

ARTICLE 47: Preserve Concord's Reformatory Branch Trail

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Presented at the FinCom Public Hearing on 3/3/2022

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To determine whether the Town will recommend, to the owners of the various portions of the Reformatory Branch Trail in Concord and to the individuals and entities and all other parties responsible for the care thereof, that the Trail continue to be maintained in an unpaved natural condition for walking, hiking, jogging, dog walking, nature immersion, nature observation, photography, and cycling; ...

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... and that any future changes made to drainage, to features affecting individuals with reduced mobility, or to other aspects of the Trail, be done in a way that causes the least injury possible to existing trees, does not clear-cut trees to make the trail wider, and preserves to the greatest extent possible the existing natural characteristics of the Trail; or take any other action relative thereto.

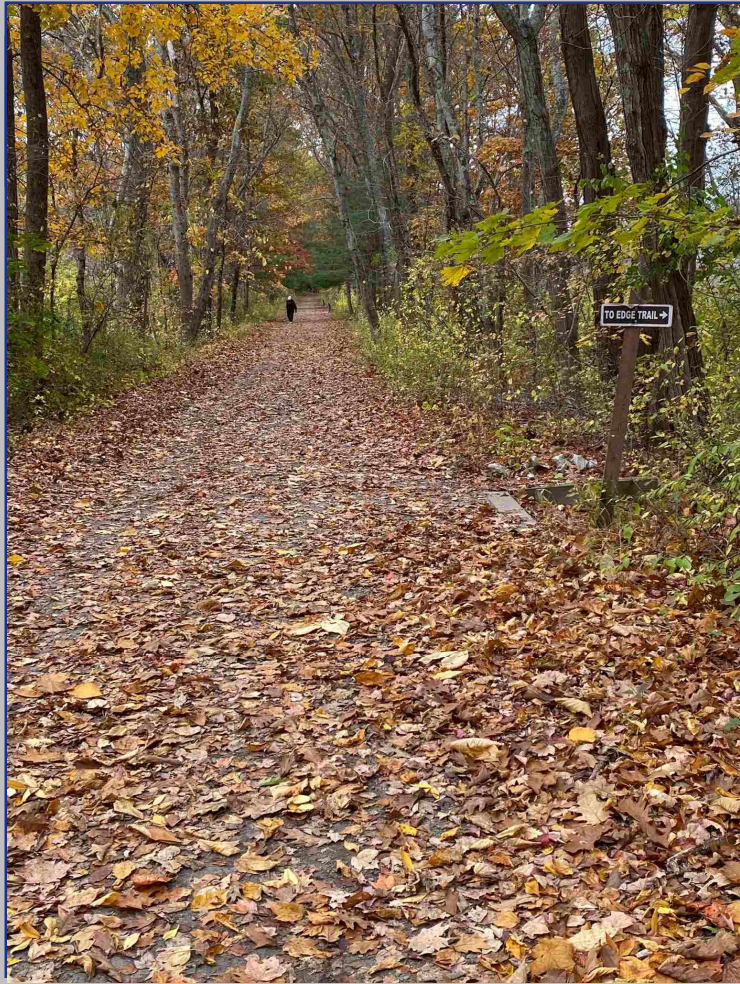
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Concord's Reformatory Branch Trail is a gem of natural beauty and endangered species habitat.

This Town asset is currently enjoyed by a wide range of users, including walkers, joggers, dog walkers, bird watchers, and cyclists of all levels and ages.

In light of recent threats to the survival of this exemplar of a mixed-use natural trail, this article reaffirms the Town's commitment to protect and preserve it.



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Concord's Reformatory Branch Trail is maintained by the Concord Trails Committee and Trail Stewards, with assistance from the Division of Natural Resources and the Department of Public Works

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Concord's 1995 Bikeways Task Force Report stated
“... the goal should be the reservation
of this trail for passive pedestrian use”
for reasons that are still true:

Impact on endangered species habitat
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service concerns for capacity

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The trail today is multiuse and preferred in its current form by pedestrians, joggers, dog walkers, hikers, and many cyclists of all levels of experience

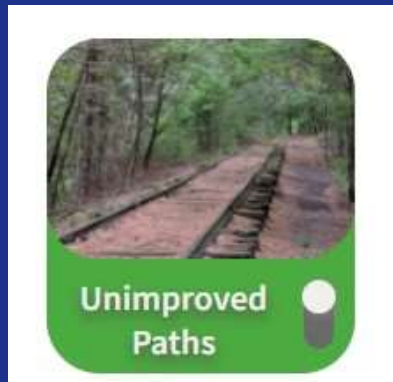
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Concord's Reformatory Branch Trail has been discussed outside of Concord, by special interests who want to make it an extension of the Minuteman Bikeway.

These discussions do not prioritize protection of wildlife and preservation of the natural characteristics of the Trail that provide nature immersion and nature education benefits.

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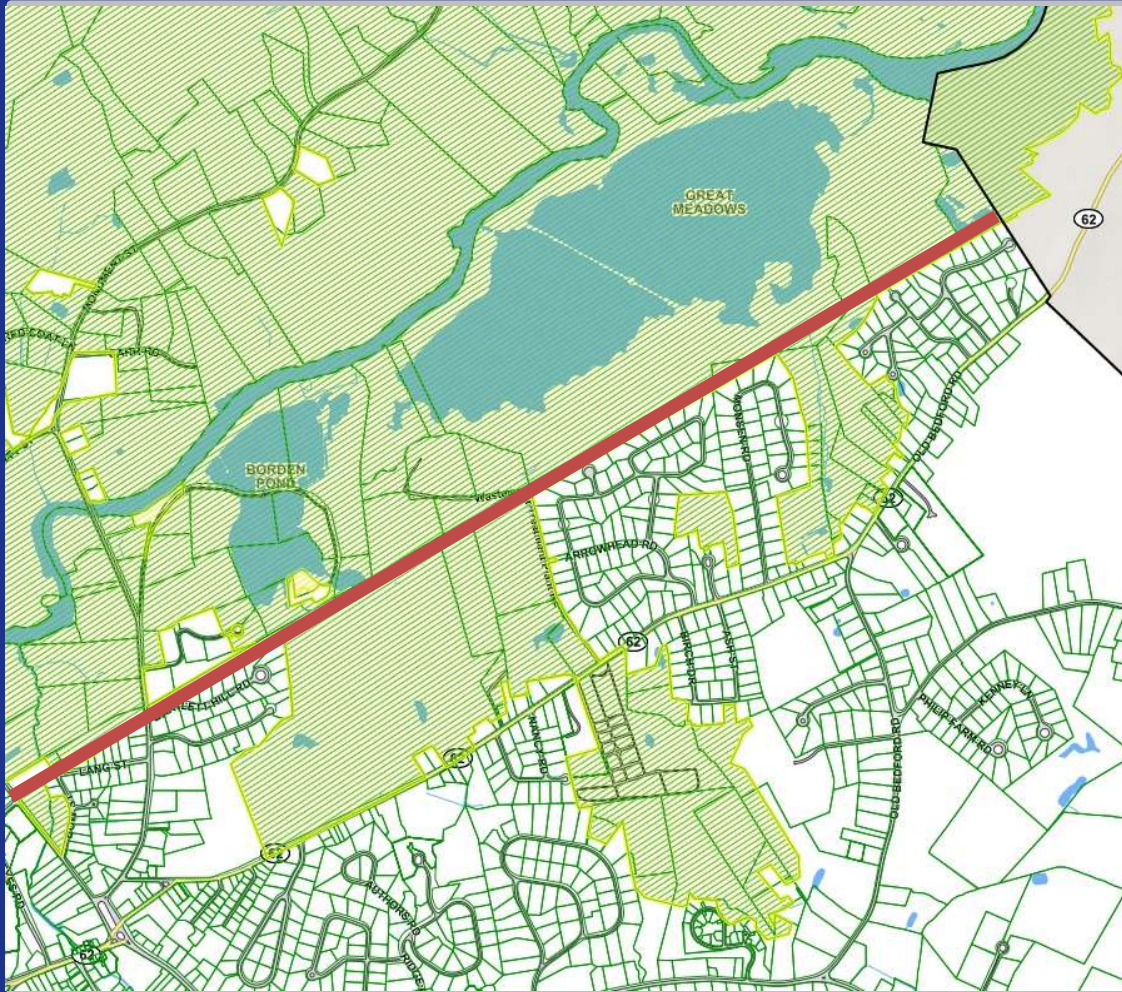
The Metropolitan Area Planning Council, on its “Trailmap” of regional trails, labels Concord's Reformatory Branch Trail with the inaccurate “Unimproved Paths” image on the left instead of the more accurate “Natural Surface Footway” on the right.



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The November 4, 2020 meeting of the Bedford Bicycle Advisory Committee included a collaborative discussion with Concord participants on strategies to extend the Minuteman Bikeway into Concord Center.

“We will get support in Bedford if we can promise that it will go into Concord.”



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Red shows the general
location of Concord's
Reformatory Branch Trail.

Green shows the extent
of Rare Species Habitat

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More information can
be found at
savetherbt.com

Blanding's Turtle



Britton's Violet
(Wikipedia)



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**This trail in its present state teaches us about
Nature's powers of recovery and renewal.**

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