits BFRT

The Howard Krueger Spin-Yogathon, held at Warrior's Way in Maynard last June, raised over \$5000 to benefit the BFRT. Howard was killed in a bicycling accident on a busy road in Arizona that had no bike path. His sister, Nan, organized the fundraiser to support the BFRT so that other people will have a safe place to ride. She described him as a "really, really nice guy" who was devoted to cycling and committed to fitness. The Friends thank Warrior's Way, Pedal Power and the many participants and donors who made this such a successful event.

Friends Welcome 2 New Board Members

Sharon Galpin, representing Lowell, began working on the rail trail with the support of Bruce Freeman in 1985. At that time she was living in Chelmsford and worked with other "early pioneers" of the trail, Mary Tevlin and Bernie Lynch. Once the project was in the hands of the state, her involvement with the trail was on hold for several years. We welcome her back!

Representing Framingham as a State Representative, a Selectman, and a member of the Planning Board, John Stasik has a long history of bicycle advocacy. We appreciate his experience and expertise and look forward to his dedicated involvement now as a member of the FBFRT Board.

With regret, we bid farewell to another Board member, Carl Elkin, who represented Sudbury. Carl moved to Arlington to shorten his commute and now uses the Minuteman Bikeway on a regular basis. He provided the Friends with the innovative map showing support for the trail in different areas of Sudbury. He was a key member of the MemberClicks development team and an enthusiastic and effective supporter of the BFRT in Sudbury. We look forward to his continued support of the BFRT.

Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail is a non-profit citizens group working in partnership with state and local officials to create a new 25 mile rail trail linking the communities of Lowell, Chelmsford, Westford, Carlisle, Acton, Concord, Sudbury & Framingham

The Friends have been active in your community!

April

Framingham: Earth Day information booth

May

Concord: Earth Day parade and table

Acton: Earth Day table

June

Carlisle: Old Home Day booth

Westford: Strawberry 'n' Arts Festival booth

Framingham: Flag Day booth

July

Sudbury: Fourth of July parade

Chelmsford: Country Fair booth

Lowell: Folk Festival information table

Summer

Sudbury: Summer Concerts booth, balloons, and construction hats

September

Leominster: Helped host Linking Together Conference

October

Acton: Oktoberfest information table

Concord: West Concord Village Day booth

Carlisle: Pumpkin Festival table

Westford: Transportation/Safety Day booth

Chelmsford: Scarecrow Festival

See www.brucefreemanrailtrail.org/help_bftr/volunteer.html for up-to-date volunteer opportunities. Or contact your town's representative listed at the end of this newsletter.

Special thanks to...

*John and Robert Kohler and **Jet Mailing Services** in Hudson, MA for their assistance in mailing this Newsletter.*

***Pedal Power Bike and Ski** in Acton for their continuing support of the rail trail. If you bring in this newsletter, you will receive 10% off the price of parts!*

Warrior's Way in Maynard for sponsoring the Spin-Yogathon to benefit the BFRT.

The volunteers at the 4th of July Country Fair in Chelmsford who braved the elements for two days.

The many volunteers who have helped with Friends' events in all our communities.

Statewide Rail Trail Coalition Forming

LEOMINSTER – Many local rail trail groups in Massachusetts often encounter similar opportunities and challenges. With the goal of sharing information and working together to establish a connected network of rail trails and other shared-use paths in the state, about 80 rail trail and greenway advocates from across the Commonwealth gathered at the Trustees of Reservations Doyle Center in Leominster on September 13. The attendees represented a variety of groups, including friends organizations, government agencies, town staff, and community activists. By the end of the meeting, the attendees agreed unanimously that a new umbrella organization should be formed.

Gary Briere from the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) presented the keynote address in which he reviewed DCR's long history of establishing rail trails and the prospect of building the Mass Central Rail Trail from Waltham to Berlin. The meeting was moderated by Craig Della Penna (Northeast Greenway Solutions). The FBFRT figured prominently in the meeting. President Tom Michelman outlined the advantages and potential impact of a state-wide organization.

Paulina Knibbe, a member of the Acton Board of Selectmen and the FBFRT, introduced an online database of rail trail information. Paulina demonstrated how the web interface database links trail organizations to municipalities, political districts, MassHighway districts, and boundaries of Regional Planning Agencies and their Metropolitan Planning Organizations. Friends' Board member Dick Williamson presented information about state- and province-wide organizations in the United States and Canada that could serve as a model for a Massachusetts rail trail coalition. His summary of the pros and cons of a variety of organizational models prompted considerable discussion. Other speakers included Eric Weis (East Coast Greenway Alliance) and Andy Greene (Wayside Rail Trail Committee).

Tom Michelman provided an overview of the meeting during a Visioning Session at the Moving Together 2008 bicycle and pedestrian conference on October 14. A roll-out of the umbrella organization will occur over the next few months.

Have You Signed Up for our Electronic FBFRT Newsletter?

Did you know you can receive our newsletter electronically? This saves paper and saves the Friends money on printing and postage so that we can put our resources to better use. When you sign up, you'll get an e-mail with a link to a PDF file of the newsletter, and you will have immediate access at your fingertips. To sign up, send your name, street address, & e-mail address to info@brucefreemanrailtrail.org.

For Further Information:

Visit: www.brucefreemanrailtrail.org

Call or E-mail:

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Attend: Monthly Friends meetings

Send E-mail: info@brucefreemanrailtrail.org