

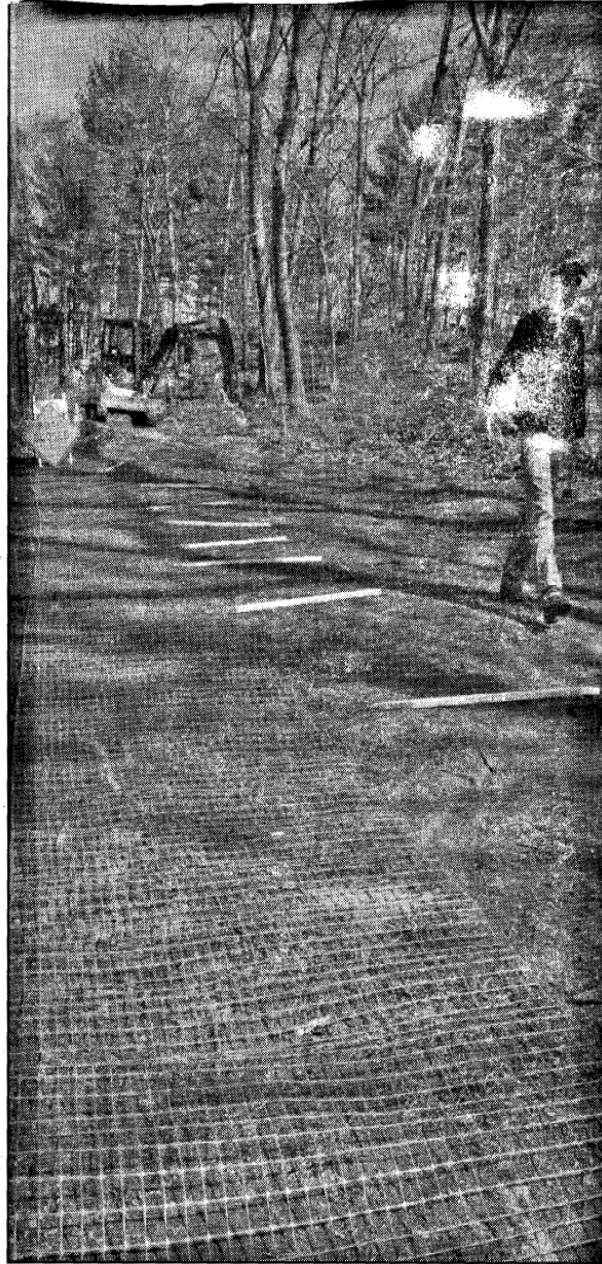
By David Rogers

By the time you read this column in print, work will have already begun at what will be the first phase of the Topsfield Rail Trail. Construction vehicles, including an excavator and backhoe, were brought to the site on Monday. Tearing up the ground in preparation for the installation of a stone dust trail was expected to begin a couple of days ago (Wednesday). After much debate on the trail, including some very spirited back-and-forth between those who oppose and those who support, it's been pretty quiet.

Once completed the Topsfield Rail Trail will be 4 miles long and run from Wenham to Boxford. It is hoped that Topsfield's section will be connected to a regional rail trail that would connect communities along Essex County.

According to the Topsfield Rail Trail's Web site, construction of phase 1 should be done by mid-June.

"The first segment is from Washington Street to the Proctor School tot lot. Segment B continues to the end of the Proctor School property behind the tennis courts. Segment C is the property owned by Grove Realty Partners and includes Topsfield Station. The last segment, D, is from Main to Summer Streets. The contract award is for Segments A, B and D. Segment C is ready to be approved by the Selectmen," the Web site states.



Workers from K & R Construction of Boxford laid out what will be a safety fence.