



FRIENDS OF THE BRUCE FREEMAN RAIL TRAIL

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Friends of the BFRT Annual Meeting:

When: Sunday, November 19, 2 pm

Where: Concord Children's Center
 1300 Main Street (Rte 62)
 West Concord
 (The center is on the corner of Main St
 and Church St. Park in the Church St lot)

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

For more info: www.brucefreemanrailtrail.org

Phase 1 Still on Target for Spring 2007 Construction Start

by Cindy McLain

Phase 1 of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail continues to wend its way through the MassHighway design process. Although progress has been slow, it continues to move forward. MassHighway has set December 2, 2006, as the estimated date of advertisement for construction bids. The environmental permit for Chelmsford has been extended, and MassHighway has indicated that funding for construction has been secured. The project remains on target for a Spring 2007 construction start.

The most tangible progress on the long awaited Bruce Freeman Rail Trail in Chelmsford is actually part of the Route 3 widening project. The newly constructed tunnel under Route 3 marks the beginning of the trail near Cross Point. It is lined with corrugated steel and will be lighted. Grading of the path through the tunnel has been completed; paving will be performed as part of the rail trail construction.

Thank-you to everyone who came by our booth at the Chelmsford 4th of July Country Fair, the level of interest

happily exceeded our expectations. Once the trail is constructed, we would like to add some enhancements such as containers with plants (in the downtown area), bike racks, benches, and informational displays. If you would like to help in any way including fund raising, design, construction, or maintenance, please send e-mail to cynthia.mclain@comcast.net.

Time to Join or Renew?

Your membership in the Friends is critical to our success. Unless your address label has "06" next to your name, it is time to join the Friends or renew your membership for 2006. Please return the membership form found on page 6 along with your check. Thanks for your support!

Westford Conservation Commission Approves Phase 1 Redesign

by Emily Teller

The Westford Conservation Commission unanimously voted to issue a new Order of Conditions for Phase 1 of the rail trail at their meeting on October 11th. At the end of August, representatives from both MassHighway and Holden Engineering, designers for Phase 1, met with the Cons Comm and discussed the details of the redesign that goes through Westford. The only change is using a new type of silt fencing that is so improved that hay bales are not needed as an additional supplemental barrier near the wetlands. The Order of Conditions was issued on October 13th. As mentioned in the Phase 1 article opposite, construction request for bids on Phase 1 are expected to be advertised in early December, with construction to start in Spring 2007.

Staff in Town Hall have reviewed the design bids and are working on selecting a design firm for Phase 2, in cooperation with Acton and Carlisle. Once the 25% design contract is awarded, professionals from the selected firm will be surveying the quarter mile of Right of Way (ROW) in Westford, and proposing design safety equipment at the Routes 225/27 intersection. This is the work funded through Community Preservation Act funding we voted for at May's Town Meeting.

Thanks to Westford residents who came out on October 14 and enthusiastically cleared about ¾ of a mile of the trail from the Carlisle line into Acton! There are currently 50 Westford residents who are members of the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail. Interested in future trail clearings or supporting the trail in other ways? Contact Emily Teller at 978-692-6968 or eteller@earthlink.net.



Rail Trail Activities in Carlisle

by Alan Cameron

Although Carlisle's segment of the BFRT is only about 900 ft long, there is no shortage of enthusiasm for the trail here. In the spring, our Community Preservation Committee voted to provide \$20,000 design funds for the project. Later, the Annual Town Meeting voted unanimously to appropriate those funds. We collaborated with Acton on the design solicitation process, have just completed the evaluation of the three bids we received, and eagerly anticipate contract award.

The short, straight portion of the trail in Carlisle is totally devoid of interesting features: no grade crossings, no bridges or culverts, no wetlands, no abutters within sight. To date, nobody in town has expressed any negative feelings about it. Only one abutting lot is occupied, and its residents are great proponents. The BFRT booth at the annual Old Home Day celebration on July 1 attracted a lot of Carlisleans, most of who were interested mainly in why it was taking so long to be built.

Our section of trail is so short that many cyclists might well miss the fact altogether that they're passing through Carlisle. Several concepts for preventing that are under consideration: plantings of some of our more popular flora (buckthorn, loosestrife), statues of common fauna (deer, mosquitoes, perhaps local politicians), and undoubtedly "Entering" and "Leaving" signs, closely spaced.

For more information contact Alan Cameron at 978-369-2223.

Lowell Greenway Design Begun

by Betsy Goodrich

Design of the Concord River Greenway in Lowell is underway. The Concord River Greenway, a 1.75-mile multi-use trail paralleling the Concord River, will eventually connect the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail with downtown Lowell. The first stage of design for the first section of the corridor from Merrimack Street to Lawrence Street is nearly complete. Public meetings will be held this winter so residents will have the opportunity to share their ideas about the design. Check the Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust's Web site at www.lowelllandtrust.org for future meeting dates.

The artist team of Mags Harries and Lajos Heder has nearly completed their public art plan for the corridor. Look for this on-line as well later this fall. In addition, thanks to the hard work of the city officials, in August the City of Lowell finalized the taking of the former rail bed for the trail between Lawrence Street and the Bradford Industries property. For further information, contact Betsy Goodrich at betsy@railstotrails.org.

Acton Coordinates Three-Town Design

by Tom Michelman

In August the towns of Acton, Carlisle, and Westford, through the Town of Acton issued a request-for-proposals (RFP) for 25% design (preliminary design) of a 4.5 mile section of the BFRT from intersection of Rte 225 and Rte 27 in Westford south to Acton Indoor Sports (just northwest of the Concord town line and Rte 2). On the north this section of Phase 2 will

connect with Phase 1, on the south the trail will terminate ~1000' south of Wetherbee Street. Three firms submitted proposals by the September 20th due date, and selection will occur in November. Completion date of the 25% design phase is scheduled for April 30, 2007.

The major steps for the scope of work are delineated as:

1. Field Survey, Base Mapping, and Data Collection
2. Concept Design Plan
3. 25% Design Review Submittal

Issues to be addressed by the winning consultant included:

- The seven trestles for brook crossings. (if and how the trestles need to be restored for multiuse rail trail purposes)
- Request for several design options for the crossing of Great Road (Rte 2A/119) in Acton
- Request for safe at-grade crossing of lower volume Main Street (Rte 27) twice in north Acton
- Exploration of alternative routes around, over, or under the Rex Lumber property, which the BFRT bisects just north of NARA park.
- The Westford crossing adjacent to the signalized intersection of Route 225 with Route 27
- The need for parking and the need to explore the opportunity of connecting to spur trails.

Of great interest, the RFP requires the winning consultant to "Organize and attend meetings with abutters, the public, town officials, and other interested parties early in the project (at the '10% design stage')"

The entire RFP can be found on our website at:

www.brucefreemanrailtrail.org/trail_plans/present_trail.html.

For more information visit our website at:

www.brucefreemanrailtrail.org or contact Tom Michelman at tmichelman@comcast.net or 987-580-6190.

Concord to Issue RFP for 25% Preliminary Design in November

by Barbara Pike

Concord is planning to issue a Request for Proposal by mid-November for the 25% design of the rail trail in Concord. The 2006 spring Town Meeting overwhelmingly approved \$160,000 in Community Preservation Act funds to address four areas: centerline survey, environmental assessment, 25% preliminary design, and review of historic artifacts. Since that time the Town BFRT Advisory Committee has been meeting regularly to work on the RFP to address this work. Because of the projected Route 2 rotary redesign, the crossing of Route 2 into Acton is not included at this time. For BFRTAC minutes and copies of the RFP, go to "committees" on the Concordnet.org web site.

Many citizens have expressed their preference for a rail trail surface, generally either an asphalt-type hard surface or stone dust-type soft surface. The Friends' position is that no recommendation on the trail surface should be made by the BFRTAC until after information is obtained from an independent consultant concerning such matters as initial construction costs, ongoing maintenance costs, and effects on potential users. Furthermore, it is expected that the trail will be designed to be safe and accessible for all users and will comply with the Americans With Disabilities Act. Please note that a



Concord to Issue RFP (continued)

newly formed group, Concord Rural Trails, which is not affiliated with the Friends, is advocating for a "natural" surface.

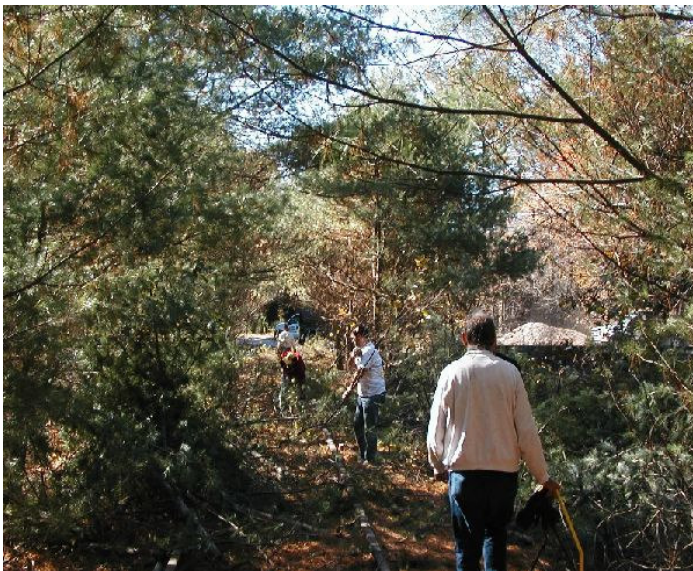
The Concord Friends had a strong presence at community events during the summer and fall: from giant bubbles at the Fourth of July "Picnic in the Park" to a 50-person strong contingent in the West Concord Family Festival parade to an outing at the Nashua River Rail Trail in Ayer (though we hope it will not rain next time!). We have continued to raise Town awareness about the trail and have enlisted the support of nearly 900 Concord families. In addition, a spring trail clearing, in conjunction with the Department of Natural Resources, is being planned to facilitate the on-the-ground survey of the right of way. For more information contact Barbara Pike at 978-369-0437.

Fall Trail Clearing – Sponsored By Acton

by Tom Michelman

Carlisle 8th grade boys ranked tri-town trail clearing as a "9.5" for community service projects!

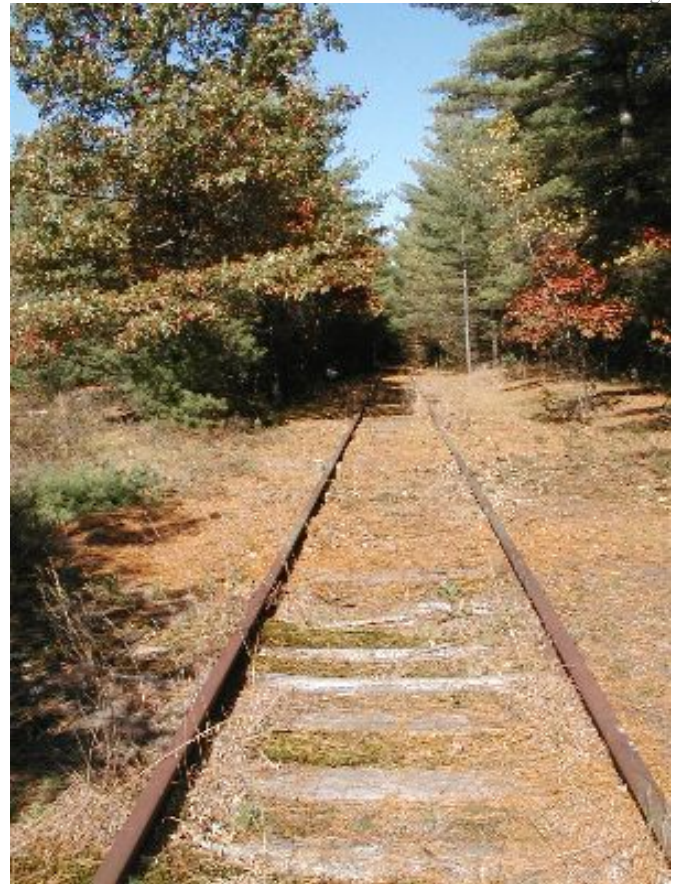
On Saturday, October 14, the Friends coordinated a trail clearing in order to facilitate an on-the-ground survey to be conducted by the winning bidder for the 25% design in Westford, Carlisle, and Acton. On a perfect fall day, with bright blue skies and stunning foliage, over 50 volunteers cleared 1 mile of the right-of-way from the Carlisle border to the area behind The Inn at Robbins Brook in Acton. This section of right-of-way includes two trestles over Butter Brook and passes through beautiful wetlands.



Before: Volunteers Hard at Work (photo by Tom Michelman)

While many assisted to make the event a great success, most notable were FBFRT members Gerri Abrams and the Collison family of Horseshoe Drive, who contributed many hours publicizing the event and soliciting our sponsors.

Food, beverages and services were generously donated by Acton Great Road Pizzeria, Bagels Plus, Domino's, Donelan's, Dunkin' Donuts, Ichabod's Coffeehouse, Idylwilde Farm, Pedal



After: A Beautiful Usable Trail! (photo by Emily Teller)

Power, Roche Brothers, Stop & Shop, Trader Joes, Staples, and Subway. All the volunteers were very appreciative of the cornucopia of refreshments, and none left unsatiated.

President's Letter

As I look back over the past two years as President of the Friends, I cannot help but be impressed with the many accomplishments that have helped moved the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail closer to completion. Our Board now represents all eight communities along the 25-mile trail corridor, and includes a talented group of people who are well connected in their communities, and who bring great enthusiasm and dedication to this project. We take pride that the Friends group works on a volunteer basis, and that none of our Board or officers is paid for their many services.

Our Friends group has grown to over 3,000 supporters with over 400 dues paying members. We elected to become a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization to gain credibility with our supporters and state and local officials, and to encourage tax-deductible contributions for the rail trail.

Our group has been involved in helping raise over \$425,000 of CPA and private funding for the BFRT in Acton, Carlisle, Concord, Sudbury and Westford. These funds were used for initial feasibility studies of the rail trail and most recently, for the 25% preliminary design process.

We continue to meet regularly with officials at the Executive Office of Transportation, the Metropolitan Planning Agencies



President's Letter (continued)

and MassHighway to gain exposure and build credibility for the rail trail project. Through our participation in planning meetings, we reached an agreement with MassHighway that the BFRT will be included in the Route 2 Rotary Redesign. This ultimately will provide a solution to the rail trail crossing of Route 2 near the Acton/Concord town line. We also have worked closely with local elected officials, town employees and town rail trail committees to move the BFRT forward in those communities.

We continue to monitor progress on the often-delayed Phase 1 portion of the BFRT that runs from Lowell through Chelmsford to Westford. We are keeping our fingers crossed that construction will start on this 7-mile section in 2007, showing everyone some tangible progress on the rail trail.

Two recent events in Framingham will help move forward Phase 3, the southern-most 5-mile section of the BFRT. The Selectmen, with our strong support, voted in favor of rail banking the rail corridor located in their town. Also, the state's Central Transportation Planning Staff recently released a positive feasibility report for that section of the rail trail.

Finally, at our November Annual Meeting, I will be stepping down as President, and Tom Michelman, our current Secretary and Board member, will take over as our new President. Tom has been successful in guiding the Town of Acton through its initial feasibility study and most recently, started them towards the 25% design phase of the rail trail. Tom's enthusiasm and knowledge will keep the Friends of the BFRT energized and moving forward to the day when the full 25-mile rail trail is completed. To help support Tom, I will remain actively involved as a member of the Board.

Sincerely,
Bob Armstrong

Sudbury Feasibility Study Near Completion

by Dick Williamson

In May the Town of Sudbury awarded a \$25,000 contract to Fay, Spofford and Thorndike (FST) for a Sudbury BFRT Engineering and Environmental Assessment. This study addresses many of the issues associated with the EOT-owned rail bed between the crossing of the Mass. Central line just north of Route 20 and the Concord town line. FST will present the assessment to the Town at a meeting starting at 7:30 pm in Sudbury Town Hall on Thursday, November 16.

The Town of Sudbury's Rail Trail Conversion Advisory Committee (RTCAC) and the Board of Selectmen have recommended that Community Preservation Act funding be requested for four rail-trail-related items: a study of wildlife near the proposed rail trail, environmental resource delineation, a title review and a survey of the right of way. The last three items are required as part of the 25% design. The requests must be approved by the Community Preservation Committee, and some may be on the April 2007 Town Meeting warrant.

On September 14, the RTCAC gave a report to the Town on some of the work that the committee has done in the two years since it was formed. Presentations included a review of the geography of the rail bed, an update on the status of the rail trail in Sudbury and the other six towns along the trail, a report on

the results of a survey sent to owners of property abutting or close to the rail bed, and a review of studies done of existing rail trails. Looking at studies of about 40 rail trails throughout the US, the presenter summarized by saying that the studies indicate that communities like their trails, that rail trails neither decrease property values nor increase crime.

The Central Transportation Planning Staff has worked with representatives from Framingham and Sudbury to study the feasibility of converting the CSX-owned rail bed between the Mass. Central crossing and Route 9 into a section of the BFRT (Phase 3). The study, released in October, determined that converting this 5-mile rail corridor into a rail trail was quite feasible. The rails and ties have already been removed, the rail corridor is eligible for rail banking, and CSX has shown an interest in selling the unused rail corridor.

Minutes of the RTCAC meetings and various rail trail documents can be found on the RTCAC web site at http://www.town.sudbury.ma.us/committees/committee_home.asp?dept=RailTrail.

For more information about the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail in Sudbury, contact Dick Williamson at 978-443-8549 or Williamson@LL.mit.edu.

Residents of Pepperell Rank Rail Trail Best Town Amenity

Regardless of all the political wrangling before rail trails are built, history indicates that residents ultimately appreciate and enjoy their new resource. Recently the Pepperell Conservation Commission took a resident poll that rated the Nashua River Rail Trail as the most popular amenity in town by a 2 to 1 margin.

Framingham Selectmen Support Rail Banking

by Susan Haney

The old railway bed in Framingham is still owned by CSX Transportation, but recent events make it more probable that the land will be acquired for a trail. In August, the Framingham Board of Selectmen voted unanimously to begin the process of "rail banking" the land. Rail banking preserves the corridor and is an important step in construction of the trail. The town has made no commitment to purchase the land, and there will be an extensive period of fact finding and public discussion before any further action occurs.

In addition, the Central Transportation Planning Staff of the Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization has released its long-awaited feasibility study of Phase III of the trail. This study discusses how the rail trail would fit in with the local and regional transportation system, and it is very positive. Cathy Buckley Lewis of CTPS presented the study at the Selectmen's meeting in August. She emphasized the trail's value for transportation, since it provides a way to cross the Mass Pike. She also identified a few areas of concern, such as the crossing on Edgell Road, but noted that methods to make it safer would be addressed.

You may have seen the Bruce Freeman information tables at town-wide events during the summer, including Marathon Day, Earth Day at Garden in the Woods, the Framingham Flag Day



Framingham Rail Banking (continued)

celebration, and the weekly Concerts on the Green. The Friends group drew crowds with displays of photos and maps, as well as balloons and face-painting. An overwhelming majority of the crowd was positive and we gathered more than 300 signatures of support.

If you have opinions about the trail, why not come to the monthly meetings of the Framingham Friends? At the meetings we discuss trail issues, plan events, and have fun, too. We meet the fourth Monday of each month (except December) at 7:30 pm in the conference rooms in the Framingham Memorial Building. For further information contact Susan Haney at 508-788-2732.

Small Victories for Bicyclists - While We Wait for the Rail Trail!

by Emily Teller

Under Commissioner Luisa Piaewonsky's direction, MassHighway has published a new design manual with many excellent bicycle-friendly aspects that they are encouraging Massachusetts' 351 towns to implement. This new publication was discussed at a recent Concord Bikeways meeting and it is estimated that it may take ten years to implement. To speed up the process, we have a suggestion to make: if your town is repaving a road (or several), or even redesigning some roads, please consider calling your town highway superintendent to request narrower travel lanes (10' is now the new minimum width) so that bike "allowance lanes" can be created outside the white, painted "fog line" near the shoulders. You would be amazed at how effective one telephone call from a resident can be! In at least one town so far this year, a phone call asking for specific consideration for bikes after new paving had been put down, but before any painting had been done, resulted in more room along several roads, including a state highway! It only takes a few moments of your time to make a difference – and highway superintendents are up very early in the morning! Try it, what have you got to lose? And you may gain significant room for bike travel along existing roads in your town.

Updating The Mass Bicycle Plan

by Dick Williamson (et. al.)

The Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation (EOT) is at the beginning of a two-year process to update a plan for on-road and off-road bicycle routes in the state. A contractor, Planners Collaborative, is leading the update. One of a series of meetings around the state was held in Concord on October 19. The 60 people at the meeting made this the largest of the meetings so far. About half of the people had some connection to the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, including friends, town rail-trail committees and opponents.

Josh Lehman, Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator at EOT, gave the introduction and set out the near-term goal, which is to identify the existing and proposed shared-use paths (including rail trails) along with on-road bicycle routes. David Loutzenheiser of Planners Collaborative reviewed the existing maps and emphasized the development of a system of interconnected bicycle facilities. Terry Reagan of Planners Collaborative moderated a Q&A session. Much of the discussion deviated from the major goal of the meeting as

speakers both for and against the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail expressed their opinions. One person noted that a key on the map delineates all proposed rail trails as "paved". This was clarified to mean a stabilized surface that could range from stone dust to asphalt. Questions about funding sources and design standards were asked.

A follow up series of meetings is planned for the spring of 2007. Information on the Bicycle Plan is available at <http://www.massbikeplan.org/index.htm>. Comment forms are at <http://www.massbikeplan.org/mapsANDgraphics.htm>

Please send questions or comments regarding Bicycle Plan Update to: David Loutzenheiser, Planners Collaborative, 273 Summer Street, Boston, MA 02210; 617.338.0018 x113 or send email to him at: massbikeplan@thecollaborative.com.

Thank You

Pedal Power Bike and Ski has supported the efforts of the Friends since our inception. They deserve our heart-felt thanks. You can show your thanks and take advantage of a 10% discount on parts by bringing a copy of this newsletter to Pedal Power at 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.



Oh my butt! Walkers, Joggers and Bikers are aching for a smooth surface trail! (photo by T. Michelman)

More Great Reading: There is much more new information on our website including the following articles:

[Adaptive Bikes Provide Greater Access to Cycling](#) by Marcy Marchello, DRC. Information on bicycles that offer people with different disabilities more stability and function can be found at <http://www.brucefreemanrailtrail.org/adaptive>

[A Glean in Their Eyes](#) by Cynthia McLain
Information on the early history of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail featuring grassroots activists Mary Tevlin and Sharon Galpin at <http://www.brucefreemanrailtrail.org/history>

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

Name _____

Street _____

City/State/Zip _____

Daytime Phone _____

Evening Phone _____

e-mail address _____

- ☐ Send my newsletter via email (include email address above)

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.

