



FRIENDS OF THE BRUCE FREEMAN RAIL TRAIL

Inside This News Letter:

Acton & Concord Updates -Page 2
 Sudbury & Framingham Updates - Page 3
 Membership Application - Page 4
 Interview with Daphne Freeman - Insert

Upcoming Friends' meetings:

**When: Tuesday, May 16, Trail walk @ 7:00 PM,
 Meeting @ 7:30 PM**

**Place: Chelmsford Cyclery, 30 Chelmsford St.
 Chelmsford, MA**

Topic: The Cape Cod Rail Trail:

Lessons Learned and the Way Ahead

**Speaker: Danny O'Brien, Rail Trail Coordinator for
 the Mass. Department of Conservation
 and Recreation (DCR).**

When: Wednesday, June 21, 6:45 pm

**Place: (Tentative) Assabet River Rail Trail,
 Wilkins Street Parking lot in Hudson**

**Agenda: Annual Summer Solstice Bike Ride;
 Retire to watering hole post bike ride.**

For details & directions go to www.brucefreemanrailtrail.org

What's Up with Phase I?

Luisa Paiewonsky, Commissioner of MassHighway, has written to the Friends the following excellent news, "Funding for [Phase I] construction has been secured. We anticipate that the construction contract will be awarded over the fall."

We eagerly await news that Phase I (Lowell, Chelmsford and Westford) has been re-designed and will be reviewed by MassHighway. The next steps are to advertise the *Bruce N. Freeman Memorial Bike Path* for construction bids and award the contract. We are looking forward to breaking ground along Phase I just about this time next spring.

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 4 along with your check. Thanks for your support!

Concord River Greenway in Lowell

The Lowell Parks and Conservation Trust (LP&CT) and the City of Lowell are collaborating on the development of the 1.75-mile section of the Concord River Greenway, which will eventually connect downtown Lowell to the Bruce Freeman RailTrail at Cross Point Towers.

LP&CT has hired both a design/engineering firm and an artist team to begin planning and designing the first section of the Concord River Greenway from Lawrence Street to Merrimack Street. EarthTech was selected to develop a conceptual design for the Greenway. A grant from the New England Fund for the Arts will be used for the development of a public art plan along the Greenway by Mags Harries and Lajos Heder. Both the art plan and the 25% design of the trail will be completed by June 2006.

The community is invited to participate in a walk of the corridor on April 30, 2006. For further information contact Jane Calvin, LP&CT Executive Director at 978-934-0030 or jalvin@lowelllandtrust.org.

Chelmsford Hosts May Meeting

We are excited to be hosting our first FBFRT meeting in Chelmsford! Please see the meeting announcement on the first page of this newsletter.

Volunteers are needed to help with planning and staffing a FBFRT booth at the 4th of July celebration in Chelmsford. Please contact Cynthia McLain cynthia.mclain@comcast.net if you'd like to help out.

Westford Town Meeting Votes on CPA Funds

Come to Town Meeting (Saturday, May 6) to vote for the BRFT Community Preservation Act warrant article!!!!

Check out the new bike lane along both sides of South Chelmsford Road, thanks to Chip Barrett's creative direction to the striping truck!

Excellent progress is happening in Westford on Phase II, the section of the trail south from Route 225 that links to Acton through Carlisle. The Parks & Recreation Commission applied for \$20,000 in CPA funding for the design phase of Westford's 0.2 miles of Phase II. The Community Preservation Committee endorsed the application unanimously in late February and will present it at Town Meeting. Many town boards and organizations have written in support of this application, including the Selectmen, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Historical Society, Westford Land Trust, and the



Westford Moves Forward (continued)

Supt. of Highways. A 3-town partnership has been formed with Carlisle and Acton for a joint contract for the design of Phase II of the trail in these three towns.

The Westford Board of Selectmen are enthusiastically supportive of the Friends' work and proposals for this section of the trail. They have: (1) appointed Selectman Chris Romeo to be the liaison for Bruce Freeman Rail Trail issues; (2) responded to a letter to the Acton Board of Selectmen agreeing to the proposed partnership with Acton and Carlisle; (3) agreed to write a letter to the Executive Office of Transportation securing a property agreement with the EOT for use of the right-of-way including access for design work and construction and eventually entering into a long-term lease agreement for this segment of Phase II of the rail trail, similar to that already contracted for Phase I. Work has begun to identify and design a potential parking area along the trail in Westford.

Please call Emily Teller (978-692-6968) if you would like to help in any way. And, if you're not a Friends member yet, please consider joining for \$10 or \$25; that small commitment will help us spread the good news of the trail's reality..

O'Naturals Night, a Fulfilling Success

O'Naturals restaurant in Acton was a lively scene for the BFRT Community Night on March 7. According to the manager, "It was insane! This was one of the busiest Community Nights we have had. People just kept coming. And the decorations were great, too."

Gerri Abrams orchestrated the evening, which featured a raffle, slide show, and helium balloons. Thanks not only to Gerri but also to the business sponsors: Pedal Power, Staples, Talbots, EMS, Soccer Stuff, Learning Express, Verizon, Ralph Jordan, Acton Framers, Rails to Trails, and of course O'Naturals.

Acton Government Ratchets-up Support

Last January the Acton Board of Selectmen (BoS) reiterated, reemphasized, and ratcheted-up their support for the BFRT. At the request of the FBFRT the BoS:

1. Appointed Selectmen Andy Magee to act as the liaison on BFRT issues. This is very important because as the BFRT moves toward design and construction, issues become more complicated and time-sensitive. Selectmen Magee already has facilitated FBFRT communication with the BoS, participated in our October 2005 clean-up and will no doubt make a great liaison.

2. Requested right-of-entry from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation for a continuation of the October 2005 trail clean-up / clearing along a portion of the BFRT right-of-way paralleling Route 2A/119 in Acton. This was a prerequisite for the FBFRT to host the March trail clearing.

3. Agreed in principal to expand the Town of Acton's design request for proposal to include small sections in Carlisle and Westford (a total of ~0.5 miles). See Westford and Carlisle updates for details on how the 3 towns will work together. The FBFRT, realizing and appreciating that Acton will take the lead on this issue, voted to donate \$5000 to the Town of Acton in

order to defray additional Staff and Counsel costs associated with coordination of this combined design effort.

4. Agreed in principal to allocate Town resources so that the Acton portion of the BFRT will be ready to take advantage of \$4.0 million in State and Federal matching funds (up to 90% of BFRT costs) in September 2007. These funds have been earmarked for the BFRT via the state Transportation Improvement Plan (or TIP) for federal fiscal year 2008. Finishing design by September 2007 gives Acton the best probability of getting those matching funds this decade.

In February the Community Preservation Committee increased the Town's initial request of \$125,000 to \$175,000 to pay for expected 25% design costs. The BFRT project had many strong supporters on the CPC including Selectmen Andy Magee and Walter Foster.

Finally there is a new volunteer opportunity! Staff a table on Earth Day April 29 in Acton. Contact Tom Michelman tmichelman@comcast.net 987-580-6190 for details.

Trail Clearing Quiz

Q: What do you get when you combine:

- 85 volunteers
- 3 weed wrenches
- 3 crock pots of John Salmi's chili
- Generous donations of food by local businesses
- An enthusiastic organizer (Tom Michelman)
- And an ever-supportive bike shop (Pedal Power)?

A: Over a mile of "manicured" trail in Acton!

The trail clearing on March 25 along Route 2A from Concord Rd. to Brook St. was an overwhelming success thanks to the many volunteers, donors, and organizers. Be sure to patronize and thank our business donors: Pedal Power Bike & Ski, Roche Bros, Subway, bagels Plus, Dunkin' Donuts, Donelan's Supermarkets, Stop & Shop, Debra's Natural Gourmet, Domino's Pizza, Ichabod's. Also many thanks to the Town of Acton and Mass. Executive Office of Transportation (EOT) for facilitating the event.

Concord to Vote Critical Funds

Supporters of the rail trail have an important role to play in Concord's 2006 Town Meeting! TM will be asked to give final approval for \$160,000 in Community Preservation Act funds for the rail trail. You are urged to attend and support Warrant Article 28, which likely will be presented on Tuesday, April 25. **Your vote is important in order to assure passage.**

The CPA funds will be used for a centerline survey and title review, in-depth environmental assessment, historic artifacts inventory, and preliminary design. When this work has been completed, the Town will be eligible to apply for state and federal funds, which are expected to pay for 90% of the design and construction of the trail.

The Friends will host three trail walks in April. On April 11 at 7:30 am ("Sunrise Walk" with coffee provided) at the rear of Sanborn School, April 19 at 10 am ("Vacation Special" with cookies for kids of all ages) at the rear of Sanborn School, and April 23 at 2 pm ("Family Fun Walk" with balloons for all) at the West Concord Train Station parking lot.



Concord Creates BFRT Committee (continued)

Last December the Board of Selectmen formed the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (BFRT) Committee. Members of the committee are Jim Terry, chair, Nancy Crowther, clerk, Harry Beyer, Gerry Boyle, Elissa Brown, Ken Miller, Barbara Pike, and Andrea Siani. The Selectman liaison is Dinny McIntyre. Among the duties and responsibilities of the Committee are "to make recommendations... concerning the design, planning and development of the rail trail... and to solicit public input concerning the development of the BFRT."

The committee has walked the trail corridor and invited comments from neighbors and others interested in the trail. It also will be working with the Planning Department to write the Request for Proposal for the CPA-funded project. You may send comments and letters of support to JimTerryJr@AOL.com.

Concord Friends will participate in a number of events during the coming months: Earth Day, Picnic in the Park, Mass Bike Festival at Verrill Farm, and the West Concord Family Festival. Volunteers are always needed and welcome. You could walk in a parade, staff a booth, inflate balloons, or just talk about the trail with visitors. Please call Barbara Pike at 978-369-0437 or Bob Armstrong at 978-369-8444 for further information. Details are also available on the rail trail website under events and volunteer opportunities.

Sudbury Issues RFP for Feasibility Study, Consultant to be Selected in May

It's been one year since Sudbury Town Meeting approved \$25,000 to study the feasibility of converting to a multi-use path the unused rail corridor from Route 20 north to the Concord Town line. During that time the Town's Rail Trail Conversion Advisory Committee (RTCAC) has met monthly to examine a wide range of issues associated with rail trail development, including wetlands and wildlife, storm water management, home sales near rail trails, and trail surfaces. The RTCAC has also received numerous citizen comments, including some from those who oppose development of the trail.

In response to these inputs, the Rail Trail Committee's Request for Proposals (RFP) places significant emphasis on environmental issues. Also, the consultants will be asked to provide costs and recommendations for both paved and unpaved (crushed limestone or stone dust) trail surfaces.

Last month, the Board of Selectmen approved the Committee's RFP for the BFRT Feasibility Study. Proposals are due in April, and it is expected that the consultant will be selected in May.

A public presentation of the conclusions of the Feasibility Study is tentatively scheduled for November 2006. Once the study is complete, funding for preliminary design will be requested from the Community Preservation Committee.

Minutes of RTCAC meetings and various rail trail documents are on the RTCAC web site: [http://www.town.sudbury.ma.us/committee_home.asp?dept=Rail Trail](http://www.town.sudbury.ma.us/committee_home.asp?dept=Rail%20Trail). For more information about the "BFRT" in Sudbury, contact Dick Williamson at 978-443-8549 or Williamson@LL.mit.edu.

In The News

On April 2nd the Boston Globe recognized our group as being instrumental in the progress of the trail:

"Beverly Woods, assistant director of the Northern Middlesex council of Governments, sees significant momentum building for the project, attributing part of it to the active support it is getting from the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, a nonprofit advocacy group founded in 2002.

"Here's a project for which a shovel of dirt has not been turned, and they have over 1,500 families participating," she said of the Friends group.

A link to the article can be found in the [EVENTS/NEWS](#) column on our web site: www.brucefreemanrailtrail.org.

Framingham Friends Support Trail Conversion

Since the rails and cross ties in Framingham have been removed by CSX, a number of people have begun walking on the newly cleared path. They have discovered a quiet sunny place away from automobile traffic, a wide path lined with trees and occasionally frequented by deer and other animals coming south along the corridor. There is a growing awareness of the benefits that a well-landscaped and surfaced path could provide, as well as correspondingly reduced concerns by many who live near the right of way. Several new users have been excited to learn that such a path could extend twenty five miles to Lowell and have begun encouraging their neighbors to support the conversion of the rail trail.

As awareness and interest in the Framingham section of the trail grows, so too does interest in the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail. The Framingham – Sudbury Trail Study being prepared by the Massachusetts Central Transportation Planning Staff is expected to be released within the next several weeks and is expected to provide a favorable recommendation to proceed. It will then be up to the Friends group to provide publicity for the report and to attract & encourage volunteers who will provide guidance, input and effort over the coming years, in order to shape the trail to fit the needs of the Town.

The Framingham FBFRT holds meetings on the fourth Monday of each month in the Memorial Building. The next meeting will be held on April 24th 7:30 P.M. All interested people are welcome. Contact Susan Haney [shaney@erols.com] or Bill Williamson [bill@wwilliam.com] for more information.

What Can We Say?

Once again the folks at Pedal Power Bike and Ski have shown their unwavering commitment to the rail trail! Please stop by and thank Joyce and John for their support of FBFRT. "Friends" may bring this newsletter to Pedal Power at 176 Great Rd in Acton for a 10% discount on parts and accessories.

Many Thanks!

*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.

- Individual \$10
- Family \$25
- Sponsor \$50
- Conductor \$100
- Engineer \$250
- RR Tycoon \$500+

*Conductor and above receive a complimentary BFRT Cap

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.





An Interview With Daphne Freeman

Emily Teller & Cynthia McLain of the Friends of the BFRT, along with Beverly Woods of the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG), recently spoke with Daphne Freeman, widow of Bruce Freeman. They wanted to hear about the person the rail trail is named after and to learn about his efforts in promoting the rail trail.

Bruce married Daphne while he was serving in the Army during World War II, and they moved to Chelmsford in the 1950's. Bruce worked as an insurance salesman for Prudential Insurance. Daphne said that to this day, she meets people who tell her "Bruce was the first one we met when we came to Chelmsford. He was so wonderful, so warm, he welcomed us and this is what we think when we think of Bruce." Early on, he was politically active and ran for the Chelmsford Board of Selectman and School Committee. Bruce ran for a seat in the State Legislature and was elected to the Mass House of Representatives in 1968. Prudential was accommodating and waived his employment contract to allow more time for his legislative work. He retired from Prudential in 1983 after 25 years, but continued to serve in the State Legislature. "He loved people. He loved to be of service...he absolutely loved what he did."

According to Daphne, Bruce "was always working for open space". He was successful in getting funding for construction of Crystal Lake in Chelmsford, following a dam breach in 1970. In 1986, the lake was renamed Freeman Lake in his honor. "He wanted so badly to get that lake taken care of so the children could swim there ... he was always looking for ways of using open space sensibly for people to enjoy."

In 1978, the Cape Cod Rail Trail was constructed and it generated considerable interest locally because of the unused Penn Central railroad track in the center of Chelmsford. Daphne told us that, although he was familiar with the Cape Cod Rail Trail, Bruce never rode on it. However, he did ride on bike paths in San Jose, CA. "[H]e went on the bike trail...[and] thought it was so nice." (And, indeed, it is! See Coyote Creek Trail at www.geocities.com/bayareaparks). According to Daphne, "He thought it was a great idea to have one in this town [Chelmsford] and adjoining towns." In 1985, Bruce began working with others to have a bike path built. The Cape Cod Rail Trail was a model for the proposed Lowell-Sudbury Rail Trail.

Rep. Freeman was diagnosed with leukemia in 1983. He began chemotherapy in 1986, after being diagnosed with another form of cancer, yet continued to work on the project. Being too ill to run for office, Bruce recommended that Carol Cleven, a School Committee member, run as a candidate for his seat. With support from Daphne, Cleven was elected to the State Legislature in 1986.

The rail trail project was passed along to Carol as one of Bruce's legacies. In her maiden speech to the House of Representatives in 1987, Rep. Cleven honored the memory of Bruce Freeman by introducing a bill to create a rail trail between Lowell and Sudbury to be named in his honor. The bill passed the House by unanimous vote, and in 1989 Gov.

Dukakis signed H.1455 into law, creating "The Bruce N. Freeman Memorial Bike Path."

In Daphne's words, "Bruce stressed that children and their parents should have somewhere that they could be safe, because the roads [weren't safe], and it's far worse now than it was when he was alive. He thought it was terribly essential to have a bike path in Chelmsford and the surrounding towns." Daphne Freeman remains a strong proponent of the rail trail named in her husband's honor. You may see her running errands around town in her Bruce Freeman Rail Trail cap. If you do, please let her know that you support the rail trail.



State Rep. Bruce N. Freeman
(Photo courtesy of Daphne Freeman)

