



# Freedom's Way

National Heritage Area Management Plan

NEWSLETTER 2 | SEPTEMBER 2013

## Freedom's Way National Heritage Area Management Plan - How Do You Provide Input?

As FWNHA moves through the management plan process your input is invaluable. Visit [www.freedomsway.org](http://www.freedomsway.org) to—

- Take a short Survey
- Make a Comment
- Learn about New Developments

Thank you! Your involvement guarantees our success.

## A Note of Thanks

On behalf of the Freedom's Way Heritage Association, I would like to thank everyone who attended our three Management Plan public meetings in May and June 2013. This public process provided valuable input for the Management Plan that will guide the organization to 2023 and beyond. Your continued involvement and interest will strengthen the planning process and inform our implementation strategy.

**This National Heritage Area is important.** The Freedom's Way National Heritage Area brings the revolutionary ideas of American freedom, democracy, conservation and social justice into the present and future. As one of nearly 50 National Heritage Areas designated by Congress, Freedom's Way was recognized as having places where natural, cultural and historical resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally important landscape. Through their resources, National Heritage Areas communicate nationally with communities to determine how to make heritage relevant to local interests and needs.

**There is power in working collaboratively.** The National Heritage Areas (NHA) program is a grassroots, community-driven approach to heritage conservation and economic development. Through public-private partnerships NHAs support historic preservation, natural resource conservation, recreation heritage tourism, and educational projects. Leveraging funding and long-term support for projects, NHA partnerships foster pride of place and an enduring stewardship ethic.

**Your input is valuable.** Your thoughts and comments help Freedom's Way define our focus and strategies, both in our management plan and in our activities going forward. Your continued involvement is needed: Visit our web site ([www.freedomsway.org](http://www.freedomsway.org)); Participate in the upcoming December public meeting; Take our survey, and Attend a program or event.

Thank you for your support! I look forward to seeing you out and about in Freedom's Way.

*Peter Webb, President, FWHHA*



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To become a member, please visit [www.freedomsway.org/friends/join.html](http://www.freedomsway.org/friends/join.html)

# A Vision for the Future: The Management Plan

## *Stewardship for the New England Landscape of American Ideas*

### **What We've Heard from Stakeholders**

Thanks to everyone who came out to our public meetings on the management plan. When Congress designated the Freedom's Way National Heritage Area (FWNHA), the legislation identified 12 required elements of the final FWNHA management plan, with one of the most critical elements being public input.

We have synthesized what we heard, grouped under a few main topics. The main thread underlying each topic was the need to take local planning, education, and programming efforts and expand them to a regional scale. One of the greatest strengths of Freedom's Way is its potential to foster regional collaboration, and we were pleased to hear suggestions about how we can help.

### **Programs that Transcend Boundaries**

There is an important need to think regionally and develop programs that span multiple municipalities. Attendees at the public meetings, well-acquainted with current FWNHA programs, brainstormed potential future initiatives. For example, some towns have had successful cemetery tours in the past, but a possible future approach may involve a cemetery tour through neighboring towns that lasts a full day or is expanded to a series of tours. Another example was provided by residents of Sudbury, who know about their town's Babe Ruth connection and wanted to hear about the sports heritage of others towns to see if there is potential for broader programs on sports history.

### **A Catalyst for Communication**

There is an overarching need to promote regional programs and resources in an integrated manner. Freedom's Way has the opportunity to be this umbrella. In addition to acting as a catalyst for expanded programming, attendees identified Freedom's Way as one of the best megaphones for broadcasting these events. Several dozen examples of newsletters, organization websites, and email lists were cited for their useful information, but we kept hearing,

"I'd love to get all this information in one place." The need for a centralized calendar of events that is well-maintained and easily accessible, including both Freedom's Way events as well as relevant events by other organizations, was often expressed. Attendees identified Freedom's Way as uniquely positioned for this role, as its geographic extent and connections can encourage the necessary cooperation among a variety of state, federal, and local groups. As a regionally-based organization, Freedom's Way is poised to expand more media attention for events throughout the region.

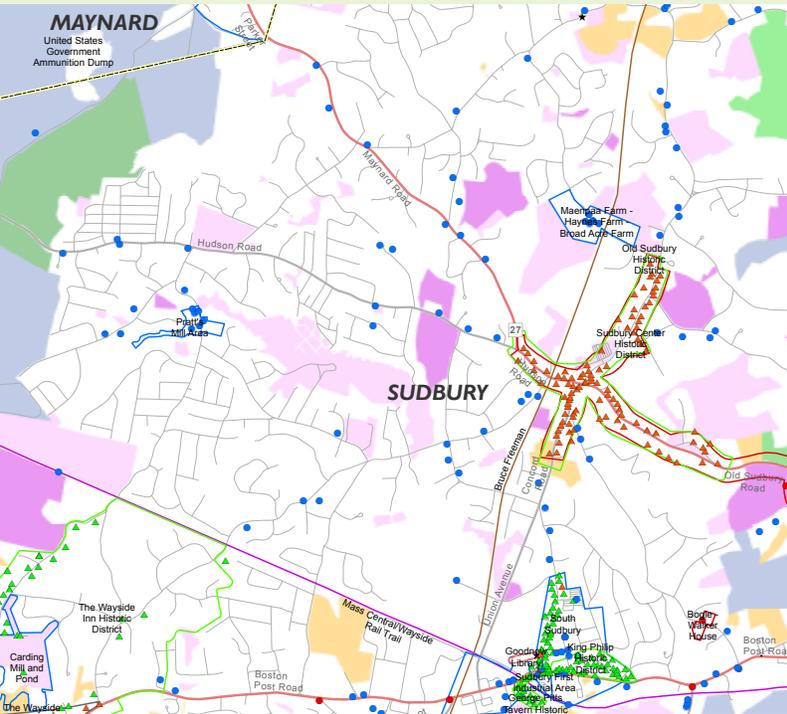
### **Promoting Resources**

One of the things we heard loud and clear is how proud you are of this region, and your desire to show it off to others. Attendees were full of suggestions about how Freedom's Way can turn the area's individual attractions into destination travel, highlighting the multiple cultural, natural, and commercial options available for full-day and weekend travelers. In addition, as one of the region's broadest entities, Freedom's Way can help organizations and governments understand the current visitor market, and the benefits of identifying potential inroads into local, regional, and interstate tourism.

Recognizing that Freedom's Way covers a large area, attendees liked the idea of establishing three to five information center "hubs" spread throughout the region, especially in locations that already get visitor traffic. At these places, visitors might find out what nearby museum has exhibits for kids, where to eat lunch, and what trails are accessible, all within a 20-minute drive. Hubs would be places to build on-the-spot itineraries at a moment's notice.

The first step in letting people know what resources are available in Freedom's Way is identifying the resources and their location. As part of the management plan requirements, maps of the region's many different cultural, natural, and civic resources are being developed to provide easy access to information. This effort requires combining

# for the Freedom's Way National Heritage Area



## Mapping the Resources of Freedom's Way

One of the major goals for the FWNHA Management Plan is to create a comprehensive inventory of natural, historic, and recreational resources of the Heritage Area. So, we are mapping the many important places of Freedom's Way in GIS (Geographical Information System).

A live GIS station facilitated by a GIS specialist from the consulting team was set up during each of the public meetings to demonstrate the database and help the public understand how GIS works. We initially thought that the main purpose of the GIS station would be to collect information about existing resources that were not already in the current database. However, we found that most people expressed a greater interest in how this technology can help organize the information we already have, and how it can be used to promote the Freedom's Way National Heritage Area. From suggested thematic layers of information to possible ways to make the maps readily available, we heard a number of ideas from people already thinking ahead to various useful applications!

previous inventories with new information gathered from state agencies, regional planning authorities, and people like you.

## Planning and Partnerships

Regional planning and broad-based partnerships are the foundations a successful heritage area. Stakeholders and members of the public identified a need for an organizing force that helps protect and promote the characteristics that make this area special. Among the many discussions we heard a need for:

- A centralized clearinghouse for towns that have implemented, or are considering, non-traditional planning initiatives focused on livable communities and/or historic resources.
- Supporting and promoting the programs and projects that celebrate Freedom's Way's continuing heritage, such as the local farmers that are vital to many of our towns' economies.
- Developing innovative strategies for economic development and heritage tourism on a regional scale.

As a result of the Stakeholder meeting and the public meetings a number of things became clear. A great sense of pride exists in this area coupled with a strong desire to work to promote it to others. Agencies, organizations and local citizens quickly recognized the opportunity for Freedom's Way to be the catalyst for centralized communication of programs, events and resources. The potential to take residents and visitors beyond the boundaries of their town to a larger, more regional, audience could prove vital to economic development and regional tourism. As many pointed out, Freedom's Way's ability to generate partnerships that involve a variety of like-minded organizations provides a stronger voice when approaching agencies such as the MBTA. In a sense, the collaboration, exchange of ideas among seemingly diverse organizations, and the friendships formed during the meetings bore witness to what Freedom's Way could accomplish on a much larger scale as a National Heritage Area.

## Stories We Heard

### Did You Know... Stories from Freedom's Way

In order to find out more about connections throughout the region, we asked meeting attendees to tell us briefly, on an index card, about local stories that others might not know. People responded with dozens of stories about individuals, places, and traditions. From the earliest settlers in NH who were connected to those in MA through deep family ties, to the 20th century efforts to encourage more thoughtful development, conversations with attendees kept identifying different ways in which these "local" stories contribute to a broader regional tale. Here are just a few:

**Did You Know...that there is a ghost town in Freedom's Way?** In the early 18th century, the town of Monson, NH was established between what is now Hollis and Milford. Plagued by poor cultivation conditions and insufficient infrastructure, the town dissolved only 23 years after its official incorporation in 1737. Today, you can still visit this abandoned town site, which provides an archaeological snapshot into this Colonial settlement. The site was acquired by the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests beginning in 1998, largely due to the enthusiasm of local residents, in order to save the town site from development and open it up for recreational use and study.

**Did You Know...that the first golf course open to African Americans was in Stow, MA and that their first national tournament was played here in 1926?** At a time when segregation barred African Americans from several area clubs, Stow Acres Country Club (then called Mapledale) was open to all. Wealthy Boston merchant Charles Cox constructed the nine-hole course in the early 1920s and hired African American Robert Hawkins to be the first course manager. Several oral histories have given accounts of Mapledale's early days and the first tournament, as well as about Hawkins and his family.

**Did You Know...that Shirley, MA was home to author and preeminent urban planner Hermann Field?** Born in Zurich, Switzerland, Field was imprisoned by the Communist authority in Poland after World War II while inquiring after his brother, Noah. Hermann and his cellmate kept themselves alert by writing books while serving their sentences. Decades later, Hermann and his wife Kate followed up with a book about their experiences "Trapped in the Cold War". While imprisoned, Field developed an abiding interest in sustainable development. In 1973 he established a multi-disciplinary planning program at Tufts University that became the Department of Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning. Today, the program is partially endowed by the Hermann and Kate Field Education Fund.



## Freedom's Way Programs

### FREEDOM'S WAY ANNUAL MEETING & SLEEPY HOLLOW CEMETERY TOUR

October 20, 2013 • 2:00-3:15 PM

#### Sleepy Hollow Cemetery & Concord Art Association, Concord, MA

*Sleepy Hollow Cemetery Tour - 2:00 PM*

Explore the grounds and history of one of the first American cemeteries designed with a park-like setting. Visit the graves of Patriots, authors, and history-makers as your tour guides Jayne Gordon, Corinne Smith, and Lou Sideris, share stories about these figures of the past.

*Reception & Annual Meeting - 3:30 PM*

Join members and friends for light refreshments and the Annual Meeting held at the *Concord Art Association*. Our host destination combines the past with modern art exhibits and programs found inside the historic *John Ball*



Author's Ridge, Sleepy Hollow Cemetery, 1930s postcard, Courtesy of Tish Hopkins.

*House*. This preserved and readapted building has witnessed three centuries of people and historic happenings.

For directions and to register, visit: [www.freedomsway.org/friends/news.html#2013annualmeeting](http://www.freedomsway.org/friends/news.html#2013annualmeeting)

### IN THOREAU'S FOOTSTEPS: WESTWARD I GO FREE

September 19, 2013 • 6:30 - 8:00PM



Corinne Smith, author and naturalist

*Bigelow Public Library, 54 Walnut Street, Clinton, MA*

Henry David Thoreau's longest journey is one that is often overlooked when for two months in 1861, Thoreau and Horace Mann Jr., traveled from

Massachusetts to Minnesota and back, including a pass-through of Clinton. Author and naturalist Corinne H. Smith will take you on a visual travelogue depicting their routes, the sights they saw and wrote about, and what you can see in those same places today.

In partnership with the Bigelow Public Library, this FREE program is partially funded by a grant from the Clinton Cultural Council, supported by the Mass Cultural Council.

For more information go to:

[www.freedomsway.org/projects/thoreau.html](http://www.freedomsway.org/projects/thoreau.html)

### FREEDOM'S WAY CONVERSATION: AMERICA'S BACKYARD LIBRARY

September 22, 2013 • 2:00-4:00PM

*Milford Town Hall, One Union Square, Milford, NH*

Join Jim Moran, the American Antiquarian Society's Director of Outreach, in the beautifully restored Milford Town Hall to explore unique items from the New Hampshire towns of Amherst, Nashua, Hollis, Brookline, Greenville, Mason, Milford, and New Ipswich.

The American Antiquarian Society, a national library whose collections comprise over 4 million items from throughout the United States, Canada, and the British West Indies, is located in Worcester, MA. The society holds many historical items related to the history of many Freedom's Way's communities.

Continue the conversation during a reception that starts at 3:30PM. This program is offered in partnership with the Milford Historical Society ([www.milfordhistory.org](http://www.milfordhistory.org)) and Souhegan Valley Chamber of Commerce. To learn more, visit <http://freedomsway.org/friends/news.html>

## Partner Programs

### BEAVER BROOK ASSOCIATION

September 28<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> • 11:00AM-5:00PM

#### *Fall Festival & Nature Arts Show*

Beaver Brook Nature Center in Hollis NH invites you to their 33rd annual Fall Festival and Nature Art Show. This free event offers ongoing activities including live animal demonstrations, nature crafts for children, a honeybee talk/demonstration, live music, and homemade food for sale. The Maple Hill Gardeners sell original arrangements and wreaths made from the dried harvest of their gardens. Choose from two days of things to do from the pumpkin trail, spinning demonstrations, and art show to presentations by Eyes on Owls or sing-along with the Harmonica Saints.

For directions and a full weekend schedule, visit:

[www.beaverbrook.org/welcome/32nd-annual-nature-art-show-call-for-artists](http://www.beaverbrook.org/welcome/32nd-annual-nature-art-show-call-for-artists)

### THE OXBOW NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

*Visitor Contact Station, Hospital Road, Devens, MA*

This fall, outdoor enthusiasts and families will soon be enjoying a new Visitor Contact Station complete with a gathering space, a universally accessible trail to an amphitheater, and a connection to a newly opened trail. River access is still in construction at this time. However, once complete, riverside parking with a car-top boat launch will provide a new recreational opportunity for visitors to enjoy. Accomplished primarily with Federal grants and in partnership with MassDevelopment and Devens Enterprise Commission, the site offers amenities for visitors to this special national wildlife refuge that stretches for eight miles along the Nashua River and covers 1,667 acres of wetlands, forests, and trails.

For directions and to learn more, visit:

[www.fws.gov/refuge/oxbow/](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/oxbow/)



Marcia Wilson's Eyes On Owls presentation. Photo © Mark Wilson / WILDSHOT.



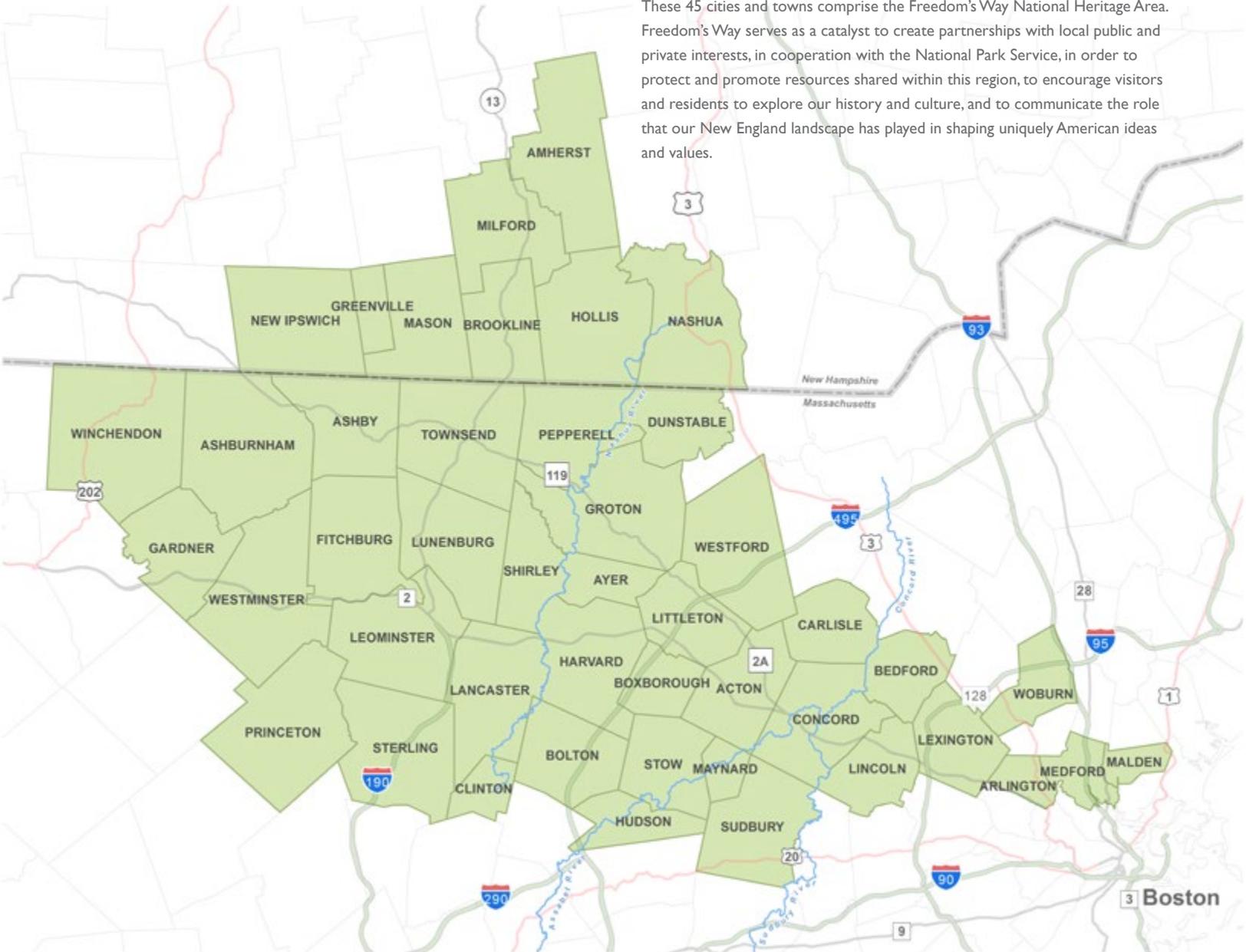
Oxbow NWR Visitor Contact Station soon to open. Photo © Oxbow NWR.

### FWHA Welcomes New Executive Director

The Freedom's Way Board of Directors are pleased to welcome interim Executive Director, Patrice Todisco, who will oversee our management planning process. Patrice is an experienced professional with more than 20 years of executive leadership in the public and non-profit sectors, most recently with the Boston Esplanade Association and the Boston Harbor Association. She holds an advanced degree in landscape architecture from Harvard University and is active in the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS). We feel certain her leadership and knowledge will help shape our interpretive plan as well as ensure the success and timeliness of the management planning process.

## Freedom's Way National Heritage Area

These 45 cities and towns comprise the Freedom's Way National Heritage Area. Freedom's Way serves as a catalyst to create partnerships with local public and private interests, in cooperation with the National Park Service, in order to protect and promote resources shared within this region, to encourage visitors and residents to explore our history and culture, and to communicate the role that our New England landscape has played in shaping uniquely American ideas and values.



### What's Next?

Over the next few months, we will be preparing the draft management plan that will be the subject of a public meeting on December 4<sup>th</sup> in Devens, MA and will be available online before the meeting for review and comment.

The final management plan will be produced in December 2013 for submission to the Secretary of the Interior for review and approval. We anticipate that the final plan will be approved early in 2014.

### Take the Survey and Share your Thoughts

Your continued input is important as we draft the management plan and identify ways to improve our communication with members and visitors. We hope you will take time to complete a short survey with a series of questions about activities in the Freedom's Way National Heritage Area.

Please go to: [www.freedomsway.org](http://www.freedomsway.org)

For more information about Freedom's Way, the management plan, and National Heritage Areas, please go to:

**Freedom's Way**

[www.freedomsway.org](http://www.freedomsway.org)

**Management Plan**

[www.freedomsway.org/mgmt/management-plan.html](http://www.freedomsway.org/mgmt/management-plan.html)

**National Heritage Areas**

[www.nps.gov/heritageareas](http://www.nps.gov/heritageareas)



We invite you to take a *short survey*, and share your thoughts with us.



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