

Nearly 100 Quincy Residents Explore St. Moritz



Tom Keeley, Lisa Keeley and Caden Wallace of Quincy enjoy the first ever Winter Walk in the Woods in Quincy.

Nearly 100 people attended the first-ever Winter Walk in the Woods on December 5. The half-mile hike started at the St. Moritz trailhead in

Quincy. The Friends of the Blue Hills, along with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation and the Quincy Department of Planning and Community Development, is working to raise awareness of the Blue Hills Reservation among Quincy residents. More than 50% of the Blue Hills is within Quincy, yet many residents do not know where they can enter the Blue Hills locally.

A working group of Quincy residents and public and non-profit organizations are planning events and activities to encourage residents to explore and enjoy all the recreational opportunities in the Blue Hills. To get involved, please email info@FriendsoftheBlueHills.org.

Beat the Winter Blues at Winter Fest!

Join us on Tuesday, February 23, from 5-8 p.m. at Blue Hills Ski Area

Join the Friends of the Blue Hills and the Blue Hills Ski Area for an evening of Blue Hills winter fun at Winter Fest! Come for a night hike or get your exercise on the slopes downhill skiing. Whether or not you choose the outdoor activities, there is plenty of inside fun too: you can tap your feet to the spirited Irish tunes of Songs for Ceilidh, taste chili from some of the best local restaurants, entertain the kids with crafts, and warm up to the company of old and new friends. You'll be able to kick back with a beer from Blue Hills Brewery and purchase additional refreshments at the snack bar.

(continued on page 2)



Photo by Gene Jacobs

The Friends of the Blue Hills cares deeply about Blue Hills forests and all of its inhabitants. When there are too many deer in the forest, the deer suffer and other animals starve to death, particularly baby birds who depend on native insects. See page 4 for our position on this difficult issue.



Photo by Laurent LaFontaine of Milton

Blue Hills Ski has invested \$1.3 million in improvements for the 2015-2016 Ski Season. They have constructed a new snow-making pump house and have widened and regraded a number of trails. They planned to open by late December.

Clearing the Trails and Protecting the Forests



Over 40 trail Maintenance volunteers gathered on December 5 to prepare the forests for the winter, including Grace Geraghty from Westwood (on left) and Bailey Gillis from Lowell.

Sign up for Monthly Giving Today!

Fill out the form to the right -- or go on line - to help provide a steady and reliable source of income for FBH and will ensure that your membership never lapses!

The Friends of the Blue Hills newsletter is produced four times a year.

Editors: Anne Comber, Judy Jacobs, Barbara Kirby

Layout: Donald Souliere

Visit us on the web at www.FriendsoftheBlueHills.org or call 781-828-1805 for membership, maps and schedule information.
P.O. Box 416, Milton, MA 02186

Many thanks to the hundreds of volunteers who helped maintain the trails and keep the forests healthy last year! Thanks to your efforts, we were able to keep 125 miles of trails in the Blue Hills clear and accessible to hikers, cyclists, and horseback riders. Special thanks to the co-chairs of the Trail Maintenance Committee: Caleb Blankenship, Chris Mullin, and Robert Shine. We hold trail maintenance volunteer events one Saturday a month from April through December. If you work for a company that encourages community service, contact us to set up a private event for you and your co-workers. For more information, please visit www.friendsofthebluehills.org/trails-program.

(continued from page 1)

Beat the Winter Blues at Winter Fest!

Blue Hills Ski Area will be offering discounted ski tickets for the night. If planning to ski, print the front page of www.FriendsoftheBlueHills.org or the FBH Facebook page and bring it to the event. For more information, email info@FriendsoftheBlueHills.org.

Many thanks to Doctors Express in Braintree and Dedham and William Raveis Real Estate in Milton for sponsoring this year's Winter Fest!

YES! I want to protect the Blue Hills Reservation!

- Basic Membership – \$30
- Hancock Hill Hero – \$100
- Chickatawbut Champion – \$500
- Other _____
- Ponkapoag Protector – \$50
- Skyline Steward – \$250
- Great Blue Guardian - \$1,000

Payment Frequency (Choose one)

- Lump sum donation
- Monthly donation of \$ _____

Become a Sustainer: Yes, have this gift renew automatically

- I've enclosed a check made payable to Friends of the Blue Hills
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Card Number _____ Exp. date (MM/YY) _____ Card security code _____

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Please mail to Friends of the Blue Hills

P.O. Box 416, Milton, MA 02186

You may also donate through our secure server at FriendsoftheBlueHills.org.

Thank you for your generous support!



Eagle Scout Improving the Blue Hills

Sal Spada is an Eagle Scout Candidate in Troop 1 in Dedham. As a Boy Scout, he has hiked in the Blue Hills area for well over a decade, primarily from the Trailside Museum to the Quarries. Two years ago, while volunteering with the FBH Trail Maintenance Committee, Sal met people who were concerned with the accessibility of all the trails in the Blue Hills. Trail Maintenance Committee Chair Caleb Blankenship introduced him to the Fowl Meadow area, which was in particular need of work. As Sal started to plan his Eagle Project, he spent the next year researching this area throughout different seasons to identify work that needed to be done.

For his Eagle Project, Sal built a new bog bridge on a section of trail near marker 6005. He made this decision while on a hike in April, 2015. Beginning the hike on the Burma Path, he discovered that most of the trail was passible, but relatively wet. When he

hit the junction of marker 6005 and Burma Path, he had to wade through three feet of water in order to cross the trail. The bog bridge that Sal designed allows hikers to traverse this entire trail without getting wet. The bridge will increase the utilization of this area by allowing hikers to access the trails in all seasons.

In order to fund his project, Sal created a GoFundMe page and successfully raised the money necessary to complete the project. He was able to keep his costs low by reusing materials, such as granite blocks, which were used as a base. Sal began his work last fall and completed the project in late December. Congratulations to Sal for improving access to the Fowl Meadow area!



Sal Spada (back row) shown working on his Eagle Scout project in Fowl Meadow. Helping him are his friends (front row from left to right) Nick Carroll, Max Malamut, Dante Campanella, and Kyle Martens.

Sunset Hike a Sight to Behold!



It was a picture perfect evening for the Fall Foliage Sunset Hike in October. Over 150 people hiked Great Blue to watch a glorious sunset and then hike down under the lights. The Blue Hills Observatory, shown, offered tours throughout the evening.

Are the Blue Hills in Your Will?



Photo by David Gouthro

By leaving a gift in your Will to the Friends of the Blue Hills, you join the Skyline Society, a select group of people who are committed to the future of the Blue Hills. Learn more at www.FriendsoftheBlueHills.org/skyline-society.

Decreasing the Deer Population Will Save Birds... and Protect All Forests Creatures

If we do nothing about the booming deer population, we are forsaking our forests.

Baby birds will die. So will native plants, insects and all that depend on them for survival.

While it is painful to allow hunting of any sort in the Blue Hills, we know that the overpopulation of deer harms both the forest and the deer themselves. **Although healthy populations of deer range from 6 to 18 per square mile, the Blue Hills has an estimated 85 per square mile.**

This high population means that deer eat so much of the forest plants that they decrease the food and habitat for other animals – and for themselves, as well. While the Department of

Conservation and Recreation and Mass Wildlife are still analyzing the biologic data from this winter's four-day hunt, they have identified a noticeable trend: **the female deer harvested through the four-day hunt at the Blue Hills this winter were 12 to 15 pounds lighter than does in the Quabbin Reservoir.** In the Quabbin Reservoir, deer populations have been brought down to healthy levels through an annual hunt. According to the DCR, the smaller deer is a significant difference and may be a sign of greater competition among a high density population for available food resources.

The deer are not the only casualties of overpopulation. The deer are eating all the native plant species that they can reach – which destroys the bushes and

grasses where insects, birds and rodents eat and live.

As native plants disappear, Douglas W. Tallamy, entomologist at the University of Delaware explains, so do native insects. **With few native insects, the species in the entire food chain – including birds and their predators – are deprived the basic nutrition they need to live.**

We care deeply about the individual deer in the Blue Hills. **But if we do nothing to control deer populations, we will allow birds, rabbits, insects and many other animals to die.** By controlling deer populations, we will help keep all forests inhabitants healthy.

Hilltop Society Members are Tops!

Last August, a special group of Friends were celebrated as the founding members of the Hilltop Society. This new club recognizes generous members who have given \$1,000 or more to the Friends of the Blue Hills. Society members were honored at a special cocktail party at the home of board member Laura Beebe, at right, whose property abuts the Blue Hills Reservation. For more information about the Hilltop Society, please contact Judy Lehrer Jacobs at judy@FriendsoftheBlueHills.org or visit www.FriendsoftheBlueHills.org/hilltop-society-benefits.



Record Number Celebrate the Blue Hills!

Over 175 people attended last fall's Annual Celebration at the Milton Hoosic Club, making it our most successful annual gathering ever! Attendees enjoyed the opportunity to catch up with other Blue Hills enthusiasts, learn about what we have achieved together over the past year, and raise funds to protect and preserve the Blue Hills Reservation.

A big thank you to everyone who came and made the event a success and to the many individuals and businesses that donated to the silent auction.

Congratulations to our 2015 Community Partners:

Bill Baino, Milton Public Schools

Deborah Felton, Fuller Village

L.L. Bean, Legacy Place

Melissa Horr Pond, Quincy Department of Planning and Community Development

Thank You to our Generous Sponsors:

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Success! Real Estate – Tom O'Neill



Denny Swenson, left, is the president of the Friends of the Blue Hills. She presented one of the four Community Partners Awards to Shawn McMullen, store manager of L.L. Bean, Legacy Place.



Cynthia Guise of Milton takes a look at some of the many items in the Silent Auction.

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Join us for Winter Fest
Tuesday, February 23, from 5-8 p.m.
Blue Hills Ski Area
 Discounted skiing, Irish music, chili tasting and more!
 Visit www.FriendsoftheBlueHills.org for details

Friends of the Blue Hills
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