



# Blackstone Watershed Collaborative Meeting Notes

December 15, 2023, 10am-12pm

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

## Attendees:

Sarah Bertrand, Phyllis Charpentier, Nick Cohen, Kevin Mendik, Ted Beauvais, Adam Menard, Caleigh McLaren, Risa Shimoda, Eleah Caseau, Greg Doerschler, Joann Lindenmayer, Bill Napolitano, Angel Valenzuela, Michael Wilkinson, Kristopher Houle, John Marsland, Rebecca Quinones, Howard J. Erlichman, Nadia Madden, Allison Hamel, Amanda Coffuire, Allison Perlman, Regine Spector, Danielle Perry, Arthur Plitt, Judy Rondeau, Kevin Rice, Stefanie Covino, Donna Williams

## Recording Available:

<https://clarku.hosted.panopto.com/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=19ed188d-c2ff-438b-8960-b0d9011c387c&start=0>

## Presentations:

[Angel Valenzuela](#), National Park Service Hydropower Assistance Program (HAP) Fellow, [Risa Shimoda](#), Executive Director of the River Mangement Society, with [Kevin Mendik](#) from National Park Service, providing an overview of the Hydropower Toolkit.

- View the Toolkit [here](#)
- Six core competencies to help new and seasoned hydropower practitioners go through the process, including: Licensing, Regulations, Facility Types, Collaboration & Negotiation, Natural/Recreational/Cultural Resources, & Environmental Justice and Equity
- Includes background, resources, and case studies
- Will be adding more resources and integration with the Hydropower Reform Coalition resource library and website
- [Uncommon Dialogue](#)

## Subgroup Updates:

- Water quality
  - Check out the “Dam Busters” webinar series on dam removal. Register for the webinars (the next is 1/10/24 on community engagement) and view the recorded webinar from November [here](#).
  - Last summer, a group of Holy Cross Students researched the impact of road salts in our region. Watch the video all about their research, called “How Road Salt Affects the Blackstone”, [here!](#)



How Road Salt Affects The Blackstone: Holy Cross Summer Research 2023

- In Rhode Island, the Plastic Waste Reduction Act Regulations will go into effect in the New Year. The law bans retail establishments from providing single-use plastic bags to customers at the point of sale.

## Partner Updates:

# Blackstone Watershed Collaborative Meeting Notes

December 15, 2023, 10am-12pm

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

- **Executive Office of Economic Development:** MA is developing a guide for cities and towns to take impactful zoning, administrative, and other local actions to reduce flood risk and promote flood-resilient construction. Please take the survey to provide your (anonymous!) feedback, ideas, and suggestions [here](#).
- **Municipal Vulnerability Program:** The MVP Program released the [ResilientMass Plan](#) in October, a Statewide Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Plan. In total, the ResilientMass Plan details 142 actions across state agencies that are tracked publicly at [Resilient.Mass.Gov](#). Key actions include establishing an Office of Climate Science, making the state building code more resilient, and updating MBTA design standards.
- **The Northeast Seed Network** wants to hear from you! They are working to increase the accessibility of genetically appropriate, source-identified seeds and plants for the ecoregions of the U.S. Northeast and North-Mid Atlantic states. They are hoping to better understand the needs and desires of native seed and plant material buyers in order to improve the availability of desired species and reduce shortages. If you purchase or use native seed and plant materials in your work, please take this [survey](#).
- **TURNAROUND Films**, a local studio documenting innovative solutions to our changing environment, recently released a new film called "[On the Road with Salt](#)" that explores how the town of Franklin balances using salt to keep roads safe from ice in the winter and providing clean, salt-free drinking water to the residents. This short 8-minute film introduces the environmental and health impacts of road salts during the winter and the technological, policy, and communal efforts to reduce the amount of salt entering our waterways as winter ice and snow melt.
- **Blackstone River Watershed Association:** In October, the BRWA Education Team offered a program called Bugs of the Blackstone at Sutton High School for AP Environmental Science students to be introduced to aquatic macroinvertebrates. They showed leaf pack samples from three different cold-water fisheries in Grafton and Sutton.



- **Project Opportunity:** Recreating the "Ghost Rivers" work in the Blackstone! Baltimore has created an art installation and website to showcase buried streams in their city called "Ghost Rivers." There is a great opportunity to do something similar in the Blackstone! This project would be an interesting intersection of public art, local history, and environmental stewardship. Explore Ghost Rivers [here](#)!
- **MassDEP:** The RFP for two [nonpoint source pollution](#) grants will be released in mid-February. There is a pre-RFP meeting on 1/24/24. Contact Judy Rondeau for more information: [Judith.Rondeau@mass.gov](mailto:Judith.Rondeau@mass.gov)
- **Blackstone River Coalition:** Heather Parry is updating the BRC's QAPP. DEP has an app that makes it easier, which is currently in the review process. Interested in participating? Contact Heather: [heatherparry.wqm@gmail.com](mailto:heatherparry.wqm@gmail.com)
- **Friends of the Blackstone:** The Spring Migration Parade will be on 5/19/24 from 1:00-4:00pm at Slater Mill, hosted by the Narragansett Indian Tribe and the Hassanamisco Band of Nipmuc. Learn more at



# Blackstone Watershed Collaborative Meeting Notes

December 15, 2023, 10am-12pm

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

[blackstonecollaborative.org/kittacuck](https://blackstonecollaborative.org/kittacuck) or contact us if you want to help plan! We're trying to make this a very interactive event.

- RI Dept. Of Health has stated that fish are safe to eat from the Blackstone River in RI except organs or fish that are bottom dwellers such as catfish. Advocates are skeptical of sharing this advisory in a public education campaign due to the need to provide specific information and not just "fish are safe to eat." We feel that more study and clarification is needed and want to also speak to MA. In the meantime, we advise folks to remain cautious if consuming fish from the river. We will work to organize a conversation with MA & RI Dept of Health to learn more on this topic and share at a future date.

## Next meetings

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

**January 19, 2024:** Heidi Ricci - Director of Policy, Mass Audubon

**February 16, 2024:** TBD

**March 15, 2024:** TBD

Speaker topics we're working to organize for you include... (let us know what others you want to hear about!)

- CSO on the Blackstone
- Fish consumption from the river

## Legislative/Policy Updates:

- **The RI Infrastructure Bank** launched \$5.5 million Municipal Matching Funds Pool through the Municipal Infrastructure Grant Program in November. This program will make grants of up to \$1 million to provide municipalities with matching funds required to unlock federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding for eligible infrastructure projects. Additionally, the Infrastructure Bank received more than \$52 Million in municipal resilience program action grant applications.

## Tools You Can Use! Tools and Resources

- EOED Flood Risk Resources: The Executive Office of Economic Development is sharing the [slides](#) used in their Inland Engagement Sessions and a [list of potential actions to reduce flood risk](#) in MA. To learn more about these resources, visit the [project webpage](#).
- [From the Ground Up](#): This new quarterly publication from Wildlands, Woodlands, Farmlands & Communities was created with the goal of making you think in more holistic and healing ways about the complex climate, biodiversity, and human welfare challenges facing New England—and all who make their homes here.
- [USFWS Coastal Program Urban Habitat Conservation Report](#): By using principles reflected in the Service's Standards of Excellence, the USFWS collaboratively designed and implemented landscape-scale habitat conservation that delivers a wide range of benefits to fish, wildlife, and people. Furthermore, by working with urban communities, we connect people to nature and foster a sense of stewardship, which is critical to the success and future of habitat conservation.
- The [Fifth National Climate Assessment](#) (NCA5) is out! This report is the US Government's preeminent report on climate change impacts, risks, and responses. It is a congressionally mandated interagency effort that provides the scientific foundation to support informed decision-making across the United States. Importantly, they also



# Blackstone Watershed Collaborative Meeting Notes

December 15, 2023, 10am-12pm

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

have a section on how important collaboration is to addressing climate change, and the importance of center equity in that work. [Check out that chapter here.](#)

- [NCA5 Webinars](#): Come learn about the NCA5 findings of a particular chapter from the authors themselves through this series of 1-hour webinars.
- [Bioretention Design Handbook](#): The Bioretention Design Handbook (the handbook) compiles the current state of knowledge from a combination of literature, interviews, and site visits with leading municipalities and practitioners across the United States to document approaches for bioretention design, construction, inspection, and operation and maintenance.
- [What Does Collaborative Capacity Make Possible](#): This is a new white paper that explores the prevailing perspectives on the relationship between collaborative capacity and landscape outcomes.

## Events:

- **January 4, 2024** – [CMRPC's CPTC Webinar Series: Planning with Community Support](#) – This course describes how to conduct a planning process, with an emphasis on a comprehensive or master plan that will ultimately have the support of the community. A variety of public participation strategies will be examined, including plan implementation processes. The course will cover how to design the community engagement process. It costs \$35 and begins at 6:00pm.
- **January 6, 2024** – [CMRPC's CPTC Webinar Series: Zoning and Overlay Districts](#) – This course illustrates the various types of overlay districts and explains how they differ from traditional zoning measures and describes the form and contents of an overlay district. Discussion will allow participants to explore the potential pros and cons of overlay vs. traditional zoning. This course costs \$35 and begins at 9:00am.
- **January 9, 2024** – [CMRPC's CPTC Webinar Series: Adopting and Revising Rules and Regulations of Boards](#) – This session will clarify which types of zoning, non-zoning and subdivision rules and regulations are mandatory and which are voluntary; describe what they can and cannot cover; and explain how they get adopted and amended. The regulatory framework for establishing fees and using consultants will also be discussed. It costs \$35 and begins at 6:00pm.
- **January 10, 2024** – [CMRPC Climate Pollution Reduction Grant Public Workshop: Southeast CMRPC Region](#) – This public workshop is set to discuss climate pollution reduction strategies for the Southeast CMRPC subregion (Millbury, Grafton, Upton, Sutton, Northbridge, Douglas, Uxbridge, Millville, Blackstone, Mendon, and Hopedale). The workshop will be at the Northbridge Town Hall from 6:00-8:00pm.
- **January 11, 2024** – [MassDOT Stormwater Handbook Update "Lunch and Learn": EBC Water Resources Webinar](#) – Join EBC for a "lunch and learn webinar" exploring the new guidance documents and tools recently released by the MassDOT Stormwater Unit, including MassDOT's Stormwater Design Guide (SDG), Water Quality Data Form (WQDF), and Stormwater Report Template. 12:00-1:15pm.
- **January 16, 2024** – [CMRPC's CPTC Webinar Series: Fair Housing Laws](#) – This module will describe how land use regulations have been (and continue to be) used to exclude groups from specific neighborhoods and properties and provide a detailed overview of federal and state laws intended to prevent discrimination and promote equity in housing. A special focus will be on the role of the municipality in enforcing a commitment to fair housing, and the potential consequences of not doing so. It costs \$35 and begins at 6:00pm.
- **January 17, 2024** – [EBC 6th Annual Briefing by the New England State Dam Safety Directors](#) – This event will again bring together the state dam safety directors from New England to provide updates from each of their respective states. This year the discussion will explore risk-based evaluations and how those changes are



# Blackstone Watershed Collaborative Meeting Notes

December 15, 2023, 10am-12pm

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

impacting the assessment process, financial decision-making process, and condition ratings, the permitting climate, and the increasing cost of dam repairs. This event is 9:00-12:00 and is \$30 for nonprofits to register.

- **January 18, 2024** – [CMRPC Climate Pollution Reduction Grant Public Workshop: City of Worcester](#) – This public workshop is set to discuss climate pollution reduction strategies for the Central CMRPC subregion (City of Worcester). The workshop will be at the Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) on the 3rd floor of the Rubin Campus Center Building.
- **January 19, 2024** – [NCA5 Webinar: Tribes and Indigenous Peoples](#) – Come learn about the NCA5 findings of a particular chapter from the authors themselves through this 1-hour webinar. 1:00-2:00pm.
- **January 25, 2024** – [EBC Webinar on new MS4 Regulations](#). Noon-1:30pm. \$30 for nonprofits.
- **January 31, 2024** – [What does Collaborative Capacity Make Possible? Webinar](#) – This webinar will detail a new white paper that explores prevailing perspectives on the relationship between collaborative capacity and landscape outcomes. View the full document [here](#).
- **February 12, 2024** – [NCA5 Webinar: Social Systems and Justice](#) – Come learn about the NCA5 findings of a particular chapter from the authors themselves through this 1-hour webinar. 1:00-2:00pm
- **February 15, 2024** – [NCA5 Webinar: Adaptation](#) – Come learn about the NCA5 findings of a particular chapter from the authors themselves through this 1-hour webinar. 2:00-3:00pm.
- **February 22, 2024** – [NCA5 Webinar: Northeast](#) – Come learn about the NCA5 findings of a particular chapter from the authors themselves through this 1-hour webinar. 3:00-4:00pm.
- **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.
- **March 15, 2024** – [NCA5 Webinar: Land Cover and Land Use Change](#) – Come learn about the NCA5 findings of a particular chapter from the authors themselves through this 1-hour webinar. 11:00am-12:00pm.
- **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:

- **12/31/2023** – [US Fish and Wildlife Fish Passage Program Bipartisan Infrastructure Law: Restoring River, Floodplain, and Coastal Connectivity and Resiliency](#) – This program aims to maintain or increase native fish populations to improve ecosystem resiliency and provide quality fishing experiences. This program funds a variety of project types including, but not limited to dam removals, culvert replacements, floodplain restoration and reconnection, dike breaches, and reconnection of tidal habitats.
- **1/8/2024** – [Flood Mitigation Assistance Grant](#) – The priorities for this program are to employ cost-effective measures to reduce or eliminate the long-term risk of flood damage to buildings, manufactured homes, and other structures insured under the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).





# Blackstone Watershed Collaborative Meeting Notes

December 15, 2023, 10am-12pm

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

- **1/11/2024** – [Massachusetts Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant](#) – This program will fund a portion of the project cost for the acquisition, development, and renovation of parks, trails, and conservation areas. For more information contact Ian McElwee at [imcelwee@cmrpc.org](mailto:imcelwee@cmrpc.org).
- **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.
- **1/13/2024** – [Northeast Organic Farming Association Winter Conference](#) – Conference topics include Cordyceps Cultivation, Cornell Botanic Gardens' Native Lawn, Effects of Growing Vegetables in Perennial Clover Cover, Farmer Movement + Wellness, and Varieties for Organic Success. This conference will take place at Worcester State University from 8:00am-6:00pm.
- **1/18/2024** – [RIDEM's Urban and Community Forestry Program](#) – DEM, in partnership with the Green Infrastructure Center (GIC), is offering technical expertise and support for eligible Rhode Island municipalities to launch new urban forestry programs or to enhance their existing programs. This comprehensive program includes support for tree canopy mapping, planning, management, planting, code and ordinance development, master plans, policy development, and community engagement and education.
- **1/18/2024** – [North American Partnership for Environmental Community Action \(NAPECA\)](#) - grant program seeking proposals from organizations supporting environmental initiatives that will involve and empower Indigenous Peoples and communities and enhance climate adaptation by respectfully applying and protecting Indigenous knowledge systems.
- **1/18/2024** – [Culvert Replacement Municipal Assistance Pre-RFR Project Inquiry Call](#) – MA DER is encouraging potential applicants to schedule a Project Inquiry call with DER staff during the pre-Request for Responses (RFR) period to discuss project eligibility. This grant will replace undersized, perched, and/or degraded culverts located in areas of high ecological value. To schedule a Project Inquiry call, potential applicants are asked to provide basic project information in advance so DER staff can be prepared to discuss the project. This process is optional but recommended!
- **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.
- **1/26/2024** – [National Estuary Program Watershed Grant Program](#) – This nationally competitive grant program is designed to support projects that address urgent, emerging, and challenging issues threatening the well-being of estuaries within the 28 NEP boundary areas. There is a two-step application process. 1) LOI is due 1/26/2024. 2) full proposals (by invitation only) are due 4/5/2024. Awards will range from \$200,000-500,000 and will be completed within a four-year period.
- **1/31/2024** – [Small Communities - Big Challenges \(SCBC\)](#) – This nationwide EPA grant is for local governments to demonstrate innovative and inclusive strategies for engaging with rural communities to understand these communities' environmental public health issues of concern.
- **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.



# Blackstone Watershed Collaborative Meeting Notes

December 15, 2023, 10am-12pm

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

- **2/2/2024** – [Narragansett Bay and Water Restoration Fund \(BWRF\) Grants](#) – DEM is seeking proposals for projects to improve water quality, build capacity for stormwater management, and restore aquatic habitats, including the control of aquatic invasive plants through its Narragansett Bay and Watersheds Restoration Fund. A total of \$3 million in funding will be available.
- **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)
- **2/29/2024** – [US Forest Service - Supporting Underserved and Small-Acreage Forest Landowner Participation](#) – This funding supports the participation of underserved or small-acreage forest landowners in emerging private markets for climate mitigation or forest resilience. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis starting 12/1/2023.
- **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** – [Mass DCR Land Conservation Networking Mini Grant](#) The ideal proposal will bring together people from a shared geography to build or strengthen relationships in service of community conservation. Proposals can focus on a single community or multiple communities. The scale and size of the proposed networking should be meaningful to the applicant and intended participants
- **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.

## Job Opportunities:

- Taunton River Watershed Alliance – [Communications Internship](#)
- Sierra Club's Massachusetts Chapter – [Chapter Director](#)
- MA Division of Wetlands and Waterways –
  - [Regional Planner IV](#)
  - [Program Coordinator III](#)
- American Farmland Trust –
  - [Conservation Implementation Specialist](#)
  - [Climate and Water Solutions Implementation Specialist](#)
  - [Climate and Energy Solutions Implementation Specialist](#)
  - [Climate and Carbon Solutions Implementation Specialist](#)
  - [Farmland Easement Support Specialist](#)
  - [Senior Conservation Technical Specialist](#)



# Blackstone Watershed Collaborative Meeting Notes

December 15, 2023, 10am-12pm

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

- City of Worcester – [Assistant Conservation Agent](#)
- MA DER – [Restoration Partnership Coordinator](#)
- MA DER – [Operations Coordinator](#)
- MA DER – [Finance Manager](#)
- Narragansett Bay Estuary Program – [Executive Director](#)
- River Network – [Climate Resilient Communities Urban Forestry Director](#)
- Greenbelt – [Development Manager](#)
- Restore Americans Estuaries – [Associate, Programs](#)
- Environment Council of Rhode Island – [Administrator](#)
- City of Somerville – [Sustainability and Resiliency Planner](#)
- The Blackstone River Watershed Association – [Blackstone River Water Quality Monitoring Midreach Team Field Coordinator](#)
- Friends of the Blue Hills – [Executive Director](#)
- Housatonic Valley Association –
  - [Berkshire Watershed Director](#)
  - [Wild and Scenic River Program Coordinator/Conservation Manager](#)
- 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](#)
- Climate Resilient Communities – [Urban Forestry Director](#)
- Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council – [Resilience Hub Manager](#)
- Groundwork Lawrence –
  - [Workforce Development Program Manager](#)
  - [Pa'Lante Resident Task Force \(Contractor Position\)](#)
- Kim Ludgren Associates Inc. – [Director of Climate Solutions](#)
- OARS – [Executive Director](#)
- MVP – [Regional Coordinator, Berkshires,](#)
- City of Worcester – [Upper Blackstone Clean Water Wastewater Operator](#)
- City of Woonsocket – [City Planner](#)
- Conservation Law Foundation – [Fall/Winter/Spring Intern - MA](#)
- Mass Audubon – [Field Teacher at Broad Meadow Brook](#)