

A Road Runs Through It

By Jim Briand

In March 1955 Massachusetts Commissioner of Public Works, 47-year old John Volpe, was the state's master builder with a vision for unimpeded high speed driving that new suburbanites longed for. Central to that vision was an upgraded Route 128 that would complement the high-speed driving experience of the newly opened Southeast Expressway. For Volpe, those new roads would be "the best thing that has happened to Boston in the last century." On July 15, 1954 he laid out his vision for the path of the road at a public hearing. He expected no opposition and encountered none that night.

For eight months things remained quiet and planning proceeded. Then on March 2nd, 1955 State Representative Harold Putnam of Needham raised an alarm. On March 3rd, 1955 Volpe was conducting a public hearing on an unrelated matter and Harold Putnam seized control of the agenda. Before a hushed crowd he declared that Volpe's plan to take 750 acres of reservation land for the highway would be "the ruin of the Blue Hills," and demanded that a new route be found. "This land is priceless and irreplaceable," said Putnam. "It brings joy to thousands of people seeking relaxation from bustling city life." In the intervening days debate raged on the front pages and editorial sections of the region's many newspapers, including the *Boston Globe*, *Herald*, *Post*, and *Quincy Patriot Ledger*. Putnam charged Volpe and the DPW with a cover-up of viable alternative routes. A week later, on March 10th, 1955, more than 250 people packed a small Canton hearing room. Volpe led off. "The proposed route will not destroy the Blue Hills, he said, it will make it more accessible and safer to use," he said. In fact, "a great many more will enjoy its beauty by driving through than ever used it in the past."

Putnam stood to respond. "Commissioner Volpe's plan, he stated, represents nothing less than the wanton and reckless sabotage of the public domain. We must preserve the Reservation. Boston is the second most congested metropol-



Ponkapaog Pond and Great Blue Hill

itan area in the nation. This recreational land will be more highly prized in the future. A good alternative route has been proposed. Anyone who loves the Blue Hills should join me."

Businessmen from Randolph and Quincy opposed the alternative route, however. Randolph representatives charged that it would dissect their town, creating a "second East Milton

Square," while Quincy representatives said moving the road was bad for business and posed "a threat to security in the event of Russian nuclear attack" by limiting evacuation routes.

At the end of the evening passions remained high and the issue remained unresolved. Yet no one had illusions about the ultimate outcome. John Volpe was both judge and jury, and barring extraordinary political intervention, his mind was made up.

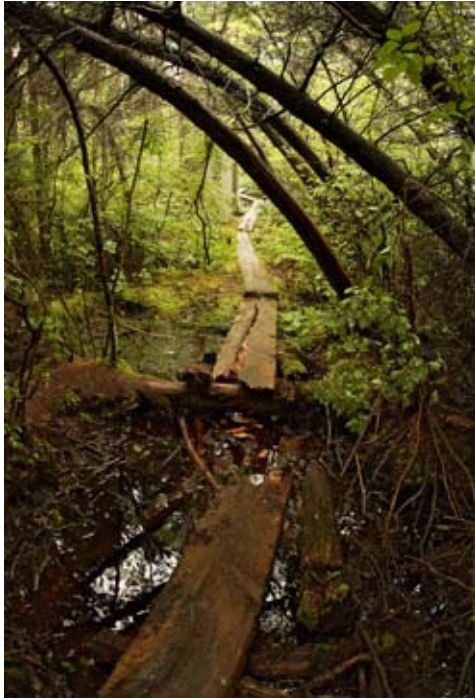
A week after the hearing, a local Wollaston man, Arthur C. Wesley wrote to the *Patriot Ledger*: "This highway is a foot in the door. Then will come bypasses and new connecting links, the noise and stench of fast

diesel trucks. It will no longer be a bird sanctuary, no more will it be a study of nature and then it will be too late."

As we know now, the highway did pave the way for other roads through the land. But luckily, we still have much to enjoy. This year, may we heed Wesley's warnings and renew our effort to protect the Reservation for future generations.

Photo Contest Winners

This year's 'Preserve the Beauty' Photo Contest winners were selected from over 80 entries. Rachael Alpert, 17, of Stoughton won the grand prize in the under 18 category for her photo "Rock Man." Lars Waldman of Hyde Park was awarded the grand prize in



"Boardwalk Interrupted" by Lars Waldman

the 18 and over category for his photo "Boardwalk Interrupted."

Both winners received \$150 in prize money and a professionally enlarged and framed copy of their photographs. The two winning photos and 13 photos that received Honorable Mention can be viewed on our web site.

We thank FBH's volunteer contest coordinator, Owen Hartford, for many hours of sorting photos, communicating with contestants, and judging the photos. Many thanks to the second judge, Tom Fitzgerald, for dedicating his time to helping choose the best photos.

Lastly, thanks to everyone who participated in this year's photo contest.

For more information and to see the Honorable Mention photos, go to the Friends of the Blue Hills web site www.friendsofthebluehills.org/FBHPhotoContest2008Winners/

Many thanks to Middlesex Savings Bank for supporting the 'Preserve the Beauty' Photo Contest by donating the prize money for both contest awards.

Protect the Reservation through your internet searches

Every time you search the internet using the Yahoo-powered www.goodsearch.com, and designate the Friends of the Blue Hills as your charity, you support FBH and our work to protect the park. Use it just as you would any search engine, get quality search results from Yahoo and support FBH. To start searching, you can access goodsearch.com through the site itself or through our website: www.FriendsoftheBlueHills.org/supportfbh.htm.

YES! I want to protect the Blue Hills Reservation!

I want to become a Friends of the Blue Hills member

(Please choose one of the following:)

Personal: Individual \$25 Family \$45 Senior \$20
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I would like to make an additional donation of:

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P.O. Box 416, Milton, MA 02186

Houghton's Pond Trail Race: October 5, 2008

by John Goldrosen

The 5th Annual Houghton's Pond Trail Race continued to grow in popularity, with 246 registrants and 193 race-day runners, ranging in age from 11 to 70. The day was cloudy but runners enjoyed comfortable temperatures in the 50's. We provided a well-organized and safe event for the runners.

Congratulations to the first male finisher, Stephen Allison and the first female finisher, Jonnifer Moorhead.

Profits from the race are divided between Colonial Road Runners and the Friends of the Blue Hills.

Many thanks to John Goldrosen and the Colonial Road Runners for donating a portion of the race profits to the Friends of the Blue Hills.



Jonnifer Moorhead was the first woman finisher

The Friends of the Blue Hills newsletter is produced four times a year.

Executive Director and Editor:

Judy Lehrer Jacobs

Layout: Owen Hartford

Visit us on the web at www.FriendsoftheBlueHills.org or call 781-828-1805 for membership, maps and schedule information.

PO Box 416, Milton, MA 02186

Calendar of Events

Pull and post this section of the Friends of the Blue Hills Newsletter and join us for some exciting events in the Blue Hills Reservation!

Winter 2009

▲ FBH sponsored event

Sunday, January 4, 10:00 am
Ponkapoag Pond Hike

FBH joint hike with AMC. X-C ski or hike if no snow 6 miles around pond. 5 hours. Meet at Ponkapoag Golf Course. Leader: Steve Olanoff, 781-326-6585. ▲

Saturday, January 10, 1:00 pm
Evergreens of Winter

Venture with us on a leisurely walk through stands of pine and hemlock, as we look at the hardy trees, shrubs and ground covers that stay green throughout the winter. 1.5 hours. Meet at the Houghton's Pond main parking lot. Call 617-698-1802 for details.

Saturday, January 17, 1:00 pm
St. Moritz Winter Wonderland

The St. Moritz area of Quincy was once the home of a huge winter carnival. Join DCR Rangers as we discover the interesting history of this winter wonderland on this easy hike. 1 hour. Meet at the Shea Rink parking lot at 651 Willard Street in Quincy. Call 617-698-1802 for details.

Sunday, January 25, 10:00 am
Eastern Section Hike

FBH joint hike with AMC. X-C ski 6 miles over moderate terrain or hike in hilly areas if no snow. 5 hours. Meet at Shea Ice Rink. Leader: Steve Olanoff, 781-326-6585. ▲

Sunday, February 1, 1:00 pm
Tracking in the Blue Hills

Put on your detective hat as we search for clues of animal activity. Where do animals go in the winter? Join a DCR ranger and look for tracks and other animal signs. 1.5 hours. Call 617-698-1802, x212 for registration.

Sunday, February 8, 1:00 pm
Bigfoot Stomp: A Snowshoe Hike

Did you just get a new pair of snowshoes or looking to get a set? Join a DCR Ranger and staff from EMS for a guided romp through the Blue Hills. We'll provide the tips and tricks to getting around in the deep stuff. EMS will also have a limited number of adult size snowshoes to loan. No experience is necessary! 1.5 hours. Call 617-698-1802 x212 for registration and meeting place.

Saturday, February 14, 1:00 pm
Shivering Singles Saunter

Join a Blue Hills Ranger and mix and mingle with other singles. You'll take an easy stroll around Houghton's Pond, then gather in the Visitor Center to share some refreshments. 1.5 hours. Meet at the Houghton's Pond main parking lot. Call 617-698-1802 for details.

Sunday, February 15, 10:00 am
Chickatawbut Section Hike

FBH joint hike with AMC. X-C ski 6 miles in the most remote area of the Blue Hills or hike if no snow. 5 hours. Meet at Shea Ice Rink. Leader: Steve Olanoff, 781-326-6585. ▲

March 7 and March 8
Maple Sugar Days,

10:00 am to 4:00 pm at Brookwood Farm. Call 617-698-1802 for details.

Saturday, March 14, 10:00 am
Houghton Section Hike

FBH joint hike with AMC. 7 mile hike on a variety of trails with several views and lunch atop Buck Hill. 6 hours. Meet at Houghton's Pond lot. Leader: Steve Olanoff, 781-326-6585. ▲

DCR Blue Hills Adult Walking Club

The DCR Blue Hills Adult Walking Club is a group of adults that meets on a weekly basis for recreational walks. The purpose of these walks is social exercise. There is no fee to join and everyone 16 or older is welcome. Walks are normally 2 to 5 miles with varying terrain. Call 617-727-4573 for details.

Advocacy Update

By Bob Quinn,
Advocacy Committee Co-chair

Lantana Land Grab

FBH continues to work to stop the transfer of this 3.2 acre parcel of the Blue Hill Reservation to a private for-profit entity, the Lantana function hall. The proposal as mandated by a Special Act of the Legislature in 2002 calls for the transfer of the property to the Lantana and for the Lantana to cut down all the vegetation and create a 374-space parking lot. We are in the final editing of a video that will be posted on the FBH website. Thank you to Owen Hartford for all of his work in the production of the video. Also the Lantana land grab has now been placed squarely in front of Governor Deval Patrick. Please join the more than 200 individuals who have expressed their opposition to this loss of our parkland. Simply visit http://devalpatrick.com/issue.php?issue_id=7698527. Register and express your opposition to this proposal. Finally we have scheduled a meeting with Commissioner Richard Sullivan. At this meeting we will personally present our argument that 1) there is no public purpose that would

allow for the sale of this parkland to a private for-profit entity and 2) that the Commonwealth must receive the full fair market value if it is to be sold. Lantana has to date offered to pay less than a third of the estimated value of this desirable property.

Mini Fenway

We continue to monitor this proposed project on the east end of the Reservation. On December 3, three members of the Advocacy Committee visited the site with the project CEO, Ron Iacobucci. Although, much of the area is far from pristine, the area does act as a buffer and as an entry into this section of the Blue Hills Reservation. FBH volunteers toured the two vernal pools and reviewed the property for endangered species habitat. Mr Iacobucci intends to seek a variance from certain environmental restrictions. FBH will monitor and respond to the variance application when submitted.

Weather Observatory Expansion

The FBH continues to monitor the proposal from the Weather Observatory to construct an educational center on

the summit of Big Blue. On December 3, FBH organized a meeting with Don McCasland from the Weather Observatory as well as representatives from the Blue Hills Trailside Museum. During the meeting, we learned that the Observatory has not begun a capital campaign for this project. All design documents and drawings are merely rough estimations; no decisions have been made about the scope of the project or nature of the new building. Without funding, the Observatory cannot even produce the planning documents necessary to obtain the necessary permits. Nevertheless, the Observatory still has plans to fundraise and construct a new facility. Meeting attendees expressed a variety of concerns, ranging from ridgeline development, visual impact on the Reservation, proximity to the Skyline Trail, traffic on the summit, impact upon the Trailside Museum, and environmental impact of the construction project. The FBH Board and Advocacy Committee plan to meet in February to clarify our position on this project. Please let us know what you think! Contact us at info@FriendsoftheBlueHills.org or 781-828-1805.

Trailside Museum Budget Slashed

By Norman Smith, Director,
Trailside Museum

Blue Hills Trailside Museum is managed by Mass Audubon and owned by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). The state provides operating funds annually to support the management and programming at the museum. In October 2008, in response to the state's revenue shortfalls, Governor Patrick cut 70% of the state portion of Trailside's budget for fiscal year 2009. As a result, three staff positions have been elimi-

nated. Effective January 1, 2009, the museum and the grounds (previously open to the public five days a week) will operate on a reduced three-day schedule: Friday, Saturday and Sunday only. Mass Audubon will continue to provide scheduled programs at Trailside, provide care for the museum's program and exhibit wildlife, and operate its summer camp at Chickatawbut Hill Education Center in the Blue Hills Reservation. In the spring of 2009, Mass Audubon and DCR will review the status of the budget to determine whether operating hours can be increased or will need to be otherwise adjusted.

What can you do to support the Trailside Museum?

FBH joins Trailside Museum in urging you to contact your state representatives and senators in support of the Trailside Museum. Here are some talking points: express your concern for the future of the Trailside Museum; the FY 2010 budget should contain funding for the museum; while we all understand a budget reduction is necessary given the state of the current economy, cutting the museum's budget by 70% is not reasonable for this important public resource. To find out who your legislators are or to obtain their address, visit: www.wheredoivotema.com.

Remembering Martha Curtis

By Hugh Stringer

We remember Marty Curtis for the Indian pudding she baked for FBH and Neponset River Watershed Association meetings. But her culinary skills hardly touch the contribution she made to



Martha Curtis

“preserving and protecting” the Blue Hills Reservation.

People who knew Marty might remember her in hip-deep Hemenway Pond clearing it of invasive species, or planting lilies at street corners, or surveying homes in Milton for “Habitat for Wildlife,” or selling her homemade dog biscuits at Milton Farmers Market. We remember her weekly news column “Conversationally Speaking.” It ran in Milton papers for almost 40 years.

Marty’s mother was a pantheist and Marty believed in homoeopathic medicine. On visiting her home in Milton, I had the impression that she would never think of pulling a weed or removing a bush for fear that someday someone might discover its medicinal value. She had no lawn. If she ever raked leaves she did so to fill her compost bins. Her bird feeders were well stocked; squirrels and chipmunks seemed as welcome as goldfinches: One feeder with suet, another with thistle seeds, a third sunflower, and another with a mix.

We remember Martha T. Curtis for her dry wit. She put humor into the frustrating

work of “preserving and protecting” the environment. While conservation was her life’s work, she never let work interfere with enjoying the natural world with which she surrounded herself. We would do well to remember her good humor when we suffer setbacks to our “preserving and protecting” the Blue Hills Reservation.

Honoring David Morse

By Kathy MacDonald

At this year’s Annual Meeting, David Morse retired from the Friends of the Blue Hills Board of Trustees after 30 years of dedicated service. David was initially recruited to FBH by founder Henry Howe back in 1978 when the organization was only two years old. David served as President from 1987 to 2001 and then as Clerk from 2001 until his retirement. He gave solid legal opinions, thoughtful advice, and always applied good common sense. We thank David for his many years of dedication to the Reservation and wish him the best as he hikes the reservation as a regular member of the Friends.

A Big Thank you to FBH Trail Maintenance Volunteers

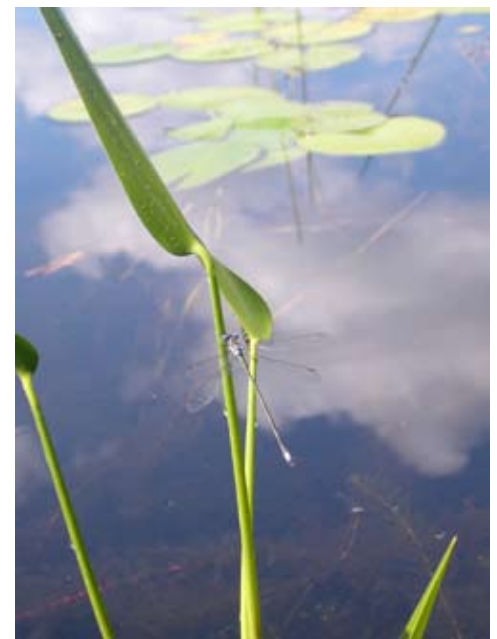
Volunteers had a lot to celebrate at this year’s trail maintenance volunteer appreciation barbeque. Volunteers participated in 12 trail events that drew over 150 volunteers who contributed over 600 hours. In addition, 18 people have ‘adopted trails’ and will maintain the trails for the entire year. These Adopters have already logged over 200 hours of work on their trails!



Photo Contest Finalists



“Rock Man” by Rachael Alpert, 17, of Stoughton. Photo Contest winner in the under 18 category.



“Damsel on the Pond” by Sheryle DeGirolamo of North Attleboro (Location: Southwest corner of Ponkapoag Pond). One of 13 Honorable Mention winners.

Support FBH with your purchases!

If you’re buying something at **Amazon.com**

please enter through our website and click on “Get Involved.”

Every purchase you make that starts at our website helps support Friends of the Blue Hills!

www.FriendsoftheBlueHills.org

A touch of cabin fever?
Escape to the Reservation
for a winter hike or cross-country ski!
January 25, February 15, March 14
Check calendar page for details

Stay Informed Between Quarterly Newsletters

Add your email address to our list and receive timely updates on FBH news, as well as event reminders. Joining our email list means you can also help FBH to act quickly upon any issues threatening the Blue Hills. Rest assured, we never share our members' emails with other organizations. Please sign up by sending an email with your name as it appears on our membership list to:
info@FriendsOfTheBlueHills.org

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Volunteer and Membership Coordinator: Victoria Cassidy

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Robert Quinn, Quincy; Bob Tankin, Milton;
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Outreach Committee Chair: Kathy McDonald

Advocacy Committee Co-chairs: Robert Quinn and John Sheehan

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