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Mass. Pike Board to Allow Public Use of Trail

By Jon Brodtkin / News Staff Writer

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Advocates of the Cochituate Rail Trail got good news this week when the Massachusetts Turnpike Board voted to allow public use of a half-mile segment of the trail, said A. Richard Miller, a trail proponent.

The easement given to the town of Framingham clears the way for the public to walk on a half-mile of the four-mile trail stretching through Framingham and Natick. The vote preserves the trail and a portion of surrounding woods, but not the entire width of the greenway.

"I think it's real big news, and it's just in time for Christmas," said Miller, who lives in Natick.

Volunteers have spent several summers cleaning the trail. Miller said he expects the half-mile to be accessible by the public next spring.

The portion owned by the Pike is entirely in Framingham, except for nine square feet in Natick, Miller said. There are two other parts, one owned by CSX in Natick and the other owned by the MBTA in Framingham.

Negotiations are under way to give the public access to both parcels. However, the CSX portion has one remaining user and is not yet available for use as a trail, Miller said.

"We think that will also be closing in the near future, but I doubt it will be in time for next summer," he said.

Miller attended the meeting Tuesday in which the Pike board took its vote to guarantee public use of the trail, he said. Framingham selectmen voted in October to accept the easement.

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