

Your Blue Hills

The Newsletter for Supporters of Friends of the Blue Hills

FRIENDS OF THE
BLUE HILLS
PROTECT • PRESERVE • PARTICIPATE

WINTER 2025



More than 200 kids and adults cast a line and enjoyed this fall's fishing event. Right: More than one four-footed friend came to see the sun set with their humans.

It's Been a Busy Fall!

From photo shoots to fishing lessons and special events to sunset hikes, the Blue Hills has been at the center of so much activity this fall. As the park prepares for the new year—and a host of new programming—following are highlights from the past few months.

Fishing Event a Hit With Kids

Baiting a hook. Casting a line. These are powerful childhood memories for many. And now, there are 233 more people who can say they've been fishing in the Blue Hills. On two days in August and September at Houghton's Pond, FBH partnered with Elevate Health, DCR, and US Fish and Wild-

life to bring this classic pastime to a new generation of visitors. People were excited about this event, so expect it to be back in 2025. Fishing poles will be baited and ready!

Sunset Hike Attracts Hundreds

Watching the sun set from atop a high point in the Blue Hills Reservation may be one of the top 10 things to do in the park. But access to the Blue Hills after sunset isn't usually



allowed. Luckily, an exception was made for the annual Sunset Hike & Concert in October, and more than 200 people hiked up Great Blue Hill to watch the sun set, enjoy music by live band Bad Street,

and have a picnic before heading down the ski hill under the lights. Thank you to all who attended, the many volunteers who helped out, sponsor Orchard Cove, and partners Blue Hill Observatory and Blue Hills Ski Area.

Annual Meeting

A Celebration in the Park

October's annual meeting was a bit different this year—it took place right in the Blue Hills! New England Base Camp on Unquity Road hosted almost 100 guests under their pavilion and inside the Egan Center, making this year's annual



meeting extra special. While temperatures were cool, attendees warmly welcomed volunteer honorees Charlie Crosby and Steve Valero (on behalf of the Blue Hills Hiking Club) and guest speaker Mardi Fuller.

Guests enjoyed mingling with old friends and making new ones while relaxing around the firepit listening to FBH member Keith Pierce from Quincy play guitar. Over dessert provided by Konditor Meister, Maura Doherty of Quincy was announced as the winner of the coveted dinner raffle. It was



a magical night, surrounded by the Blue Hills and by those who love and take care of them. Thank you to all the sponsors, volunteers, auction donors, and attendees for making this an event to remember.

Photo Contest

Showing Off Beauty in the Blue Hills

If a picture paints a thousand words, then this year's photo contest spoke volumes. More than 130 photos were submitted, showcasing the Blue Hills and visitors' talents with a camera. Denis Minevich from Natick won the Popular Vote while the three-judge panel selected shots by Christine Roberts of Quincy as the Judges' Choice, Matthew Thomas of Roslindale for "What Lives in the Blue Hills," and Shawn Szturma of Arlington for "Who Visits the Blue Hills." Thank you to

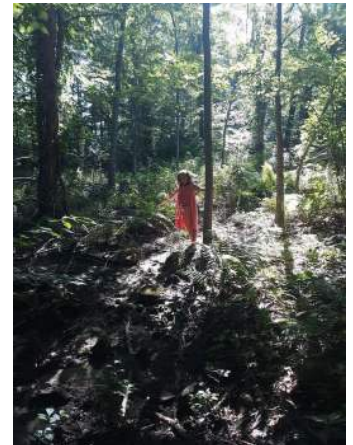
sponsors Dedham Savings, Patagonia-Cambridge, and Page Waterman Gallery & Framing. Watch for the 2025 contest to open for submissions in the spring.



*Denis Minevich
Walk into the Reservoir*



*Shawn Szturma
Evening Paddle
at Ponkapoag Pond*



*Christine Roberts
Forest Fairy*



*Matthew Thomas
Ring-Necked Duck*



Stay up to date on future events by bookmarking the website calendar. Scan the QR code today!



Generosity

Giving Back During the Holidays and Beyond

This time of year sparks generosity, helping nonprofits like Friends of the Blue Hills raise funds that make our mission of preserving, protecting, and promoting your park possible all year long.

Are you seeking an easy way to make a positive impact in your local community this holiday season? Here are some ways you can do just that:

- **Contribute** to the FBH end-of-year campaign to help reach the goal of \$60,000.
- **Give** the gift of FBH membership to your Blue Hills loving family and friends.
- **Purchase** new FBH hoodies, T-shirts, and more for friends, family, and even yourself to show your love and support for the park.
- **Sponsor** a trail for a friend or yourself to support on-going trail stewardship.
- **Set up** an automatic monthly gift of any size.
- **Give** through a Donor Advised Fund (DAF).
- **Practice** planned giving by adding FBH as a beneficiary to your will or estate.
- **Make** a tribute gift in honor or memory of someone.

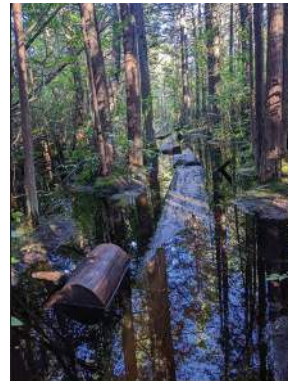
Just click the **Donate** button at www.friendsofthebluehills.org to learn more about these options and give a gift that protects the park that you love.

Park News in the New Year

Programming, Projects and More Coming Soon

Boots 'n Brews Is Back!

The popular hikes in collaboration with Widowmaker Brewing in Braintree will return in 2025 with new partner Arc'teryx and themes for each hike. Join us on these monthly guided hikes in the Blue Hills, meet other outdoor enthusiasts, and relax after each hike at Widowmaker. People who do all 12 hikes will win Arc'teryx, FBH, and Widowmaker swag. Hikes are \$10 (which includes a post-hike beer), and you can sign up on the FBH website.



Steve Murphy, Dorchester, Boardwalk at Ponkapoag

Because the boardwalk weaves through multiple habitats, a study is necessary to ensure the new boardwalk will not have a negative impact on the environment or wildlife, but ecological studies are expensive. As this process gets started, the boardwalk will remain closed to protect the safety of both hikers and the environment.

Adaptive Mountain Bike Trails

FBH is committed to making the Blue Hills more accessible to those with disabilities. In partnership with the New England Mountain Bike Association (NEMBA) and DCR, FBH is moving to improve the Forest Path mountain bike loop near Houghton's Pond. This improvement is to ensure it meets trail standards for adaptive recreation. The project will widen the trail, remove boulders, and add wayfinding signage to ensure everyone, regardless of ability, can enjoy the Blue Hills. FBH, DCR, and NEMBA will do the trailwork, which is estimated at \$10,000.

Watch our website for more info on upcoming events and these projects. We will need your help to make progress.



Emerson Dobrindt, Milton, Night Mountain Bike Ride



Board Member Spotlight

From Chili Taster to Board Member

Matt O'Dette's journey from being a member of the Friends of the Blue Hills to becoming the latest FBH board member began with a bowl of chili at the annual Winterfest event. But his love of the Blue Hills started in the park as a child and is just as strong today. He is a lifelong resident of the area who believes in the importance of protecting our natural resources and the power of nature to influence our wellbeing.

"As humans, our connection with nature is vital," Matt says. "It's a grounding force, a place to unplug from the fast-paced distractions of technology and recharge our internal energy." With his strong background in marketing, leadership, and relationship building, he is an ideal steward to ensure the Blue Hills Reservation will be protected, allowing future generations to experience its beauty and peace. Please welcome Matt to the FBH board!

Dedication

Welcome Friends!

We celebrate the latest group of generous individuals and organizations that chose to be part of our community. Each name reflects a commitment to making a positive impact in the park. Thank you for your dedicated support and partnership.

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 Blue Hills Hiking Club
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Grant

North American Association for Environmental Education

In Memory of Someone

Barbara Tilley

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YES! I want to keep the Blue Hills trails and forests healthy for hiking and other recreational activities.

Please use my gift to maintain the trails, improve the habitat, and preserve native species against invasives to keep the wildlife and the woods safe for all visitors.

Enclosed is my gift of \$_____

Return this coupon with your check to: Friends of the Blue Hills
 580 Washington Street
 Canton, MA 02021

Or give securely online at:
friendsofthebluehills.org/support