



# ANNUAL REPORT 2020

Dear Members, Supporters, and Friends,

Thank you for your support in 2020. We truly could not have done it without the Conservancy community's flexibility and resilience last year. A month after kicking off our event calendar with a February Winter Duck Walk, we found ourselves postponing the annual meeting and, eventually, many other events. When the parks re-opened May 1, we joined the citywide effort to adapt to new conditions, putting up pandemic-safety signs in both parks and urging people to be safe. Fortunately, we were able to host some socially distant events and to accomplish many of our goals, albeit in new ways.

As the seasons unfolded, more people than ever before found their way to Blackstone Boulevard and Blackstone Park to exercise, to enjoy a restorative moment in nature, to safely share time with others, or all three. We were gratified to hear many stories of appreciation from you for these green spaces. Increased use brought some challenges - wear and tear on paths, occasional crowding issues, a significant increase in trash and litter.

The Conservancy made progress on these and other challenges thanks to many dedicated volunteers, our partners in the Parks Department, and generous financial support from our donors. Highlights include finding ways to carry on with family-friendly programs, holding a record 17 park-keeping work events, moving forward on improvement plans for both parks with our partners in the Parks Department, and receiving generous grants from two families that helped us plan for larger Boulevard and Park projects in 2021. A more detailed update on our activities is found on the next page.

We are deeply grateful for your support and hope you continue to join us in protecting and caring for the parks.

With best wishes,

Carrie Drake  
President

Jane Peterson  
President Emerita

P.S. We are regretfully postponing our annual meeting until it's safer to gather. For now, we hope you enjoy discovering or re-discovering unique places in both parks: on page 4 you'll find a seasonal scavenger hunt with some ideas for getting started.

## Projects and Progress in 2020

### Blackstone Boulevard

- Contracted workers planted ten new trees, and mulched young trees and gardens.
- We hired GroundworkRI to water young trees, adding 8 extra waterings during the extreme drought.
- A committed volunteer revitalized the Boulevard's southernmost garden, adding native plants and watering by hand. The Witherby statue garden was spruced up and replanted.
- Dedicated volunteers picked up litter daily.
- Although Boulevard concerts were cancelled, musicians hired for the Boulevard concerts were partially paid to offset pandemic-related income loss.
- We helped the Parks Department with plans for fixing a section of the path.
- Energetic volunteers worked at 17 socially distanced Park-Keeping events, combating invasive plants and erosion.
- A group of neighbors joined us to plan for bluff-edge protection in the Park.
- Several committed individuals worked daily or weekly picking up litter, watering, clearing fallen trees, clearing invasive plants, or fixing trails.
- A local artist transformed erosion-control measures near Loring with her uplifting Haybale Project.
- Grant-funded contractors and volunteers seeded to improve habitat and stabilized a steep slope.
- We helped plan and execute outreach on the Parks Department's 2021 project to replace the snow fences, add informational signage, and further mitigate erosion.

### Blackstone Park Conservation District

- We hosted "Art and Exploration" family events, with new safety protocols, every month except March, April and May.
- With the Parks Department, a new mulch-mowing effort was launched along Loring Avenue, using chopped fallen leaves as natural soil enhancers.

# BLACKSTONE PARKS CONSERVANCY

P.O. Box 603141, Providence, RI 02906  
Annual Financial Report, FY 2020

**Assets January 1, 2020** **29,022**

## **Income**

Contributions		49,314
Membership	43,814	
Concerts	3,000	
Benches, trees, special projects	2,500	
Grants		26,212
Other		115

***Total Income*** **75,641**

## **Expenses**

Administrative		(13,730)
Contract work	(8,536)	
IT, printing, mail, signage	(4,384)	
Licenses	(810)	
Blackstone Park Conservation District		(9,861)
Blackstone Boulevard		(7,208)
Events		(1,426)
Miscellaneous		(525)

***Total Expenses*** **(32,749)**

***Net Result*** **42,892**

**Assets December 31, 2020** **71,914**



# BLACKSTONE PARKS SCAVENGER HUNT

- Watch a bird soar over the Seekonk River
- Find a carved mushroom along the Blackstone Boulevard path
- Follow the animal footprints along River Drive
- Take a seat at the Trolley Shelter
- Wave hello to The Spirit of Youth (the statue of a young girl) on the Blackstone Boulevard path
- Find the Haybale Art Project in the Park's north section
- Look for turtles in York Pond

## BONUS

- Find the brass Works Progress Administration plaque at the base of a hill

# Thank you

Our heartfelt gratitude goes to the many individuals who gave advice, grants, and time to the Blackstone Parks Conservancy in 2020. We are also deeply indebted to our many generous members, who are acknowledged by letter and online.

April Alix  
Gale Aronson  
Audubon Society of RI  
Dan Berard  
Ruth Berensen  
Boulevard Tree Sponsors  
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Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Senator Donna Nesselbush  
Wendy Nilsson, Supt. of Providence Parks  
Park-Keepers  
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Providence Dept. of Parks & Recreation  
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Steve Ricci, Groundwork Providence  
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RI Dept. of Environmental Management (DEM)  
RI Dept. of Public Works (DPW)  
RI Dept. of Transportation (DOT)  
RI Wild Plant Society  
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\*BPC Committee members

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