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## More Than \$90,000 in MassTrails State Grants Will Improve the Southeastern Massachusetts Bioreserve

*City of Fall River & The Trustees plans new Accessible Nature Play Trail, property upgrades*



*MassTrails grant recipients with Gov. Charlie Baker*

**FALL RIVER, MA** – August 16, 2021 – The City of Fall River and The Trustees of Reservations (The Trustees) have received more than \$90,000 in state grants to fund the Bioreserve Loop Trail Project and build an Accessible Nature Play Trail at Copicut Woods, the gateway to the 16,000-acre Southeastern Massachusetts Bioreserve.

These projects are part of the MassTrails Grant Program, an initiative totaling nearly \$4 million funding 52 trail projects across the Commonwealth, that support public-private partnerships to maintain and improve existing trails and construct new ones. This year's projects help communities address trail drainage, develop new trails, expand equitable access to trails, build boardwalks and bridges, and design and install signage.

Fall River will receive nearly \$43,000 to identify, create and mark a 20-mile Bioreserve-wide loop trail through Fall River and Freetown. The project enhances public access to hike, run, and bike in the Bioreserve. This project will upgrade existing wetland crossings and provide a new visitor parking area as well.

“Creating a permanent long trail provides another way for residents and visitors alike to enjoy more of the natural beauty and cultural landscapes this vast forest has to offer” said Paul Ferland, City of Fall River Department of Community Utilities Administrator.

At The Trustees' Copicut Woods, a 516-acre parcel in Fall River consisting of upland forests, wetlands, and waterways, a \$50,000 grant will be used to construct an 1,850-foot Universal Access Nature Play Trail. It will replace an existing trail that runs from the main parking lot to the heart of the property, that will be universally accessible and feature small nature play installations for young children.

"We are so grateful for this grant because it provides expansion of overall accessibility and engagement at one of our most beautiful yet underrated properties," said Jennifer Klein, Director of Outdoor Experiences. "COVID has put a spotlight on the importance of safe outdoor places and this new trail allows universal access to everyone who wants to enjoy this special place."

There are more than five miles of trails at Copicut Woods that connect to the Southeastern Massachusetts Bioserve, one of the largest protected tracts of land in Massachusetts that stretches from Fall River to Freetown to Lakeville. Fall River controls about 5,000 of the Bioserve's 16,000 acres, with more than 50 miles of hiking trails in Fall River and Freetown.

The MassTrails Grant Program is funded through the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation's (DCR) capital budget, and from the motor fuel excise tax on off-road vehicles. The program provides important funding for project development, design, and construction of shared-use pathways, which facilitate connections to where people live, work, and recreate. The funds focus on construction and maintenance of recreational trails of all types and uses, including both motorized and non-motorized activities.

**More about The Trustees**

*Founded by landscape architect Charles Eliot in 1891, The Trustees has, for 130 years, been a catalyst for important ideas, endeavors, and progress in Massachusetts. As a steward of distinctive and dynamic places of both historic and cultural value, The Trustees is the nation's first preservation and conservation organization, and its landscapes and landmarks continue to inspire discussion, innovation, and action today as they did in the past. We are a nonprofit, supported by members, friends and donors and our 120 sites are destinations for residents, members, and visitors alike, welcoming millions of guests annually. [www.thetrustees.org](http://www.thetrustees.org).*

**More about The City of Fall River Department of Community Utilities**

*The Fall River Water Commission was established in 1870 to supply the City of Fall River with pure, clean drinking water. In 1895, the Watuppa Reservoir Commission began a legacy of acquiring freshwater resources and watershed forestlands to protect that water supply. Now, as a Southeastern Massachusetts Bioserve Partner, the city continues its long tradition of forest stewardship and welcomes the public to large sections of its protected forestland for recreation and education purposes.*

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