

State of the Blackstone: The Blackstone River - Past, Present, and Future

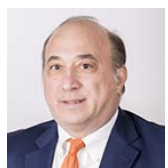
April 29, 2019 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
Blackstone Heritage Visitor Center, Worcester, MA

Speakers

Mike Gerel has served as the Program Director of the NBEP since February 2019. In this role he oversees all program operations and leads the development and implementation of science-based, community-driven partnerships and initiatives that enhance water quality and the resilience of climate impacted habitats in the Narragansett Bay estuary and its watershed in Rhode Island and Massachusetts. Mike has more than twenty-five years' experience in ecosystem-based planning and restoration, facilitation and collaborative governance, and public policy. Through scientist and management positions with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Sustainable Northwest, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, and state and federal government he has advanced the study and recovery of imperiled coastal systems across the U.S. Mike is deeply committed to working in concert with those whose livelihood and culture are tied to the land and water of their place.



Councilor Morris A. Bergman a Worcester attorney in private practice, is serving his third two-year term as a Councilor-at-Large. He previously served two terms as a member of the City of Worcester Zoning Board of Appeals and currently serves as a docent for Preservation Worcester. He is a graduate of Doherty Memorial High School, Worcester. He received a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from Boston University and a Juris Doctorate from Boston University.



Martin Suuberg was appointed on January 8, 2015 as the Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) by Governor Charles D. Baker and his Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Matthew A. Beaton. With nearly 30 years of experience working in environmental and natural resource agencies at the state and federal level, Martin is a lawyer and manager who has effectively and efficiently administered the environmental laws that protect the quality of life for all Massachusetts' citizens. At MassDEP, Martin served as Deputy Commissioner for Policy and Planning. He took over this position after 9 1/2 years as the Regional Director for the Central Regional Office in Worcester, which serves more than 70 communities in Worcester County and nearby areas and is responsible for environmental permitting, inspection and enforcement activities.



Director Janet Coit has been the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management's leader since 2011. She was recently awarded the New England Women in Energy and the Environment's Achievement Award and the Gary S. Sasse Distinguished Public Service Award from the Rhode Island Public Expenditure Council. Last year, Director Coit was awarded an honorary degree from the Roger Williams University Law School. She also was inducted into the American College of Environmental Lawyers and received the Environmental Business Council Paul G. Keough Environmental Energy Award for Government Service.



Mel Coté is chief of the Surface Water Branch in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's New England Regional Office in Boston, Massachusetts. The branch comprises four sections: Ocean and Coastal Protection, Watersheds and Nonpoint Source, Water Quality, and Wetlands Protection. The branch administers the six National Estuary Programs in New England, including the Long Island Sound Study; dredged material management and ocean disposal programs; nonpoint source management and water quality planning programs; the Lake Champlain Basin Program; the Southern New England Program for Coastal Watershed Restoration; the water quality standards and total maximum daily load (TMDL) programs; and the wetlands regulatory and planning programs. Mel also serves on the Northeast Regional Ocean Council's Ocean Planning Committee, the New England Regional Dredging Team, and other regional committees and workgroups.



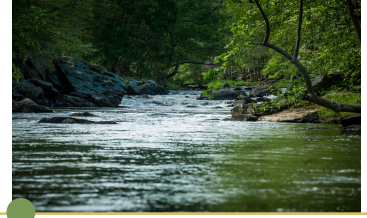
PURPOSE OF THE WORKSHOP:

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.

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Moderators

Nick Wildman is a Certified Ecological Restoration Practitioner and the Dam Removal Practice Leader for the



Massachusetts Division of Ecological Restoration. Nick joined the DER in 2007 after having been involved in river and wetland projects in New

York, New England, and New Orleans. He is currently the Division's lead on eight restoration projects across Massachusetts. He also leads the Division's work examining the economic effects of restoration and serves as the Vice-Chair of the Narragansett Bay Estuary Program's Steering Committee. Nick has a Master of Environmental Management degree from Duke University and a Bachelor of Science from the University of Maine.

Pieter de Jong has worked for 35 years as an environmental planner for local, state and Federal agencies and consulting firms.



Currently semi-retired, he still provides consultant services periodically in disaster management, sustainability and climate change adaptation. He holds bachelor's and

master's degrees in biology, environmental studies and regional planning from the University of Pennsylvania. Since moving to Uxbridge from Maryland, he has been exploring the beauty and historic landscape of the Blackstone River watershed by trail and kayak. He serves on the boards of the Blackstone River Coalition, the Blackstone River Watershed Association, and the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor.

Speakers and Panelists

Kevin Klyberg was born and raised in the Blackstone Valley. As a Ranger, a big part of Kevin's job is sharing stories about all the wonderful places, the history, and the people here in the Blackstone Valley. Most of the time he takes people on walking tours, but has also done tours on trains, buses, horse-drawn wagons, canoes, kayaks, bicycles, and on the excursion boat, the Blackstone Valley Explorer. Kevin studied history in college, but did not know what he was going to do for a job. After hearing about an opportunity to give tours on the Blackstone River, he gave hundreds of tours over two years. Through that experience, Kevin learned a lot about being an interpreter – how to provide information and inspiration in the right amounts and at the right times so that visitors will have more enjoyable and meaningful experiences.



Susan Mara is the Director of Planning and Redevelopment for the City of Pawtucket, Rhode Island. She has worked for the City of Pawtucket for almost 15 years on projects and initiatives which have improved the Blackstone Watershed. Ms. Mara has written over \$1 million in Brownfields Cleanup grants, and developed a revolving loan fund for Brownfield remediation for the cities of Pawtucket and Central Falls.



Karla Sangrey is the Engineer-Director/Treasurer at Upper Blackstone Clean Water in Millbury, MA. Ms. Sangrey has worked for the Upper Blackstone since 2004 and is responsible for the overall administration and operation of the treatment facility. Upper Blackstone provides wastewater treatment to the City of Worcester and several surrounding communities, serving a population of about 250,000. Upper Blackstone's advanced biological nutrient removal process produces a high quality effluent to protect the water quality of the Blackstone River and the Narragansett Bay into which the Blackstone eventually discharges. Previously, Ms. Sangrey was a Principal with the consulting firm CDM Smith.



Stefanie Covino has been the Conservation Planner for the City of Worcester for about five months and was previously with Mass Audubon's Shaping the Future of Your Community Program for 3 years. She graduated with a Masters of Environmental Science and Policy from Clark University here in Worcester. She has extensive experience in engagement and science communication and is trained as a Keystone Cooperator on forest management and stewardship. She serves on the board of the Massachusetts Watershed Coalition and is a Certified Provider for the Commonwealth's Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program to help communities identify actions to improve climate resilience. Her areas of interest include smart development, nature-based solutions, and watershed protection.



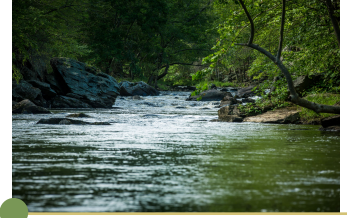
Peter Coffin is the coordinator of the Blackstone River Coalition and has been working towards the goal of making the Blackstone River fishable and swimmable. Peter collaborates with partners throughout the Blackstone watershed to help educate and monitor the health of the river. He was formerly an Interpretive Park Ranger with the National Park Service for the John H. Chaffee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor. Peter is hopeful that the river will continue improving for future generations to use.



E. Heidi Ricci is the Assistant Director of Advocacy at Mass Audubon. She has decades of experience in environmental policy and community engagement. She created and oversees the Shaping the Future of Your Community program, which assists communities in building resilience through low-impact development and targeted conservation. Ms. Ricci holds a B.S. degree in Biology from Tufts and an M.S. degree from Antioch University New England. She serves on the Nashua River Wild & Scenic Study Committee and on the Board of the Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions and the Massachusetts Rivers Alliance. She has received several awards including an Environmental Merit Award from EPA Region I.



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Nature Walk

Following the workshop, discover Broad Meadow Brook, MassAudubon's largest urban wildlife sanctuary including 400 acres for hiking and education programs encouraging preservation and conservation of the natural world. Meet Kate and Marina for 1:30PM in the parking lot located a few miles down the road at:

414 Massasoit Road Worcester, MA 01604

Nature Walk Guides

Marina Flannery is the Director of Environmental Education for Blackstone Valley Tourism Council. Professionally,



Marina creates educational outdoor programming and has accumulated thousands of hours as a naturalist, guide, teacher and birder for BVTC and Audubon Society of

Rhode Island as well as on her own. For Marina, outdoor programming is more than a profession but a passion, and she thoroughly enjoys sharing nature with people of all ages.

Kate McPherson is the Narragansett Bay Riverkeeper at Save The Bay. She joined Waterkeeper Alliance in 2018 and works on a variety of river restoration and advocacy issues across the Bay's the bi-state



(southeastern Massachusetts and northeastern Rhode Island) watershed. She supports community

efforts to protect and restore rivers, freshwater wetlands, coastal habitats, and advocates for statewide policy changes that support watershed health. Kate is a Wetland Scientist and holds an B.S. in Wildlife Biology and Management from the University of Rhode Island. She will never cease to be delighted by birds, will always stop to help an amphibian or turtle across the road, and tries to be a voice for the watershed.

Panelists

Keith Hainley is the Director and River Restoration Coordinator with the Blackstone River Watershed Council/Friends of the Blackstone, and has probably single handedly helped to fill state landfills with more river trash that one could think imaginable. Nothing escapes him if it's on or near the river. Keith coordinates volunteers, working with the scouts, local organizations and schools to get them excited about removing trash and invasive plants. As soon as cloning is common place, we plan to order 4 more of him. Since walking many of the roads along the Blackstone River when training for Marathons in 1998 I was appalled by the trash and have been working ever since to help keep it clean.



Robert J. Johnston is Director of the George Perkins Marsh Institute and Professor of Economics at Clark University, as well as editor of the journal Resource and Energy Economics. He is an environmental economist whose research addresses economic valuation, benefit transfer and ecosystem services, with an emphasis on aquatic, coastal and coupled natural/human systems. He has also conducted significant work in fisheries economics and climate change adaptation. Among other appointments, he is co-chair of the Ecosystem Science and Management Working Group of the NOAA Science Advisory Board, and on the Steering Committee and Science Advisory Board of the Narragansett Bay Estuary Program, the Senior Advisory Board of the Connecticut Sea Grant Program, and the Fulbright U.S. Student Program National Screening Committee.



Bob Billington founded the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council in 1985, his goals were to reveal the history of the Blackstone Valley, clean up its river and build an understanding of events that changed the course of America. He has directed sustainable tourism development in the Blackstone Valley creating numerous partnerships. He has served as a Commissioner with the Blackstone Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission. Billington led the creation of the Blackstone River Watershed Council, and he served as Chairman of the Old Slater Mill Association, leading the effort to create the Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park. Blackstone River's development has been his priority, including construction and operation of the Blackstone Valley Explorer and the current River Classroom program.



JoAnne Holahan has been a member of the Board of Directors of the Blackstone River Watershed Association since 2009 and served as its President from 2013 to 2018. She is currently the board's Vice President. As a retired middle school science teacher, Joanne brings 22 years of teaching experience to her other role as the BRWA's Education Team Coordinator. Throughout her teaching career JoAnne introduced her students to watershed issues through classroom and hands-on studies of the Blackstone River. Her students were recipients of the John H. Chafee Heritage Award for their work on storm water pollution and the Secretary of Environmental Affairs Award for Outstanding Environmental Programs. She has been involved in the Blackstone River Coalition Water Quality Monitoring Program since its inception in 2003.



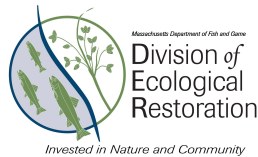
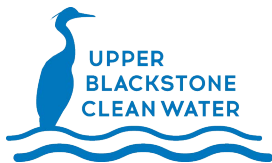
Donna Williams served as Massachusetts Audubon Society's Conservation Advocacy Coordinator at Broad Meadow Brook Conservation Center and Wildlife Sanctuary in Worcester, for 22 years before retiring in 2011. In that role, early on she helped create and establish the now-400+ acre wildlife sanctuary and visitor center in Worcester. Once they were up and running, she planned, organized and implemented programs and events in Central Massachusetts with particular focus on water resource protection in the Blackstone River watershed. One "watershed event" was Expedition 2000, a four-day paddle down the entire length of the Blackstone by 30 core paddlers, including Donna. The intense interest that the expedition generated sparked the creation of the Blackstone River Coalition (BRC), launched the Campaign for a Fishable/Swimmable Blackstone River in Massachusetts and Rhode Island, and jump-started the award-winning BRC Watershed-wide Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring Program. Donna has played a leadership role in all of this, helping create and serve as President of the BRC, developing the "Tackling Stormwater" outreach materials for the Campaign, and managing the 80-member watershed-wide volunteer monitoring program, which is now beginning its 16th season. Since 1995, she has been an integral part of the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor, first as a commissioner on the federal commission and, after its sunset, as a director and past Chair of its subsequent non-profit organization.



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A Special Thanks to our workshop organizers and partners:



NARRAGANSETT BAY ESTUARY PROGRAM



This project was funded by a cooperative agreement (CE00A00366) awarded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission on behalf of the Narragansett Bay Estuary Program.