



ANNUAL REPORT 2023

May 15, 2024

Dear Members and Friends,

Thanks to your essential support, 2023 was another fruitful year for the Blackstone Parks Conservancy. Together, and as always in partnership with the Parks Department, we made progress on present needs and planning for future resilience in the face of ever-increasing climate challenges. As detailed below in “Projects and Progress,” we undertook a wide range of activities reflecting our vision: Healthy Urban Green Space for All. A few themes stand out.

Public programming continued to grow. Not only are our events fun, they also build awareness and appreciation of the parks, strengthen community, and promote healthy time outdoors. As always, we are looking for new ideas for events – if you have suggestions, let us know!

Ecosystem and plant health remained a key focus. In addition to ongoing improvements in both parks, we sharpened our focus on the health of Boulevard trees. We contracted with an experienced person to keep track of watering and maintenance needs and put our tree inventory online. When this inventory is complete, we will be able to communicate seamlessly with the City about individual trees, and to easily update and track trees planted by the Conservancy.



Near-term and long-term management of stormwater impacts took on new urgency. Challenges to both parks are increasing dramatically as storms intensify, winters warm, and infrastructure ages. Last year we countered erosion with physical reinforcements and planting. We also worked with experts and the community to plan for the future of York Pond and its inputs, including improved stormwater management at the south end of Blackstone Boulevard.

None of this would be possible without you, the many members, volunteers, City officials and employees, and professionals who bring vitality to these parks. Thank you for being an important part of the Conservancy community.

Please join us for our annual meeting on Thursday, June 20, 2024 - and stay for the season’s first Trolley Shelter Concert!

Sincerely,

Carrie Drake, President

Projects and Progress in 2023

Blackstone Boulevard Park

- ◆ The popular Trolley Shelter summer concerts on the Boulevard returned with five shows by favorite artists and some newcomers. Hundreds enjoyed the music, with some adding in a picnic dinner or dancing in the closed street.
- ◆ In November, volunteers planted 700 daffodil bulbs in two lawn areas. This was the third daffodil planting project in as many years. To date, 2,300 daffodils have been planted in six spots along the Boulevard. We are grateful to Mike Isenberg for sparking and funding the projects.
- ◆ We expanded tree care: in early summer, over 30 small trees were flagged for special attention, including re-establishing tree pits with high-quality mulch that suppresses weeds and holds moisture. The Parks Department removed several dead or damaged large trees, and oversaw cabling on one venerable tree to help keep it healthy.
- ◆ A summer Pickup Sticks volunteer event helped beautify the Boulevard and improve mowing safety. People walking on the path collected sticks and dropped them at designated spots for Parks Department crews to chop them into mulch.
- ◆ The south end of Blackstone Boulevard was the focus of a planning effort for improved stormwater management, safety and park aesthetics. An initial study helped increase our understanding of park users. Next, as part of a coalition of environmental organizations, and with support from City agencies and extensive community engagement, substantial progress was made toward a new design. This work received major funding from the Narragansett Bay Estuary Program.
- ◆ Contractors watered young trees for a relatively low total of \$1,480, due to a rainy summer. In the fall, contractors planted and cared for five new trees.
- ◆ *The Spirit of Youth* statue, near Clarendon Street, now has a new sheen. An expert contractor evaluated the statue's condition, then thoroughly cleaned, touched up a few rough spots, and rewaxed the bronze.
- ◆ A new seasonal Boulevard Monitor was hired to help inventory all the Boulevard's trees and monitor newer trees for watering and care issues.
- ◆ Volunteers cared for Boulevard gardens and picked up litter. A crew from Swan Point Cemetery pitched in at the Trolley Shelter garden.



Blackstone Park Conservation District

- ◆ The Education Committee organized nature-based events including a Moon Rise celebration, two RiverRides, guided shoreline walks, and birding. With 15 Minute Field trips, families explored educational activities and crafts throughout the year in the long-running monthly series “Art and Science in the Park.”
- ◆ The Education Committee produced 5 popular concerts featuring a wide range of musical styles, including Classical Indian, original compositions, and improvised electronic music. They were well attended by people of all ages.
- ◆ We commissioned an updated Forest Management Plan with a Certified Forester funded by the Natural Resources Conservation Service. By identifying threats to the forest and suggesting ways to improve forest health, the Plan helps us fine-tune ongoing efforts for managing invasive plants, erosion control, and replanting.
- ◆ Volunteers were instrumental in our efforts to improve ecosystem health, working hundreds of hours removing invasive plants, fixing trails, planting, clearing trash near the water, and more. We are deeply grateful for invaluable support from partners in the Parks Department and co-hosts at Save The Bay, and to all who came to scheduled drop-in park-keeping events, worked independently, or were part of groups from Congregation Beth-Shalom, Temple Beth-El, Dimeo Construction, Croft School, Lincoln School, Moses Brown School, and Wheeler School.
- ◆ We co-hosted an Earth Day cleanup/spruce-up with Councilwoman Helen Anthony. “Plawkers” collected trash from the riverbank and nearby woods, and a group from The Croft School converted a mountain of wood-chips into a new “floor” for the Children’s Circle. This was part of a citywide effort supported by the Parks Department and the Partnership for Providence Parks.
- ◆ To improve the visitor experience, we updated park maps and entrance signs.



BLACKSTONE PARKS CONSERVANCY

P.O. Box 603141, Providence, RI 02906

Annual Financial Report, FY 2023

Assets January 1, 2023	140,810
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Income

Membership Contributions	54,896
Memorial Trees	2,000
Grants	1,373
Interest	3,455
Other	353

<i>Total Income</i>	62,078
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Expenses

Administrative	(20,449)
Contract work	(13,508)
IT, printing, mail, signage	(6,699)
Events and gifts	(46)
Licenses	(196)
Blackstone Park Conservation District	(16,263)
Blackstone Boulevard	(20,784)
Boulevard Concert Series	(8,158)
Education	(8,256)
Miscellaneous	(1,306)

<i>Total Expenses</i>	(75,215)
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<i>Net Result</i>	-13,138
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Assets December 31, 2023	127,672
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Thank you

Our heartfelt gratitude goes to the many individuals and organizations who gave advice, grants, and time to the Blackstone Parks Conservancy in 2023. We are also deeply indebted to our many generous members, listed in subsequent pages.

April Alix
Robertico Arias
Gale Aronson
Councilwoman Helen Anthony
Audubon Society of RI
Julia Barton
Dan Berard
Boulevard Tree Sponsors
Lt. William Brown, Providence Police Dept
Brian Byrnes
Joseph Cavallaro
Paul Cavanaugh
Alison Chaltas
Citron Spa
Classical High Jazz and Rock Band
Lisa Conigliaro
Don Cordner *
The Croft School
Dimeo Construction Company
Harold Doran
Bryce Dubois
Peggy Edwards
Alexander Elton, City Forester
Wenley Ferguson
Greg Gerritt
Rabbi Emily Goldberg
Joe Grady
Melissa Guillet
Anthony Hollingshead
Horsley Witten Group
Michael Isenberg
Brian Johnson, BKJ Productions
Wendy Klein
The Lincoln School
Karen Longeteig*
Leo Major
Brad Marston
Helene Miller, Partnership for Prov. Parks
Miss Wensday
Moses Brown School
Narragansett Boat Club
Narragansett Bay Estuary Program
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Nickel Jukebox
Rabbi Preston Neimeiser
Wendy Nilsson, Supt. of Providence Parks
Park-Keepers
Joe Parillo
Partnership for Providence Parks
Providence Community Library Special Collections
Providence Dept. of Parks & Recreation
Providence Dept. of Public Works
Providence Dept. of Planning
Matthew Rahaim
Allan Raskin
Srinivas Reddy

Steve Ricci, Groundwork RI
Swan Point Cemetery
Christopher Riely, Sweetbitch Consulting
Amelia Rose, Groundwork RI
Save The Bay
Bob Segal
Congregation Beth Sholom
Skyscrapers Inc
Stone Cold Gypsies
Swan Point Cemetery
Doug Still, This Old Tree Consulting
Rick Taylor
Temple Beth-El
Peter Vilbig
Kate Wells
The Wheeler School
The Hon. Sam Zurier

*BPC Committee members



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Anthony Hollingshead
Jennifer McLean
Robert Murphy
Ken Orenstein
Jeff Williams

Members

We are very grateful to our members who contributed between January 1st and December 31st, 2023.

Lifetime Members, \$1,000 and above

Joseph A. Chazan
MEE Foundation
Mary P. Oenslager Foundation
Kevin and Amy Orth
Porter Braden Fund
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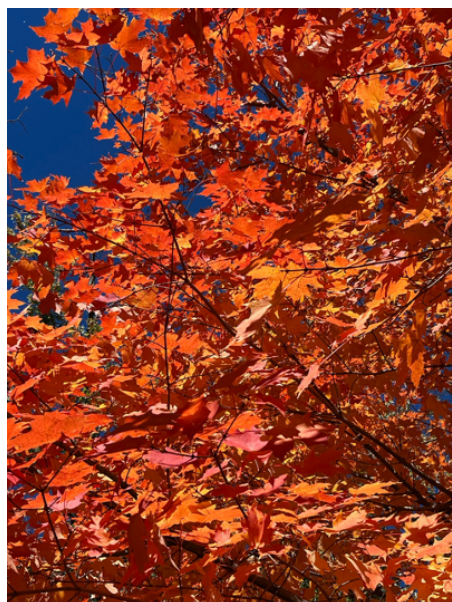
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Raether-Schoettle Charitable Fund
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