



Dear Members and Friends,

Feb 5, 2014

In 2013 the Blackstone Parks Conservancy (BPC) moved to a new stage in our mission of looking after the Blackstone parks with the Providence Parks Dept. and pronounced the elegant Boulevard well and truly launched after years of restoration work. And in a move made possible by a \$67,320 matching recreational trails grant awarded by Rhode Island's departments of environmental management and transportation (DEM and DOT), we pivoted toward the somewhat disheveled 45-acre Blackstone Park Conservation District.

Twenty-thirteen was also the year that our new education committee organized its first events, some of which were so popular that a few children and parents had difficulty leaving when it was time to go home. So it seemed like perfect timing when the US Fish and Wildlife Service chose Providence as one of six American cities for the Urban Wildlife Refuge Initiative and Blackstone Park as a local partner in bringing children closer to nature.

The Boulevard will always need maintenance of its trees and gardens, many planted by the BPC, and the deteriorating center path needs costly attention yesterday. But basically, this "crown jewel" of Providence is set, annually celebrated by the popular free summer concerts organized by Gale Aronson.

The conservation district, on the other hand, with its feeling of nature untamed, is losing topsoil and native plant species despite valiant efforts by BPC volunteers making small-scale repairs over the years. The DEM-DOT grant and the Parks Department support will make it possible in 2014 to attempt a larger-scale rescue affecting about five acres in a short period of time, to get a lasting foothold on the fragile center section high above York Pond and the Seekonk River. Coastal woodland like this, blessed with ponds and land and water birds, is precious. In the face of habitat loss, helping people, plants, and wild animals co-exist in a more stable equilibrium matters.

This year the education committee is humming with a full calendar of events planned for children and families, some featuring music, and many creatively involving nature activities. Looking to blend education and fun, this group is planning projects such as bird banding and building bat houses with help from the new US Fish and Wildlife coordinator April Alix, who taught middle-school children in Blackstone Park for several years. The educators are thinking of how to use the park as a rich resource for families. Engaging children in the future of these treasured parks is key to ensuring that they survive and thrive.

With best wishes,

Jane Peterson, President

**Annual Meeting Tuesday, March 11, 2014, 6:00-7:30 pm, Gov. Lippitt House, 199 Hope St.**  
Refreshments 6:00, meeting 6:30-6:45, followed by speaker **Morgan Grefe**, executive director of the RI Historical Society. Parking available at Wheeler School.

# Projects and Progress in 2013

## Blackstone Boulevard

- Planted 8 trees purchased with donations and an America the Beautiful grant.
- Parks Dept. installed a new roof on the small shelter.
- Maintained 4 gardens along the length of the Boulevard, and cleaned up storm damage to trees with help from a State Senate Legislative Grant.
- Held 5 summer concerts at the Trolley Shelter that were enjoyed by hundreds of people. Butler Hospital continued to support the concerts.
- Paid Groundwork Providence to weed, water, and prune entire Boulevard.

## Blackstone Park Conservation District

- Received generous Dept. of Environmental Management and Dept. of Transportation grant to upgrade badly worn trails. Requires about \$17,000 in matching funds or their equivalent.
- The Education Committee organized events bringing dozens of visitors to the park, some for the first time. Families with young children built fairy houses, listened to storytellers, sang, and created keepsakes. All ages enjoyed trail walks and a boat ride.
- On Earth Day, the BPC and Friends of Blackstone Woods volunteers ran a trash cleanup, a trail walk, and craft-making, joining dozens of other park groups in a city-wide celebration and cleanup organized through Partnership for Providence Parks.
- Lined trails with logs on two trail days with Appalachian Mountain Club and Friends of Blackstone Woods. Upgraded trail maps and developed informational signs for installation in 2014.
- The two-year-old Forest Health Works Project for native plants continues to thrive on Angell Street in the care of dedicated volunteers.
- Our new Invasives Control subcommittee organized and trained volunteers in a series of productive work days in all sections of the park. Began mapping invasive plants.

## General

- Set in motion Moses Brown students' stormwater project on York Pond and watershed.
- Instituted standardized procedures and protocols for other groups working with BPC.
- Researched history of the Blackstone Parks.

# BLACKSTONE PARKS CONSERVANCY

P.O Box 603141, Providence, RI 02906

## Annual Financial Report FY 2013

<b><u>Beginning Balance all funds January 1, 2013</u></b>		<b>67,522</b>
	<b>Income</b>	
Contributions		28,099
Membership	22,099	
Concerts	6,000	
Grants		5,652
Eastside Marketplace Friendship Fund Receipts		736
<b><i>Total Income</i></b>		<b>34,487</b>
	<b>Expenses</b>	
Administrative		(12,279)
Contract work	(4,232)	
Copying, mail, signage , IT	(2,505)	
Training	(400)	
Events, gifts	(5,142)	
Park		(1,007)
Improvements	(646)	
Maintenance	(360)	
Boulevard		(10,300)
Maintenance	(7,042)	
Trees, plantings	(3,139)	
Equipment storage	(120)	
Trolley Shelter garden		(125)
Concerts		(6,212)
Education		(377)
Miscellaneous		(292)
<b><i>Total Expenses</i></b>		<b>(30,592)</b>
<b><i>Net Result</i></b>		<b>3,895</b>
<b><u>Ending Balance all funds December 31, 2013</u></b>		<b>71,418</b>

# Thank You

Our heartfelt gratitude goes to the many individuals and organizations who supported the Blackstone Parks in 2013. We would not exist without your advice, financial help, and volunteer hours.

## Thank you for volunteer hours or gifts:

Appalachian Mountain Club	Sarah Gleason	Perennial Planters
Gale Aronson*	Senator Gayle Goldin	Suzanne Renfro*
Anna Browder	Sally Godfrey	Elena Riverstone*
Ken Byrne	Hemma Hamburg	Holly Roberts
Butler Hospital	Ellen Jagolinzer*	Dell Sala
Citizen's Bank	Heidi Janes	Surface Matter Design
Don Cordner *	Claire Kelly	Swan Point Cemetery
Al Dahlberg, Jr.	Rich Lang	Temple Beth-El
Carol Delaney*	Left Brain LLC	Elisa Vele-Tabbador*
Mary Dennis	Lincoln School	Steven Vessella*
Nadine DiStefano	Michael McGlynn	Erik Wernevi
Eastside Marketplace	Senator Donna Nesselbush	Whole Foods Market
Peggy Edwards	Nancy Nowak	* Committee members
Martha Fraenkel*	Susan Olson*	

## Thank you to our advisors and partners:

April Alix, US Fish & Wildlife Urban Wildlife Refuge Initiative	Janis Nepshinsky, US Fish & Wildlife Urban Wildlife Refuge Initiative
Gregg Cassidy, Dept. Environmental Management	Wendy Nilsson, Partnership for Providence Parks
Sheila Dormody, Sustainability Director, Providence	Natural Resources Conservation Service
Wenley Ferguson, Save the Bay	Rhody Native
Sarah Gleason, researcher	RI Dept. of Environmental Management
Steven Hamburg, Environmental Defense Fund	RI Dept. of Public Works
Sally Harmon, MLA, Landscape Designer	RI Dept. of Transportation
George Harvey, Groundwork Providence	Serve Rhode Island
Brian Johnson, bkj productions	Douglas Still, City Forester
Hope Leeson, RI Natural History Survey	Kristen Swanberg, Audubon Society of RI
Alicia Lehrer, Woonasquatucket Watershed Council	Tara Tsakaklides, Moses Brown science program
Superintendent Robert McMahon, Parks Dept.	David Wrenn, Lippitt House

## Blackstone Parks Conservancy 2013 Officers and Trustees

Jane Peterson, President	Margaret Brookner	Robert Murphy
Paul Lietar, Vice-President	Jonathan Ford	Kimberly Nelson
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