

Houghton's Pond Trail Races

Sunday, October 4 - 9:00 AM

DCR Blue Hills Reservation

840 Hillside Street, Milton

PRE-RACE INFORMATION

(1) If you have friends who have not yet registered...they can still register at <https://runsignup.com/houghtonspondtrailrace> (and we hope that they will!) **Registration closes on Friday, October 2 at 7 PM. There is NO race-day registration.**

(2) DIRECTIONS: Address for GPS is **840 Hillside Street, Milton**. *From Route 93 (Rt. 128), take Exit 2 to Rt. 138 North (Milton). Turn right at the first full set of traffic lights (Mobil station is on left corner). Drive one mile to stop sign, and continue straight ahead. The Houghton's Pond main parking lot ("Lot A") is on the right, 0.2 mi. after the stop sign.*

(3) PLEASE CARPOOL with friends and family members, if possible. This will help to ensure that the main parking lot at Houghton's Pond accommodates everyone, including other park users. That is important for our getting permits for future races.

If the main lot ("Lot A") fills up, there is an additional parking lot ("**Lot B**") on Blue Hill River Road, on the west side of Houghton's Pond. If you park in that lot, walk from the lot towards the pond, and follow the footpath to the left around the pond—it's just 0.25 miles to the race check-in and start. (And if THAT lot fills up, park in "Lot C", also accessed from Blue Hill River Road. Lot C is at the east end of Houghton's Pond, about 0.4 miles from the race start.)

(4) RACE CHECK-IN: Bib number pick-up is from 7:30 to 8:45 AM, in front of the Houghton's Pond Visitors Center (the "thatched-roof" building near the main parking lot).

(5) IF YOU WANT TO SWITCH THE RACE DISTANCE that you are registered for: let us know ASAP (before Friday, October 2, if possible!) by emailing trailrunning@colonialrunners.org. At the latest, notify us when you check in, to prevent errors with the race results.

(6) BOTH RACES START at 9:00 AM adjacent to the Visitor's Center and the check-in area. Please assemble by 8:50 AM, for final instructions and course information.

(7) RESTROOMS: Besides the porta-jons next to the check-in area, restrooms will be available in the Visitors Center and also in the Houghton's Pond bathhouse, on the beach about 200 yards from the check-in area/starting line.

(8) CHIP TIMING: We are using “chip timing” at both the start and finish of the event, so you will need to cross the timing mat at both the start and finish. We will use net (chip) times for results. Even though we are using chip timing, **PLEASE WEAR YOUR BIB NUMBER OF THE FRONT OF YOUR BODY!** This will help us record numbers manually, as a back-up system.

(9) SELF-SEEDING: The course begins on a wide path, but narrows after 0.3 miles. Please seed yourself accordingly at the start, to minimize passing and avoid a jam-up at the narrower section. (Since the event is chip-timed, you don’t need to be at the front unless you **SHOULD** be at the front!)

(10) WATER STOPS: There are three water stops on the 7-mile route, at 2, 4.25, and 5.9 miles. The water stops on the 3.7-mile route are at 2 and 2.5 miles.

(11) COURSE DETAILS:

Both races follow a “lollipop” route, with the last mile going in the reverse direction of the first mile. **The two races follow the same route until the courses “split” at 2.3 miles**, at the top of the uphill after the first water stop. **The 7-mile runners will bear to the left, and the 3.7-mile runners will bear to the right.** (We **WILL** have volunteers at that intersection to direct you, but please be prepared!)

Course Markings: The courses will be marked with white limestone arrows on the ground at all turns, and with pink flagging tape along the route. (Miles will be marked on the ground in white.) A white line on the ground across the entrance to a trail means “do NOT enter this trail”! There will also be volunteers at several key intersections.

The entire course is on dirt, except for 0.2-mile sections of pavement in the first and last miles on an abandoned road (“Old Route 128”).

(Minor) Course Change in 2025-26: We tweaked the course slightly in the first and last half-mile, to avoid a narrow trail that runs through a swamp and has become subject to flooding. For those of you who have run the race before, this means running on Old Route 128 for 0.2 miles, instead of 0.15 miles as in the past. The race distances remain the same, and the course is slightly easier!

We will send out an email Friday or Saturday to all registered runners, to alert you about any **downed trees** on the course. Our volunteers will clear the course of loose twigs and branches when they mark the course the day before the races.

Faster runners in the 7-mile race might overtake slower runners in the 3.7-mile race in the last mile of the course. Please follow “trail running etiquette”: faster runners are expected to give a verbal warning (“coming on your right/left”) when approaching and overtaking slower runners...and slower runners are expected to run single-file and make room for the passing runners, when it is safe to do so.

(12) “WHERE ARE THE HILLS?” Runners in both races will encounter a gradual uphill from 0.7 to 1.1 miles, and just before the “split” at 2.3 miles. For the 3.7-mile runners, the course is mostly flat or gradually downhill from the split to the finish. For the 7-mile runners,

there is another rocky uphill section from about 2.3 to 2.5 miles, a more significant climb from 3.25 to 3.7 miles along the Buck Hill Path, and a gradual uphill from 5.2 to 5.6 miles. Total elevation gain is about 300 feet for the 3.7-mile route, and 700 feet for the 7-mile route.

(13) “SHARE THE TRAILS”: Please remember that our race does not have exclusive use of the race course. During your run, you may encounter hikers, people walking their dogs, other runners, and mountain bikers. Be courteous to other users, run single-file where needed, and give a verbal warning when approaching another person from the rear. And please smile and say “Hello” or “Good Morning”!

(14) FOR SAFETY’S SAKE:

- The use of headphones/earbuds is not forbidden, but it is discouraged, so that you can hear other runners and our volunteers.
- Due to the narrow trails, **no dogs are allowed in this event.**

(15) REFRESHMENTS: There will be bagels, bananas, other snacks, plus water and Gatorade available after the race. **Thank you to the Dunkin’ shop nearby on Rt. 138, for the donation of bagels!!**

(16) AWARDS: Marathon Sports gift certificates are awarded to the overall winners in each race. We also have custom race coffee mugs as an award for the overall winners, as well as the top three finishers in age groups **19 & Under, 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69, and all finishers in the 70 & Over age group.** We will hand out the awards for each race on a “rolling basis,” as soon as the results are available, without holding a formal awards ceremony. So, don’t leave without stopping by our awards table, and check if you placed among the winners! (If you have your phone with you, and you opted in at registration to receive text messages, you should receive a link to your results shortly after you finish, with your finishing time and place...but if you don’t, we’ll have a paper listing of winners at the awards table.) **Due to the high cost of shipping, we will be unable to mail mugs to award recipients, so please pick them up at the race!**

(17) RACE SHIRTS: **As of September 28, there are still shirts available for new registrants** (some sizes are “sold out”). Everyone will receive the size of shirt that was requested when you registered. If you want to switch sizes, stop by the check-in area after you finish your race, and if there are any unclaimed shirts in your size, we’ll be happy to switch your shirt.

See you on October 4!

John Goldrosen, Race Director

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