

Trail Maintenance Volunteers Swing into Action!

Now that the snow has melted and warmer days are right around the corner, the Trail Maintenance Committee is hard at work assessing and repairing the damage done to the Blue Hills during the harsh winter months.

From April through December, volunteers meet monthly to clear overgrown brush, remove tree limbs, and repair water channels to keep the trails clear and accessible for all. Starting in late winter, the volunteers on the Trail Committee began surveying the winter damage and identifying which paths require immediate work.

If you love the Blue Hills and want to ensure the 125 miles of trails are open to hikers, horseback riders and mountain bikers, helping to maintain the trails is a great way to give back! Don't worry if you've never done it before... you'll receive training, tools and even lunch!

The first trail maintenance event is Saturday, April 29. For more information visit FriendsOfTheBlueHills.org/trails-program.



Kayla Arruda helped cut back branches that blocked a trail during a Community Service Day with her company.

Ponkapoag Boardwalk To Get Needed Repairs



Many visitors have had to walk through the bog on submerged planks to reach the end of the boardwalk.

Please see article on page 4.

Friends' Members Help Decision Makers Address Blue Hills Concerns



Friends of the Blue Hills President Denny Swenson with Senator Walter Timilty and a petition with over 700 signatures of people who are concerned about creating safer road crossings when hiking the Skyline Trail. Senator Timilty is working closely with the Friends of the Blue Hills and the Coalition for a Better Blue Hills on this and other issues to benefit the Blue Hills.

Please see article on page 4.

Your Chance to Sponsor a Trail for that Special Someone!

Looking for the perfect gift for someone who loves the Blue Hills? Whether it's for a birthday, a graduation, Bar/Bat Mitzvah, Mother's Day, Father's Day or any occasion at all, the Friends of the Blue Hills is offering an opportunity to Sponsor a Trail!

For \$35, you will receive a certificate with the recipient's name, the occasion,

Is the Blue Hills in your Will?



Photo by David Gauthro

You can protect the Blue Hills' wildlife for years to come. To learn about the Skyline Society and leaving a gift in your Will, visit FriendsOfTheBlueHills.org/skyline-society.

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

and the name of the sponsored trail along with a trail map so the recipient can see where his/her trail is located in the Blue Hills Reservation. We will either mail the certificate to you or to the recipient with the information you supply. Best of all, your gift will help Friends of the Blue Hills maintain the trails so that everyone can enjoy them! For more information, please email info@FriendsOfTheBlueHills.org.



Jean and Scott Cohoon unknowingly each Sponsored a Trail in the other's honor recently. They frequently hike in the Blue Hills together.

YES! I want to protect the Blue Hills Reservation!

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Basic Membership – \$30 | <input type="checkbox"/> Ponkapoag Protector – \$50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hancock Hill Hero – \$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> Skyline Steward – \$250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chickatawbut Champion – \$500 | <input type="checkbox"/> Great Blue Guardian - \$1,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | |

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
 Please charge my Mastercard Visa Discover American Express

Card Number _____ Exp. date (MM/YY) _____ Card security code _____

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

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 caring about the Blue Hills!

Team Up with Friends of the Blue Hills to Green Up the Blue Hills!



**Sunday, May 21,
1-3:30 p.m.**

We had a very mild winter (thank goodness!), and that means the invasive plants are out in force this spring!

Please help protect the forests by joining us at the annual Green Up on Sunday, May 21, from 1:00 - 3:30 p.m. If everyone pitches in a little, we'll make a big difference to the native plants by removing lots of invasive weeds around Ponkapoag Pond. But it's not all work... there will also be music, face painting, crafts, and a scavenger hunt along the way!

If you're interested in volunteering, please RSVP to Greenup@



Volunteers from the New England Aquarium Barbara Moesing, Lace Garland and Alissa Minot pull invasive garlic mustard.

FriendsoftheBlueHills.org or call 617-696-8248. Parking is available at Temple Beth David, 1060 Randolph Street, Canton. It is a short, scenic walk

from the parking lot to the Ponkapoag AMC Cabins. The event will take place rain or shine – so come on out, bring the family and your gardening gloves!

Rockin' in the Park

Saturday, May 6, 1-3 p.m.

Join Les Tyralla, a registered geologist, on this co-sponsored DCR and Friends of the Blue Hills geology walk. We will explore the volcanic bedrock and glacial features of the Blue Hills and learn the secrets of geological processes on this moderately strenuous two-hour hike over rocky terrain. Sturdy footwear and the ability to climb rugged, narrow trails are required.

Preregistration is required and space is limited. Email Maggi.Brown@state.ma.us with contact name and email, number of attendees and ages. For ages 12 and up.

Peek-a-Blue Hikes Are Back!

Special Activities at Kick-off on April 11

Join us for the first Peek-a-Blue Hike of the season on Tuesday, April 11, from 11 am-12 noon at Houghton's Pond. All parents, grandparents and caregivers are welcome to bring young ones for a fun, age-appropriate hike to explore the Blue Hills Reservation.

Children will enjoy special activities and surprises at the kick-off!

The hikes will continue every other Tuesday morning throughout the year. Participants enjoy free water, juice and healthy snacks, and while the meeting

point is always in the Houghton's Pond main parking lot, the hike route varies. Many thanks to L.L. Bean for once again helping us co-lead the hikes.

For more information and a complete schedule of Peek-a-Blue Hikes, visit www.FriendsoftheBlueHills.org/peekablue or email info@FriendsoftheBlueHills.org.



Tots on foot and in a stroller are all welcome!

Seasons of the Blue Hills Photo Contest

Do you love the Blue Hills all year long? Show it by submitting a photo to the Seasons of the Blue Hills Photo Contest!

Submit up to four photos of the animals, plants or people who benefit from the Blue Hills in every season. Or your subject could be your favorite view, trail or landmark that gives you joy throughout the year.

You could win one of two prizes. One \$250 L.L. Bean gift certificate will be awarded to the photographer with the photo that has the most electronic votes. Another \$250 L.L. Bean gift certificate will be awarded to the person whose photo is chosen by a panel of judges. Your photo may also be included in the 2018 Seasons of the Blue Hills calendar. The contest deadline is September 10, 2017, 5:00 p.m. To enter and



Photo by Mark Mikkan

to vote for your favorite photo, visit www.FriendsoftheBlueHills.org/photocontest.

Many thanks to the photo contest sponsors, Dedham Savings and L.L. Bean.

Friends' Members Help Decision Makers Address Blue Hills Concerns

Over the last several months, Friends' leaders have led meetings with the Coalition for a Better Blue Hills, Senator Walter Timilty and Rep. William Driscoll, as well as DCR administrators, to discuss creating safer road crossings, restoring operating funds for the Blue Hill

Trailside Museum and the Blue Hill Observatory, and assuring adequate funding for the Department of Conservation and Recreation.

Many decision makers care deeply about the Blue Hills. As they work hard to advocate for the park's needs, it is helpful for them to be able to demonstrate that their constituents also value the Blue Hills. Our vocal membership plays an important role in helping to make sure our public officials can prioritize the park and its visitors with their colleagues on Beacon Hill and with other key government agencies. A big thank you to all our members for helping to make a difference on Beacon Hill -- and in the park!

Spring Surprises in a Changing Climate: Special Event for Members of Friends of the Blue Hills

Sunday, April 23, 1 p.m. at Ponkapoag Pond
Park at Temple Beth David, 1060 Randolph Street, Canton

Professor Richard Primack, a plant ecologist from Boston University who delivered the highly engaging keynote address at last fall's Friends of the Blue Hills Annual Celebration, has kindly agreed to host an exclusive "Members Only" interactive walking event where he will share his insights on climate change and the Blue Hills. Plants, birds, insects and other animals

will be included. The hike starts at 1 p.m. and will last approximately an hour. Light refreshments will be served, and all members are invited to join us for this interesting afternoon event. If you're not a member – or need to renew – feel free to join or renew your membership at the event! For more information or to RSVP, email info@FriendsoftheBlueHills.org.

Ponkapoag Boardwalk To Get Needed Repairs

Though not as well known as Houghton's Pond, Ponkapoag Pond is the park's largest body of water, located within Canton and Randolph. At 200 acres, it is an ideal spot for fishing and non-motorized boating.

A quarter of Ponkapoag Pond's surface is underground, since its entire northwest corner is covered by an uncommon wetland plant community

known as a bog mat, a buoyant layer of vegetation that spreads out from the shoreline. Eventually it becomes thick enough to support an extensive cedar forest. Visitors can walk out to view the entire pond via a boardwalk, a string of anchored planks extending a fifth of a mile from dry land to open water.

Over the years, the boardwalk has sunk into the bog, flooding it and making it

difficult to hike safely.

This summer, the Student Conservation Association in Massachusetts will be working with the DCR to repair and replace the damaged boardwalk planks so that visitors will be able to enjoy this spectacular and unique feature in the Blue Hills Reservation.

Warm temps and even hotter chili!

Nearly 200 people joined Friends of the Blue Hills for an evening of lively Irish music, chili tasting, crafts, and winter fun! Mild temperatures made for a very pleasant night hike!

Special thanks to Blue Hills Ski Area for hosting the event and to our sponsors, AFC Urgent Care in Braintree and Dedham and Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage in Milton.

We are also grateful to the businesses that helped make Winter Fest a big success: Larabar, Fruit Center Marketplace in Milton, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center- Milton, and Suju Juice.

Congratulations and THANK YOU to our wonderful Chili Cook Off Competitors: Chili's in Braintree, The Fours in Quincy, Queen Anne's Catering in Canton, and Whole Foods at Legacy Place. Queen Anne's won the Judge's Choice Award for the fifth year in a row, and The Fours won the People's Choice Award for the third year in a row.



Families enjoyed the winter arts and crafts.



Volunteers welcomed people to Winter Fest and helped make the event a big success!



Skiers enjoyed the mild temperatures on the ski slopes.



Dozens of people participated in the Night Hike up to Great Blue



Voting on the People's Choice in the Chili Cook-off was hard—but fun—work!

Photo by Tom McGuinness

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Join us at Green Up!
Sunday, May 21, from 1:00-3:30 p.m.
Ponkapoag AMC Cabins
A Day of Stewardship and Fun
Music, face-painting, crafts and pulling weeds!
Visit www.FriendsoftheBlueHills.org for details

Friends of the Blue Hills
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