



February 19, 2016

Dear Members and Friends:

On behalf of my fellow board members at the Blackstone Parks Conservancy (BPC), thank you for making our stewardship of these two historic parks possible. We depend on you. As volunteers, we also turn to Rhode Island experts for up-to-date insights on how to confront challenges like climate change--the topic of our annual meeting March 23rd.

Some of our work is familiar to you. In 2015, the *Boulevard Committee* again used your contributions to plant trees and to keep the gardens and young trees watered, a costly commitment in this dry season, second in a row. In the sandy Conservation District, new grants enabled our *Park Committee* to rebuild trails and install plants valuable for erosion control and habitat. While some volunteers managed these projects, others renewed URI certification in invasive plant removal, another long-term BPC commitment.

Complex challenges inspire us to deepen our collaboration with Rhode Island scientists and environmental agencies in order to better manage problems like stormwater runoff. Informed by current ecological knowledge, we join the Providence Parks Department in experimenting with new ways of building more resilience into these precious parks. It's the job of our very active *Education Committee* to share this information with schools and children, using the Conservation District as an outdoor classroom.

Right now we are searching for a way to responsibly address the plague of winter moth caterpillars that ravaged Providence trees last year--over time these annual visitors could kill many of our trees. But because the science of pest control is unsettled, we are figuring out with City Forester Doug Still and university experts if we can safely spray a few limited Boulevard areas and then compare impacts. It may turn out that doing nothing is safest for the time being. Whatever is decided, we will let you know well before the caterpillars emerge in the spring to swing leaf to leaf on long silken threads.

Effective stewardship requires partnerships. Local schools, corporate groups, and individuals have all generously donated time to caring for the parks. One exciting development is our alliance with Moses Brown, which began with the AP Science class studying stormwater under our tutelage and mushroomed into the entire upper school giving a service day last fall to the Blackstone parks. Over 400 students spread information about stormwater in the 380-acre watershed that feeds York Pond in the Conservation District, placing school-designed decals on storm drains and reaching out to businesses and neighbors.

Until recently, most national environmental groups have passed cities by, focusing instead on rural nature. Now, thanks in part to organizations like the Trust for Public Land —another friend—this focus is broadening to encompass making cities more “green.” This means, among other things, helping cities like ours to absorb more rainwater. The Conservancy, with your support, is in the right place with its vision: *Healthy Urban Green Space for All.*

With best wishes,

Jane Peterson, President

Annual Meeting, Wednesday, March 23, 6:00-7:30 p.m., Gov. Lippitt House, 199 Hope St. Parking at Wheeler School. Refreshments at 6:00, meeting 6:30-6:45. Then J. Timmons Roberts of Brown University will address climate change in Providence.

Projects and Progress in 2015

Blackstone Boulevard – *Boulevard Committee*

- Planted 20 trees chosen for beauty and suitability for site.
- Organized four summer concerts at the Trolley Shelter, sponsored by Butler Hospital and Senators Gayle Golden and Donna Nesselbush.
- Maintained four gardens along the Boulevard.
- Paid Groundwork Providence to weed, water, and prune 50 trees.

Blackstone Park Conservation District – *Park Committee & Education Committee*

- Planned and supervised the stabilization and rebuilding of the “boathouse” trail in the center section, lining it with native trees and shrubs subsidized by the Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC). Watered plants installed in 2014 as needed.
- Brought back some favorites, including concerts by Lindsey Meehan and the RI Philharmonic Music School Jazz Ensemble, bird banding, Moonrise on the Seekonk, a Not-So-Spooky Trail Walk and a River Ride tour of the Seekonk. Linked with Paterson Park and Gladys Potter Park for more concerts, aided by the Urban Wildlife Refuge and Providence Partnership for Parks.
- Created a special gathering place for small children just inside the woodland behind Blackstone Field. Volunteers from RISD’s freshman class created a fence and a teepee out of invasive plants, and goats rented from a local farm devoured the poison ivy nearby.
- Started removing invasive plants at Gulf Road, the beginning of a multi-year project supported by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and volunteers. Volunteers continued the Forest Health Works Project on Angell St.
- Volunteers removed hundreds of pounds of trash from the parks and the waterfront as part of a citywide Earth Day cleanup.

Blackstone Parks Conservancy Officers and Trustees

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BLACKSTONE PARKS CONSERVANCY

P.O. Box 603141, Providence, RI 02906

Annual Financial Report, FY 2015

Beginning Balance all funds January 1, 2015 **66,231**

Income

Contributions		30,192
Membership	21,642	
Concerts	6,500	
Benches and Trees	2,050	
Grants		53,783
Eastside Marketplace Friendship Fund Receipts		691
Other		9

Total Income **84,675**

Expenses

Administrative		-10,729
Contract work	-6,604	
Copying, mail, signage , IT	-2,751	
Events, gifts	-1,284	
Licenses, training	-90	
Park		-40,879
Improvements	-33,421	
Maintenance	-7,457	
Boulevard		-5,814
Maintenance	-4,513	
Benches and Trees	-1,301	
Concerts		-6,506
Education		-479
Miscellaneous		-5,073

Total Expenses **-69,480**

Net Result **15,195**

Ending Balance all funds December 31, 2015 **81,426**

Thank You

Our heartfelt gratitude goes to the many individuals who gave advice, grants, and time to the Blackstone Parks Conservancy in 2015. We are also deeply indebted to our many members and supporters, who are acknowledged by letter but not listed here.

April Alix, USFWS Urban Wildlife Refuge
Appalachian Mountain Club
Tom Ardito
Gale Aronson*
Audubon Society of RI
William Barry
Sam Bell*
Cynthia Bertozzi
Boulevard Tree sponsors
Anna Browder
Brown University Summer@Brown Camp
Butler Hospital
John Campanini
Steve Casserly, Yardworks
Gregg Cassidy, DEM
Caitlin Chaffee, CRMC
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Leslie Chazan*
Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC)
Don Cordner *
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Eastside Marketplace
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Heather Faubert, URI
Temple Fawcett
Wenley Ferguson, Save the Bay
Martha Fraenkel*
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Glow Oil
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RI Dept. of Public Works (DPW)
RI Dept. of Transportation (DOT)
RI Philharmonic Music School
RISD P.O.S.E. Program
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Save the Bay
Serve Rhode Island
Silk Tree Farm
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Lorén Spears
US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)
Wheeler School
Mike Watkinson
Winn Residential Property Management
Harriet and Jimmy Wrenn
Pamela Young Lietar
ZipCar

* Committee members