



BLACKSTONE PARKS CONSERVANCY NEWS

Spring 2018

Spring Clean Up and More

Local students invested some serious sweat equity in May to strengthen the Blackstone Park woodland. Sixty-five kids, ranging from 6th to 12th grade, came to the center section from Lincoln School and the Wheeler School for back-to-back workdays. Their mission: to protect this popular section of the park from overuse and storm water damage.

Supervised by BPC volunteers and school staff, the students used shovels and wheelbarrows to move mountains of chips onto two bare sections of trail, thus encouraging rainwater to sink in where it falls instead of running off downhill. They also installed new timber steps and cleaned out water bars that guide water diagonally off the trails. Finally, to protect fragile plants, they fixed and installed fences and weeded. Volunteers and visitors alike were struck by both groups' good cheer and energy as they dedicated a long, productive morning to helping the park become healthier.

Although most people know this already, we can't say often enough that everyone can help sustain the Park by staying on the trails, by not throwing balls through the woods, and by spreading the word that the fences are there to protect young plants and especially fragile areas.



Upcoming Events:

Park Keeping:

June 6, 5:30-7pm. Meet at the kiosk at E. Orchard and Parkside Avenue for light work in the park.

Father's Day Jazz Concert:

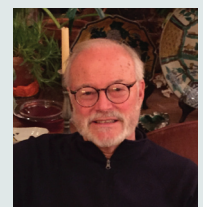
June 17, 2-3pm. Blackstone Field in front of Narragansett Boat Club.

Summer Concert Series on the Boulevard:

July 11, 25, August 8, 22, 6-7:30pm. Concerts in Nature by the Trolley Shelter.

Park Keeper of the Month: Rick Richards

Rick Richards is a long-time stalwart of our park and we are lucky to have him as head of our Education Committee. We have had countless events in our park due to his leadership since he joined the Conservancy's board 5 years ago. From Shakespeare in the park, to the River Rides, to Duck Walks and more: Rick has been behind the creation, coordination and implementation of these events along with the other Education Committee members. In addition, Rick is the first one to raise his hand to help in the park or to offer help getting other volunteers. We couldn't do all our incredible work without people like Rick. Thank you Rick for all you do for the Conservancy!



Native and Invasive Plants In Historic Blackstone Parks

Nearly everywhere you look in springtime, invasive plants like Asiatic bittersweet are on the march, eclipsing the native plants in their path. The Conservancy tries to manage invasives in order to give natives a fighting chance.

When native plants are outmaneuvered for sun and nutrients, the web of life of which they are part falters as well. Birds and other animals, insects, even fungi essential to soil health depend on the natives - the team players. Invasives can take over the game and become dominant but then succumb when adversity strikes - they have no backup.



Virtually all the plants you see behind fencing in Blackstone Park Conservation District are natives installed by environmental agencies and BPC volunteers. Ranging from viburnum and blueberry bushes to wild asters, they are well adapted to this woodland.

River Road

You may have noticed the work done down on River Road along Blackstone Field. This work has been done to accommodate demand for community and high school rowing programs at the Narragansett Boat Club. The Boat Club is expanding its outside boat storage area by moving the road ten feet west into Blackstone Park. NBC and the Blackstone Parks Conservancy are collaborating to make this area work better for everyone involved.

The benefits of this work are:

- State of the art storm draining filtration system (tree pits)
- 25 % reduction of pavement
- Improved traffic safety
- Five new red maples to replace three trees

This work has been funded by NBC members; approved by the City of Providence and the Coastal Resources Management Council.

BPC Grants for Outdoor Educators

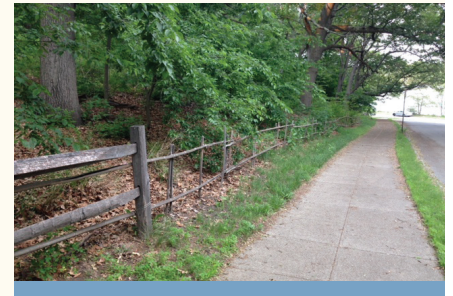
The Blackstone Parks Conservancy is offering up to six \$100 grants for educators to conduct an hour and a half program of their design in Blackstone Park. In addition to this stipend, up to one hundred dollars is available for supplies. BPC will supply volunteers to support activities and provide publicity.

The Park provides a diverse environment of woods, ponds, meadowland, and shoreline. In addition, there is an activity circle within the woods, walking trails and a field. Interested educators are encouraged to visit the site to learn about its possibilities.

This grant is open to educators of all sorts—artists, biologists, musicians and anyone else with a proposal for using the park to interact with a group of elementary aged children. If you are interested in pursuing this opportunity, please submit a 1 page proposal by June 15th to: blackstoneparks@gmail.com

Help us to finish our fence!

We need your help in order to finish a post-and-rail fence in an important area of our park that protects over 1,000 native plants.



Six years ago a severely degraded portion of Blackstone Park was cleared of invasive plants, then restored with over 1000 native plants and partially surrounded with a post-and-rail fence.

We need your help protecting this important project by finishing the missing part of the fence - a 225-foot-long section that will protect the restored area and enhance its beauty.

A generous donor has pledged to match each gift dollar for dollar until we reach our goal of \$1,800. Your donations will go directly to the completion of this fence and towards the protection of the native plants in this portion of the park. Every dollar will help. We need \$800 more to reach our goal!

DONATE TODAY (<https://www.gofundme.com/blackstone-park-fence-replacement/donate>)