



# Blackstone Watershed Collaborative Meeting Notes

November 17, 2023, 10am-12pm

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

## Attendees:

Heidi Ricci, John Marsland, Hillary King, Ted Beauvais, Rebecca Budd, Darrell Moore, Jasper Carleton, Cassandra Florez, Kimberly Groff, Nick Cohen, Heather Parry, Elizabeth Scott, Amanda Coffuire, Sarah Plutnicki, Doug Alward, Bryce DuBois, Peter Coffin, Sydney M., Gary Bechtholdt, Adam Menard, Stefanie Covino, Cay DenHerder, Phyllis Charpentier, Sophia Kostoulas, Natalie Regan-Lampert, Bruce Curliss, Sarah Bower, Caleigh McLaren, Vincent Thai

## Recording Available:

<https://clarku.hosted.panopto.com/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=c0849447-62ca-404e-b56b-b0bd012927e3>

## Presentations:

**Hillary King**, MVP Program Regional Coordinator, speaking about the MVP Open [Expression of Interest](#), due 12/15/23.

**Bruce Curliss**, Member of the Hassanamisco Band of Nipmuc, and **John Marsland**, President and Founder of Friends of the Blackstone speaking about the recent Intertribal Gathering on 10/22 in support of [restoring migratory fish passage back to the Blackstone, or Kittacuck](#).

## Subgroup Updates:

- Water quality
  - Check out a new monthly “Dam Busters” webinar series on dam removal that started in November. Register for the webinars (next is 12/6/23) and view the first recorded webinar [here](#).
  - RI has 319 grants for implementing nonpoint source pollution now open, due 1/26/24. Note: These funds may be used in watershed with approved watershed-based plans. However, EPA now allows flexibility to allow both the development of watershed plans in disadvantaged communities as well as implementation of community demonstration projects that address known sources of NPS water quality impairment. This flexibility opens the door to potential projects in certain portions of the state that currently lack an approved watershed plan. [Learn more here](#).
  - The Blackstone River Watershed Association is hiring! BRWA is looking for a seasonal, part-time Field Coordinator to lead its Water Quality Monitoring Program in the middle reach of the watershed. The middle reach extends from the MA/RI state line north to about Grafton and includes 28 monitoring locations on the main river and tributaries. Learn more [here](#) or contact Heather Parry of the BRC ([heatherparry.wqm@gmail.com](mailto:heatherparry.wqm@gmail.com)) and Ted Beauvais of the BRWA ([ted.beauvais@thebrwa.org](mailto:ted.beauvais@thebrwa.org)) for more info.

## Partner Updates:

- **MassRivers:** Dam Busters is here! This is a series of 1-hour webinars on dam removal that started in November. Register for the webinars and view the first recorded webinar [here](#). Mark your calendars for the next webinar on December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023!
- **Blackstone Collaborative was awarded \$100,000** from SNEP’s Watershed Implementation Grant Program to advance ecological restoration and improve community resilience. We will be providing capacity building and technical assistance by: 1) Creating future dam removal practitioners by hosting a dam removal and ecological restoration training and providing follow up information; 2) Supporting fish passage around the lower four dams on the river by highlighting indigenous voices as the river’s original & ongoing stewards and supporting public events such as the intertribal gathering and a 2024 fish migration parade; and 3) facilitating a technical working group around fish passage. View other projects funded by SNEP-SWIG [here](#)!



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- **Thank you to everyone for attending, sponsoring, or supporting our dam removal training!** We had over 120 registrants and had an eventful and informative day! Check out our list of helpful dam removal and ecological restoration resources [here](#) and stay tuned for more information about a potential Dam Removal Working Group forming.
- **Blackstone River Coalition (BRC):**
  - Sampling has now ended for 2023, and the data will be submitted to DEP/DEM. Updated data will appear on the [BRC website](#) in February 2024.
  - The BRC applied for a DEP grant which would pay for testing at 75 sites, bacteria testing, and purchasing hobo water level data loggers. This grant would allow the BRC to test more sites than they do now. Towns interested in joining the water quality testing program should contact Peter Coffin [peter.coffin@zaptheblackstone.org](mailto:peter.coffin@zaptheblackstone.org) or Heather Parry [heatherparry.wqm@gmail.com](mailto:heatherparry.wqm@gmail.com).
- **Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS):**
  - NRCS has just completed a Preliminary Investigation Feasibility Report (PIFR) which focused on flood prevention in Central Falls and Pawtucket. The PIFR is a requirement to do a cursory investigation to check the viability of moving forward with the Planning Phase. They are currently in the process of requesting funds to perform an EA/EIS.
- **Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC):**
  - CMRPC is currently conducting a series of [public workshops to discuss the effects of climate pollution](#) and ways to reduce climate pollution in the Shrewsbury area of Worcester County, and they want to hear from you! They are hosting 6 community outreach events in the coming weeks. The next is in Shrewsbury on November 30<sup>th</sup> from 6:00-9:00pm. Register [here](#).
  - CMRPC is also looking for community liaisons for MVP 2.0 in the following communities: Uxbridge, Sutton, Northbridge, Douglas. See more details [here](#).

## Next meetings

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

December 15, 2023: TBD

January 19, 2024: TBD

February 16, 2024: TBD

## Legislative/Policy Updates:

- **Mass Rivers Alliance** testified in favor of The Outdoor Recreation Act in October. It would create a dedicated funding source for the state's newly created Office of Outdoor Recreation and allow that office to make grants to create or improve outdoor recreation opportunities, with priority given to projects that benefit underserved and Environmental Justice populations across the Commonwealth.

## Tools You Can Use! Tools and Resources

- Need help on a GIS project? Wishing you had a new map for your work? Let us know! We'd love to connect you to GIS resources. [Fill out this form to share your needs](#) and we'll brainstorm during the meeting to come up with some next steps.



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## Events:

- **November 18, 2023 - January 16, 2024**– [Citizen Planner Training Collaborative](#) Workshops for planning professionals and planning board members involved in municipal planning and land use in Massachusetts. Learn more about the training collaborative by visiting the CPTC website.
- **November 30, 2023** – [Regional Air Pollution Plan Public Workshops](#) – Come learn about air pollution reduction strategies at the Shrewsbury Public Library from 6:00-9:00pm.
- **December 5, 2023** – Watershed Collaboration Funding Workshop from [MassECAN](#). This is a zoom workshop on funding needs and opportunities for watershed collaboration. This will be a unique opportunity to bring together funders, collaborative leaders, and other group members to brainstorm and learn from each other. Register [here](#).
- **December 6, 2023** – [Dam Busters 101 Free Webinar #2 on Funding a Dam Removal Project](#) – Explore financing options by learning about potential federal, state, local, and even private funding sources.
- **December 12, 2023** – [The Future of Transportation in 495/ Metro West Annual Conference](#). 8:30-10:30am in Framingham, MA.
- **January 11-13, 2024** – DEP is sponsoring a free workshop with the founder of community-based social marketing (CBSM), Dr. Doug McKenzie-Mohr over three sessions from 10am-2pm on January 11, 12, & 13. This training provides a comprehensive introduction to CBSM and how it is being applied throughout the world to foster behaviors that protect the environment. Please register if you're able to attend all three sessions, as spots will fill quickly. For more info, contact [Judith.rondeau@mass.gov](mailto:Judith.rondeau@mass.gov) or register [here](#).
- **January 24, 2024** – [Massachusetts Environmental and Energy Agenda for 2024 and Beyond](#) – Come hear Rebecca Tepper, Secretary of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA), speak about her priorities for 2024 that reflect those issues that are important to the strategic environmental, energy and climate goals of the Healey administration
- **March 2, 2024** – [MACC Annual Environmental Conference 2024](#) – Save the date for this fabulous spring conference at The College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, MA. They are currently seeking wetland and climate related workshop proposals for this event.
- **May 13-16, 2024** – [River Rally](#) in Grand Rapids, MI. This event combats feelings of isolation, overwhelm, and burnout for network members working at the intersection of water and justice by building knowledge and skills, diversifying perspectives and solutions, recognizing achievements within the network, and strengthening connections.
- **May 14-16, 2024** – [National Adaptation Forum](#) in Saint Paul, MN. This event is a bi-annual convening for adaptation professionals to innovate, network, and focus on established and emerging climate adaptation issues of the day.
- **October 6-10, 2024** – [Restore America's Estuaries Conference](#) in Washington, DC. This is the premier event for policy makers, practitioners, and managers in the United States to explore the latest research, policy, and practice in coastal restoration.

## Grants:

- **11/30/2023** – [USDA Landscape Scale Restoration Grants](#) funds collaborative, science-based restoration of priority rural forest landscapes, leverages public and private resources, and supports State Forest Action Plans. State agencies, federally recognized tribes, nonprofits, universities, and local governments may apply.



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- **12/7/2023** – [Coastal and Estuary Habitat Restoration Program and Trust Fund \(RI\)](#) seeks projects to restore or enhance ecological conditions that have been degraded by human impacts in coastal or estuarine habitats such as coastal wetlands, submerged aquatic vegetation beds, shellfish beds, vegetated coastal upland and anadromous fish runs Pre-proposals are due by 4:00 p.m. on December 7, 2023.
- **12/15/2023** – [Climate Change Community Engagement Grants](#) – RIDEM is offering grants up to \$40,000 each for community groups to engage directly with the EC4, state agencies, and consultants working to prepare Rhode Island's 2025 Climate Action Strategy. The strategy will include multiple pathways and projects that will lead Rhode Island to a carbon-neutral future. To help us better develop and implement these programs and policies so that they reflect the goals and needs of the community, we are asking community groups to provide outreach, engagement, and facilitation support.
- **1/12/2024** – [US Forest Service - Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program](#) – This is a unique opportunity for communities to acquire and conserve forests that provide public access and recreational opportunities, protect vital water supplies and wildlife habitat, serve as demonstration sites for private forest landowners, and provide economic benefits from timber and non-timber products.
- **1/26/2024** – [RI Section 319](#) – This is a grant to assist in the implementation of projects that prevent and/or abate water pollution associated with nonpoint sources (NPS) and to improve or restore aquatic habitat.
- **2/1/2024** – [MassTrails](#) provides grants to support recreational trail and shared use pathway projects across the Commonwealth. The award amount ranges from \$60,000 for “local” projects and up to \$500,000 for projects demonstrating critical network connections of regional or statewide significance. Eligible activities include project development, design, engineering, permitting, construction, and maintenance of recreational trails, shared-use pathways, and the amenities that support trails. Contact Sam Carter at [scarter@cmrpc.org](mailto:scarter@cmrpc.org) for more information.
- **2/21/2024** – [The Microprojects Program](#) is the Central Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization (CMMPO) funding program for first and last-mile solutions, workforce transportation, and other small, non-traditional transportation projects, like bicycle racks, bicycle storage, and bike sharing capital expenses (not operations), and wayfinding for bicyclists and pedestrians. The CMMPO allocated \$400,000 per year to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the Microprojects Program and it is funded with federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds. For more information contact Yahaira Graxirena, Transportation Project Manager: [ygraxirena@cmrpc.org](mailto:ygraxirena@cmrpc.org)
- **Rolling through 4/4/2024** – [MassCEC's EmPower Massachusetts](#) offers multiple stages of investment in communities and community-based organizations so that they can explore, develop, and implement program models or projects that provide access to the benefits of clean energy for previously underserved populations. This MassCEC program crowd-sources new and innovative ideas, then helps put them into action.
- **Rolling As Available** – [AMC Waters and Rivers Protection Fund](#) – Receive up to \$10,000 to fund a project that supports the protection and understanding of our region's water resources, including but not limited to the development of recreational opportunities, research on, and protection of riparian environments, and advocacy to protect clean water and recreational access. Contact [markrallio@gmail.com](mailto:markrallio@gmail.com) for more information.
- **Rolling As Available** – [MA Department of Fish and Game's In-Lieu Fee Program](#) – This program funds land conservation or aquatic resource restoration projects (all of Blackstone in MA is eligible). Municipalities, nongovernmental organizations, and state agencies are eligible to apply. Contact Aisling O'Shea at [aisling.oshea@mass.gov](mailto:aisling.oshea@mass.gov) for more info or to apply. Materials are also available on COMMBUYS under BD-231046-COM-COM4-77929.



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## Job Opportunities:

- Narragansett Bay Estuary Program – [Executive Director](#)
- Taunton River Watershed Alliance – [Communications Specialist Intern](#)
- CMRPC – [MPV 2.0 Community Liaisons for Uxbridge, Douglas, Sutton, and Northbridge](#)
- City of Somerville – [Sustainability and Resiliency Planner](#)
- The Blackstone River Watershed Association – [Blackstone River Water Quality Monitoring Midreach Team Field Coordinator](#)
- Environmental Policy Innovation Center – [Restoration Permitting Policy Lead](#)
- Friends of the Blue Hills – [Executive Director](#)
- Housatonic Valley Association – [Berkshire Watershed Director](#)
- MA EEA – [Assistant Director of Water Policy](#)
- Northeast Organic Farming Association Massachusetts Chapter – [Policy Director](#)
- University of Maine Cooperative Extension – [Assistant Extension Professor of Horticulture and Ornamental Horticulture Specialist](#)
- Water Supply Citizens Advisory Committee – [Executive Director](#)
- New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill – [Community Education Coordinator](#)
- Climate Resilient Communities – [Urban Forestry Director](#)
- Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council – [Resilience Hub Manager](#)
- Department of Fish and Game – [Communications Director](#)
- Groundwork Lawrence –
  - [Development Manager](#)
  - [Urban Agriculture Manager](#)
- Kim Ludgren Associates Inc. – [Director of Climate Solutions](#)
- OARS – [Executive Director](#)
- Sustainable Solutions Lab at UMass Boston – [Executive Director](#)
- SRPEDD – [Principal Environmental Planner](#)
- CivicWell – [Climate Change and Energy Program Director](#)
- MVP – [Regional Coordinator position in the Berkshires and Hilltowns region,](#)
- UMass Extension – [Climate Program Assistant](#)
- The Nature Conservancy – [Northern Appalachians Freshwater Conservation Manager](#)
- City of Worcester – [Upper Blackstone Clean Water Wastewater Operator](#)
- City of Woonsocket – [City Planner](#)
- State of RI – [Chief Resilience Officer](#)
- Conservation Law Foundation – [Fall/Winter/Spring Intern - MA](#)
- Mass Audubon – [Field Teacher at Broad Meadow Brook](#)