"Hiking has been my salvation! Thank God for BHHT and all you do. I am so grateful. It has also brought my daughter and I so much happiness, time together, and invaluable discussions." – Theresa Kelley

This spring was a challenging time, with many unknowns and lots to worry about. Yet, while we all dealt with quarantine, working and learning from home, and checking supplies, something delightful happened. Many of you went outside and found comfort in nature and a deeper connection with your place and your families.

At BHHT, we put out a tote of free trail guides at our office in March, and community members from around the peninsula dusted off their hiking shoes and hit the trails. For some of you, this was your first experience on our trail systems, and we were delighted to hear about what you discovered.

BHHT’s social media feed and email was flooded with thank-you notes and pictures of families, couples, and your canine hiking friends. Our trails also hosted socially distanced hikes so grandparent could see their grandchildren, and all the photos and messages of gratitude made us very happy. They further cemented in us how important this work is not just for the environment, but for community.

Parker Point – South St Trail Work Nears Completion

You may have noticed that staff, volunteers, and contractors have been chipping away at the two main trail links in the heart of Blue Hill over this past winter and spring. The Parker Point – South Street Trail boardwalk construction phase is complete, having installed 274 frames for 1,127 feet of tiered boardwalk steps. The staff and volunteers have now transitioned into laying gravel on the trail to lessen the impacts of exposed tree roots and wet sections. The Age-Friendly Trail that starts at Tenney Hill and connects with the PP-SS Trail is also making some serious headway.

Staff and contractor Jason Lepper, of Hart Farm Land Clearing, are spreading a Park Surface gravel mix to make a durable 6 foot wide path leading into the lovely forested area behind the First Congregational Church on George Stevens Academy property. Blue Hill Heritage Trust will manage this trail segment under a 10-year trail license agreement with GSA. A socially distanced “grand opening” for the trail system will be held later this summer.
Despite the recent hot, dry weather, this spring started off stormy and wet, which kept the stewardship work very busy. George G. and I, and our trail steward volunteers, spent many hours out in the woods in March and April cleaning up after spring storms. After one particularly bad weekend, we had to clean up several blowdowns at Blue Hill Mountain, Potter’s Brook, Hundred Acre Wood, and other trails. Clearing large blowdowns is dangerous, and we are often layered on top of each other, under immense weight and pressure. Trees must be carefully removed one at a time from the tanglewood piles, and we always need to be aware of changes in pressure, movement of the tree, and other hazards overhead and underfoot. With patience, focus, and teamwork, however, George G. and I can usually get the mess cleaned up!

The wet spring also encouraged a problem of a never-ending battle. This year, instead of fighting the beaver we tried something different and installed “beaver deceivers” at each bridge. Beaver are tenacious, however, and this becomes a never-ending battle. I'm also sure that everyone who sent in a donation this spring in response to all the upheaval. Thank you for thinking of our lands. Stay tuned for details.

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