

## In Your Backyard

# Topsfield Linear Common Trail provides safe ride through woods

By Craig Idlebrook

If you're looking for a scenic but easily accessible way to see some of the best interior woodland in Essex County, then you might want to consider a bike ride on the Topsfield Linear Common Trail. This 3.9-mile rail-to-trail path connects Boxford with the Wenham town line, and offers easy access to some pristine hiking paths along the way. The trail provides some of the best of what a bike path can offer, said Gregg Demers, president of Friends of Topsfield Trails.

"It's a long section of trails that are wooded, with limited road crossings, so it's safe," Demers says. "It's flat, it's scenic and it gets access to areas that are otherwise inaccessible."

The trail is part of the Border to Boston Trail initiative, a collaborative effort to create and link 30 miles of trails for eight communities on the North Shore.

The Topsfield Linear Common Trail was carved out of former railway land owned by the MBTA and National Grid, and connects bicycle and foot travelers with many state for-



*Topsfield Linear Common Trail is a safe place for families to ride together.*

est and sanctuary land trails that were once part of the estates of the richest residents of Essex County in the Gilded Age.

The southern 2.3 miles of the unpaved trail is made up of highly compacted stone dust, which resists most erosion and is suitable for all but in-line skaters. The remaining 1.6 miles at the northern end is more rustic, made up of grass and compacted soil. The trail connects much of

the downtown of Topsfield and even allows for bike access to the ever-popular Topsham Fair in October. Grassroots organizations raised funds to provide bike racks and a pedestrian traffic signal near the fairgrounds, making it a green and safe way to enjoy the festivities.

*Topsfield Linear Common Trail: [www.friendsoftopsfieldtrails.org](http://www.friendsoftopsfieldtrails.org). To read about more places to go for a bike ride, go to [AAA.com/Horizons](http://AAA.com/Horizons).*