Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor, Inc.

2015 Annual Report

One valley...
One environment...
One history...

All powered by the Blackstone River watershed.
So nationally significant, it was named the

Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor.

So important to the American identity,
part of it was designated the

Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park,

the 402nd unit of the National Park Service.

Mission

The Blackstone Heritage Corridor works with community partners to preserve and promote the Valley's historic, cultural, natural and recreational resources for current and future generations.

Cover photo by Merrilyn Parry

A Great Return on Investment

Michael D. Cassidy, Chairperson

It's been an exhilarating year for Blackstone Heritage Corridor, Inc. (BHC). It began with the official designation of the new Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park, something we have invested decades of time and energy toward. BHC is proud to be a strong and committed partner of the new Park, assisting with the planning for the 402nd unit of the National Park Service.

This was our first full year as the reimagined management entity for the National Heritage Corridor, now a dynamic nonprofit with an enthusiastic and creative staff. In 2015, BHC expanded outreach with new publications, new programs and a new website complete with bells and whistles. We reinvigorated the exceptional Volunteers-in-Parks program and benefited from more than 6600 hours valued in excess of $153,000 allocated to the projects and programs of the National Heritage Corridor. BHC worked to invest in our capacity and that of our partners. We provided additional funding through Partnership Program Grants for many important projects in communities and nonprofits in the National Heritage Corridor.

BHC matched $670,771in federal funding to the National Heritage Corridor with $1.4 million, creating an impact of more than $2 million in the region and tripling the return on the federal investment. It is a pleasure to report that 94% of our expenditures in 2015 went directly into programming.

Investments from around the region have optimized BHC's success in 2015. I want to thank all of our generous corporate sponsors of this year's programs: Navigant Credit Union, Taco/The White Family Foundation, UniBank. We were also fortunate to have the support for our operations from the College of the Holy Cross, Fletcher Foundation and the Stoddard Foundation. I especially want to recognize the thoughtful support of all of the Corridor Keepers – businesses and individuals – who have invested in the programs of the National Heritage Corridor. Further gratitude is owed to our Board of Directors for their time, effort and many talents. On their behalf, I also recognize the hard work of our energetic BHC staff and their many successes in 2015.

It is my privilege to have chaired the Board of Directors over the past year and I thank you for that opportunity. Join us this year as we celebrate both the 30th Anniversary of our National Heritage Corridor and the 100th Birthday of the National Park Service.

News Flash!

BHC is moving its home base to the geographic center of the National Heritage Corridor to better serve communities and partners, and to complement and assist the efforts of the new Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park. Opening in late spring, BHC will occupy a portion of the historic Linwood Mill in Whitinsville.

Board of Directors, 2015

Michael D. Cassidy
Chairperson, Pawtucket, RI

Donna M. Williams
Immediate Past Chairperson
Grafton, MA

Richard Gregory
Vice Chairperson, Providence, RI

Harry Whitin
Vice Chairperson, Westborough, MA

Todd Helwig
Secretary, Worcester, MA

Gary Furtado
Treasurer, Smithfield, RI

Joseph Barbato, Millbury, MA

Robert Billington, Pawtucket, RI

Justine Brewer, Mendon, MA

Allen Fletcher, Worcester, MA

John Gregory, Lincoln, RI

Jeannie Hebert, Whitinsville, MA

Aaron Hertzberg, Pawtucket, RI

Stephen Larrick, Central Falls, RI

Richard T. Moore, Uxbridge, MA

Dennis Rice, Whitinsville, MA

Dennis Stark, Pawtucket, RI

Statement of Financial Position

For the year ending September 30, 2015

ASSETS

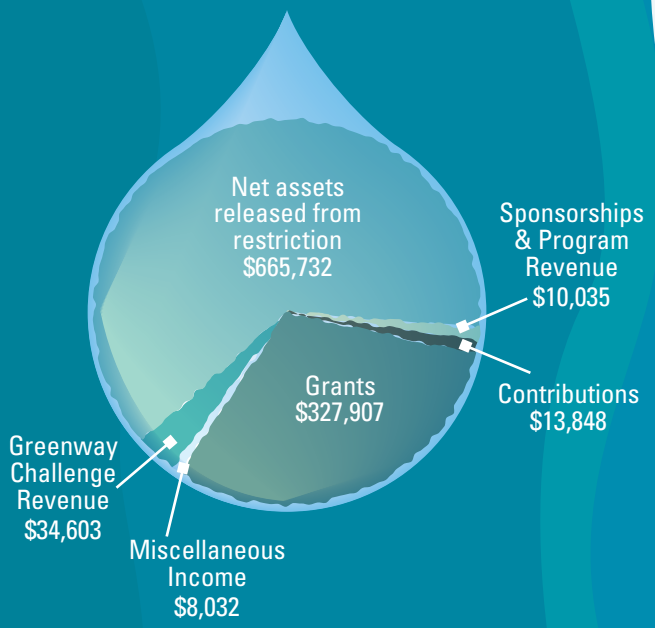
Cash & Cash Equivalents	$647,859
Grants Receivable	626,077
Prepaid Expenses	2,373
Fixed Assets, net	36,802
Total Assets	**$1,313,111**

LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS

Liabilities	
Accounts Payable & Accrued Expenses	16,991
Grants Payable	189,942
Net Assets	
Unrestricted	130,790
Temporarily Restricted	975,388
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	**$1,313,111**

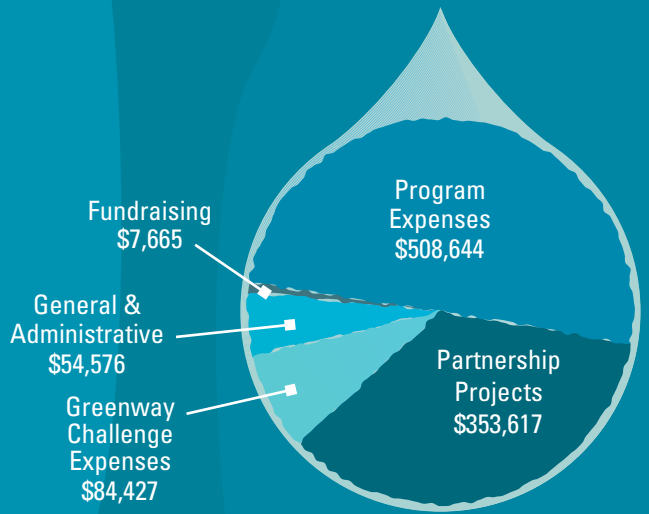
SUPPORT & REVENUE

Total Support & Revenue $1,060,157



EXPENDITURES

Total Expenditures $1,008,929



"The new BHC Strategic Plan will assess the strengths and challenges of BHC in 2016 with a vision to building a sustainable organization by 2026."

Charlene Perkins Cutler
Executive Director

Surging Toward 2026

Charlene Perkins Cutler, Executive Director

As we move into our 30th year as a National Heritage Corridor, BHC is undertaking a strategic planning process to give voice to our visions for the Valley for the next decade and to identify the strategies that will achieve those visions. The planning work will be spearheaded by several mission-related subcommittees of the Board of Directors in a process that will also encourage public participation.

Why is BHC doing a strategic plan? The last revision of the *Cultural Heritage and Land Management Plan for the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor* dates back to 1998. The new BHC Strategic Plan will:

- become the backbone of BHC's work plan for federal agreements;
- be used to create grant application/solicitations for corporate and foundation funding;
- be used to justify endorsements of partner projects and generate letters of support; and
- be used to make defensible decisions in the allocation of resources.

The new BHC Strategic Plan will assess the strengths and challenges of BHC in 2016 with a vision to building a sustainable organization by 2026. Mission-related visions and strategies will address:

- Stewardship of both the National Heritage Corridor and BHC
- Economic Development & Community Revitalization (including tourism, agriculture)
- Historic & Cultural Resources (including cultural identity, ethnic traditions and diversity, the arts, historic resources)
- Natural Resources (including land use, air, water, wildlife, recreation)

Interested people are encouraged to join the endeavor by contacting the BHC office. The planning process began in January, 2016, and is expected to be complete by year's end.

Staff

Charlene Perkins Cutler
Executive Director

Megan DiPrete
Deputy Director &
Community Planner

Stephanie Begin
Administrative Assistant

Suzanne Buchanan
VIP Program Coordinator

Bonnie Combs
Marketing Director

Barbara Dixon
Special Events Coordinator

Devon Kurtz
Director of Audience Engagement

OUR CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION

Senator
Ed
Markey, MA

Senator
Jack
Reed, RI

Senator
Elizabeth
Warren, MA

Senator
Sheldon
Whitehouse, RI

Congressman
David
Cicilline, RI

Congressman
Joseph
Kennedy, III, MA

Congressman
Jim
Langevin, RI

Congressman
Jim
McGovern, MA

We are most grateful for the support of the following partners, corporations and foundations in 2015:

College of the Holy Cross · Fletcher Foundation · Greater Worcester Community Foundation · Navigant Credit Union · NeighborWorks Blackstone Valley · Stoddard Foundation · Taco / The White Family Foundation · UniBank

Thank you to the Corridor Keepers, generous people and businesses who believe in the mission of Blackstone Heritage Corridor and provide financial support.

Friends - up to $249

Joan H. Bagley
David Barber
Gary R. Beauchamp
Nancy Benoit
Robert D. Billington
Blackstone Bicycles
Blackstone Studios
Blackstone Valley Outfitters
Craig Blais
Burt Bliss
Ron Bloch
John M. Boehnert
Karen Bryant
Comfort Inn Pawtucket
The Burrito Company
Frank Callahan
Camille & Jemy Carino
Natalie Carter
Deb Cary
Charles R. Cary
Melanie Champagne
Benjamin Chokshi-Fox
Arthur L. Chute
Susan Ciaramicoli
Robert Clark, III
Russell Cohen
Joyce & Wayne Cormier
Katie Corticelli
Paul Crimlisk
Michael Cove
Pieter De Jong
Tony Deller, CPA
Cheryl Derlien
Marisa Desautel
Jane A. Desforges
Megan DiPrete
George Dresser
Mark Dunleavy
Erik & Michelle Eckilson
Robert Ericson
Elaine Ethier
Allen Fletcher
Virginia Fox
Wayne Franklin
Gary Furtado
Friends of Hearthside
Frank Gagliardi
Lee & Dina Gaudette
John Giangregorio
John Gifford
Alicia M. Good
The Goyette Family
John Gregory
Phillip Gregory
Christian Grundel
Frances Guevremont
Russell Gusetti
Robert & Lee Hanks
Marian & Edmund Hazzard
James Heller
Todd & Lara Helwig
Aaron Hertzberg
Steve Holm
Jayne Hughes
Philip Johanson
Mark Jones
JustGive
Faith Knowles
Trent Koopman
Koopman Lumber & Hardware

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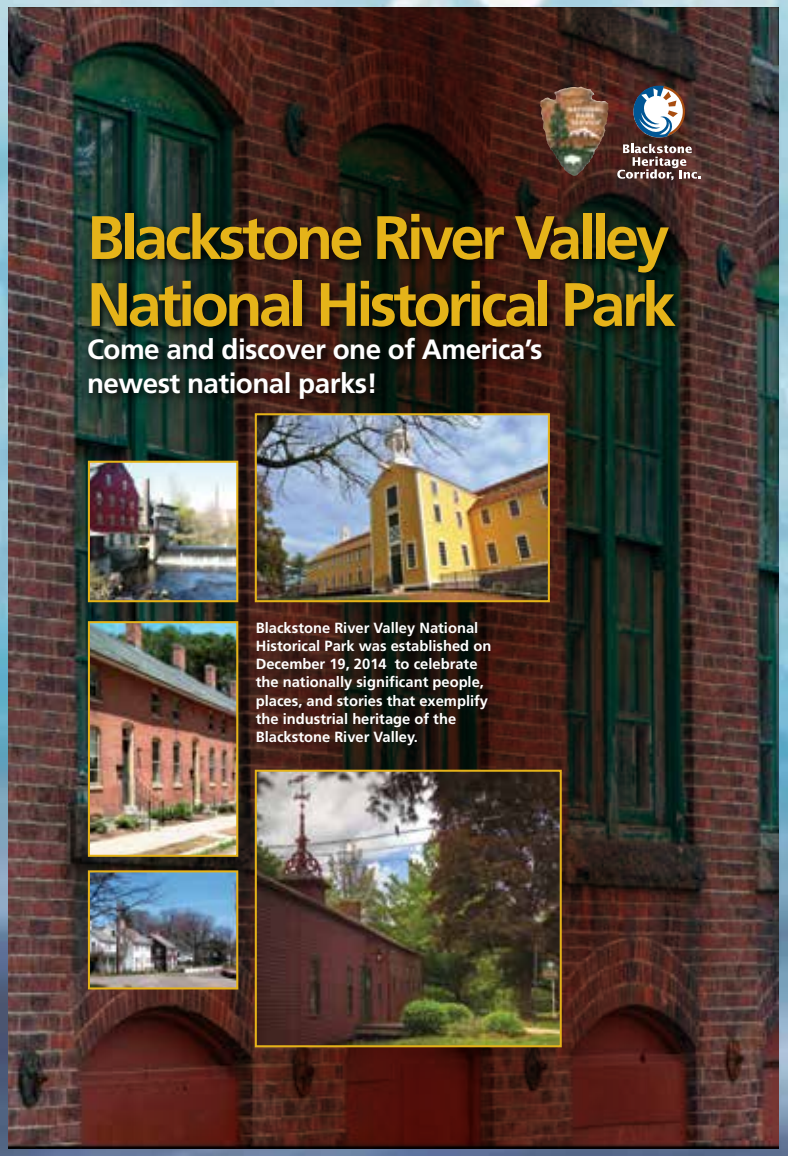


The New Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park

Meghan Kish, Superintendent

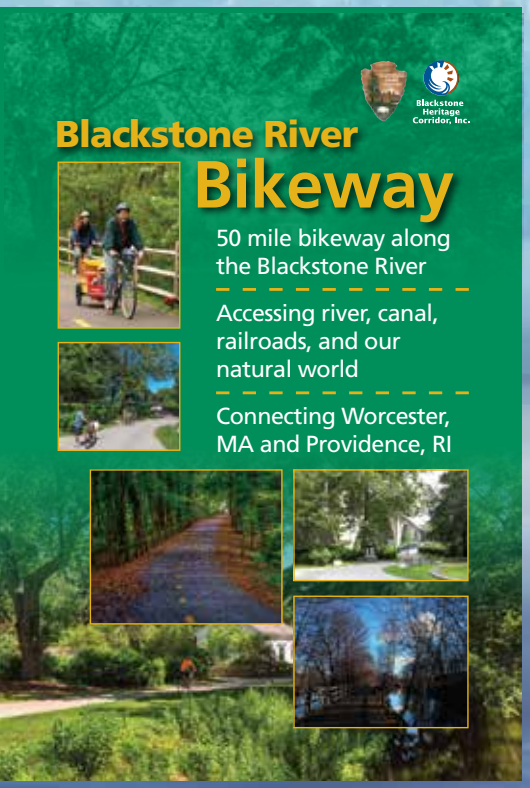
As of December 19, 2014, Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park became the 402nd unit of the National Park Service (NPS). We are honored to be able to preserve and protect the resources that tell the story of "the Birthplace of America's Industrial Revolution," here, in the Blackstone Valley. The new national park is nested in the larger Blackstone Heritage Corridor, a unique situation that lends us great opportunity! While the two are separate entities, we both work to make the Blackstone Valley the best it can be.

Park staff is working hard to define the boundary of the new park, reach out to stake-holders, build relationships with partners and plan for the future. We are honored to work with the Blackstone Heritage Corridor to do this important work. Together BHC, as a strong non-profit, and the National Park Service, a federal government organization, bring unique strengths to the table. Together we can accomplish great things in the Blackstone Valley – and we already have!

"Together we can accomplish great things in the Blackstone Valley – and we already have!"

Meghan Kish
Superintendent

This year, the organizations worked together to reinvigorate the Volunteers-In-Parks (VIP) program, start a shared strategic planning process, develop outreach materials and reach out to our Junior Rangers through the innovative GearHeads online program. As we work together, great things continue to happen and we look forward to seeing what our organizations can do for the Blackstone Valley.



Friends continued from page 4

Mike LaPlante
Stephen Larrick
Neville Lassotovitch
Margaret A. Lavallee
Deborah Lawrence
Donald Leighton
James P. Lippincott
Professor Patrick Malone
Elizabeth Martin
Mary F. McDonald
Lance McKee
Edward McKeon
Millbury Historical Society
Debra Moore
Richard T. Moore
Paul C. Mowrey
John A. Mutter
Nationwide Construction
Dana & Nancy Newbrook
Bruce Nichols
Richard Nolan
Eugene Peloguin
Dr. Ken Peloquinetrella
Marsha R. Platt
Red Star World Wear
Alice & Fred Reinhardt
RHD – Rhode Island
Rhode Island Antiques Mall
Janet Robidoux
John H. St. Sauveur
Sharp Family Foundation
Dennis Stark
Judith Sullivan
Mike Tonry
Heidi Travers
Aaron Usher
Cary VandenAkker
Vose True Value Hardware, Inc.
Wallis Cove Cabins
Gavin Walker
Christine Watkins
Nancy Wegimont
Elaine Wilczek
Judith S. Wynne

River Restorer - $250+

Elizabeth Bacon
Blackstone Valley Tourism Council
Justine Brewer
Michael & Jane-Ellen Cassidy
Jeannie Hebert
Susan F. Gonsalves
Christine King
Nation Wide Construction
RESCOM Exterior, Inc.
Dennis Rice
Signature Salon, LLC
Twin River Casino
C.D. Whitney Insurance

Valley Visionary - $500+

Kyle Adamonis
J.F. Cove Insurance Agency, Inc.
Charlene & Doug Cutler
Environmental Strategies & Management
Richard H. Gregory, III
Vanasse, Hangen Brustlin, Inc.
Richard Whitesell
Harry Whitin
Donna & Ted Williams

Canal Captain - $1,000+

Navigant Credit Union
Ski with Charlie

Heritage Hero - $5,000+

Anonymous
Taco/The White Family Foundation

Blackstone Beacon - $10,000+

College of the Holy Cross
Fletcher Foundation
Greater Worcester Foundation
NeighborWorks Blackstone Valley
Stoddard Foundation
UniBank

Our partners working in the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor:

Government Advisors

- Secretary MA Executive Office of Housing & Economic Development
- Director RI Department of Environmental Management
- Superintendent National Park Service
- Executive Director RI Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission
- State Archaeologist & SHPO MA Historical Commission
- Secretary MA Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs
- President, RI Commerce Corporation

Massachusetts Environmental/ OpenSpace/Land Use

- Massachusetts Department of Fish & Game
- Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation
- Blackstone River Watershed Association
- The Blackstone River Coalition
- Blackstone Headwaters Coalition
- The Canal District of Worcester
- Mass Audubon
- Grafton Land Trust
- Greater Worcester Land Trust
- Metacomet Land Trust
- Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission
- Trustees of Reservations at Cormier Woods
- Friends of Upton State Forest

Rhode Island Environmental/ OpenSpace/Land Use

- RI Department of Environmental Management
- Blackstone River Watershed Council/Friends of the Blackstone

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Trash Responsibly™

Litter is not a new problem in the 25 communities of the National Heritage Corridor but BHC has launched a campaign to eliminate it. Trash Responsibly™ is an effort to make changes that positively impact the National Heritage Corridor when it comes to community revitalization and environmental quality. BHC is enlisting help from residents, businesses, nonprofits, and municipalities to keep litter from polluting our water.

The first element of Trash Responsibly™ is a customized litter bag that affixes to the back of a car seat, a stroller, or bicycle to collect trash so that it can be properly disposed of. The bag features the Trash Responsibly™ message as a reminder along with the Blackstone Heritage Corridor logo, both printed in white. The black bag is made from 100% post-consumer recycled plastic and is reusable. BHC is providing the bag through its online shop at BlackstoneHeritageCorridor.org.

Shortly after launching Trash Responsibly™, Blackstone Heritage Corridor proudly announced that Anchor Subaru of North Smithfield, RI, is the first corporate sponsor of the program. Beginning in February 2016, Anchor will place a Trash Responsibly™ bag into every new car sold, further customized with the Anchor Subaru logo.

Next steps for the Trash Responsibly™ campaign include producing an informative rack card, coordinating cleanups throughout the Valley, providing new information about recycling, and co-branding more litter bags. Rumor has it there may be a friendly and enthusiastic competition for towns and cities to conduct cleanups.

Lesley McLaughlin

"Trash has no place in the wonderful Blackstone River Watershed! This is our legacy to pass on to our kids and grandkids."

Charlene Perkins Cutler,
Executive Director, BHC

Bonnie Combs

Did you know...

that cigarette butts, the #1 litter item according to the Ocean Conservancy, are among the most toxic things in our environment... each containing arsenic, cadmium, lead, and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons.

Partners continued form page 6

- Audubon Society of Rhode Island
- Sierra Club, Rhode Island Chapter
- Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council
- Rhode Island Rivers Council
- Save The Bay
- Environment Council of Rhode Island
- Burrillville Land Trust
- Cumberland Land Trust
- Glocester Land Trust
- Lincoln Land Trust
- Smithfield Land Trust
- Grow Smart Rhode Island
- Northern Rhode Island Chapter of Trout Unlimited
- State of RI, Division of Planning

Massachusetts Historical Groups/Sites

- Massachusetts Historical Commission
- Preservation Massachusetts
- Preservation Worcester
- Worcester Historical Museum and Salisbury Mansion
- Waters Farm
- Daniels Farmstead Foundation, Inc.
- The Asa Waters Mansion
- Willard House & Clock Museum
- Chestnut Street Meetinghouse and Cemetery Association
- Douglas Historical Society and E.N. Jenckes Store Museum
- The Little Red Shop Museum
- Grafton Historical Society
- Leicester Historical Society
- The Millbury Historical Society
- Sutton Historical Society
- Upton Historical Society
- Uxbridge Historical Society

Rhode Island Historical Groups/Sites

- RI Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission
- Preserve Rhode Island
- Rhode Island Historical Society
- Museum of Work and Culture
- Historic New England
- Rhode Island Labor History Society
- Blackstone Valley Historical Society
- Burrillville Historical & Preservation Society
- East Providence Historical Society
- Glocester Heritage Society
- Old Slater Mill Association
- Preservation Society of Pawtucket
- Providence Preservation Society
- Smith-Appleby House Museum/ The Historical Society of Smithfield
- Hearthside
- Valentine Whitman House, Chase Farm, Hanaway Blacksmith Shop, Moffett Mill, Quaker Meeting House, Arnold Bakery
- Blackstone Valley Cemetery Network
- American-French Genealogical Society

Economic Development, Tourism and Business

- Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce
- Blackstone Valley Tourism Council
- Northern RI Chamber of Commerce
- Pawtucket Foundation
- Rhode Island Commerce Corporation
- Smart Growth RI
- Sustainable Tourism Planning & Development Laboratory

Recreation & Outdoor Organizations

- Appalachian Mountain Club, Worcester Chapter
- Blackstone Bikeway Patrol
- Blackstone Valley Paddle Club
- Blackstone Valley Sugaring Association
- Rhode Island Bicycle Coalition
- Rhode Island Canoe & Kayak Association

Transportation

- RI Coalition for Transportation Choices
- Rhode Island Department of Transportation
- Massachusetts Department of Transportation
- Smart Growth RI

Educational Institutions

- Brown University
- Bryant University
- Clark University
- Community College of Rhode Island
- College of the Holy Cross
- Lincoln Technical Institute
- Salve Regina University
- Quinsigamond Community College
- RISD
- RIC

Community Resources

- Worcester Polytechnic Institute Housing, Youth and Social Services
- Community Care Alliance
- Neighbor Works Blackstone River Valley
- Family Resources Community Action
- Riverzedge Arts Project Community Arts and Culture
- Blackstone River Theatre
- Stadium Theatre

Blackstone Heritage Corridor's GO!

It was an idea to create a month-long program of guided hikes, paddles and bike rides, historical walking tours, nature adventures, festivals and more in the 25 communities between Worcester and Providence. It was planned as both an educational program and a tourism driver. The month chosen was September because it is that special time of year when summer merges with autumn and the beauty of the area really starts to peak. The name it was given was GO! and the inaugural event drew more than 8,000 people participating in the 80+ free, guided activities and special events, exceeding the program's projected goal of 7,500.

The month-long program began in Uxbridge at the Uxbridge Antique Fire Museum with an open house and tour. Roy Henry, a volunteer with BHC for 11 years, was one of the first to sign up to host an event for the GO! program. He saw this as an opportunity to highlight the work he and his colleagues have done to build the collection at the museum. Being featured in the program book was a bonus for the newly furbished museum and the Uxbridge Antique Fire Museum hosted several tours throughout the month so that more people could enjoy the experience.

BHC held a special kickoff celebration at the Little Red Shop Museum in Hopedale to coincide with the Hopedale Walkabout that same evening. National Park Service Ranger Kevin Klyberg led the walkabout with more than 30 people coming to hear about the vibrant history of this factory town. The Draper Mill made a significant impact in the textile industry during the Industrial Revolution in the Blackstone Valley and, as a result, that area was singled out as one of the six historical nodes for the new National Historical Park.

In Providence, both the Rhode Island Historical Society and Providence Public Library joined in GO!, as did the Worcester Historical Museum and the nearby Salisbury Mansion. In Woonsocket both the Museum of Work and Culture and the American-French Genealogical Society held Open Houses, inviting new visitors to learn about the French-Canadian history in the area. Betty Mencucci and her husband Carlo, both volunteers with BHC and natives of Burrillville, hosted an historical walking tour of Harrisville and also offered a Graveyard History Tour in Pascoag both villages of Burrillville.

GO! also provided opportunities to learn about natural resources and wildlife. There were bird walks at the Massachusetts Audubon Society's Broad Meadow Brook Wildlife Sanctuary, nature walks with New Dawn Earth Center, a foliage hike to Lookout Rock in Northbridge, walks along the scenic Burrillville Bike Path and also Beaver Brook in Worcester. Joe Nadeau, a five-year volunteer with the Blackstone River Bikeway Patrol, a BHC volunteer program, hosted a guided morning bike ride along the bikeway highlighting

points of interest along the river and canal. There were also several scenic boat tours aboard the Blackstone Valley Explorer in Pawtucket and volunteers from the Blackstone Valley Paddle Club, another BHC volunteer program, welcomed two dozen paddlers on a trip from Blackstone Gorge to the Millville Locks and back.

Near the end of the month, more than 700 people gathered at Lincoln Woods State Park in Lincoln for the Blackstone River Valley Greenway Challenge finish line festivities. The Blackstone River Watershed Council/Friends of the Blackstone (BRWC/FOB) had a record turnout for its Full Moon Canoe Paddle that departed from Sycamore Landing in Manville and coincided with an eclipsing Blood Moon. Keith Hainley, environmental coordinator at the BRWC/FOB expressed his excitement and appreciation for GO!: "It was a very successful event for us and we are thrilled that we were able to get so many people out onto the water on such a significant night. We hope it's something they will remember for a long time."

GO! is all about visitors (and residents) coming to experience the beauty and history of this area, meeting the people who volunteer here and are passionate about where they live, and leaving with a memory that makes them want to come back and explore more. Plans are already underway for GO! in 2016. For those interested in leading a GO! experience or listing a special event, visit BlackstoneHeritageCorridor.org and download an application.

Thank you to Navigant Credit Union for their sponsorship of this event.

Navigant CREDIT UNION

The Impact of Partnership Grants in Corridor Communities

Support from Blackstone Heritage Corridor helped Save The Bay implement a high impact environmental education program to 100 students from Woonsocket's Chillin and Skillin' program over six weeks during the summer. Students were introduced to Narragansett Bay by providing hands-on, environmental education programs that centered on marine creatures, habitats, marine and watershed issues all related to Narragansett Bay.

-Bridget Kubis-Prescott
Director of Education, Save the Bay

In April 2015, the Hopedale Historical Commission (HHC) was awarded a $15,000 grant from the Blackstone Heritage Corridor, Inc. (BHC). The grant was instrumental in helping Hopedale, and more specifically the HHC and the town's Little Red Shop Museum (LRSM) volunteer staff, to work toward fulfilling its role as one of several partners and stakeholders in the Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park. With these funds we were able to train our all-volunteer staff in the best cataloging practices for the LRSM, purchase equipment and supplies for cataloging the Museum's various artifacts and documents, develop a strategic master plan for LRSM and execute final placement of the LRSM's 10-loom collection.

In a separate project funded by an additional $5,000 from the BHC, the HHC sponsored, approved, and installed an interpretive sign about the Hopedale Community House and the Unitarian Church. The installation of interpretive signs in Hopedale's compact downtown highlights the wealth of historical sites for both residents and visitors to study and enjoy. They provide a means to access Hopedale's history 365 days a year and bring our town's remarkable stories out of the Museum, off the pages, and directly into the landscape of the community.

Suzan L. Ciaramicoli, Curator, Little Red Shop Museum Recording Secretary and Former Co-Chair, Hopedale Historical Commission

Impacts continued on page 12

John Robson

"They provide a means to access Hopedale's history 365 days a year and bring our town's remarkable stories out of the Museum, off the pages, and directly into the landscape of the community."

2015 Partnership Grants Awarded

Town of Auburn — $15,000

Pakachoag Meadows Walking Trail, including a feasibility study, survey, and analysis of connections to other recreational lands and the Blackstone River Bikeway.

Blackstone Headwaters Coalition — $9,000

The Little School in the Woods Takes a Raindrop Journey along the Blackstone, an education program

Town of Blackstone — $11,500

Blackstone River and Canal Cleanup, Feasibility Study and Structural Analysis, focusing on an historic bridge neighborhood and its integration as a key feature of the Blackstone River Greenway and the Southern New England Trunkline Trail.

Hopedale Historical Commission — $15,000

The Little Red Shop Museum Catalogue Project, creation of a strategic plan and professional network of support.

Mass Audubon's Broad Meadow Brook — $3,000

New canoes and gear for the Blackstone River Outreach Program.

Museum of Work & Culture, Rhode Island Historical Society — $12,500

The Mill Project, a permanent exhibit about the significance of Woonsocket's mills and the transformation of the city in the 19th-20th centuries.

Old Slater Mill Association — $8,000

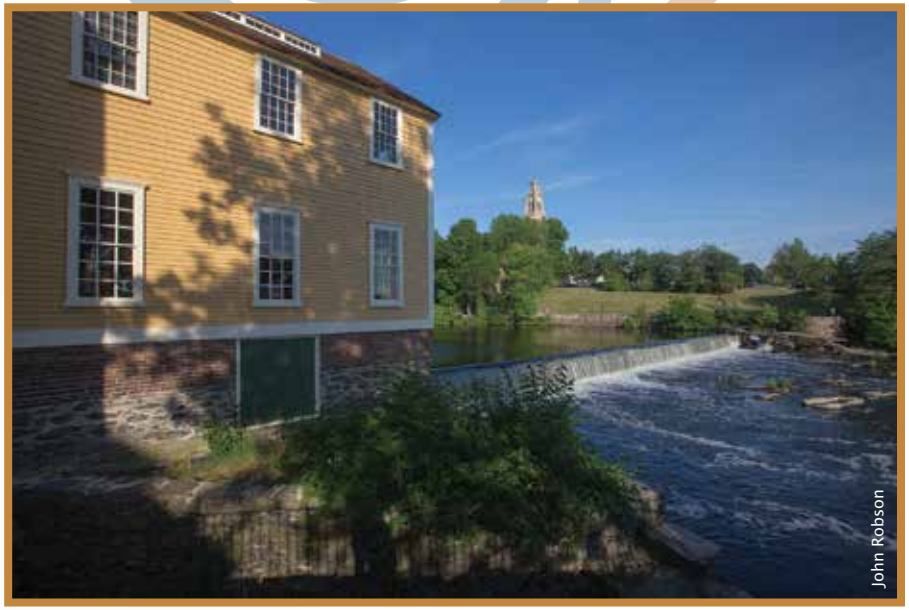
Jenks Settlement and Pawtucket's Early Ironworks, exploring and connecting the early settlement and ironworks industry with the birth of the American textile industry.

Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council — $8,000

Woonasquatucket Recreation & History, a series of paddle events with scholars to interpret history and environment in North Smithfield and Providence.

David Cruz

Museum of Work and Culture


John Robson

Impacts continued from page 10

Thanks to funding from the Blackstone Heritage Corridor, we are able to host an historical recreation series in our Watershed. The funding allowed us to give stipends to local historians who added value to participants on every one of our nine paddles. It also allowed us to adequately publicize every one of these events through posters, online postings and press coverage for almost every event. We brought 141 people to our recreational programs with Blackstone Heritage Corridor's assistance. Each was surveyed and confirmed that they loved the program and they want to learn more in future years about such topics as watershed connectedness, wildlife and geology.

Dorothy Campbell

Thirty percent of our program participants joined us for the first time in 2015. That means 42 people that never participated with us before now understand some of the great opportunities we provide. People can become our new donors, advocates, volunteers and regular participants. We are very grateful for the Blackstone Heritage Corridor Grant. It made our recreation program for 2015 something very special.

-Alicia J. Lehrer, Executive Director
Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council

WOONASQUATUCKET RIVER
WATERSHED COUNCIL

The Preservation Society of Pawtucket received a grant from BHC that was combined with resources from four other sources to fund a narrated Visual Tour of the 1828 Joseph Spaulding House in Pawtucket, owned by the PSP. This is new technology which will place the tour on the internet and allow anyone world wide to view this well-restored house in Pawtucket for a small fee. Copies of the tour on a DVD will be distributed to some 44 historic properties in Rhode Island. The grant from BHC was essential to fund the project which was important as it provides a permanent view of the house interior and exterior as left by owners John and Elizabeth Johnson. At this time, the DVDs are set to be distributed to the various organizations in Rhode Island.

—Paul Mowrey, Director and Volunteer, Preservation Society of Pawtucket

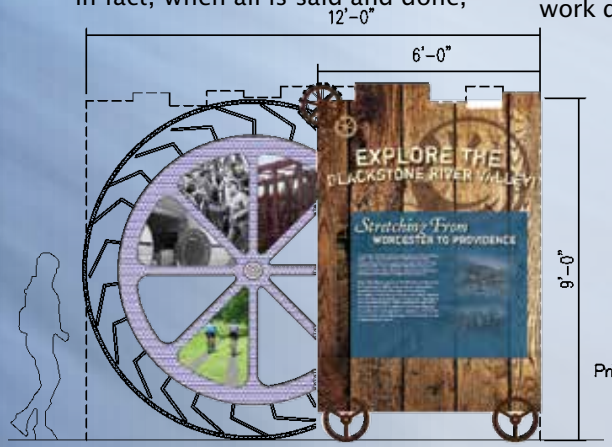
"People can become our new donors, advocates, volunteers and regular participants. We are very grateful for the Blackstone Heritage Corridor grant. It made our recreation program for 2015 something very special."

Blackstone Heritage Corridor Visitor Center at Worcester

Exciting things are happening at the future site of the Visitor Center in Worcester. Phase One of construction has begun! Trucks and cranes and earthmovers of all kinds from E.T. & L. Corp. are busy prepping for heavy work and plans are underway for canal walls to be rebuilt, hills to be created, and lots of earth to be brought on site. In fact, when all is said and done, the ground will be nearly two feet higher when construction on the building starts.

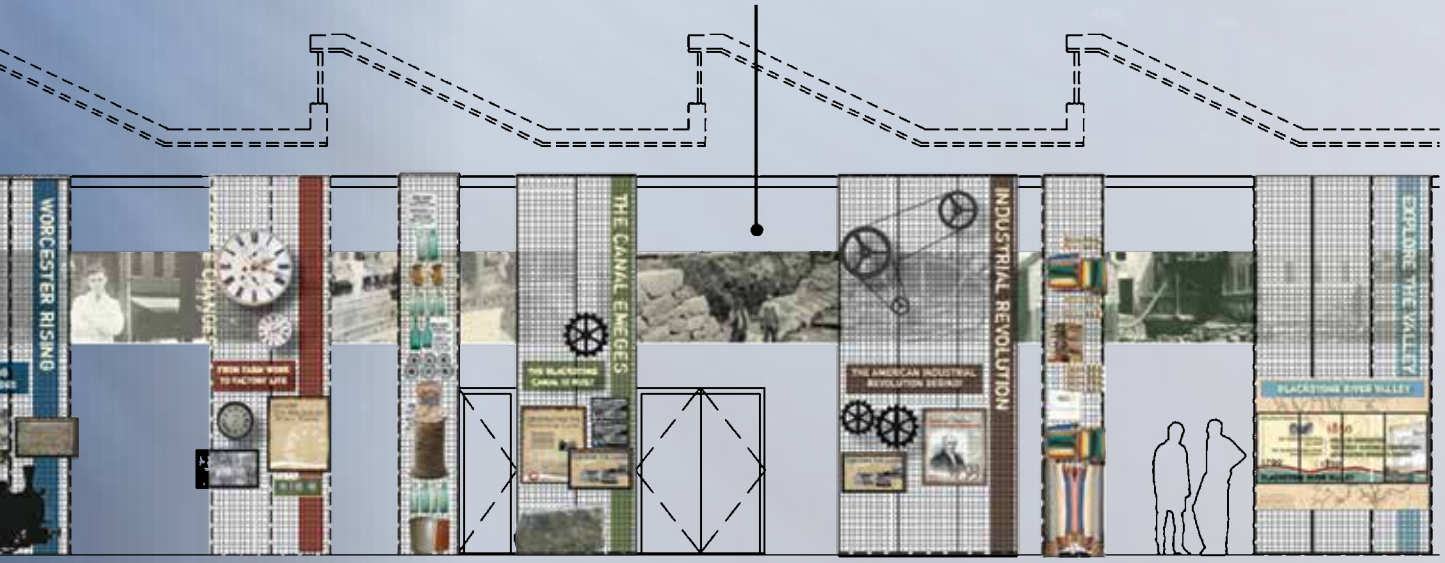
The exhibit design process has been proceeding rapidly. Phase Two is nearly complete with storyboards, interpretive plans, exhibit elements drawn out and measured, and a writing framework developed.

The Blackstone Heritage Corridor Visitor Center at Worcester is due to open in late fall of 2017.



G.1.4 Overhead Mural
3.5'x58'
Printed direct to 1/8" sintra
To be applied to wall, behind mesh panels
(See graphic package)

Devon Kurtz



Blackstone Valley Tourism Council

Visitor Center Support

BHC is pleased to assist visitors in having the best of experiences while visiting the National Heritage Corridor. Support is provided to three locations in the Valley at the present time:

The Pawtucket Visitors Center, located across from the Old Slater Mill in Pawtucket, RI, communicates the story of the birth of the American Industrial Revolution.

The Museum of Work and Culture, Woonsocket, RI, explores immigration, labor and the battle for the cultural survival of ethnic groups coming into the Valley to work in the mills.

River Bend Farm at the Blackstone River & Canal Heritage State Park in Uxbridge, MA, tells visitors about how industrialization and the canal changed the lives of farmers in the Valley.

Coming in 2017 – The Blackstone Heritage Corridor Visitor Center at Worcester will celebrate the City's enduring legacy of innovation and invention, ethnicity and cultural traditions, and transportation history.

Community Planning

Blackstone Heritage Corridor (BHC) works closely with the Rhode Island MPO (through the RI Statewide Planning Program, also known as "SPP") and the Central Massachusetts MPO (also known as "CMMPO," which operates through the Central Mass. Regional Planning Commission). BHC provides critical information for the reports those MPOs must provide to the U.S. Department of Transportation. BHC also participates in the development of the Transportation Investment Plans (TIP) to advocate for projects which benefit and enhance the communities throughout the Blackstone Valley. A TIP is a 5-10 year planning document and the most recent TIPs include important projects such as completion of the Blackstone River Bikeway, protection and enhancement of historic bridges, and development of multi-modal transportation and economic development projects.

Dave Barber

Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) are federally required transportation planning bodies comprised of elected and appointed officials agencies having interest or representing local, state and federal governments or agencies having interest or responsibility in transportation planning and programming.

BHC works with the state and local agencies doing projects that are federally-funded to help protect the historic, cultural, natural and recreational resources throughout the National Heritage Corridor. An example includes work on the bridge on Blackstone Street in Sutton, MA. This bridge is adjacent to the amazing "Singing Dam" and the Blackstone River and Canal. The historic tow path was impacted by the project, as were the stream banks. By working closely with town and state officials, BHC was able to identify and help protect a multitude of resources at this one location alone.

Megan DiPrete

This year BHC also provided assistance in 20 of the 25 cities and towns in the National Heritage Corridor. The assistance included technical assistance in a variety of capacities, support for grant applications, assistance with Comprehensive/Master and Open Space Planning efforts, and providing grant funding for specific projects.

Dave Barber

Megan DiPrete

BlackstoneHeritageCorridor.org It's all new!

The new BHC website has taken on a magazine quality. The interactive resource provides an easy-to-navigate and attractive home page with pull down menus and photo buttons that allow quick access to the plethora of interesting components on the site. The website was designed to first work flawlessly on mobile devices and then to function on desk/lap top computers.

A special section for young people (or those young at heart) is GearHeads. The logo was designed to be in constant motion and when the home page for GearHeads loads, a Monty-Python-esque animation greets the viewer.

Other sections include the Volunteers-in-Parks Program where one can learn how to volunteer and/or submit hours donated, a Visitor Guide with an interactive map, a Calendar of Events with a quick button for uploading new submissions, and pages for the new Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park and the Roger Williams National Memorial.

Of particular note are the individual pages for each of the 25 communities in the National Heritage Corridor. They include interesting links to town/city resources like the town/city hall, library, museums and historical societies and more. BHC has produced 27 walking tour guides and those are being uploaded to the community pages.

Throughout the website, beginning on the home page with a bar of rotating images, there are wonderful photos from the National Heritage Corridor, many provided by the talented photographers who have submitted images for the BHC calendar project. There is a process to upload new photos to the gallery to be considered for the Photo of the Week.

With the new website, Blackstone Heritage Corridor, Inc. also launched its online Shop. The shop allows one to purchase BHC merchandise and event tickets, as well as make donations. Currently, the inventory includes BHC hats (available in 6 different colors), Trash Responsibly™ bags, and the 2016 calendar featuring pictures from local photographers and environmentally-friendly tips in each month.

Viewers are encouraged to revisit the website often as the content is always being enhanced.

GearHeads is a special section of the new Blackstone Heritage Corridor website GEARED just for kids. What is a GearHead you ask? Well...

GearHead (n.): a kid, powered by the Gears in their brain; who explores nature, discovers history, protects the environment, and goes on adventures through the Blackstone River Valley.

Explore! Discover! Protect!

. . . and GO!

GearHeads

GearHeads is designed to encourage children to learn about and explore the Blackstone Heritage Corridor through activities, crafts, and fieldtrips that celebrate our diverse region. Kids can make a model of a 1820s canal boat, learn all about bicycle safety, learn about the people who live here, and discover all sorts of wildlife in their own backyard.

Blackstone River Bikeway Milestones

Terrific milestones were reached in 2015! In Massachusetts, construction on a three-and-a-half-mile section in Uxbridge, Millville and Blackstone moved right along, and a new bridge for the Bikeway was installed in Blackstone.

In Rhode Island, where about half of the Bikeway in that state is completed, design plans for the sections in Providence and through Woonsocket and North Smithfield progressed nearly to completion. Funding commitments are needed in order to see these segments into the construction phases and to move the final segments into the design process.

Greenway Challenge Celebrates Its 15th Annual Adventure Race

More than 360 athletes gathered in the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Saturday, September 26, 2015, to compete in the 15th Annual Greenway Challenge. The bi-state, 60-mile, four-sport adventure race included alternating segments of running, street biking, river paddling, and mountain biking. The Challenge has been known for changing its course each year and this year's race started in Sutton, MA, at Purgatory Chasm and finished in Lincoln, RI, at Lincoln Woods State Park. Seventy-three teams navigated their way through eight towns with transition sites at the Sutton Airfield, Rice City Pond and River Bend Farm in Uxbridge, Daniels Farmstead in Blackstone, the Kelly House Museum, the Blackstone River Bikeway, and Chase Farm in Lincoln. The last leg brought the athletes to the finish line and awards ceremony at the Grove in Lincoln Woods State Park.

In the Championship Division, Team MRA Triple Threat from Worcester, MA, won by finishing the course in 4:17:39.30. Holding their titles from the 2014 Greenway Challenge, this year's female Ironwoman champion was Laura Zimmer from Westborough, MA, with a finish time of 5:57:33.48, and Trent Koopman from Whitinsville, MA, won the men's Ironman division with a time of 5:07:14.01.

Thank you to the Greenway Challenge sponsors: UniBank, Taco/The White Family Foundation, WXLO 104.5, WORC-FM 98.9, and The Pike 100 FM.

Edd Cote

Volunteers-in-Parks Program

The Volunteers-in-Parks (VIP) program has been re-organized and re-energized. Highlights from this past year include a March weekend of Maple Sugaring in partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation at River Bend Farm in Uxbridge. April found many volunteers making a difference with "spring cleaning" along the Blackstone River and the Blackstone River Bikeway.

The Blackstone Valley Paddle Club volunteers continue to guide paddle trips on the Blackstone River and local tributaries. This past season they celebrated 15 years of continuous programing with 14 VIPs providing 16 paddle tours and donating 530 hours of volunteer service. This is a tremendous program that continues to attract a loyal following from May to August.

Other VIP highlights include the continued growth of the Blackstone River Bikeway Patrol and new volunteer opportunities with GO! - a month-long experience program in September.

The VIP program is as unique as the National Heritage Corridor's landscape. A grand total of 6,651 hours were recorded in 2015 valued at $153,439 with 146 VIPs volunteering. Imagine the possibilities for 2016!

Bonnie Combs

Sarah Buchanan

Bonnie Combs

Megan DiPrete

Special Recognition of Long-time VIPs

At the close of 2015, Blackstone Heritage Corridor gave special recognition to all volunteers who had served 10 or more years in the Volunteers-in-Parks program – 44 extraordinary people!

25 years or more:
Margaret Carroll, Millville, MA
John Marsland, Cumberland, RI
Donna Williams, Grafton, MA
Robert Billington, Central Falls, RI
Richard T. Moore, Uxbridge, MA

20-24 years:
Val Stegemoen, Blackstone, MA
Dave Barber, Hopedale, MA
Stephen Giardini, Millville, MA

15-19 years:
Ethel Lalsey
Irene Blais, Woonsocket, RI
Robert Charpentier, Harrisville, RI
Ben Thompson, North Scituate, RI
Cheryl Thompson, North Scituate, RI
Susan Shea, Woonsocket, RI
Frank Matta, Cumberland, RI
Albert Klyberg, Lincoln, RI
Charlie Thompson, Whitinsville, MA
Julie Riendeau, Harrisville, RI
Steve Riendeau, Harrisville, RI
Blackstone Valley Paddle Club

10-14 years:
Gerard Noel, Woonsocket, RI
Paul Papineau, Woonsocket, RI
Linda Konvalinka, Milford, MA
Lee Parham, Norton, MA
Keith Hainley, Woonsocket, RI
Robert Martin, Cumberland, RI
Judy Hadley, Lincoln, RI
Kent Cameron, North Scituate, RI
Heather Elster, Whitinsville, MA
Nancy Weigmont, Woonsocket, RI
Robert Taylor, N. Attleboro, MA
Louise Price, Upton, MA
George Hadley, Lincoln, RI
Kathy Barton, Manville, RI
Roy Henry, Uxbridge, MA
Kathy Hartley, Lincoln, RI
Matthew Goyette, Woonsocket, RI
Patti McAlpine, Warwick, RI
Erik Eckilson, Woonsocket, RI
Pat Choiniere, Lincoln, RI
Michelle Fontaine, Douglas, MA
Barbara Vassallo, Woonsocket, RI
Martha Stegemoen, Blackstone, MA
Bonnie Combs, Blackstone, MA

A VIP First!

One unique volunteer event was a bridal shower. A soon-to-be-married couple decided that instead of receiving gifts they would request their invited guests to spend the day volunteering and making a difference along the Blackstone River Bikeway. Forty new VIPs, family and friends participated in the day-long cleanup, with a buffet lunch and gift bags (including work gloves, sunscreen, water and snacks), all donated by the bridal party. The event provided 240 hours of volunteer service to the VIP program and new energetic VIPs.

The Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor

Auburn, MA
Blackstone, MA
Burrillville, RI
Central Falls, RI
Cumberland, RI
Douglas, MA
East Providence, RI
Glocester, RI
Grafton, MA
Hopedale, MA
Leicester, MA
Lincoln, RI
Mendon, MA
Millbury, MA
Millville, MA
North Smithfield, RI
Northbridge, MA
Pawtucket, RI
Providence RI
Smithfield, RI
Sutton, MA
Upton, MA
Uxbridge, MA
Woonsocket, RI
Worcester, MA

Blackstone Heritage Corridor, Inc.

WATER POWERED!

BlackstoneHeritageCorridor.org