



# ANNUAL REPORT 2025

April 30, 2026

Dear Members and Friends,

Thank you for making 2025 another full and productive year for the Blackstone Parks Conservancy. With your help, and alongside our wonderful partners in the Parks Department, we worked to create vibrant natural spaces and meaningful community experiences, and to strengthen natural ecosystems that sustain healthy healthy plants and nurture wildlife. These goals are captured in the Conservancy's vision: **Healthy Urban Green Space for All.**



Here are three main accomplishments in 2025. You can find more details below in Progress & Projects.

- ✓ Our wide-ranging programs in both parks welcomed many familiar faces and newcomers. I hope you were able to join us for a concert, a nature-discovery walk in the woods, a new view from a boat, an up-close-and-personal tussle with invasive plants, or another outdoor event that connected you with nature.
- ✓ Ongoing projects continued to produce wonderful results. Some literally came to fruition - like the Parkside Road pollinator patch, which now hosts songbirds, bees, and butterflies while protecting the slope against erosion.
- ✓ New ideas sprouted. A couple of examples: the new "Boulevard Blockstars" volunteer team began refreshing Blackstone Boulevard Park, and a new online newsletter keeps us better connected.

Of course, we faced challenges as well. Aging stormwater infrastructure, a changing climate and new threats to plants added urgency to our work and created new needs. In response, we became more committed than ever to long-term planning and working even more closely with our City and community partners.

We also realized that we need more volunteers to keep up with growing challenges, and we started expanding our outreach efforts. Please contact us if you would like to pitch in with hands-on work or other matters!

I hope you benefitted from the Conservancy's activities this past year, and that 2026 brings you even more enjoyment of these beloved parks. Thank you for being part of this community. **Please join us at our Annual Meeting on June 17th, at the Trolley Shelter, to celebrate our two parks and what we have built together—and stay for the season's first concert!**

Sincerely,

Carrie Drake, President

# Projects and Progress in 2025

## Blackstone Boulevard Park

We hosted five Trolley Shelter Summer Concerts featuring an array of musical styles. These drew hundreds of attendees for evenings of music, picnicking and dancing. We thank Senator Sam Zurier for partial funding via a State Senate Legislative Grant.



We brought back our seasonal Boulevard Monitor to keep a watchful eye on trees and other plants and coordinate with the watering team.

Young tree watering was more important than ever. A summer drought plus regular young-tree needs required a record 22 waterings by the nonprofit Groundwork Rhode Island, costing over \$8000.

Building on last year, Groundwork Rhode Island provided special tree care to 80 young and/or vulnerable trees. The perimeters were weeded then covered with a layer of high-quality mulch to suppress weeds and hold moisture. Our Boulevard Monitor

checked on these trees through the growing season.

We contracted with the nonprofit Garden Time to prune older small trees that had structural issues. This significant work should improve their health as well as aesthetics.

Our five beeches were re-evaluated for beech leaf disease, and supplemental care was continued from 2024.

Volunteers stepped up!

- Many Boulevard walkers helped with the “Pickup Sticks” project, collecting fallen branches that the Parks Department removed for mulching. This helped beautify the Blvd and improved mowing safety.
- The new Boulevard Blockstars assessed volunteer-appropriate needs, removed invasive plants, cleared sightlines, and helped run three big group projects with Butler Hospital workers from the union SEIU1199NE. These projects accomplished renovation of the area outside the Butler Hospital entrance, removal of large overgrown shrubs, and preparation for a new pollinator garden.
- Individual volunteers and small teams cared for gardens and picked up litter.



Contractors planted six new donated trees honoring a loved one or a special event.

After much public engagement the Boulevard Gateway Project’s conceptual design was completed. This major redesign of the south end of Blackstone Boulevard will improve stormwater management, safety, and park aesthetics. It includes removing excess pavement, re-contouring soil to manage water flow, adding plantings and new crosswalks, and redesigning the road. It is supported with funds from the Narragansett Bay Estuary Program, Councilwoman Helen Anthony, the City of Providence, and the Southeastern New England Program. The next steps will be detailed engineering and permitting, and following essential 2026 work by the City on the underground stormwater system, moving ahead to bid and construction.

## Blackstone Park Conservation District

Nature-themed programming by the Education Committee featured year-round events, including the MoonRise celebration, RiverRides on the Seekonk, guided nature walks, and birding. With Nature on the Move, families explored educational activities and crafts in a popular long-running monthly series.

Concerts in Blackstone Field included Classical Indian music and mellow tunes for MoonRise.

Erosion control included volunteer projects to stabilize several trails and install straw bales along a sensitive bluff edge.

Ecosystem and habitat improvements included removing invasive plants, seeding cleared areas, and planting new trees and shrubs. In the biggest project, an additional 20 trees and shrubs were added to ravine reforestation begun in 2024. All plantings were monitored and maintained.

We successfully completed the second year of our three-year National Resources Conservation Service contract, to remove specific invasive plants and re-establish native woody plants.

Beech leaf disease remained a serious concern. We consulted with the Rhode Island Natural History Survey and forest experts about this new disease, which is widespread in the Park and has no known cure in a forest setting. In some areas with many stricken beeches, oak seedlings were planted and protected with temporary fences.

We co-hosted a massive shoreline cleanup with Save The Bay as part of the International Coastal Cleanup. Over 60 volunteers organized by Temple Beth-El collected 544 lbs of trash as part of a “reverse Tashlich” event.

Hands-on volunteers made all the difference!

- Group projects attracted 266 participants, who collectively worked over 700 hours. Events included 16 drop-in “Park-Keeping” work sessions and 9 team building/service days. In addition, individuals independently picked up litter or carried out approved projects.
- Many thanks to groups from Moses Brown School, Wheeler School, Stanford University’s “Beyond the Farm” program, Paterson Neighbors, Scout Troop #66; Temple Beth-El, Congregation Beth-Sholom, and University of RI Hillel.



## Outreach

A new [e-newsletter](#) launched mid-2025 brings current activities and issues to our members and friends, approximately monthly.

We co-hosted a [public lecture](#) in partnership with Audubon Society of Rhode Island. Dr. Charles Clarkson presented the dangers of pesticides, and discussed how East Side residents can have positive impacts on the important migratory bird corridor that runs along the Seekonk River.

[Outreach to newcomers](#) included staffing a community-group table at the Lippitt Park Farmer's Market in June and September.



# BLACKSTONE PARKS CONSERVANCY

P.O. Box 603141, Providence, RI 02906

## Annual Financial Report, FY 2025

**Assets January 1, 2025** **91,157**

### **Income**

Membership Contributions	57,670
Grants	6,707
Interest	1,874
Other	6,512

**Total Income** **72,763**

### **Expenses**

Administrative	(22,583)
Contract work	(15,436)
IT, printing, mail, signage	(6,190)
Events and gifts	(863)
Licenses	(94)
Blackstone Park Conservation District	(2,718)
Blackstone Boulevard Park	(25,090)
Boulevard Concert Series	(8,985)
Education	(6,301)
Miscellaneous	(545)

**Total Expenses** **(66,222)**

**Net Result** **6,541**

**Assets December 31, 2025** **97,698**

# Thank you

Our heartfelt gratitude goes to the many individuals and organizations who gave advice, grants, and time to the Blackstone Parks Conservancy in 2025. We are also deeply indebted to our many generous members, listed in subsequent pages.

Ajit Acharya  
SueAnderbois, City Council  
Helen Anthony, City Council  
Robertico Arias  
Audubon Society of RI  
Dan Berard  
Boulevard Blockstars  
Boulevard Tree Sponsors  
Lt. William Brown, Providence Police  
Butler Hospital workers SEIU1199NE  
Sharon Carpentier  
Joe Cavallaro  
Paul Cavanaugh  
Classical High School Jazz and Rock Band  
Congregation Beth Shalom  
Don Cordner \*  
Sam Daganhardt, City Forester  
Jill Davidson, City Council  
Harold Doran  
Peggy Edwards  
Michelle Farias  
Wenley Ferguson  
Greg Gerritt  
Rabbi Emily Goldberg  
John Goncalves, City Council  
Melissa Guillet, 15 Minute Field Trips  
Anthony Hollingshead  
Horsley Witten Group  
Brian Johnson, BKJ Productions  
Wendy Klein  
Kate Lacouture, Garden Time  
Petros Linardos  
The Lincoln School  
Karen Longeteig\*  
Sgt. Michael Martinous, Providence Police  
Matunuck Wind  
HeleneMiller, Partnership for Prov. Parks  
Miss Wensday's Vintage Jazz Band  
William Monahan  
Moses Brown School  
Narragansett Bay Estuary Program  
Narragansett Boat Club  
Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Rabbi Preston Neimeiser  
Nickel Jukebox  
WendyNilsson, Supt. of Providence Parks  
Park-Keepers  
Partnership for Providence Parks  
Paterson Street Neighbors  
Marjorie Powning  
Prov. Community Library Special Collections  
Providence Dept. of Parks & Recreation

Providence Dept. of Planning  
Providence Dept. of Public Works  
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Srinivas Reddy  
Steve Ricci, Groundwork RI  
Amelia Rose, Groundwork RI  
Save The Bay  
Scout Troop 66  
Bob Segal  
Skyscrapers Inc  
SNEP Network  
Stanford U "Back to the Farm" Program  
Stone Cold Gypsies  
Swan Point Cemetery  
Rick Taylor  
Temple Beth-El  
Temple Emanu-El  
Mike Turgeon and Quanata LLC  
URI, Hillel Center  
The Wheeler School  
Joseph Wojtanowski  
The Hon. Sam Zurier, RI Senate

\*BPC Committee members



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# Members

We are very grateful to our members who contributed between January 1<sup>st</sup> and December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2025.

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