

# 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

*Thank you!*

FRIENDS OF THE  
**BLUE HILLS**  
PROTECT • PRESERVE • PARTICIPATE

Photo: John Parker





Photo: Caitlin Komm

## Dear Friend,

These days when we head out on the trails, we're more grateful than ever. To be outdoors is a gift. To breathe fresh air and feel sunshine on your face is a privilege never to be taken for granted.

How does Friends of the Blue Hills preserve the park? We care for the trails by clearing, maintaining, and repairing them (this includes building and rebuilding bridges and other structures) so your walks through the woods are always accessible and beautiful. In this way you can enjoy the Reservation year-round. You might even join the 125-Mile Club... or challenge yourself to complete it again!

How do we protect the park? We advocate for things like: the Public Lands Preservation Act, parking lot improvements at Ponkapoag Pond's Fisherman's Cove, increased public transportation to the park, improved safety in the crossing of Route 28, and a sound electric bike policy. We also remove invasives that threaten native species and local wildlife.

Together with you, we preserve, protect, and enjoy our second home, the Blue Hills. We hope you enjoy the 2021 Annual Report – a record of your impact on the park. You're a wonderful gift. We're so thankful!

For the Blue Hills,



*Judy Lehrer Jacobs*  
Judy Lehrer Jacobs  
Executive Director



*Matt Panucci*  
Matt Panucci  
President

## 2021 Board Members

Matt Panucci, President  
Bob Murray, Treasurer  
David Dobrindt, Secretary  
Carina Bandle \*  
Laura Beebe  
Ken Cohen

Barbara Huggins Carboni  
Emily Grilli-Scott  
Jane Hylton  
Rick Kesseli  
Lorna Jane Norris  
Mike Paglia

\* *Joined 2022*

### See How We're Addressing the Top Concerns of Our Members

*Based on our 2021 Member Survey*



**DEVELOPMENT THREATS**



**HABITAT PRESERVATION**



**TRAIL MAINTENANCE**





## Thank You, Trails Volunteers!

A good trail is one that's clear and accessible. Ideally, when you walk it, you don't even notice that it's been cared for. If you do, something's probably not right.

Making this happen is hard work. We're profoundly grateful for the hundreds of volunteers who dedicate themselves to blazing, brushing, pruning, clearing, raking, building, and repairing the trails. Thank you!



**515**

TRAIL VOLUNTEERS



**2,196**

VOLUNTEER HOURS



**40**

MAINTENANCE EVENTS



**35**

TRAIL ADOPTERS

## The 125-Mile Club Members Agree: You Deserve to Be This Happy!

How many trail miles did you log when you were 3? If it's any less than 125, Thea McElwaine has you bested. She even beat her mom and dad to her first 125-Mile Club patch by doing some trails with each parent, separately. Clever girl. And just look how happy Thea is with her impressive accomplishment!

The Friends of the Blue Hills 125-Mile Club kicked off in the spring of 2021 and was an immediate success. So far, 712 people have signed up. From May through December, 25 members completed the challenge.

There are many ways to participate in the 125-Mile Club: on your own, on regularly led hikes, on family hikes, and in special events such as Boots 'n Brews and our June celebration event.

Coming soon: maps for each section of the park (prompted by survey results) and new patches for completing all 125 miles more than once.

Interested? Sign up. You won't regret it!  
[friendsofthebluehills.org/125mileclub](http://friendsofthebluehills.org/125mileclub)



**712**

125-MILE CLUB MEMBERS



**25**

MEMBERS COMPLETED THE CHALLENGE SO FAR



Photo: Colt McElwaine

# How You Help to Keep the Blue Hills Habitat Healthy

A forest with many native plants is resilient, but invasive species threaten the invisible web of connections among all the plants and the wildlife that depend on them.

Finding and removing the invasives that threaten native species requires observations for data. This data can make a big impact.

**Together with you**, we observe, identify, and

eradicate invasives. This preserves the ecosystem and keeps the Blue Hills healthy.



**900+**  
OBSERVATIONS  
CONDUCTED



**174**  
SPECIES  
OBSERVED



**3**  
HIGH SCHOOLS  
& COLLEGES  
ENGAGED

# Your Voice, Amplified

Any single voice in a noisy world is not easily heard. But our many voices together have the power to persuade the decision makers to prioritize the Blue Hills. When this happens, change happens. Here are some of the ways we've united our voices to advocate for the Blue Hills in 2021:



**Crossing Safety** – In 2021, we proposed a study on how to improve safety for hikers crossing Route 28 (between Chickatawbut Road and Route 93). The study is being implemented this year, and it will explore the need for traffic calming, speed regulations, or pedestrian traffic signals.



**Public Lands Preservation Act** – This important piece of legislation recently passed the State Senate after passing the House. We will continue to engage members on this bill and work in coalition with other organizations to ensure protected lands stay protected.



**E-Bike Policy** – When we heard that the state policy on electric bicycles was to be changed for the worse, we worked in partnership with other Friends organizations and mobilized our members to make sure that DCR continues to follow sound electric bike policies. The original policy currently remains intact.



## Ponkapoag Parking Lot Improvements

In response to our voicing of members' concerns, the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) developed a master plan for Ponkapoag Pond. One of the key priorities is to make major improvements to the parking lot at Fisherman's Cove on Randolph Ave in Canton. Friends of the Blue Hills represented your concerns throughout the process as a stakeholder. But it was your voice that started things in motion to bring about this good news.



**Public Transportation** – For thousands of families in the Boston area, the Blue Hills and its resources remain inaccessible. In partnership with other community groups, we successfully advocated for the Equity and Access Feasibility Study to improve MBTA bus access. Now, as part of an advisory group for this study, we continue to promote access to the Blue Hills for everyone.



# You Preserve and Protect the Blue Hills!

## THANK YOU



4.7 OUT OF 5 STARS

"What do members think of the park?"

*Based on our 2021 Member Survey*

*The Friends of the Blue Hills is devoted to preserving and protecting the Blue Hills Reservation's natural beauty, diverse habitats, and many recreational opportunities.*

**351**

**NEW MEMBERS**

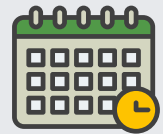
**1,464 TOTAL MEMBERS**



**35**

**EVENTS**

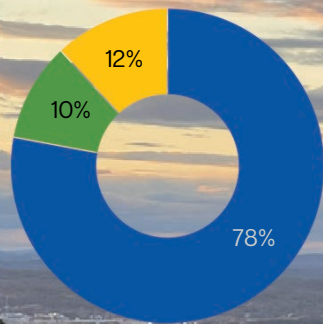
**932 ATTENDEES**



### Financial Snapshot

**2021 REVENUE**

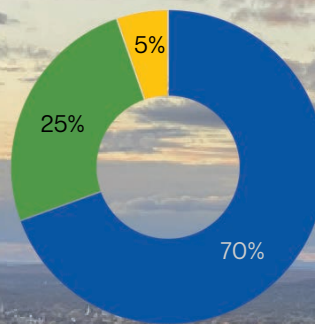
\$311,800



- INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS
- GRANTS
- EVENTS

**2021 EXPENSES**

\$225,415



- PROGRAM
- MANAGEMENT
- FUNDRAISING

### Enjoying the Blue Hills Together

The fall foliage views from atop Great Blue are nothing short of spectacular. Nearly 300 people joined us for the Fall Foliage and Sunset Hike event in October. It felt so good to come together as a community again, hiking and enjoying the beautiful autumn colors at sunset!



## We Love Celebrating Our Members!

Every July is Membership Month, when we are proud to host several special events to celebrate our wonderful members. (Last July, nearly 70 participants learned the stories behind the historic ruins at the Lyons Turning Mill near Quincy Quarry.)

Photo: Brian Baldeck

## We're Looking for Leaders – Maybe You?

We are looking to identify and develop leaders for events, organization, change, and improvement. We plan to grow the Advocacy Committee and the Blue Hills Buffer Committee – and to do even more for the park.

We need leaders and additional volunteers to help with: trash pick-up, dog waste management, and the development of a public campaign with messaging that encourages all of us park-goers to care for the Blue Hills in every way that we can. Interested? Please email Paul Williams at [paul@friendsofthebluehills.org](mailto:paul@friendsofthebluehills.org).



Thank you for helping to make the park doggone good. Good dogs like Rupert, Jake, and Elvis enjoy the park just like you do! --- **Let's go for a walk!**



Photo: Nicole Shapiro

FRIENDS OF THE  
**BLUE HILLS**  
PROTECT • PRESERVE • PARTICIPATE

**Your Continued Support of the Blue Hills Matters. Thank You!**

[friendsofthebluehills.org](http://friendsofthebluehills.org) · [info@friendsofthebluehills.org](mailto:info@friendsofthebluehills.org)

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