# Freedom's Way NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

# 2024-2025

## YEARS IN REVIEW

MIDDLESEX FELLS RESERVATION, MALDEN, MA

www.freedomsway.org

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Elizabeth Warren (MA)
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Maggie Goodlander (NH 2nd - 2025)
Annie Kuster (NH 2nd- 2024)
Jim McGovern (MA 2nd)
Seth Moulton (MA 6th)
Lori Trahan (MA 3rd)

**STAFF**
Patrice Todisco
Executive Director
Desiree Demski-Hamelin
Deputy Director

# A Message from Leadership

We are delighted to share with you the Freedom's Way National Heritage Area (FWNHA) Fiscal Years 2024 and 2025 Annual Report, detailing the organization's impact from October 1, 2023, through September 30, 2025.

Perhaps it was inevitable that the American Revolution would be a primary focus of the organization's work during this period, as the forty-five communities within the Heritage Area were at the epicenter of the earliest debates about, and the first battles that would confer, independence to the colonies. To provide a foundation for understanding those events and their impact on the region, a series of projects and programs designed to commemorate the semiquincentennial under the auspices of **Freedom's Way 250** took place.

Including **Revolutionary Stories, Curated Themed Itineraries,** and **How We Remember: Revolutionary War Monuments, Memorials and Markers in the Freedom's Way National Heritage Area**, Freedom's Way 250 continues in 2026 with a reimagining of the award-winning program, **Declaring Independence: Then & Now.** Designed to reveal how individuals within communities debated and responded to the question of independence, **Declaring Independence: Then & Now...Reimagined** will reawaken the region's civic spirit by linking care, community and shared responsibility through history, performance and dialogue—from 1776 to 2026 and beyond. Enthusiasm among participating communities for this program is high, and we look forward to sharing the experience with you. Don't miss it!

As always, community engagement remains at the core of our work and mission.

In the past two years our impact in the region has steadily grown. The **Partnership Grant Program** has supported projects and programs both large and small, illuminating and interpreting the region's rich history in countless ways. Our robust communication platforms continue to share the work of our partners to the broadest possible audiences and link people, places and stories together in a seamless narrative of the region.

None of these accomplishments would have been possible without the generosity of the many individuals and organizations who are acknowledged in this report. We look forward to building on this momentum in the year ahead.

Thank you for being a part of the FWNHA community and we hope to see you soon!

Warm regards,

**Franca Barricelli**
President

**Patrice Todisco**
Executive Director

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

# Impact by the Numbers

The Heritage Area's impact is evidenced through the strength of its work and the work of our many partners. Together we sustain and support the cultural identity of the region.

**49**
Partnership Grants awarded

**$143K**
in Hidden Treasures Mini Grants & Partnership Grants invested back into our communities

**>3,500**
people reached through public programs & grant-funded projects

**120+**
community organizations engaged in our work

**1.5:1**
federal funds leveraged

"We are **ENORMOUSLY GRATEFUL** to Freedom's Way for the funding we received, which has helped make "MIGRATION: The Ongoing American Revolution" an exciting, beautiful, and **ESPECIALLY MEANINGFUL** exhibit in 2025. Thank you, Freedom's Way for your support."

— **John Anderson**, President
Medford Historical Society

DISCOVERING THE REVOLUTION ANEW

# Freedom's Way 250

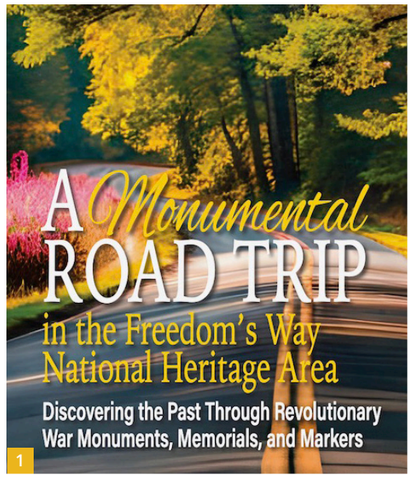
Within the Freedom's Way National Heritage Area, where the events that launched the American Revolution took place, 2024 and 2025 provided an opportunity to showcase the region's unique role in the creation of the American story, inspiring the initiative **Freedom's Way 250** to commemorate the semiquincentennial and illuminate the region's rich history.

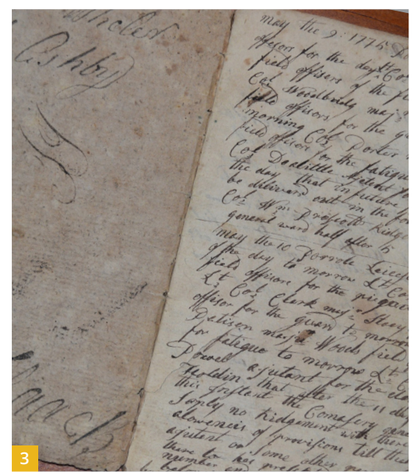
A foundational project, **How We Remember: Revolutionary War Monuments, Memorials and Markers in the Freedom's Way National Heritage Area**, created a comprehensive survey of more than 175 monuments, memorials, and markers within the Heritage Area with ties to the American Revolution.

Placing their evolution within the context of historical events and providing an understanding of who is memorialized and how, **How We Remember's** dedicated web page serves as a foundation for future exploration on the topic within the region.

**"A Monumental Road Trip – Discovering the Past through Revolutionary War Monuments, Memorials and Markers in the Freedom's Way National Heritage Area"** was featured in ***Discover the Battle Road: A Commemorative Issue in Celebration of the 250th Anniversary of the First Battles of the American Revolution***.

This publication was produced in partnership with *Discover Concord* magazine and funded, in part, by the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism.





*1. Cover of "A Monumental Road Trip – Discovering the Past through Revolutionary War Monuments, Memorials and Markers in the Freedom's Way National Heritage Area."*

*2. Scouts gathered in front of the Concord Scout House during Patriots' Day 2025 celebrations. Photo courtesy of the Concord Scout House.*

*3. Restored 1775 Orderly Book, part of the Ashby Historical Society's collection.*

*4. Mayor Concannon and Senator Markey at the dedication of Woburn's Battle Road Memorial Area.*



COMMEMORATING AMERICA'S 250TH

# Revolutionary Stories Partnership Grants

Freedom's Way supported 14 projects throughout the Heritage Area highlighting themes and stories relating to the American Revolution that provide fresh interpretations and perspectives that explore the multiple meanings and impacts of that event within the region. Projects funded include:

**The Pursuit of Colonial History**
*Grantee: Concord Scout House*
A day-long program and activities for youth to immerse them in the physical and intellectual act of 1700s social media including letterpress printing demonstrations and the printing of broadsides to be displayed at Wright Tavern. The grant also funds a trail map guide for the Boy Scout's annual Battle Trail hike.

**1775 Orderly Book Restoration**
*Grantee: Ashby Historical Society*
The Ashby Historical Society engaged the North East Document Conservation Center to repair and restore an original 1775 Orderly Book kept by Amos Wheeler for the Ashby Company on the lead-up to the Battle of Bunker Hill; Wheeler was killed in that battle. A shareable digital copy of the book was created and made available to the public.

**Battle Road Memorial Area Interpretive Signage**
*Grantee: City of Woburn, MA*
A set of interpretive panels sited at Woburn's Battle Road Memorial Area that highlight the city's contributions to the American Revolution and educate visitors on the historic role of Woburn's Battle Road, its place in the broader Revolutionary War narrative, and the stories of residents who participated in this pivotal moment in American history.

## 2024 & 2025 GRANT AWARDS

***Untold Stories: Battle of Menotomy, Voices of the Overlooked, & Centennial Reflections***
Arlington Historical Society

**Monument to Fallen Crown Soldiers Who Died on April 19, 1775**
Arlington Historical Society

**1775 Orderly Book Restoration**
Ashby Historical Society

**Faded Memory: Women & People of Color in the American Revolution & Beyond**
Athina Education

**Commemorating 250 Years: New Perspectives on the American Revolution at the Concord Museum – Year 1**
Concord Museum

**The Pursuit of Colonial History**
Concord Scout House

**A Modern Revolution Presentation & Book: *Lincoln Modern: Plain Living, High Thinking***
Friends of Modern Architecture

**Coloring the Past: The Events of April 19, 1775 in Acton**
Iron Work Farm

***Swept Up in Revolution***
Lexington Historical Society

***Lexington Celebrates! Parades, Pageants & Pandemonium***
Lexington Historical Society

***MIGRATION: The Ongoing American Revolution* - Celebrating Medford's Migrant Heritage Past & Present**
Medford Historical Society & Museum

***The Road Where it Happened: The Revolution Comes to Menotomy***
Old Schwamb Mill

**250th Planning & Program**
Stow Historical Society

**"Revolutionary Concordians" Trading Card Game**
Thoreau Farm Trust

**Patriots' Day Candlelight Cemetery Tours**
Westford Historical Society & Museum

**Tour of Westlawn Cemetery's Revolutionary War Veterans**
Westford Historical Society & Museum

**Battle Road Memorial Area Interpretive Signage**
City of Woburn

BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER

# Community Gatherings

FWNHA Annual Community Gatherings provide an opportunity for networking and regional engagement. At each, partners share programs and projects funded through the FWNHA Partnership Grant Program and the organization's plans for the coming year are presented. Thank you to the Concord Museum for hosting the FWNHA Community Gatherings in their Lyceum.

## "How We Remember: How We Forget" Lifting Up Untold Stories – November 17, 2024

### Concord Reformatory Cemetery: Naming the Unnamed - Phase I
Grantee: Concord Prison Outreach
Presented by Elizabeth Rust, President

### Faded Memory: Women & People of Color in the American Revolution & Beyond
Grantee: Athina Education
Presented by Katina Fontes, President & Founder

### Redesign of the Indigenous Peoples Gallery
Grantee: Cyrus Dallin Art Museum
Presented by Heather Leavell, Museum Director

CONCORD PRISON OUTREACH

ARLINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

REDISCOVER MAPLEDALE, STOW, MA

## "How We Remember" An Afternoon Inspired by the Work of Our Partners & the Power of Storytelling – November 5, 2023

### Monument to Menotomy's Enslaved & Free Persons of Color
Grantee: Arlington Historical Society
Presented by Richard Duffy, Monument Committee Chair

### Rediscover Mapledale - Phase I
Grantee: Rediscover Mapledale
Presented by Stacen Goldman & Kelly Lawlor, Co-Presidents

### Revolutionary War Veterans Tour
Grantee: Westford Historical Society & Museum
Presented by Linda Greene, Museum Director

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Julie Bernson, Director of Learning
The Trustees

Carolin Collins, Director of School & Youth Porgrams
Historic New England

Denise LeBlanc, Vice President & Program Chair
Friends of Pine Hawk

Kathryn Parent, Program Coordinator
MA DCR Division of Water Supply Protection

Hannah Wolfe, Education Coordinator
Lexington Arts & Crafts Society

**CONSULTING PROJECT MANAGER**

Elisabeth Nevins, Principal, Seed/Ed Consulting

ASHBY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

1836 BATTLE MONUMENT, MINUTE MAN NHP

COLLABORATING TO PROMOTE

# Lifelong Learning

## Heritage in Action: Engaging the Next Generation through Educational Programs & Activities

A three-part webinar series designed to support cultural, environmental and history organizations in developing and sustaining education programs for school audiences offered in September 2025.

### Developing School Programs for K-12 Students
Susan Diachisin, Director of Education
Fitchburg Art Museum

Elisabeth Nevins, Principal
Seed/Ed Consulting

### Engaging Youth & Family Audiences at Your Site
Robert Kiihne, Independent Exhibit Designer
Former Director of Exhibits, USS Constitution Museum

Kris Scopinich, Senior Director of Education & Engagement
Mass Audubon

### Creating Accessible Experiences for Visitors of All Abilities
Charles G. Baldwin, Program Officer III: Access & Inclusion
Mass Cultural Council

Brindha Muniappan, Senior Director of the Museum Experience
Discovery Museum

## Hidden Treasures Festival of Nature, Culture & History

Combined, the 2024 and 2025 festivals featured more than 120 events and activities hosted by 95+ community partners in more than two thirds of the 45 towns and cities within the Heritage Area.

Thematic focuses included semiquincentennial initiatives "How We Remember" and "Revolutionary Weekends."

## Connecting Communities: Walks & Talks

The 2025 series, inspired by our "How We Remember" project, explored the ways in which people and events of the Revolutionary War period are commemorated in various towns' landscapes while sharing fascinating stories behind how and why these commemorative objects came to be.

Community partners included Acton 250, Arlington 250, Arlington Historical Society, Lexington Historical Society, Minute Man National Historical Park and Westford Historical Society & Museum.

## 2024 & 2025 GRANT AWARDS

**Signage for Bolton Conservation Properties: Pop-up Arboreta & Wayfinding at Rattlesnake Conservation Area**
Town of Bolton Conservation Department

**Understanding & Sharing African American History in Concord**
Concord Museum

**Concord Reformatory Cemetery: Naming The Unnamed - Phases II & III**
Concord Prison Outreach

**On Belonging in Outdoor Spaces: 2024 Speaker Series**
Farrington Nature Linc

**88th Regional Exhibition of Art & Craft**
Fitchburg Art Museum

**Patriots' Day 2024 at Minute Man NHP**
Friends of Minute Man National Park

**Fall 2024 & 2025 Program Series**
Friends of Pine Hawk

**Native Land Learning Series**
Friends of the Middlesex Fells Reservation

**2024 Destination: Nature Juried Art Show**
Harvard Conservation Trust

**Still River Baptist Church Preservation**
Harvard Historical Society

**Summer Community Programming at the Armory on the Assabet; Structural Engineering Review of the Hudson Armory**
Hudson Cultural Alliance

**The City of Malden's 375th Anniversary**
City of Malden

**Cross Street Cemetery Gravestone/ Monument Conservation - Phase I; Cross Street Cemetery Gravestone/Monument Conditions Assessment**
City of Medford Historical Commission

**On the Edge: Nature & Culture in a Time of Crisis–Symposium & Gallery Show; Interpreting the Ebenezer Keyes Conservation Area**
North County Land Trust

**Educational Consultants & Curricular Development; Website Design & Build**
Rediscover Mapledale

**"The Hipped-roof House" Book Publication**
Shirley Historical Society

**"A Walking & Driving Guide to Sudbury's Changing Land"**
Sudbury Valley Trustees

**"Thoreau On-The-Go" - Phase 1; 83rd Annual Gathering of the Thoreau Society: Thoreau & Resilience**
The Thoreau Society

**"Revolutionary Concordians" Trading Card Game; "The Language of these Fields" - Phases I & II**
Thoreau Farm Trust

**Lost from the Ledger: Westford's Native Story**
Westford Historical Society & Museum

INVESTING IN OUR COMMUNITIES

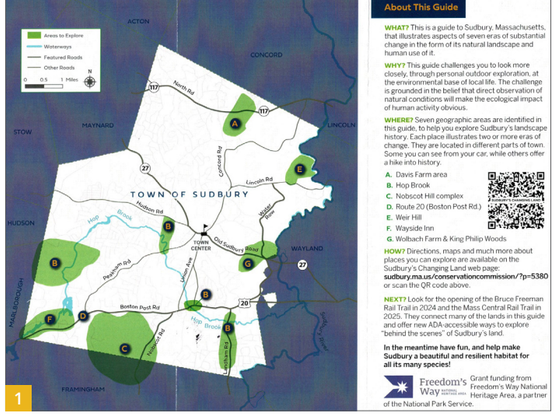
# Partnership Grant Program

Providing strategic investments in the natural, cultural, and historical resources that enhance the sense of place within the Freedom's Way National Heritage Area, the Freedom's Way Partnership Grant Program is a catalyst for new, creative programs and projects within the 45 communities of the Heritage Area. Its impact is evidenced in the depth and breadth of the projects it supports—both large and small. Forty-nine grants totaling $146,308 in support were awardedin 2024 and 2025. Highlighted projects include:

**"A Walking & Driving Guide to Sudbury's Changing Land"**
*Grantee: Sudbury Valley Trustees*
Design and printing costs for the brochure "A Walking and Driving Guide to Sudbury's Changing Land," which provides an easily accessible reference on the broad range of landscapes that exist in, and shaped, the town of Sudbury throughout time. Supplemented by historical, ecological, and wayfinding information accessed by means of a QR code on multiple locations, the guide challenges Sudbury residents and visitors to look more closely at the environmental base of local life through in-person exploration, raising awareness of the ecological impact of human activity on nature past, present and future.

**Cross Street Cemetery Gravestone/Monument Conditions Assessment**
*Grantee: City of Medford Historical Commission*
A conservation study to determine the scope of work and repairs, prioritize and assess immediate, short, and long-term needs and associated fees for the Cross Street Cemetery. Designated as the City of Medford's second oldest cemetery, dating to 1816, it contains the remains of a cross section of the community, including prominent residents, civic ancestors, veterans of the Revolutionary and Civil Wars. An important local landmark, the cemetery was relocated in 1956 to accommodate the construction of Route 93.

**Native Land Learning Series**
*Grantee: Friends of the Middlesex Fells*
A series of lectures and guided tours, the Friends of the Fells Native Land Learning Series facilitated cross-cultural environmental learning within the Fells community by empowering Indigenous educators to share their knowledge of ecology, land conservation and sustainability. Speakers included Brad Lopes, citizen of the Aquinnah Wôpanâak Tribe on Noepe and Native American Teacher Retention (NATRI) Program Manager at the Mashpee Wampanoag Education Department; Larry Spotted Crow Mann, citizen of the Hassanamisco Nipmuc Tribe, award-winning author, and director of The Ohketeau Cultural Center; and Elizabeth James-Perry, an Aquinnah Wampanoag Culture Bearer, Educator, and restorative Native gardener.



*1. "A Walking & Driving Guide to Sudbury's Changing Land" brochure.*

*2. Gravestone conditions assessment at Medford's Cross Street Cemetery.*

*3. Larry Spotted Crow Mann presents during the Native Land Learning Series.*

CULTIVATING YOUNG LEADERS

# NPS Summer Internship

In 2024 Freedom's Way launched a summer internship program in partnership with **Minute Man National Historical Park**. Providing an opportunity to learn about the work of the National Heritage Area, the internship supports Minute Man's interpretive program staff and provides training in formal and informal interpretation, visitor services and research techniques.

2024 intern, **Kristen M. Delatour**, a master's student in historical archaeology at UMass Boston, completed historical research on Case Whitney, a formerly enslaved man who labored at the Wayside. Her work enhanced the interpretation of the archaeological collections found at the Casey House to expand the understanding of the lives of enslaved and Free Black people within Concord.

In 2025, **Hannah M. Santos**, a rising senior in history and anthropology at UMass Boston researched and interpreted the events of April 19, 1775 to convey information through formal and informal interpretation and create digital media content and public outreach materials to share with the public.

KRISTEN M. DELATOUR

HANNAH M. SANTOS

WORKING TOWARD A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

# Strategic Framework Overview

Ten years ago, the Secretary of the Interior approved the Freedoms' Way National Heritage Area Management Plan. A foundational document defining the organization's key interpretive themes, the Management Plan created a framework to guide the initiatives and activities of the heritage area over the following five to ten years.

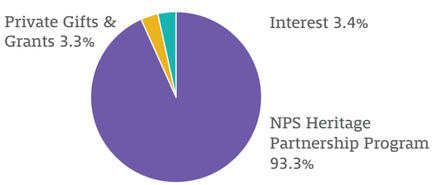
To chart a course for the success of the organization and articulate a vision for its future, a strategic framework planning process was initiated in 2025. This work will be ongoing. In the first phase of the strategic framework planning process a refresh of the organization's mission, vision and values took place, and a partnership development and engagement committee established.

**To learn how you can be involved as we plan for the future of the Freedom's Way National Heritage Area send us an email at mail@freedomsway.org.**

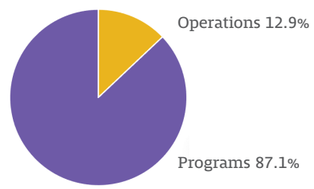
MAINTAINING A BALANCED BUDGET

# Financial Overview

| | FY2025 | FY2024 |
|---|---|---|
| Income | $505,084 | $483,963 |
| Expenses | $483,286 | $473,674 |
| Net Income | $21,798 | $10,289 |
| In-Kind Match | $697,976 | $685,653 |




Income




Expenses

*Based on unaudited financials for October 1, 2024 through September 30, 2025, and independently reviewed financials for October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024.*



## MISSION

We collaborate with people, organizations and the communities of the Heritage Area to facilitate and promote preservation, conservation and educational initiatives. Our efforts inspire residents and visitors to value and engage with our landscapes, histories and cultures, and the principles underlying freedom and democracy.

## VISION

A network of strong and diverse communities that work together to promote, protect, and celebrate the natural, cultural, and historical resources of the region.

## VALUES

**Collaboration/Teamwork:**
Working together to achieve common goals through open communication, shared accountability, and a focus on collective strengths.

**Honoring diverse voices:**
Recognizing the value of different perspectives, experiences, and backgrounds which enriches understanding, fosters empathy and innovative and effective solutions.

**Creativity:**
Innovative, adaptable and flexible problem-solving and showing an ability to make new things or think of new ideas.

**Inclusion:**
Making everyone feel valued, respected, and supported, creating an environment where individuals can fully participate, bring their authentic selves, and contribute their unique perspectives.

**Respectful and Professional:**
Treating everyone with courtesy and consideration, while upholding high standards of conduct and demeanor, communicating clearly, and maintaining a positive and proactive mindset.

GIVING THANKS TO OUR

# Members, Partners & Supporters

## INDIVIDUALS

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## ORGANIZATIONS

Acton 250 • Acton Memorial Library • Arlington 250 • Arlington Historical Society • Ashby Historical Society • Athina Education • Be Well Be Here • Bedford Historic Preservation Commission • Bedford Historical Society • Bigelow Free Public Library • Town of Bolton, MA • Bolton Historical Commission • Bolton Historical Society • Boulder Art Gallery • Boxborough Historical Society • Carlisle Historical Society • Citizens for Lexington Conservation • Clinton Greenway Conservation Trust • Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts • Concord Museum • Concord Prison Outreach • Concord Scout House • Cyrus Dallin Art Museum • Discovery Museum • Farrington Nature Linc • First Parish Unitarian Universalist of Arlington Indigenous Justice Working Group • City of Fitchburg, MA • Fitchburg Art Museum • Fitchburg Cultural Alliance • Fitchburg Greenway Committee • Fitchburg Historical Commission • Fitchburg Historical Society • Fitchburg Redevelopment Authority • Fitchburg State University • Fitchburg Trail Stewards • Footwork & Frolick Society • Fort Devens Museum • Friends of Minute Man National Park • Friends of Modern Architecture • Friends of Pine Hawk • Friends of Sholan Farms • Friends of the Middlesex Fells • Friends of Walden Pond • The Gardner Museum • Groton Business Association • Groton Conservation Trust • Groton History Center • Groton Trails Committee • Harvard Conservation Trust • Harvard Historical Society • Historical Piano Concerts, Inc. • Historic New England • Hollis Heritage Commission • Hollis Social Library • Hudson Cultural Alliance • InTown Fitchburg • The Icon Museum & Study Center • Iron Work Farm in Acton • Johnny Appleseed Visitor Center • City of Leominster, MA • Leominster Public Schools Project Apples • Lexington Arts & Crafts Society • Lexington Historical Society • Lincoln Historical Society • Lincoln Land Conservation Trust • Littleton Historical Society • Louisa May Alcott's Orchard House • City of Malden, MA • Mason Historical Society • Mason Public Library • MA250 • MA DCR Division of Water Supply Protection • MA DCR Wachusett Mountain State Reservation • MA DCR Walden Pond State Reservation • Massachusetts Society of the Cincinnati • Mass Audubon • Mass Cultural Council • Town of Mason, NH • Medford Historical Commission • Medford Historical Society & Museum • Minute Man National Historical Park • Nashoba Conservation Trust • Nashua Arts Commission • Nashua International Sculpture Symposium • Nashua River Watershed Association • Nashua Valley Railroad Association • New England Forestry Foundation • New Hampshire State Council on the Arts • NewVue Communities • North County Land Trust • Old Frog Pond Farm & Studio • Old Schwamb Mill • Pepperell 250th Celebration Committee • Pepperell Conservation Commission • Pepperell Cultural Council • Prudence Wright Chapter, NSDAR • Rauscher Farm Management Subcommittee • Rediscover Mapledale • Sandy Pond School Association • Shirley Historical Society • Steele Farm Advisory Committee • Stow Historical Society • Sudbury Historical Society • Sudbury Valley Trustees • Thayer Memorial Library • Thoreau Farm Trust • The Thoreau Society • The Trustees • The Umbrella Arts Center • University of Massachusetts Boston • USS Constitution Museum • Wachusett Reservoir Watershed • Westford Historical Society & Museum • City of Woburn, MA • Woburn Historical Society • Woburn Public Library • Wright Taven Legacy Trust

## BUSINESSES

Barry Equipment Co. Inc. • Enterprise Bank • Hannaford Bloomin' 4 Good Program • Heritage Strategies, LLC • MassDevelopment • Voyager Publishing, LLC

CURATING A VIRTUAL MUSEUM OF THE REGION

# Visit Us Online & Keep in Touch

## Download Our Free Mobile App

Available on iOS and Android devices, the **Explore Freedom's Way NHA** mobile app can be used to:

- Navigate an interactive map of places to go and things to do!
- Peruse our selection of thoughtfully curated itineraries or create your own!
- Create personalized travel plans using the 'My Plan' feature!
- Share the details with friends and family!

## Check Out Our Heritage Area Kiosks

Piloted in early 2025, kiosks providing an introduction to the Heritage Area are sited throughout the region:

- Groton History Center
- Johnny Appleseed Visitor Center
- Minute Man National Historical Park
- Sudbury History Center
- Thayer Memorial Library
- Wachusett Mountain State Reservation
- Walden Pond State Reservation
- Westford Museum
- Wright Tavern

## Subscribe to Our Monthly e-Newsletter

Our **monthly e-newsletter** includes curated content from throughout the region including "A Closer Look," upcoming events, updates on Revolution 250 programming and projects, and so much more!

## Follow Us on Social Media

@freedomswaynha

@freedomswayheritage

@freedomswaynha

@freedomswaynationalheritag7308

A MEMBER OF THE
**National Heritage Area System**

Freedom's Way NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

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