



**Role:** Executive Director – Full Time/exempt

**Website:** <https://friendsofthebluehills.org/>

**Start date:** Approximately January – February 2023

**Location and hours:** The Blue Hills Reservation lies within six Massachusetts towns located south of the Boston Metropolitan area: Canton, Randolph, Quincy, Braintree, Milton, and Dedham. Although the organization has no fixed office space, the successful candidate will need to live within easy access to Blue Hills Reservation for events, programs, in person meetings, and community engagement. The majority of work can be performed remotely, and hours are largely flexible. Some meetings and events take place in the evenings and over weekends

**Compensation:** Starting salary is \$85,000 with generous PTO, medical benefits, and 403b

To apply: Inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed in confidence to Lorna Jane Norris of [LJN Advisory](mailto:LJN@lornajanenorris.com). Please send a resume and letter of interest to [LJN@lornajanenorris.com](mailto:LJN@lornajanenorris.com). Letters of interest should be no more than two pages and should outline how your professional background, experience, interests, and passions specifically correlate to the position and to the Friends' mission and work. The position will remain posted until filled however preferential consideration is given to applications received by November 3rd, 2023. The review of applications will begin immediately. All applicants will receive a personal acknowledgement of their application.

The Friends of the Blue Hills (the Friends) is committed to cultivating a diverse staff that is representative of the communities we serve. Applications from individuals having diverse backgrounds and life experiences are strongly encouraged. We are open to the possibility that a great candidate for this job may not precisely meet all of the criteria below; if you believe you're the right person for this job and can persuasively make that case, we encourage you to apply.

### About Friends of the Blue Hills

**Mission:** The Friends of the Blue Hills is a 1,400-member non-profit organization devoted to preserving and protecting the Blue Hills Reservation's natural beauty, diverse natural habitats and many recreational opportunities.

**About:** Twenty minutes south of Boston, nestled in suburban sprawl and circled by highways, is the Blue Hills Reservation, a DCR managed park. Within its borders lie 7,000 acres of forest, 125 miles of hiking trails, ponds for paddling, fishing and swimming, camps for young people, and visitor centers for all.





Friends of the Blue Hills has been working since 1979 to mobilize the surrounding community, with the goal of protecting the park and its valuable natural resources. The organization seeks to strengthen the bond between the community and the Blue Hills to ensure it will always be cared for, accessible, and enjoyed. In addition to working on specific initiatives to respond to current needs and opportunities, each year the Friends' volunteers, members, staff and Board dedicate time to:

- Protecting endangered species habitat and remove invasive species
- Maintaining the trails
- Preventing encroachment and development
- Advocating for funding to increase impact
- Increasing access to the park through engagement with surrounding municipalities and the MBTA
- Building community among its members and all people who love to use the park



The Friends currently has a budget of \$335,000 and a Board of Directors of eleven. The organization employs a full-time Executive Director, three staff members, and various vendors and contractors to assist in running the organization. The outgoing Executive Director is moving on to a new opportunity after 19 years and will be departing in late October. A current staff member is serving as Interim Executive Director with the active support of a Transition Committee and the Board.

The organization is in excellent financial, structural, and operational health, with a recently completed recruitment drive yielding six talented and enthusiastic new members to join its working Board. A five-year strategic plan was completed in 2021.

### About the opportunity

Reporting to the Board of Directors, the Friends next Executive Director will be joining the organization at a pivotal time – there are many exciting possibilities for new leadership to build upon the organization's recent growth in membership, revenue, visibility, infrastructure and impact.

**At its heart**, the Friends is an organization that engages people through its programs to care for the park. And, events in our recent history have resulted in the Friends' working to respond to current and emerging needs.

**Firstly**, during the pandemic, the Blue Hills became a safe place for people to gather – to be in community with friends and family, and with nature. Parking lots overflowed and tens of thousands of people who had never visited the park found healing and inspiration on its trails. The next leader can continue efforts to leverage this new level of engagement with the park along with our fresh understanding of how beneficial being in places like the Blue Hills is, not just for our physical health, but for our social and emotional well-being.

**Secondly**, in a year when the news has been dominated by the devastating impacts of climate change, the need for the Friends to raise its voice, join with like-minded voices, and influence dissenting or resistant voices is clear. Our next leader will guide the organization in crafting that voice, using it to raise awareness about the fragility of our ecology, and the critical role that preserving the Blue Hills plays in the future of our communities and the planet.

**Finally**, it's imperative that the organization persist in its commitment to creating access to the park through public transportation links. The park can be seen clearly from neighborhoods such as Mattapan and Dorchester, but current transportation limitations make traveling to the park difficult to impossible without a car.



We will be looking to the next Executive Director to continue to drive efforts to advocate for regular, convenient and affordable bus service to the Blue Hills so that communities with limited access today may access the park in greater numbers.

This friendly and highly effective organization is ready and eager to welcome fresh eyes as it looks to blaze new and exciting trails, shaping the future direction of this small and very mighty organization. The Friends is seeking a leader who can bring people together to do the vital work that increases its impact- bringing creativity, positivity, warmth, and resourcefulness to the following priorities over the next several years:

### **Build strategic relationships**

- Investing in existing relationships with members, volunteers, donors, partners, legislators and other key stakeholders, leveraging their energy and dedication towards increased impact
- Developing new, diverse relationships that will increase the voices of support for the Friends while expanding its thinking as to what initiatives the Friends should explore
- Connecting communities, businesses and organizations to the Friends and to each other to raise awareness of the Blue Hills as a resource, and to encourage collective advocacy for the park
- Broadening the profile of the Blue Hills and the Friends through innovative and impactful partnerships and programs
- Establishing a fresh, clear, and consistent voice for the Friends through creative messaging, marketing and communications

### **Strengthen and develop resources**

- Developing the fundamental skills and systems to increase the organization's fundraising capacity focusing on increasing people's investment in the mission and work of the Friends; cultivating individual donors, exploring new grant opportunities, and attracting sponsorships from local businesses
- Articulating the value of becoming a member; increasing the sense of belonging and purpose for members and volunteers, and finding actionable ways for them to participate
- Building a staffing and governance structure to strengthen current operations and support future organizational growth and impact



### **Assess and direct organizational vision**

- Gaining a quick understanding of the current initiatives and programs and ascertaining what the priorities are. Then, building the required resources and schedule for moving those priorities forward
- Evaluating the current way of doing things: what's working, what the Friends might want to do differently, and what the Friends might want to stop doing. Leading the work to enact changes as needed
- Determining the possibilities and potential for the next iteration of the Friends considering the balance of the organization's various identities as protector, preserver, educator, connector, advocator, and organizer
- Gathering current and new stakeholders around a fresh vision that reflects current needs and opportunities while anticipating those in the future



## About the ideal candidate

### Prior experience, skills, and qualifications

- A demonstrated and deep care for the natural world, open spaces, and land conservation
- Significant experience working in or with non-profit organizations. Experience with membership organizations is a plus
- Competency and prior experience in all functional areas of nonprofit management: finances, HR and people management, operations, governance, program and project development, marketing and communications, fundraising, and event planning
- Adept in managing the competing priorities and limited resources of a \$335K organization
- Exceptional project management and organizational skills
- Comfortable working with a customer relationship management database and utilizing technology to maximize efficiency
- Expertise and or education in ecology, environmental science, land use/planning, or environmental policy is highly desirable
- Experience liaising with local and state politicians and government agencies such as the DCR, town planning boards, administrators and elected officials is highly desirable
- The ideal candidate must be able to complete all physical requirements of the job with or without a reasonable accommodation. Requirements include traveling to the park, walking on hiking trails both flat and with elevation, participating in occasional trail maintenance and invasive control work, setting up for events within the park, and tabling within other settings such as farmers markets and community events



### Abilities and qualities:

- **Balanced** – Can lead with vision while overseeing and executing on the day to day
- **Collaborative** – Natural relationship builder and connector of people, communities, and organizations
- **Strategic** – Translating vision into actionable steps and distributing those steps among the organization's staff and volunteers
- **Committed to Equity** – A constant commitment to and understanding of the importance of building structures and programs that promote access, opportunity, and inclusion for all, and that specifically engage groups who have historically not felt welcome in natural public spaces
- **Passionate and Persuasive** – Communicating the organization's purpose and impact to a variety of audiences through creative and consistent messaging, in fundraising, marketing and social media campaigns, and when speaking publicly
- **Visionary** – The ability to speak about the Friends place and role within the larger landscape of land conservation
- The Friends next Executive Director is **friendly, positive, humble, energetic, invested, and passionate** about bringing people together around the Friends' mission to protect and preserve the Blue Hills Reservation



LJN ADVISORY