



Blackstone Watershed Collaborative Meeting

August 19, 2022, 10am-12pm

Zoom <https://clarku.zoom.us/j/91977706024> Call: 646-876-9923 Meeting ID: 919 7770 6024

Attendees: Ted Beauvis, Gary Bechtholdt, Sarah Bower, Molly Cardoza, Nick Cohen, Peter Coffin, Stefanie Covino, Deb Cary, Jessica Davis, Greg Doerschler, Peter Friedland, Susan Gorelick, Keith Hainley, Allison Hamel, Ray Kelley, Colleen Keenan, Hillary King, Tim Loftus, Katie Liming, John Marsland, Patti McAlpine, Adam Menard, Heather Parry, Paul Popinchalk, Rebecca Quinones, Dawn Rosser, Karla Sangrey, Donna Williams, Bill Napolitano, Sam Turken (WGBH)

Recording Available:

<https://clarku.hosted.panopto.com/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=2746846d-0285-4222-b72a-aef60102c457>

Special Presentation of photos from the [Blackstone River Commons: Expedition 2022!](#)

- One deliverable of this project is making information on recreational navigation (portages, dams, etc.) publicly available
- The expedition highlighted goals of the Needs Assessments including fish passage (through meeting with dam owners and environmental advocates), water quality (meeting with WWTF operators and water quality monitoring volunteers), invasive species (bringing attention to the spread of water chestnut), and more.
- EPA R1 Administrator David Cash brought to light the need to engage with a wider audience and make sure the community members were represented in decision making, from EJ communities and indigenous communities in particular
- Portions of the main stem of the Blackstone were entirely dry from the drought, likely due to water diversion to the canal, especially in Uxbridge
- Link to see photos (will expire in about a month, contact Stef for access afterward):
https://www.icloud.com/photos/#068M4_57YOrGrV3TIOnfUYjVg

Subgroup Updates

- Municipal Resolutions Supporting Needs Assessment
 - Met with Cities of Central Falls and Pawtucket, waiting on dates to present. On agenda for Worcester City Council on Sept 13.
- [ZAP 50th – August 27 clean up/green ups & Sept 10 celebration](#)
 - ZAP events and cleanups extend into the week of August 27
 - Media coverage has included print, radio, and community TV
 - Volunteers are still needed!
 - Community groups are asked to RSVP whether they will table at final September 10 event. RSVP to Patti McAlpine at patti.bvtc@gmail.com
 - Take pictures and videos to show your project and the people & use #ZAP50 – this will be used to make a montage video to show at Sep 10th Celebration
 - Report your results!
 - i. Report on www.ZAPtheBlackstone.com with: How many people, How many bags and/or lbs of trash - This applies to any site, even if it's just one person!
- Bike/greenway
 - Keith Hainley: received approval to connect Blackstone, MA and Central Falls, RI
- Water quality
 - Ted Beauvis: would like to mount a campaign for action on CSO and other overflow issues. Worcester has a good integrated plan from 2019, how can we support the city of Worcester, such as getting state/fed financial support? Currently 15% of city is in CSO
 - Tim Loftus: Upper Blackstone takes in a certain amount of CSO discharge, but the system may become backed up with major rainstorms



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- Karla Sangrey: Supports implementation of integration plan, as many municipal pipes are broken
- Stef is working with city to set up a tour of the CSO and will follow up with scheduling info, likely a Tues or Thurs in Sept
- See more here on Worcester's integrated plan: <https://www.worcesterma.gov/worcester-waters>
- University work
 - No updates
- Other: Water chestnut/invasives work group
 - Blackstone Valley Tourism Council water chestnut pull 9am – 2pm Saturday, August 20, around the Central Falls landing

Partner Updates

- Northbridge: Open Space Committee working on updating their plan – draft soon and available for comment; working on prioritizing actions from MVP plan regarding Carpenter Reservoir. Northbridge has also hired their first full-time conservation agent, David Pickart
- Worcester: Job openings for Worcester's Department of Sustainability & Resilience!
 - Energy Analyst: <http://www.worcesterma.gov/human-resources/employment-opportunities/job-details?thingDataId=ITw43vt2d4FZY6jkueJqsQ>
 - Senior Manager of Energy Services: <http://www.worcesterma.gov/human-resources/employment-opportunities/job-details?thingDataId=iRIXInHodk-18hNaB13Ylg>
- CC4ES: extreme heat mitigation work repurposing boat sails as shade project is complete. Also working on/expanding work repurposing pallets and plastic into raised garden beds and small planters in Providence. See updates here: <https://cc4es2.wixsite.com/y4us>
- Peter Coffin/BRC: Heather Parry is the new data coordinator. Met with MassDEP and used the water quality monitoring data to take the Mumford River off the impaired list for dissolved oxygen. There is currently raised additional interest in Hopedale when Spinderville Pond received a no-swim alert for algae/green sheen – unknown at this time what it is without further testing, but certainly more frequent with the drought
- Mass Audubon: Hired new Education Coordinator Sarah Bertrand – will introduce to everyone and be part of the Collab team soon
- Colleen Keenan: Finishing up summer work on environmental education guide for Blackstone River Valley National Parks. Topics covered include environmental history of the Blackstone River Watershed, and attention to particular challenges such as storms/flooding, invasives, and more. Colleen will share her work at the next Collab meeting so we can all use this great information in our own work!

Discussion of Priority Projects & Criteria: What are your priority projects for your organization or municipality? How do they overlap between groups? Do you know what they'll cost yet or where to start? Let's get our Collab priorities list going!

- Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs)
 - BRWA is very focused on this right now, and we'd like to learn more about CSOs in Worcester (the only one in the watershed).
 - Working on a CSO facility tour and speaker from the City to come to a Collab meeting on this.
- Drought:
 - This was highlighted on the paddle for sure and will continue to expand impact in region into the future
 - MassRivers will focus on drought in upcoming legislative session. Contact Sarah Bower to communicate legislative priorities.



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- “For more info - the drought bill we were pushing (and will push next session) would limit nonessential outdoor water use during declared droughts for both public AND private water users (exceptions for those watering for business or to grow food). So, it would bring a more coordinated response to drought across the state.”
- Accessibility and Inclusion in Meetings/Decision Making:
 - BRWC/FOB has requested meetings with Central Falls and Pawtucket on passing municipal resolutions and asking who the critical community groups are that we can connect with and have conversations with.
 - Collaborative is looking to increase access to this information and have more folks with a seat at the table who are often not included in this conversation otherwise – more public, more representative of the communities in the watershed.
 - Ray: suggest evening meetings, such as every other month, quarterly community meeting, etc. to include folks with inflexible 9-5 job schedules.
 - Susan: As a ZAP captain, has faced challenges in reaching out to local communities for relevant communication channels, and availability of people to get involved. It’s a sensitive issue, but a very important one.
- Poor Farm Brook Dam Removal in Worcester:
 - Peter: Colin Novick from Worcester is interested in removing a dam on Poor Farm Brook – it's supported by everyone, but the City needs to put together bid package. It’s a highly urbanized coldwater fishery that would be vastly improved by the removal. Looking for some support to help move with the City of Worcester.
- Education:
 - Ted BRWA: goal is to scale up watershed awareness education in entire valley. This could include school education programs. BRWC is also working on bringing Kittacuck Speaks to schools.
- Fish passage:
 - We met about this on the paddle and it will be a big project moving forward in the coming years as we work with the lower 4 dams in RI
- Recreational Access:
 - Huge issue highlighted on the paddle – will continue to work with partners on this, including creating an outreach document on how to paddle the river with information on portages. Will work with Friends of the Blackstone, RISD, and RICKA especially to create this
- Invasives:
 - Something we’ll continue to focus on and engage with communities about, especially water chestnut and host additional clean ups/find funding for long term management.

Next meetings & Speakers

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September 16, 2022 Ray Kelley: ZAP photos & update from the clean up & celebration, plus **Colleen Keenan** sharing information on her environmental education guide

October 21, 2022 (Speaker TBD)

Events

- **August 20** – Friends of the Blackstone hosting Connecting with Canoes!



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- Every third Saturday through October (8/20, 9/17, 10/15)
- **August 27** – ZAP 50th Anniversary Clean ups & Green ups throughout the watershed! Have you signed up yet? See <https://www.zaptheblackstone.com/> to learn more and register your event or you need for volunteers
- **September 10** – ZAP 50th Celebration at Old Slater Mill in Pawtucket, RI <https://www.zaptheblackstone.com/>
 - If you're tabling, please RSVP to Patti at patti.bvtc@gmail.com

Grants:

Job opportunities:

- **City of Worcester, Dept Sustainability and Resilience**
 - Energy Analyst – FT, \$64,117 - \$78,121 annually, apply by 09/02
 - <https://www.worcesterma.gov/human-resources/employment-opportunities/job-details?thingDataId=ITw43vt2d4FZY6jkueJqsQ>
 - Senior Manager Energy Services – FT, \$91,124 - \$120,344 annually, open until filled
 - <https://www.worcesterma.gov/human-resources/employment-opportunities/job-details?thingDataId=iRIXInHodk-18hNaB13Ylg>
- **Audubon Society of RI and Providence Stormwater Innovation Center**
 - Stormwater Education & Outreach Coordinator. Smithfield, RI (remote flexibility). FT. \$51,000/yr. BA and 2 years' experience required. "Develop and deliver curriculum and training to stormwater professionals in Rhode Island and southeast New England."
- **RI Conservation District**
 - Civil Engineer Technician. FT hourly starting at \$21/hr. Warwick, RI <https://www.easternriconservation.org/job-postings/blog-post-title-one-58aje>
- **TerraCorps**
 - Several Corps positions currently open in MA and RI for an 11-month position Aug-July 2023 <https://terracorps.org/available-member-positions/>
- **Conservation Law Foundation**
 - Great Bay 2030 Manager. Lead and coordinate a coalition of conservation and environmental organizations working collaboratively to achieve the shared vision of Great Bay 2030. Ability to commute to NH. 5 years' academic/professional experience
 - Learn more or apply by emailing Kaylee Keim at kkeim@bridgepointassociates.net
- **Mass Association of Conservation Districts** (<https://massacd.wordpress.com/employment/>)
 - Grants & Contracts Manager – 10-15 hrs/wk, \$30-40/hr, remote. Letter of interest & resume to MLeffMACD@gmail.com
- **EPA** – *coming soon!*
 - Check out www.usajobs.gov for new EPA scientist and engineering positions to be posted soon (per SNEP Network!)
- **Mass Audubon**
- **Buzzards Bay Coalition**
 - Restoration Coordinator, Water Resource Specialist, Land Steward, Youth Program Assistant
 - <https://www.savebuzzardsbay.org/about-us/our-team/job-opportunities/>