

THE BLACKSTONE RIVER – PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

Blackstone Heritage Corridor Visitor Center at Worcester
3 Paul Clancy Way, Worcester, MA
Monday, April 29, 2019
8:30am – 1:00pm

PURPOSE OF THE WORKSHOP: Provide an open platform to share information on the history of the Blackstone River, learn about the status of environmental indicators in the watershed and the groups working to improve its health, and discuss current challenges, successes, and how we can best use science and partnerships to improve the resilience of the watershed moving forward.

OUTCOMES:

1. Greater understanding among participants about the current condition and future of the watershed
2. New relationships formed and potential new partnerships explored.
3. Specific next steps defined for advancing water quality, habitat, and appreciation of the Blackstone watershed.

AGENDA

Registration and Networking

8:00-8:30am

Coffee, tea, and light snacks to start the day. Don't forget your reusable mug!

Welcoming Remarks

8:30-8:45am

Mike Gerel, Program Director, Narragansett Bay Estuary Program

Mike introduces the Narragansett Bay Estuary Program, the status and trends report, the purpose of the workshop, and desired outcomes for the day.

Perspective on the Blackstone

8:45-9:15am

Morris A. Bergman, Councilor, City of Worcester

Martin Suuberg, Commissioner, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection

Janet Coit, Director, Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management

Mel Cote, Chief, Surface Water Branch, U.S. EPA Region 1

Speakers provide an overview of their work and perspective on the Blackstone and its watershed.

Looking back – the historical importance of the Blackstone

9:30-10:00am

Kevin Klyberg, Park Ranger, Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park

Kevin grounds us in the local area by offering a brief history of the region and takes questions

Panel 1 – Present: Successes, challenges, and opportunities in the Blackstone watershed

10:00-11:15am

Moderator: Nick Wildman, Ecological Restoration Specialist, MA Department of Ecological Restoration

Panelists:

Susan Mara, Director of Planning, City of Pawtucket

Karla Sangrey, Director, Upper Blackstone Clean Water

Stefanie Covino, Conservation Planner, City of Worcester

Peter Coffin, Blackstone River Water Coalition

Panelists offer their views on recent successes, ongoing challenges, and current opportunities by answering questions from the moderator and audience.

Break

11:15-11:30am

*Exhibitor tables and invited student work from WPI Students***Panel 2 - Future: Setting goals and making a difference moving forward**

11:30-12:45pm

Moderator: Pieter de Jong, Blackstone River Coalition**Panelists:**

Heidi Ricci, Assistant Director of Advocacy, MassAudubon

Keith Hainley, River Restoration Coordinator, Blackstone River Watershed Council/
Friends of the Blackstone;

Rob Johnston, Professor of Economics, Clark University;

Joanne Holahan, Vice President/Education Team Leader, Blackstone River Watershed Association

*Beginning with our panelists and then including workshop attendees, reflect on the success, challenges, and opportunities shared by the last panel and then identify some priority actions necessary to improve water quality, habitat, and community engagement for a healthy watershed.***Next Steps and Closing Remarks**

12:45-1:00pm

Donna Williams, Watershed Advocate, Blackstone River Coalition

*What's next? Opportunities, next steps, and looking forward***GUIDED WALKING TOURS (OPTIONAL)***Please join Marina Flannery (Blackstone Valley Tourism Council) and Kate McPherson (Save The Bay) on a guided walking nature tour of the Blackstone River.**The tour will take place a few miles down the road at Mass Audubon's Broad Meadow Brook Conservation Center & Wildlife Sanctuary, 414 Massasoit Road, Worcester, MA 01604**We will meet at approximately 1:15-1:30pm, bring your own lunch or pick some up along the way.*

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