

# 2011 Annual Report and Newsletter

## Blackstone Parks Conservancy

Healthy Urban Green Space For All

### **Annual Meeting and Social at India Restaurant on March 28, 2012**

Please join us for socializing & complimentary appetizers, followed by concise summaries of the Conservancy's accomplishments in 2011. Our board members are eager to meet you and hear your ideas.

Two speakers will give short talks on local happenings. City Forester Doug Still will discuss challenges to our trees. Tom Brueckner, Chief Engineer at the Narragansett Bay Commission, will update us on neighborhood sewer projects.

The details: Wednesday, March 28 at India, 1060 Hope St (across from Lippitt Park). Refreshments start at 5:30, presentations at 6:00. Questions? Contact us at [blackstoneparksconservancy.org](http://blackstoneparksconservancy.org)

### **From the President**

February, 2012

Dear Members and Friends,

We have come a long way since our founding as the Friends of Blackstone Park and Boulevard a dozen years ago. In 2007 we became a membership organization and took our present name. Today we are a much larger group with pretty much the same mission, working with the Parks Department to care for the Boulevard and Blackstone Park Conservation District, but with a broader perspective and different challenges.

In 2011 we wrapped up a number of large projects, including pruning the entire Boulevard and installing sponsored benches in the Boulevard. (Tree sponsorships are still available.) Many volunteer hours went into ongoing efforts to improve our parks. We began creating a comprehensive plan to address long-term issues of erosion, invasive species management, and stormwater runoff. We also started to connect with other conservation groups in Providence and the Blackstone River Corridor. We expanded our outreach with an amateur photo show (with the Friends of Blackstone Woods and Narragansett Boat Club), summer concerts, and a website upgrade.

This year we continue to increase awareness and appreciation of the parks, by creating new signs for visitors to the Boulevard and the Conservation District. We will continue to build connections to other environmental groups and to work on long-term solutions to the larger issues facing our parks.

On a different note, we have settled on early springtime for our annual meeting in order to assemble close to the end of the previous fiscal year, and report on our activities in a timely fashion. We also look forward to being able to discuss ideas for the present year before the growing season.

If you have not yet shared your email address with us, please consider doing so. We value your support for "green" practices and keeping mailing costs down and will not give out your address or send many emails. At [blackstoneparksconservancy.org](http://blackstoneparksconservancy.org) you can also send membership dues or other donations, receive an emailed invitation to the annual meeting, and find out about volunteer events. We can also be reached at PO Box 603141, Providence, RI 02906.

Thank you for your support: we would not exist without the donations, initiative, and creativity of our loyal members. Please join us in pursuing our vision – healthy urban green space for all!

Sincerely,

Jane A. Peterson, President



## The Blackstone Parks Conservancy is dedicated to the preservation and stewardship of historic Blackstone Park Conservation District and Blackstone Boulevard.

### 2011 Projects and Progress

**Forest Health Works Project** In the Conservation District, qualified contractors removed invasive plants in a section along Angell Street. Native species will be planted on the site in late April, 2012. This project was sponsored by RI Natural History Survey and RI Dept of Environmental Management.

**Major Pruning on the Boulevard** Thanks to grants and individual donations, we finished this comprehensive pruning of Boulevard trees, the first in two decades. The improved health of the trees likely helped to minimize damage from Tropical Storm Irene in the fall.

**Trolley Shelter Concerts and Upgrades** We organized a series of 5 popular outdoor concerts with support from Butler Hospital, The Miriam Hospital, and Home and Hospice Care of RI. New on the scene this year were several food trucks purveying local treats. An historically appropriate iron gate in the trolley shelter, thanks to Swan Point Cemetery, improved safety at these events. And a new electricity supply at the site allowed the music to be amplified and forms the foundation for future lighting.

**Trail Work in Conservation District** The Conservancy, the Appalachian Mountain Club, the Parks Department and student volunteers from Providence College coordinated efforts and resources to repair eroded trails, adding fencing and defining trail edges. These efforts have already slowed erosion.

**Community Photo Show:** The Conservancy and Friends of Blackstone Woods organized an amateur photo show, "Through our Eyes: Woodland and Water." The show, held on a warm, clear June evening at the Narragansett Boat Club, featured photos of the Conservation District and the Seekonk River.

**York Pond Meadow Transformation** A cadre of volunteers worked throughout the growing season to remove invasive plants near York Pond, putting in more than 220 hours. They planted butterfly- and bird-friendly native plants thanks to an Earth Day grant.

**Boulevard Garden Improvements** At the northern tip of the Boulevard, gardeners added ground cover and decorative stones after removing overgrown shrubs that blocked visibility. At the "little shelter" near Brookway, contributions enabled us to arrange for extensive weed removal and soil work, followed by placement of native mountain laurel and other plantings. Five benches were added along the Boulevard. Stone work was finished in front of the Witherby statue. All along the Boulevard, several dedicated volunteers picked up trash almost daily to keep the whole park looking great.

**Website Re-launch and Green Communication** Our website was re-launched in the spring with updated information on the Conservancy, our projects, local history, invasive plant species, and more. We added links, including local birding and invasive plant species sites. The blog feature, which is linked to a Facebook page and Twitter account, provides a platform for time-sensitive event postings, calls for volunteers, and articles of community interest.

# BLACKSTONE PARKS CONSERVANCY

P.O. Box 603141, Providence RI 02906

## Annual Financial Report, FY 2011

**Beginning Balance All Funds, January 1, 2011** **\$55,976.41**

### Income

Contributions	58,433.85	
Membership	23,141.85	
Concerts, miscellaneous	23,115.00	
Benches	12,177.00	
Grants	10,651.16	
Eastside Marketplace Friendship Fund	903.00	
<b><i>Total Income</i></b>		<b>\$69,988.01</b>

### Expenses

Administrative	(10,079.86)	
Contract work	(4,072.20)	
Copying, postage, signage	(5,192.00)	
Licenses, training	(185.00)	
Events, gifts	(630.66)	
Park, Improvements	(5,579.25)	
Boulevard	(24,827.92)	
Maintenance	(6,102.18)	
Pruning	(5,000.00)	
Trees, plantings	(2,370.09)	
Equipment storage	(355.65)	
Benches	(11,000.00)	
Concerts	(7,207.02)	
Trolley Shelter garden	(7,228.10)	
Miscellaneous 2010 expenses	(2,504.19)	
<b><i>Total Expenses</i></b>		<b>(\$57,426.34)</b>

***Net Income*** **\$12,561.67**

**Ending Balance All Funds, December 31, 2011** **\$68,538.08**

## **Blackstone Parks Conservancy Officers and Trustees 2012**

Jane A. Peterson – President  
Paul Lietar – Vice-President  
Deming Sherman – Treasurer  
Carrie Drake – Secretary  
Gale Aronson  
Margaret Brookner  
Anna Browder

Jonathan Ford  
Anthony Hollingshead  
Shirley Kezirian  
Robert Murphy  
Kimberly Nelson  
Ken Orenstein

### **Many Thanks!**

Thank you to the many individuals who supported us in 2011 with your financial help and volunteer hours. We especially thank “super-volunteers” Mary Dennis, Donald Cordner, and Susan Olson.

Thank you to the following organizations for volunteer hours or gifts:

Swan Point Cemetery  
Butler Hospital  
The Miriam Hospital  
Home and Hospice Care of Rhode Island  
East Side Marketplace  
Appalachian Mountain Club  
City Year  
Temple Beth-El  
Zoo Camp on the Move  
Lincoln School  
Providence College

Thank you to our advisors and partners:

James Barnes and Hope Leeson at RI Natural History Survey  
Superintendent Robert McMahon of the Providence Parks Dept.  
Joel Boodon of the Providence Parks Dept.  
City Forester Douglas Still  
Alex Knott, gardening expert  
Dell Sala, webmaster  
Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Rhody Native  
RI Department of Environmental Management  
Providence Department of Public Works  
Alicia Lehrer of the Woonasquatucket Watershed Council  
Appalachian Mountain Club  
Wenley Ferguson of Save the Bay  
Peter Coffin of the Blackstone River Coalition