

Welcome New Friends!

Please join us in giving a warm welcome to the newest members of the Blue Hills community! Your support and partnership help ensure that the Blue Hills Reservation is protected, preserved, and enjoyed by all — today and for generations to come.

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Jacob Woolf

Your steady support protects the park all year long — set up a recurring gift with Mary. Just email her at mary@friendsofthebluehills.org.

Correction: Lorna Jane Norris, Trustee at Large, was inadvertently omitted from the list of board members in the 2024 Annual Report. Lorna Jane is awesome, and we regret the error.

Thank You to Our Partners

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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

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Your Blue Hills

The Newsletter for Supporters of Friends of the Blue Hills

FRIENDS OF THE
BLUE HILLS
PROTECT • PRESERVE • PARTICIPATE

FALL 2025

Dear Friends!



As crisp air returns and leaves begin to turn, we are reflecting on an exciting year at Friends of the Blue Hills (FBH) and looking forward to a busy fall.

With your input, FBH board and staff recently completed a new **strategic plan** that will guide our work for the next several years. Together, we've set ambitious goals to strengthen stewardship of the Blue Hills, show up for and grow our community, and expand programs and partnerships so that people of all ages can enjoy this special place. We're eager to share more with you in the months ahead — and even more eager to work alongside you to make this vision a reality.

Our advocacy efforts continued, including work with Mattapan Food & Fitness Coalition and Brookwood Community Farm to improve transportation access. Ongoing monitoring of buffer zone developments to safeguard the park's ecosystem remains a priority.

We hope you'll join us at one or more of our upcoming events:

- **Sunset Hike and Concert.** There's nothing quite like gathering to watch the sun dip below the horizon from Great Blue Hill while listening to live music. Join us October 11 for this magical evening walk and hilltop concert with Retro Rockets. BYO picnicking is encouraged!
- **Annual Meeting.** Hear about the year's accomplishments, celebrate FBH volunteers and partners of the year, connect with fellow supporters, and help shape the future of our work.

These events are wonderful opportunities to celebrate members of the community that makes our work possible — you!

Finally, as the year winds down, keep an eye out for our **Annual Appeal**. Your support helps protect and preserve the Blue Hills every season of the year and will be essential to bring the strategic plan to life.

Thank you for all you do to keep the Blue Hills healthy, vibrant, and welcoming. We can't wait to see you this fall.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature of Jen Klein in black ink.

Jen Klein, PhD
Executive Director

"Our mission is to foster connection by cultivating belonging today and stewardship for generations to come."

Photo: Buck Hill by James Condon



Great Blue Hill by Scott Griffiths of Braintree

Sunset, Song, and Scenery on Great Blue Hill



See the event on our calendar at friendsofthebluehills.org and register today!

Join FBH for a special evening at the **Sunset Hike and Hilltop Concert** on **Saturday, October 11, 2025, from 4:30–6:30 pm**. Hike with a guided group or go on your own to the top of Great Blue Hill and enjoy breathtaking views as the sun sets around 5:45 pm. Pack a picnic and settle in while the **Retro Rockets** play favorite classic-rock tunes to make the evening unforgettable. Bring your water and a camera to capture the moment! Admission is free for FBH members and by donation for non-members (comes with a raffle entry).

Looking for Trail Crew Leaders

Have you joined an FBH volunteer event before? Do you want to take the next step in protecting the trails? Are you ready to join the FBH volunteer leadership team?

We’re looking for new Trail Crew Leaders to help care for the trails and lead others in this meaningful, hands-on work. Whether it’s brushing, trash pickup, drainage work, or installing grade reversals, there’s a project for everyone.

Both small and large groups are welcome, and we will set you up for success with training, tools, safety gear, and support.

Interested? Curious?
Email John Harrell at John@friendsofthebluehills.org.



What’s in a Name? Ponkapoag Trail

By Meghan Gelardi Holmes,
FBH volunteer

Each trail in the Blue Hills Reservation has its own story. In this series, we will explore how some of your favorite trails got their names as we think about the history of the land that makes up the Blue Hills Reservation today.

On a muggy day this past summer, Ponkapoag Trail is filled with birdsong, occasional bullfrog croaks, and a few fellow hikers (plus some insects to swat at, too). The trail is a four-mile loop around Ponkapoag Pond, the larger of the two ponds in the Blue Hills Reservation (the other is Houghton’s Pond). The path is relatively flat and ideal for a peaceful walk through...

Scan the QR code to read the rest of the story in our blog – including an update on Ponkapoag Boardwalk.





Member Spotlight: Lily Horin

By Victoria Franco, FBH volunteer

I had the honor to speak with Lily Horin (she/her) — a scientist and FBH member — about what keeps her coming back to the park (and FBH) each year.

What is your history with the park? I've gone hiking with a few friends, and it's where I take my dog to get all her sniffing needs met. I even got engaged at Houghton's Pond (see above)!

What made you become a member of FBH? At a time of so much crisis in funding for parks, I wanted to do my part to keep these beautiful sanctuaries preserved for generations to come.

Where do you see FBH being valuable to visitors? Hosting classes and cleanups on the weekends! I'd especially love to learn how to camp with a group from the area.

Thank you, Lily, for helping to preserve the beautiful Blue Hills.

We'd love to hear your member story! Please email melissa@friendsofthebluehills.org to let her know you're interested.

JF&CS CHAI Works Cleans Up

A dedicated group from Jewish Family and Children's Service (JF&CS) CHAI Works-Canton, a community-based day program for adults with developmental disabilities, has taken to the park all summer to provide some much-needed TLC. In 15 visits to five areas, they spent nearly 100 hours focusing on a persistent challenge: trash. They've swept through Houghton's Pond, Shea Rink, Chickatawbut Overlook, and Little Blue, clearing out litter. Their presence sends a powerful message: This. Place. Matters.

We're grateful for those who help with the trash problem. The next time you travel to one of your favorite trailheads, you'll be able to see what can happen with a little help.

Visit jfcsboston.org for more info on CHAI Works.

Sign up to volunteer on our website calendar. Or contact john@friendsofthebluehills.org to bring out your private group.

"We try to help [our volunteers] understand how people can receive help and be helpful at the same time," says Kathryn Friel, director of day programs.



New Kids' Activity: Nature Journaling

On a warm August day, a group of young explorers set off around Houghton's Pond with pencils in hand and curiosity in their hearts. Their journey took them through a sunny open field, down to the beach, and into the cool shade of a tree-covered trail.

These 3- to 9-year-olds weren't racing to the next stop. They were slowing down, looking closely, and sketching what they saw. Leaves with soft shades of yellow creeping in, ants scurrying around, different kinds of rocks — the kids noticed it all.



They filled their journals with observations, color, and creativity. The kids could have stayed all day, discovering small wonders hidden in plain sight.

Nature journaling encouraged kids to slow down and visualize what nature is doing all around them while building a better connection with the world. It's something we all can get from being out in the park.

Watch our online calendar for future dates of exploration and journaling.