

Traffic Study Will Address Dangerous Crossing of Route 28 for Skyline Trail Hikers

Have you ever climbed Buck Hill to enjoy the exhilarating 360-degree view, only to descend the Skyline Trail and experience fear and frustration trying to cross the stream of cars racing along Route 28?

As Randolph Town Councilor Jesse Gordon says,

“Crossing Route 28 at the Skyline Trail has been a problem for years... Cars speed by and hikers need to run across to access the other side of the park.”

If hikers could cross the road more easily, the park would be less crowded in this and other well-known parts of the park. Visitors could also discover more of the hidden wonders of the park like the Great Cedar Swamp in the easternmost section.

A new study will recommend how to

protect hikers crossing this dangerous roadway.

Thanks to the urging of members of the Friends, the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization has agreed to perform the study this fiscal year.



Hikers sprint across Route 28 as they follow the Skyline Trail. The Friends of the Blue Hills successfully advocated for a study to recommend safety improvements to this hazardous crossing.

When the study is completed in 2022, Friends members will then advocate for the state to implement the safety recommendations of the study to enable hikers to more safely explore the park.

A big thank you to our members for their advocacy in support of the Blue Hills.

Poo-lution Solution Volunteers Work to Reduce Dog Waste in the Park

Photo credit: Leslie MacKinnon (Dorchester)



Dogs are wonderful hiking companions, and most owners conscientiously leash their dogs and pick up and take out their dog's poop. Dog waste that is left in the park, however, contaminates our water supply and is hazardous to wildlife and humans. Our new Poo-lution Solution volunteers are monitoring this environmental pollutant on our trails. Their efforts will provide the data we need to

test what messages will be most effective in changing people's behaviors and reducing the amount of dog waste left in the park. To learn how you can become part of the mighty Poo-lution Solution volunteers just by walking a short distance down a trail, a couple times a month, visit friendsofthebluehills.org/poo-lution.

Caring for the Trails and Forest



Volunteers Clear Trails for Everyone

A big thank you to over 400 volunteers who helped clear the trails and remove invasive plants! Merrimack Valley Bank (volunteers pictured above) was among the local businesses that dedicated a community service day to help clear the trails. To get involved, sign up for updates at friendsofthebluehills.org/trails-maintenance.



Surveying Invasives... Saving the Forest

Melika Uter was one of over 250 volunteers who participated in the Survey and Save the Forest initiative. Volunteers have collected over 1,200 observations of species around Ponkapoag Pond. Their efforts will help us develop a management plan to protect the endangered species in this part of the park. To learn more, visit friendsofthebluehills.org/survey-ponky.

Survey Says... Our Members Know What's Important! Our Members Prioritize Protecting the Park

Last spring, we surveyed our members to understand their priorities, concerns and suggestions for how we can improve our work together.

Over 300 members responded to the survey. We learned that most respondents:

- Visit the park at least once a month (95 percent)
- Do not own a dog (70 percent)
- Enjoy hiking a lot (91 percent)

We also learned that respondents have clear priorities:

- Preventing inappropriate development (97 percent)
- Maintaining the trails (79 percent)
- Caring for the forest (76 percent)

Many respondents expressed concerns about invasive species and forest health, trash, trail markings, dog behavior and dog waste.

A big thank you to everyone who responded. We also appreciate the 4.7 out of 5 stars members gave us for our work to maintain the trails and forests and protect the park from development!

As we develop our priorities for 2022, we are digging into the survey results to make sure our members' priorities are addressed.

A Gift for the Future



Photo: John Parker (Cambridge)

When you leave a gift in your Will, you will join members of the Skyline Society... and help protect the Blue Hills for generations to come. Learn more: friendsofthebluehills.org/donate-in-your-will.

Quarterly Newsletter

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Celebrating the Blue Hills... and the People who Protect It

At this year's Annual Celebration, attendees could choose online and in-person opportunities to learn about and celebrate the Blue Hills and all who care for it. We're grateful to everyone who participated; our keynote speaker, Boston Globe reporter, David Abel; as well as the many generous sponsors and silent auction donors.

Part of this year's success was the result of the hard work of the Annual Celebration Committee, whose members helped to navigate the evening's technological challenges, solicit silent auction donations, and envision an entertaining and rewarding experience for everyone who attended. To learn how you can volunteer to help organize other events, contact sage@friendsofthebluehills.org or visit friendsofthebluehills.org/volunteer/opportunities.



This year's Annual Celebration Community Partnership Award honorees included Mark Smith (far left), executive director of the Mary May Binney Wakefield Arboretum; Maggi Brown (second from right), who recently retired from the Department of Conservation and Recreation; and Ruth Bigio (far right), volunteer trail leader. Debbie Merriam, arboretum director of the Mary May Binney Wakefield Arboretum, (not pictured) was also honored. Also pictured, Matt Panucci (second from left), Friends' president; and Judy Lehrer Jacobs (center), executive director of Friends of the Blue Hills.



Mike Paglia, Jonathan Morse, Jan Murray, Jeff Ericksen and Frank Donovan propose a toast at the Annual Celebration.



Annual Celebration Committee member Brad Huizinga with Julia Glauber enjoy the Annual Celebration.

Blue Hills Photo Contest... Amazing Photos, Photographers and Winners!

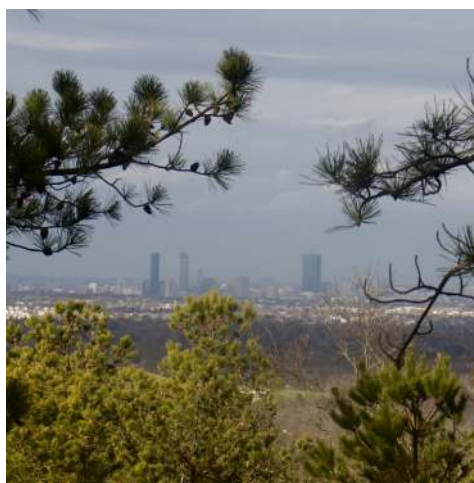
Over 100 photographers submitted over 200 amazing photos of the Blue Hills to this year's Blue Hills

Photo Contest! Many thanks to the photographers... and to over 800 people who enjoyed the photos and

voted for their favorite!

Many thanks as well to our generous contest sponsors: Patagonia and Dedham Savings. We're also grateful to this year's contest judges: Liz Bissel, Ken Cohen, Mike Albert and Allen Waltman.

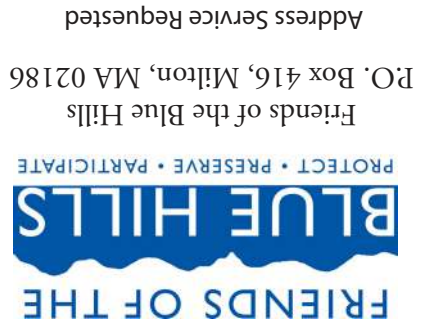
Two prizes were awarded, one for the photo that received the most electronic votes, and one for the photo selected by the panel of judges. Both contest winners received a Patagonia sweater jacket.



The Blue Hills Photo Contest winner of the popular vote was Emma Lawson of Easton for her photo "Boston Overlook."



The contest panel of judges awarded a prize to "Afternoon Delight" by Frances San Agustin of Stoughton.



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Winter Luminaria Walk
Thursday, February 24, 2022, 4:00 - 6:30 pm
 Join us for a gentle, self-guided candle-lit walk along
 Houghton's Pond lit by the soft glow of over 400 luminaria.
friendsofthebluehills.org/lights

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