



Blackstone Heritage Corridor, Inc.



Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Uxbridge to Kick Off Blackstone Heritage Corridor Cleanup Season

More than 30 Cleanups Planned Throughout the National Heritage Corridor This Spring



The first spring cleanup event in the Blackstone Heritage Corridor will take place in Uxbridge, MA, on Saturday, April 1st from 9 a.m. to Noon. Pictured here announcing the season's kickoff are (left to right) Bonnie Combs of Blackstone Heritage Corridor Inc. and Kristin Black, Uxbridge Board of Health. To register for the Uxbridge event, visit tinyurl.com/UxbridgeCleanup.

Whitinsville, MA (March 13, 2017) – In preparation for the annual spring cleanup season, Blackstone Heritage Corridor, Inc. (BHC) reached out to each community within the National Heritage Corridor and has a couple of exciting new additions this year. For starters, the Town of Uxbridge is kicking off the 2017 cleanup season with a town-wide cleanup on Saturday, April 1 from 9 a.m. to Noon.

“The Uxbridge community came together very quickly on this one,” noted Bonnie Combs, Marketing Director at BHC, who also manages its Trash Responsibly™ program. “The

Board of Health and DPW were very supportive, as well as Boy Scout Troop 25, Koopman Lumber, Premeer Real Estate, and First Night Uxbridge, Inc., which is providing free hot dogs to all volunteers. Premeer Real Estate is providing music and entertainment and is debuting its new Green Team, and Koopman Lumber has donated trash bags. The celebration starts and ends on the Town Common, in the heart of Uxbridge. Volunteers can register in advance and select a street at tinyurl.com/UxbridgeCleanup.”

In preparation for its 350th Anniversary this year, the town of Mendon, MA, is hosting its community cleanup on Saturday, April 8 from 9 a.m. to Noon, meeting at the Clough School. Volunteers will be treated to a free lunch, compliments of the Mendon Lions Club, and Southwick’s Zoo is giving volunteers a coupon for a free admission to the zoo. “The momentum is building in Mendon after last year’s cleanup where over 75 volunteers came out,” noted Combs. “We’re pleased to see such enthusiasm from the community to keep it clean.” Volunteers can register and select a street at Mendonma.gov/cleanup.

April 8 is also a busy day in Worcester, MA, where the Regional Environmental Council hosts its 28th Annual Earth Day Cleanup from 8 a.m. to Noon. According to organizers, this is a city-wide cleanup of parks, gardens, and neighborhoods involving more than 1,000 volunteers who will pick up more than 50 tons of trash at more than 60 locations throughout Worcester. The same day, the Ten Mile River Watershed Council is hosting its Earth Day Cleanup at Slater Park in Pawtucket, RI. Volunteers will meet at 9 a.m. and will disperse along the Ten Mile River. April 8 is also “Yellow Bag Day” in the Town of Cumberland, RI, and is presented by The Valley Breeze. Residents can pick up yellow trash bags ahead of time from The Valley Breeze office in Lincoln and the town collects the bags the following Monday.

A resident from Upton, MA, was inspired by reading an article about the Mendon cleanup and reached out to BHC for support in planning a town cleanup in her hometown. “I got a call one day from Lara Whal, who is part of a mom’s group, who said there were many people in her community interested in getting a cleanup going,” Combs explained. The Board of Health and the Department of Public Works granted all the necessary permissions and provided lots of support. We worked as a team and it’s a very rewarding experience to work with people who are passionate about keeping their communities clean and healthy. We are very happy to

be adding Upton to list this year.” According to Combs, some communities are concerned about hosting events due to liability and lack of supplies, but with BHC’s Volunteers-in-Parks program, volunteers are covered with liability insurance for the day and are outfitted with safety vests, litter pickers and gloves. Upton residents who want to get involved will meet on Saturday, April 15 at the town playground on Route 140 at 10:30 a.m. and will clean until 12:30 p.m.

Also on April 15, the Blackstone River Watershed Council/Friends of the Blackstone is leading a cleanup from its Environmental Education Center in Manville, RI, along the Blackstone River and Blackstone River Bikeway starting at 9 a.m., and the City of Woonsocket, RI, is hosting its Earth Day Greenup at Woodlawn Cemetery on the corner of Bernon Street and Manville Road from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. For those who enjoy geocaching, BHC volunteer Tracey Belliveau is hosting a “Cache In/Trash Out” (CITO) event at the same location. This is an annual event in the geocaching community when people search for hidden treasures and pick up trash along the way.

“I met Tracey last year at the Woonsocket cleanup,” Combs recalled. “She told me about the CITO event that was taking place afterwards. I was so intrigued to meet more people who care about the environment and I also wanted to learn more about geocaching. I highly recommend this activity, and I’m happy to report that Tracey is now one of our volunteers and has engaged her students from Woonsocket High School in our Volunteers-in-Parks program. You just never know who you’ll meet a cleanup event and where it will lead you!”

The Town of Leicester, MA, is holding two cleanup events this year, one on Monday, April 17 hosted by Becker College at the Town Hall from Noon to 2 p.m., and the other on Sunday, April 23, presented by the town at 10:30 a.m. Volunteers will meet at Town Common for both events.

The Town of Northbridge, MA, is holding a two-day cleanup this year on Friday, April 21 from Noon to 5pm and Saturday, April 22 (Earth Day) from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. “After hosting our Trash Responsibly Summit™ in November, several people came forward wanting to help plan a more impactful cleanup this year,” Combs shared. “Northbridge is a very large community and, as the saying goes, it really does take a village, and there are five of them here in Northbridge. The Whitin Community Center, UniBank, ERA Key Realty, Koopman Lumber, Tom Berkowitz

Trucking and I are all on the planning committee. We are looking to engage the local business community in getting its employees involved, as well as community groups and local residents. We're spreading the effort over a couple of days for flexibility in scheduling volunteer time."

Earth Day, April 22, falls on a Saturday this year and many communities are taking advantage of that synchronicity, including Burrillville, RI, (8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.), Central Falls, RI, (10 a.m. to 1 p.m.), E. Providence, RI, (Bold Point Shoreline Cleanup, 10 a.m. to Noon), North Smithfield Clean & Green Day (8 a.m. to Noon), and Pawtucket, RI, (Neighborhood Alliance of Pawtucket from 9 a.m. to Noon). There are four Earth Day cleanup events on April 22nd in Providence, RI, this year including the City of Providence with its 5th Annual Earth Day Cleanup (9 a.m. to 1 p.m.), the Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council which kicks off its Clean Days on the Greenway (9 a.m. to 1 p.m.), the National Park Service's annual cleanup at the Roger Williams National Memorial on North Main Street (9 a.m. to 1 p.m.), and Neutaconkanut Hill Conservancy hosting its Earth Day Cleanup from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The Town of Smithfield, RI, will meet at Deerfield Park from 9 a.m. to Noon for its annual event and the Northern Rhode Island Trout Unlimited Chapter 737 completes the April 22 list with its annual cleanup of the trout-stocked Rochambeau Pond in Lincoln, RI, meeting at 10 a.m.

The Blackstone River Watershed Association (BRWA) is hosting its Annual Earth Day Cleanup event on Saturday, April 29 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., in conjunction with Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation's (MA DCR) Park Serve Day and in partnership with Alternatives Unlimited, Inc., the Blackstone Heritage Corridor, the Volunteers-in-Parks program and MA DCR.

Volunteers are needed to cleanup sites along and near the Blackstone River and its tributaries in the communities of Blackstone, Millville, Douglas, Uxbridge, Hopedale, Mendon, Grafton, Upton, Millbury, Auburn and Sutton. Registration opens soon at thebrwa.org. This event is presented in conjunction with a Clean & Green Fair hosted by the BRWA's partner, Alternatives, Inc., and is held at River Bend Farm at the Blackstone River & Canal Heritage State Park (287 Oak St.) in Uxbridge, MA. Volunteers return to River Bend Farm following the cleanup for refreshments and to enjoy the Clean & Green Fair.

Also on April 29, the Friends of Upton State Forest is hosting a Park Serve Day at Upton State Forest from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. the Manchaug Pond Foundation is hosting its annual cleanup April 29 with volunteers meeting at the State Boat Ramp on Torrey Road at 9 a.m. and will clean until Noon.

The Town of Blackstone, MA, hosts its annual town-wide cleanup on Saturday, April 29 from 9 to Noon with a complimentary lunch served immediately afterward. Volunteers meet at the Senior Center at 15 St. Paul Street. The Grafton Garden Club organizes a cleanup each year for the Town of Grafton and volunteers will meet at the Town Common on Saturday, April 29 at 9 a.m. and clean until Noon.

The final cleanup of the season takes place in Auburn, the newest community added to the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor in 2014. Auburn hosts a cleanup every other year and is organized by the Auburn Chamber of Commerce. The 2017 Auburn Town Cleanup will be Saturday, May 6 from 7:30 a.m. to 11:45 p.m., with volunteers meeting at the Auburn Fire Station in Drury Square.

“So far, we have over 30 cleanups scheduled this spring throughout the Blackstone Heritage Corridor, exceeding last year’s count, and this is a healthy sign,” noted Charlene Perkins Cutler, Executive Director of BHC. “This number does not include a number of corporate Day of Service events planned with local companies who are engaging their employees in community service. Several BHC volunteers are taking the lead in planning these special events which will make a significant impact on our program and the health of watershed. We are very grateful for the many organizations who make annual cleanups a priority, for the communities that provide the services needed for litter removal and, of course, where would we be without the tireless volunteers who give their time in these cleanup efforts.”

For a complete list of cleanup events and contact information, please visit BlackstoneHeritageCorridor.org/happening-now/trash-responsibly. To add an event to the list, please contact Bonnie Combs at bcombs@BlackstoneHeritageCorridor.org. To learn more about BHC’s Volunteers-in-Parks program, contact Suzanne Buchanan at Volunteer@BlackstoneHeritageCorridor.org or call (508) 234-4242.

About Blackstone Heritage Corridor, Inc.:

An energetic nonprofit, the Blackstone Heritage Corridor, Inc. partners with organizations, local communities, businesses and residents to ensure the long term vitality of the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor. Learn more at BlackstoneHeritageCorridor.org.

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