



# Freedom's Way National Heritage Area

Summer 2009

## It's Official: Freedom's Way has National Designation

*By Marge Darby*

The 111th Congress passed the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act of 2009, which included over 160 separate bills relating to public lands, national parks, historic sites and battlefields, conservation and wilderness designation, national heritage areas and corridors, and historic trails.

Freedom's Way Heritage Area national designation was part of the bill, which was subsequently signed into law by President Barak Obama on March 23rd.

### Wow! Now, what's next?

Freedom's Way Heritage Association is identified by the federal legislation as the cooperating entity charged with partnering with the National Park Service to develop a management plan for the Heritage Area.

This is a tall order, and we will be calling upon townspeople, businesses, liaisons, historians, and conservationists to help us with this project. It must be a balanced plan, with consideration for all stakeholders and their interests.

Since the beginning, we have sought this designation for you, for your towns, your special resources and your history. It is also America's.

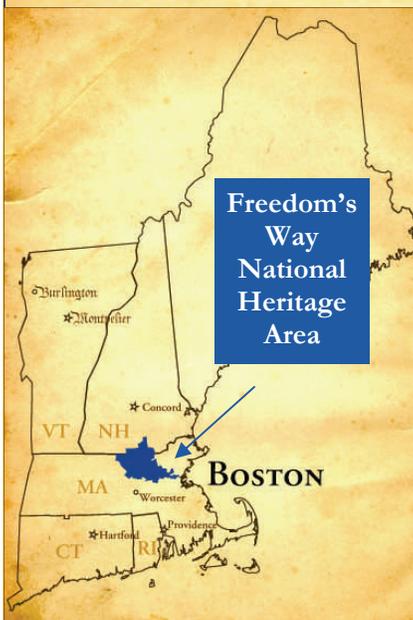
We are proud that the designation has been accomplished, but there is much more that needs to be done and we are calling upon each and every one of you to contribute your ideas and your time to make this effort a success.

Finally, whatever federal dollars are set aside for this work must be locally matched so we will continue to need your financial support. Last year, we received a small earmark from the Massachusetts legislature that was eventually vetoed by the Governor in order to balance the state budget. But we still need to pay the phone bills, keep computers working, buy paper and stamps and in general run an office.

Our local towns are tightening their belts and finding our non-profit dues hard to justify. The current economic crisis has hurt everyone and our revenues are falling off. Yet we must continue.

Do consider how you can help. We are a 501(c)3 tax-deductible organization and your donations and memberships are needed. The demands of the federal legislation will increase the office work, but you will be the beneficiaries in numerous ways. With our newly expanded website, members benefits will be expanded, in addition to accessing materials to help accomplish local goals, your organizations will be able to publicize events. And much, much more.

So dear friends, the long and the short of it is please volunteer, please give what you can, and please help us raise money to do our work..



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## What is a National Heritage Area Management Plan?

Freedom's Way Heritage Association is identified by the federal legislation as the cooperating entity charged with partnering with the National Park Service to develop a management plan for the Heritage Area.

A management plan provides a foundation to guide programs, tell stories, and establish partnerships. The plan sets priorities for actions that enhance visitor



understanding and appreciation of the area, provide for resource stewardship, and develop partnerships to assist the area's constituents and the public, for the next 10 to 15 years.

The planning process focuses on why the national heritage area was recognized by Congress; the result is a collective vision of the resource conditions and visitor experiences that will best fulfill the needs of the community and partners, and the purpose of the national heritage area over time.

### An Environment Assessment is Part of the Plan

The environmental assessment that accompanies the plan analyzes the national heritage area as a whole and as part of a larger ecological, cultural, and socioeconomic system. As part of this analysis, current public use patterns and the condition of sensitive cultural and natural resources will be evaluated. This comprehensive approach includes coordination with national heritage area partners, other land managing agencies, and the public to help ensure that the decisions made through this management planning effort are widely supported and sustainable over time.

National heritage area management plans guide constituents and partners to focus their activities on achieving the conditions and experiences prescribed by the plan. However, they generally stop short of directing specific activities, recognizing that constituents and partners may have to continuously adapt their activities based on changing information or influences.

### As directed by Congress the FWNHA management plan will include:

1. **An inventory** of the resources in the heritage area that includes properties that relate to the purposes of the heritage area and that should be protected because of their significance, and an assessment of cultural landscapes within the heritage area.
2. **Provisions** for the protection, interpretation, and enjoyment of the resources of the heritage area;
3. **An interpretation** plan for the heritage area;
4. **Program for implementation** of the management plan that includes actions to be carried out and the identification of existing and potential sources of funding for implementing the plan.

## Freedom's Way Heritage Association

John Ott, President

Jerry Van Hook,  
Vice President

Mary Whitney Treasurer

Meg Bagdonas,  
Secretary

Marge Darby,  
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Board Member Emeritus

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Freedom's Way Heritage Association Serves the Communities of Acton, Arlington, Ashburnham, Ashby, Ayer, Bedford, Bolton, Boxborough, Carlisle, Clinton, Concord, Devens, Dunstable, Fitchburg, Gardner, Groton, Harvard, Hudson, Lancaster, Leominster, Lexington, Lincoln, Littleton, Lunenburg, Malden, Maynard, Medford, Pepperell, Princeton, Shirley, Sterling, Stow, Sudbury, Townsend, Westford, Westminster, Winchendon and Woburn in Massachusetts. Amherst, Brookline, Greenville, Hollis, Mason, Milford, Nashua and New Ipswich in New Hampshire.

## President's Message



*John Ott  
President*

It has been 15 years since Freedom's Way was first formed. The bill passed by Congress creating the Freedom's Way National Heritage Area and eight other National Heritage Areas, validated what so many have worked toward for so long, the creation of a vehicle by which citizens, communities, private organizations and a variety of interests can cooperate to work together to preserve the natural, cultural historic and recreational resources that are important to them and to future generations.

We have worked with many federal, state and local agencies to reach this point. The National Park Service under whose guidance this heritage area program was developed; the US Department of Fish and Wildlife for assistance on issues relating to educational and environmental matters. The Massachusetts Development Corporation generously provides Freedom's Way space here at Devens. There have also been other valued agencies like the Massachusetts Historical Commission and the Department of Conservation and Recreation whose collaboration and support of our various programs have been invaluable.

For fifteen year we've built our network of support with friends, institutions and public and private agencies in Massachusetts and New Hampshire necessary to firmly establish that the reasons to develop this Heritage Area were sound. This planning strategy encourages all participants to agree on and prioritize programs and projects that recognize, preserve our local treasures.

FWHA, through its ten years of public programming, workshops, publications, community activities, tours and collaborative initiatives, made many friends and carried its message into the town halls, libraries and historical societies of 45 towns and cities in two states.

This done, we now must move forward and create a management plan for the area enlisting both public and private support of all types. It is said that anything is possible with money and friends. Like many non profit organizations we have lots of one and a lot less of the other, but our time has come.

*"Our  
time  
has  
come!"*

**FWHA's  
Strollin' & Rollin'  
Comes to Littleton, MA  
September 28  
to  
October 3, 2009**

*Partnering with the  
Littleton Historical Commission &  
Littleton Historical Society*

**Historic Tours for Everyone**



*Old Littleton Railroad Depot building, now privately owned*

Freedom's Way National Heritage Association's annual Strollin' & Rollin' self-guided heritage tour program will be in Littleton, MA on September 28– October 3. Featuring historic walking and bicycling and even driving tours of the town, Strollin' & Rollin' is a great way to become acquainted with the many heritage resources in our own neighborhood.

For more information, call FWHA, 978-772-3654.

## Reading About Freedom's Way on [www.FreedomsWay.org](http://www.FreedomsWay.org)

*By Milly Chandler*

For those curious about background stories about Freedom's Way and to understand the range of characteristics that comprise this heritage area, we are compiling a bibliography for your use. It will contain both children's and adult sources and will include printed materials available in bookstores, town libraries and in many school libraries.

Readings from the Freedom's Way's histories and biographies includes some of the greatest tales of our nation's past. For some of us, it is thrilling to be living just a short distance from where a dramatic event occurred. One can learn how these Freedom's Way towns came to be, what they looked like, and who were those who made its history. For those who come to visit the area, they are surprised to be standing in those sites they read about in school. We hope this bibliography would be used to prepare visitors in advance of their visits.

The bibliography will include natural histories, picto-

rials and guidebooks, about farmland, forests, mountains, rivers, valleys, vistas, viewsheds and other landscapes. There will be books about conservation efforts to preserve open land, protect old-growth forests, and encourage local farming.

Town histories will be added as we locate them as well as tales of local visionaries and inventors. Who are your town heroes? We welcome suggestions of printed material about them. You will find the heroes of the Revolutionary War and the stories of the towns' growth into urban communities. Industrial buildings that formed around the rivers remind us of their former use as they are converted to modern needs. There are books about the environment and preservation efforts, and those materials about the social ideas that led to social justice.

We hope this bibliography will be revealing and will answer the question often posed, "What is Freedom's Way?"

### WANTED: Volunteers to Help Portray Freedom's Way

Through the partnership between the MA Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and Freedom's Way, we have permission to use the digital images of the 22 communities that were photographed during the 2007-08 Heritage Inventory surveys. Most of these lovely photographs are not identified and we need help to identify them for cataloging. We also have about 1000 slides to be digitized and cataloged.

Because our desire for images is limitless, we also invite you to submit digitized and identified images to add to our collection with appropriate credit to be given when used. Contact us at [mail@freedomsway.org](mailto:mail@freedomsway.org).

### An Early Environmentalist: archy

*By Marge Darby*

Wrist surgery and recuperation earlier this year put me out of commission for a few weeks. Most of that time I found using capital letters was too hard to manage while typing with one hand. Someone mentioned e.e. cummings, the poet, but I felt more like another fictional poet, archy. The brainchild of Don Marquis, an editorial writer for the New York Sun, archy, a cockroach first appeared in print in Marquis's Sun Dial column in March of 1916.

The cockroach, was a writer and poet and appeared regularly. Supposedly, archy typed his columns by jumping on the keys. Since he couldn't hit a shift and letter key at the same time, he had to use only lower case. Undaunted by his unique handicap, archy filled Marquis' columns with his cockroach's witty observations of human behavior.

I decided to look archy up again. I find he was an early environmentalist as these excerpts of a poem written in 1935 called "what the ants are saying" show.

america was once a paradise  
of timberland and stream  
but it is dying because of the greed  
and money lust of a thousand little kings  
who slashed the timber all to hell  
and would not be controlled

and changed the climate  
and stole the rainfall from posterity  
and it wont be long now  
it wont be long  
till everything is desert  
from the alleghenies to the rockies

the deserts are coming  
the deserts are spreading  
the springs and streams are drying up  
one day the mississippi itself  
will be a bed of sand  
ants and scorpions and centipedes  
shall inherit the earth..."

And we assume cockroaches too. As far as my wrist is concerned, "there's a dance in the old dame yet."

## The Nature of Apples

An American icon, the apple is the focus of **The Nature of Apples**, an exhibition at Fruitlands Museum co-sponsored by Freedom's Way Heritage Association now through November 30, 2009. The show presents both the beauty of the fruit and its role in the agricultural economy of the Nashoba Valley.

The apple's role in regional agriculture are highlighted in the exhibition. Apple farms have long been a staple of the area, yet as development and economic pressures have come to bear, apple orchards have disappeared from the region at an alarming rate. Freedom's Way Heritage Association is documenting this vanishing way of life through an oral history program. The Farmer's Voices of the Valley's apple growers resonate through **The Nature of Apples**.



## The Freedom's Way Oral History Project

Freedom's Way Heritage Association and Fruitlands Museum are grateful for the funding for this project from the Bruce J. Anderson Foundation. Bruce J. Anderson was a serious and idealistic young man who cared deeply about the problems he saw around him. The change in our communities and the loss of our farmland, particularly orchards, would have been as important to him as to all of us.

The purpose of the Apple Orchard Oral History project is to identify the farming heritage of the towns in Freedom's Way and to document through personal experiences the changes that have occurred over the years.

The project creates an archival history of the region by conducting interviews of local farmers and farming families, focusing on orchards as one of the largest agricultural industries within the region. We cannot change the trends and forces that are making it harder and harder for farmers to continue to survive, but we can document their stories so they can be preserved and made available to future generations.

In order to keep the current project within manageable bounds, Freedom's Way is focusing on orchards in the following towns: Ayer, Harvard, Groton, Pepperell, Shirley and Townsend. You may have a particular interest in specific towns or apple farms, especially because the information is in immediate danger of being lost due to retiring or elderly farmers, or farms threatened by development or sale.

Our goal is to set up as many interviews as we can conduct over the next year. We have developed two kits for interviewers to borrow. The interviews will be voluntary and permission must be granted by the participants. The kits will contain permission slips that must be signed before proceeding. We will be providing town maps to interviewers, in order to trace current and past farm boundaries. Interviews should last no longer than about 90 minutes including introduction, signing of permission slips, and a chance to relax with the interview subject.

All recordings and transcripts will be stored at the Freedom's Way Offices. Permission to view the transcripts or listen to the recordings will be by appointment of the office staff. We currently have new copying capacity to copy related maps, deed, and family pictures. We do not want to own these items, the goal will be a virtual collection.

In addition to the history of the orchards and the family stories, we are interested in the present and future. How are these farmers coping with the global economy, marketing, labor, environmental, tax issues, etc.? What do they see as the future for farmers?



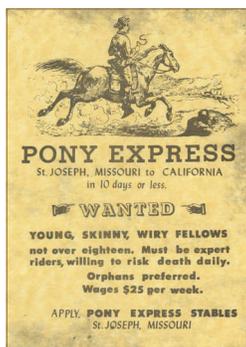
***"We cannot change the trends and forces that are making it harder and harder for farmers to continue to survive, but we can document their stories so they can be preserved and made available to future generations."***

## We're Going Green so We Won't be Seeing Red

Back in 1994, the price of a first class postage stamp was \$.29. Also, a gallon of gasoline was \$1.55, Nelson Mandela was elected president of South Africa, the Eurotunnel opened between England and France, NAFTA went into effect, and the IRA declared a cease fire in Northern Ireland.

This brief history lesson tells us that in the last 15 years, prices have increased and the world has changed. Back in 1995, only 16 million people worldwide had access to the internet. Today that number is 1.6 billion or nearly 25% of the world population use the internet for information and communication.

While Freedom's Way focuses on our cultural heritage, we need to keep up with the times. We can now send you instant email messages with news, events and resources. You can visit our website 24/7 for all the information and resources we offer. Just as letters were



once delivered by horse rider, our emerging technology sends mail via cyberspace.

This is your last printed Freedom's Way National Heritage Area newsletter. If you are a member, and we have your current email address, you will receive a copy of our full-color newsletter directly to you. If you aren't a member (and shouldn't you be?), you can always catch up on the news via our website, [www.freedomsway.org](http://www.freedomsway.org).

This is not a decision taken lightly, but paper, ink and postage cost money we need to spend elsewhere on programs to benefit this region and our members. Paper newsletters mailed to your doorstep are costly, wasteful and time consuming.

It's time to get off the paper trail and onto the electronic highway.

See you on the web!

## Now is the Time to Step Up and Join Freedom's Way

There is no other organization in this region that brings such diverse interest as museums, cultural institutions, government officials, businesses, and educators, to capitalize on our regional features. Our cultural heritage resources are plentiful, but the larger community may not have grasped its potential. If you have been receiving this newsletter without ever making a contribution, consider changing your status now -- we too are tightening our belts and we have few choices. With your help, we can do this together.

Renewal     New Membership

### Annual Membership Categories

- Individual \$35
- Family/Nonprofits/Community \$50
- Business Roundtable \$100

### Supporting Membership Categories

- Minuteman \$250-\$499
- Thoreau Associate \$500-\$999
- Patriot's Circle \$1,000-\$4,999
- Golden Eagle \$5,000 & up

### Please Print

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Town: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

*Important for email newsletter and other FWHA information*

*Thank You!*

# *A Celebration Worth the Wait*



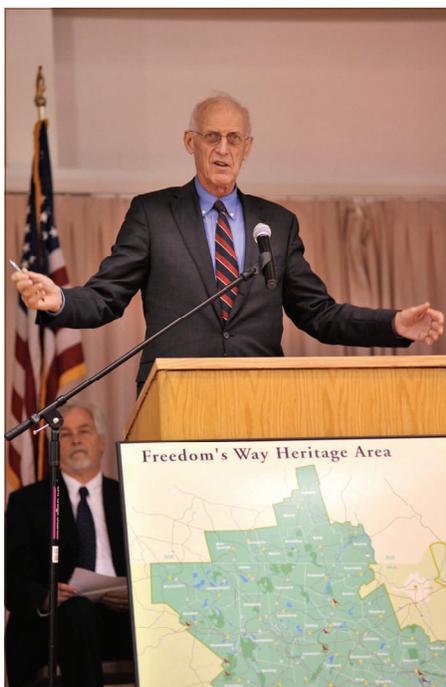
*FWHA founders Milly Chandler (left) and Marge Darby*

On June 22nd, Freedom's Way hosted a celebration of the national designation at the Shriver Job Corps Center at Devens, MA.

On hand to mark the occasion were Congressman John Olver, sponsor of FWHA's legislation, Congresswoman Niki Tsongas, MA Senator James Eldridge, Former MA Senator Pam Resor, Fitchburg Director of Development David Streb, Lou Sideris, Chief Interpreter for the National Parks Service at Minute Man National Park and Folklorist Dillon Bustin.



*From, the left, Congressman John Olver, Congresswoman Niki Tsongas, MA Senator James Eldridge*



*Congressman John Olver*



*Marion Stoddard, founder of the Nashua River Watershed Association*



*Clockwise from left rear: Congresswoman Niki Tsongas, FWHA President John Ott, Congressman John Olver, FWHA founders Marge Darby & Milly Chandler*



*Lou Sideris, Chief Interpreter, Minute Man National Park Service*

*Freedom's Way*

*Heritage*

*Association*

The Landscape of  
Visionaries & Experimenters

Serving 45 Communities in  
Massachusetts  
&  
New Hampshire



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*Ask Freedom's Way*

## So, what is a National Heritage Area?

A heritage area is both a place and a concept.

Physically, heritage areas are regions with concentrations of significant natural, scenic, cultural, historic and recreational resources. Most of the properties in a heritage area are in private ownership and will remain in private ownership.

Heritage areas are places known for their unique culture and identity, as well as for being good places to live in or visit. As a concept, heritage areas are partnerships where residents, businesses, local governments, and state and federal agencies collaborate to create more livable and economically sustainable regions.

Expanding on traditional approaches to resource stewardship, Heritage areas support large-scale, community centered initiatives that connect local citizens to the preservation and planning process.

A National Heritage Area is not a unit of the National Park Service, nor is any land owned or managed by the NPS. National Park Service involvement is always advisory in nature

Want to learn more about Freedom's Way National Heritage Area? Call 978-772-3654 or send an email to: mail@freedomsway.org. Volunteers are always welcome!