

Massachusetts 8th District

Candidate Town Hall on the Environment

Tuesday, July 21, 2020, 11:30 am on Zoom

Join the Friends of the Blue Hills and sponsoring partners for a virtual **Candidate Town Hall on the Environment**. The town hall will take place on July 21st at 11:30 am and give you an opportunity to learn directly from the candidates how they will address pressing issues facing our communities. Both candidates, Dr. Robbie Goldstein and Representative Stephen Lynch, have been invited.

Candidates will discuss their views on issues that relate to environmental protection, equity, climate change, climate resiliency, sustainable

transportation, and more. The issues that affect you, your community, and the natural places you care about, need strong leadership at the federal level. Attend this one-hour session to better understand the candidates' positions so that you can make an informed decision for this important election.

You will have the opportunity to submit questions when you register, as well as during the live, virtual event.

This event is jointly hosted by the following organizations Friends of the Blue Hills, Blue Hills Coalition for Climate Action, Clean Water Action,

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A Win for the Blue Hills' Forests

Members' support helped protect dark skies... and sensitive habitat

The world has drastically changed... but one thing remains constant: Friends of Blue Hills' members and supporters are still protecting the amazing treasure that is the Blue Hills.

Just recently, our members and supporters stopped an imminent threat to Blue Hills' forests.

When we first heard of a Department of Transportation (MassDOT) project at the intersection of Route 24 and I-93 that would drastically change the lighting in color, intensity, and spread into the reservation, we were concerned about how the light would harm the southern part of the Blue Hills, which includes

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Dr. Robbie Goldstein - Confirmed



Rep. Stephen Lynch - Confirmed

Building a Stronger Blue Hills Community for the Future

Friends of the Blue Hills
Strategic Plan 2020

Last year we developed a strategic plan to direct our work for the next five years, making sure we focus on what matters most to our members, park visitors, and the park itself.

Our charge -- to ensure that the land and its resources are here for future generations to enjoy -- is made possible only through the participation of those around us. Whether through membership, volunteerism,

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A Win for the Blue Hills

a state-designated Area of Critical Environmental Concern. We knew that the increased lighting would trespass on sensitive habitats with animals, birds, and insects that depend on darkness to signal when to eat, sleep, hunt, migrate, and even when to reproduce.

The project not only would have disrupted the fragile ecosystem in that area, but it would have also increased the energy usage for the lighting at the intersection, which contradicts the state's goal to decrease greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change. With a price tag of over \$5 million, there were also clearly other more cost-effective, less environmentally disruptive lighting solutions.

When we consulted with experts, they confirmed our fears: the light would severely damage the Blue Hills forests. The excessive energy usage and project costs were also significant

Even though the odds were against us, we knew that the only way to protect the Blue Hills is for people who care about the Blue Hills to act strategically to protect it. Thanks to Friends of the Blue Hills members, we partnered with three other environmental

organizations to coordinate our testimony and develop a strategy in appearing before a video conference meeting of the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), which would decide the fate of the project.

Representing all visitors to the park who care about the health of the forests, we explained that the project would wreak damage on animals, birds, and insects that all depend on the Blue Hills.



Photo by David Gouthro (Braintree)

When the chair announced the final vote, it took several seconds for the result to sink in. We won! With a vote of 13 to 8 against the funding of the project, the MPO effectively voted to stop the project as designed.

The MassDOT lighting project manager was also at the MPO meeting and heard our concerns. After the MPO board voted against funding the original project, MassDOT incorporated the significant changes that 'rarely happens' that we and our partners requested. The lighting project has been redesigned to bring the color, intensity, and spread down to a much safer level for this sensitive area.

Thanks to Friends of the Blue Hills members, this sensitive habitat is protected for people – and its natural inhabitants.

Our heartfelt gratitude goes out to all our members and supporters. Thank you for caring for the Blue Hills and helping to make sure that it is protected. To see a copy of our comment letter, visit FriendsOftheBlueHills.org/lighting.

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

**Editors: Maile Panerio-Langer,
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**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

YES! I want to protect the Blue Hills Reservation!

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Basic Membership – \$30+\$10=\$40* | <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 _____ | |

Name _____

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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!

Candidate Town Hall

Community Action Works (formerly Toxics Action Center), Environmental League of Massachusetts, Neponset River Watershed Association, Mass Conservation Voters, Milton for Peace, Quincy Climate Action Network, Sustainable Milton.

The 8th Congressional District includes many of the towns surrounding the Blue Hills... and certainly, all of the towns in the district include people who visit the Blue Hills!

Visit FriendsOfTheBlueHills.org/Forum2020 for details and updates.



Photo credits: Both photos (above and right) have been submitted to this year's photo contest. Curtis Hartman of Quincy submitted "Dandelion at Sunset" and Danielle Wetmore of Randolph entered "Enjoying the Sun at Houghton's Pond." To see other photos, vote for your favorite, and submit your own, visit FriendsOfTheBlueHills.org/photo-contest-voting.

Building a Stronger Blue Hills Community

partnership or simply respectful use of the park, every individual in our region has a potential role to play in our continued success. We enter our forty-first year invigorated by the opportunity to more fully engage with the broader community in pursuit of a stronger, more sustainable legacy for the Blue Hills.

Last year we developed a strategic plan to direct our work for the next five years, making sure we focus on what

matters most to our members, park visitors, and the park itself.

Goals

Our goals over the next five years, as outlined in our strategic plan, include: maintaining or increasing the park's acreage through good stewardship of the land and resources and protection of the buffer zones.

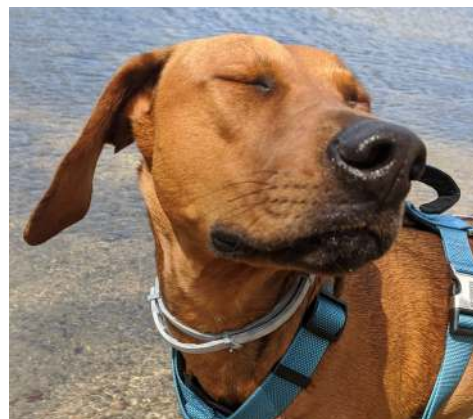
For the full strategic plan, visit FriendsOfTheBlueHills.org/strategy2020.



Photo credit: Sean Leahy of Milton (submitted to photo contest)

A Strategy for Future Generations

The Friends' new strategic plan helps to strengthen our organization, and maximize our effectiveness so we focus on what matters most to our members, park visitors, and the park itself. The plan highlights the important role our members play in making sure park visitors can enjoy the park today... and for generations to come.



Native Tree Give-away Thanks to the REI Co-op

This spring, we were working with other organizations as part of the Blue Hills Climate Action Coalition, preparing an engaging Earth Day event where you could celebrate, learn, and get trees to plant to help reduce greenhouse gases. While the international pandemic put the event plans on hold, Friends and community members still celebrated the Earth and helped take a small step forward.

Thanks to generous support from REI Co-op, over 200 Friends' members and others from the community received free native deciduous trees and shrubs (i.e. Northern Red Oak, Red Maple, River Birch, and Serviceberry) and a naturalized conifer (i.e. Norway Spruce).

Every tree you plant helps reduce climate change by capturing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and releasing oxygen. Trees also cool the earth by blocking sunlight and providing shade. Tree roots also filter harmful chemicals and pollutants to help keep our water clean. And of course, as folks who love the Blue Hills already know, trees provide peaceful spaces where we can rejuvenate ourselves.

A big thank you to REI Co-op for funding this project. As a member-owned co-op, REI invests deeply in stewardship of the outdoor places its members know and love. REI actively works with nonprofits - like the Friends of the Blue Hills! - across the country to steward and maintain local trails and public lands and connect people to the outdoors. To learn more about REI's investment, visit REI.com/h/philanthropy.



Volunteers distributed free trees to Friends' members and the community. The community event was organized by the Blue Hills Climate Action Coalition and generously supported by REI Co-op. The Friends and over a dozen other organizations are part of the Coalition.

Introducing... Meditation in Motion August 13, Noon on Zoom



Tired of being cooped up? Want to learn something new? Then join us to experience Qigong (Qi pronounced 'chee' - like 'Chee-tos'), a part of the traditional Chinese medicine that dates back over 3,000 years, and combines breathing, movement

and meditation. In this 40-minute session, you'll learn to integrate physical postures, breathing techniques, meditation and focused intentions. The session will be led by Paula Reardon-Webster, Certified Evidence-Based Instructor from Center for Taiji Studies. Paula

says that practiced correctly, you will experience gains in health, strength and energy. Certainly worth a try! Register for the Zoom link: FriendsOfTheBlueHills.org/Energy.

Photo credit: Nolan Whitehead of Newton (submitted to photo contest)

Virtual Book Club



Compelling Reads... and Dynamic Conversations Launching the new Blue Hills Book Club

Register: FriendsOfTheBlueHills.org/book-club

While we have been unable to physically get together because of the physical distancing restrictions, we can still enjoy each other's company - and ideas - virtually. There are certainly no shortage of topics to discuss!

If you are looking for great books - and people to discuss them with - you'll want to join us at our next virtual Blue Hills Book Club gathering.

When we recently read *Braiding Sweetgrass*, we talked about the incredible ways trees seemed to communicate with one another and coordinate growth and fruit-bearing.

When we discussed *The Stranger in the Woods*, the topic of choosing and successfully self-isolating for 27 years seemed incredible during this time of forced quarantine. What would it be like to have never caught a cold in nearly 3 decades because you were never close enough to anyone to get sick? If you enjoy reading books, then pull up your favorite reading chair, kick up your feet, and join us to discuss our next book.

Check out our virtual book club page for our upcoming books and more information, FriendsOfTheBlueHills.org/book-club.

Creating a Community of Respect, Acceptance, and Inclusion

At the June 1st Board Meeting, the Trustees of the Friends of the Blue Hills voted to adopt a diversity statement that had been in the works for two years. Notably, the timing of this agenda item coincided with the news of racially-based incidents in the United States including a non-compliant dog owner who called the police on a Black birder in New York City's Central Park. These recent events of violence against communities of color underscore the necessity of our organization's responsibility to create a community of respect, acceptance, and inclusion while amplifying the voices of all groups.

Friends of the Blue Hills acknowledges a continuing need to evaluate and revise its diversity efforts. Internally, the Board is working to expand its understanding of issues related to land use and is tasked this summer with reading Lauret Savoy's book *Trace: Memory, History, Race, and the American Landscape*, a book that explores human stories of migration, silence, and displacement in an attempt to make sense of land and its troubled past. The Board is looking forward to robust conversation on issues raised in this book, by our constituents, and by the news. Our Principles of Diversity statement, included on our website, is a call for all of us to do the work needed to remain relevant, ensure equal access, and develop sustainable solutions to problems facing the Blue Hills Reservation. To read the statement, visit FriendsOfTheBlueHills.org/diversity-principals.

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