



New commissioners Rep. George Peterson, Lee Dillard Adams, Dennis Rice and Richard Gregory take the oath of office at the May Commission meeting.

New Commissioners Sworn In

Nine commissioners were sworn in at the May Commission meeting and they complete the expansion of the body as required by the Commission's reauthorization legislation. They are:

Lee Dillard Adams, resident of Sutton; works with the Department of Environmental Protection in Worcester, MA

Paula Brouillette, resident and member of the Board of Selectmen, Douglas, MA

Kevin O'Sullivan, resident of Worcester; President & CEO of Massachusetts Biomedical Initiatives in Worcester, MA

Representative George Peterson, Jr., resident of Grafton, member of the MA House of Representatives

Dennis Rice, resident of Douglas; Executive Director, Alternatives Unlimited, Inc. MA

Daniel Benoit, resident of Worcester; Principal, Benoit Reardon Architects, Worcester, MA

Gary Furtado, President, Navigant Credit Union, RI

Richard Gregory III, resident of Providence; Attorney, former President, Old Slater Mill Association, Pawtucket, RI

Dr. Gaytha Langlois, Professor, Department of Science and Technology at Bryant University, Smithfield, RI

In This Issue ...

[New Commissioners Sworn In](#)

[Commission Steps into the Future](#)

[Four Special Resource Study Meetings to be Held](#)

[Stepping on the Pedal - Pushing the Bikeway Forward](#)

[Blackstone Valley Adventure Packs](#)

[Blackstone Valley 101](#)

[Support for National Heritage Areas](#)

[SRS Meeting Schedule](#)

[Thursday Night Walkabouts](#)

[Margaret Carroll Receives Award](#)

[Mendon Re-dedicates Park](#)

[Upcoming Events](#)



Special Resource Study Meetings Scheduled for July 7 & 8

Wednesday, July 7

3:00 - 5:00 p.m.
Blackstone River Theater
549 Broad Street, Cumberland, RI

Wednesday, July 7

7:00 - 9:00 p.m.
Slatersville Congregational Church
25 Greene Street, NorthSmithfield, RI

Thursday, July 8

3:00 - 5:00 p.m.
Alternatives
50 Douglas Road, Whitinsville, MA

Thursday, July 8

7:00 - 9:00 p.m.
Atria Draper Place

Commission Steps into the Future, Incorporates Corridor

At its last meeting on May 20, the Commission voted to create a new organization with a familiar name: Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor, Inc. The Commission itself is scheduled to sunset in October of next year. After having been reauthorized three times, it does not expect to get another extension. Yet, as we know, the work is far from done and the Commission wanted to demonstrate its commitment to the future of the Corridor, as well as take the time for a smooth transition. [Click here to continue....](#)

Four Special Resource Study Meetings to be Held in Valley

The National Park Service will hold a series of public meetings for the **Special Resource Study** in the Blackstone River Valley that will help Congress decide whether to establish a National Park in the Blackstone Valley. A newsletter describing the study team's preliminary findings and a range of possible management options has been distributed for public information and comment through July 30, 2010. The newsletter has also been posted on the Corridor web site at www.nps.gov/blac/parkmgmt/special-resource-study.htm.

The meetings will be held at the times and locations highlighted at the right.

The Commission urges its partners and members of the public to attend at least one of these meetings. This is the time to let the National Park Service know what the Corridor has meant to you and your organization or community, and what the level of support is for a permanent presence of the Park Service in the Valley.

Stepping on the Pedal -- Pushing the Bikeway Forward

Commissioners want to know what has been taking so long with the Blackstone River Bikeway in Massachusetts and what they can do to help getting it built. On July 8, the Commission will have a special meeting to get a status update on the planning, design and construction of the bikeway and to develop a better understanding of what has been holding up the project in Massachusetts. The Commission wants to make sure, as does every community along the planned bikeway route, that this project is once again a priority for the Commonwealth and that it moves beyond the planning stages. [To continue reading, click here....](#)

bikeway

Thursday Night Walkabouts Continue Through the Summer

McGov 2

Thursday Night Walkabouts continue through the summer and at a variety of locations throughout the Blackstone Valley. All of the programs are free and begin at 6:30 p.m. For more information about these programs, please contact Ranger Kevin Klyberg at (401) 762-0440, or check our website for a complete schedule by clicking [here](#).

Millville's Margaret Carroll Receives Award

Margaret

Telegram & Gazette photo by
Christine Peterson

The Massachusetts Historical Commission recently awarded Margaret Carroll of Millville a preservationist award for her dedication to preserving the history of Millville and the Blackstone River Valley. See the Commission's [slide show here](#) and read the [Telegram and Gazette story](#) about her.

Blackstone Valley Adventure Packs Make Learning Fun!

McGov 2

Ranger Suzanne Buchanan recently rolled out a terrific new program called Blackstone Valley Adventure Packs. They are simple backpacks filled with games, take-a-way crafts and lots of learning adventures for family fun this summer and all year long!

"Our adventure packs are themed backpacks that are full of fun activities, craft projects, information and more that families can use to learn about our valley together," Ranger Buchanan explained. "There are six different packs - the Nature Pack, The Worcester History Pack, the Factory Town Pack, the Immigration Pack, the River Pack -- and the Valley Pack; anyone can rent one for up to five days for just \$10 at one of our partner sites." [To continue the story, please click here....](#)



Exploring nature with an Adventure Pack is fun!

BlackstoneValley 101 -- An On-Line Learning Tool

Did you know....that the Blackstone Valley is home to the first planned mill village and the Rhode Island System of Manufacturing? That the valley is a great place to view and understand the "engineered landscape"? That its river drops 438 feet in 46 miles? That the City of Worcester became a port city in 1828? These and other questions and answers can be found in the six modules of Blackstone Valley 101.

"We developed Blackstone Valley 101 to create a better understanding of the national significance of our valley. Life-long residents as well as those new to the area will enjoy this overview of the valley story and many of the individuals who have taken the program have found that there were details about the Blackstone Valley that they hadn't known prior to completing the program," Valerie Paul, Blackstone Valley 101 program developer, explained.



Valerie Paul, BV 101 developer, shows Aretha Hunter of Providence the new self-directed learning program.

"The wonderful quality of an on-line learning program is that anyone, anywhere can take Blackstone Valley 101," Paul added. "We have an

Mendon's Founders' Park Re-Dedicated



Commissioner Louise Redding (front row left) joined Mendon friends at the Founders' Park dedication.

Mendon friends and organizers who coordinated the completion of Founders' Park invited partners, special guests and the public to participate in a dedication ceremony on Monday, May 31, 2010.

Founders' Park was created a little more than 100 years ago to remember the families that founded Mendon in 1667. Starting in 2008, the Mendon Land Use Committee and numerous volunteers have restored and enhanced the park to highlight its historical significance. An attractive permanent sign funded by the Corridor Commission now graces the site.

Upcoming Events

Saturday, August 28

Enjoy the **Rhode Island Chinese Dragon Boat Races and Taiwan Day Festival** in Pawtucket. Find details [here](#).

Saturday, September 25

Don't forget to register for the 10th annual **UniBank Blackstone Valley Greenway Challenge!** For details, visit www.greenwaychallenge.org

For more events and programs being held around the Blackstone Valley (and to post your own event), visit EventBlackstone.org and check your local newspaper listings, too.

bv101

amazing story to tell that is unique to the country and this is a powerful tool that helps all of us understand and tell that story." Blackstone Valley 101 is free and easy to access via any computer that is able to access the internet. It takes about 45 minutes to complete the course with chapters on: Where Industry Began, The People of the Valley, The Blackstone River, The Canal Story, Environmental Impact and Telling the Story Today.

Blackstone Valley 101 is accessible through the National Park Service web site at www.nps.gov/blac. Successfully complete the course and you will be sent a custom Blackstone Valley 101 lapel pin to signify your accomplishment!

Support for National Heritage Areas -- National and State Developments

National Heritage Areas (NHAs) are at risk of becoming the victims of their own success. When the Blackstone Corridor was established in 1986, it was the second NHA in the country. Because of the success of this partnership- and community-based approach to preservation and community revitalization, today, there are 49, with more nominations in the pipeline. Funding for this program, however, has not kept pace with its explosive growth. While each NHA typically is "authorized" to receive up to \$1 million in annual funding, the national program's budget allocation is currently only \$16 million. The proposed budget for FY11 would cut that in half! Newer NHAs are already receiving far less than what they need to get up to speed and older NHAs have seen their partnerships affected by declining allocations. In fact, pressure has been building to phase out the oldest NHAs, including the Blackstone Corridor, altogether.



Heritage Area supporters rally in Washington, DC

The Alliance of NHAs (ANHA) recently started a campaign to build support in Congress for continued, and more adequate, funding. At a rally in Washington, DC on June 15, the effort received a boost from Congressmen Tonko and Dent, who announced the formation of a House Caucus for NHAs. An earlier "Dear Colleague" letter seeking restored funding received endorsements from a large number of Senators and Congressmen, including members of the RI and MA delegations. The goal of ANHA's campaign is to make sure that NHAs are judged on their performance and continue to receive what is relatively modest funding as long as they can demonstrate there is a real need and their work makes a real difference. For more information, visit the [ANHA web site](#).

At the state level, legislation has been passed in Connecticut, and introduced in Massachusetts, that recognizes the importance and benefit of National Heritage Areas to the states. The legislation calls on state agencies to coordinate and partner with the NHAs and, in the case of Massachusetts, would allow state funding to be appropriated to NHAs in the future (if and when economic circumstances warrant it). These state legislative initiatives are important because Congress has always wanted states to be partners in the NHA program and is very much looking for evidence of such commitment as it considers the future of the national program.

Commission Incorporates (continued)

The move is also consistent with the idea of a National Park being established in the Blackstone Valley. The Park would not replace the Corridor; to the contrary. As the draft Special Resource Study will indicate, the Park will need a strong regional partner to make sure that Corridor resources that are related to the Park, and that provide a context for it, are preserved.

Importantly, the Commission stated very clearly that the new non-profit organization should avoid competition with its many non-profit partners. This can be done by focusing, for example, on federal funding sources and on joining with partners in applying for grants for partnership projects. The mission remains the same: empowering our partners and promoting collaboration.

[Back to top](#).

Stepping on the Pedal (con't)

Fortunately, the state had good news to offer in May, when the Departments of Transportation (DOT) and of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) announced that DCR would take the lead on the next phase of the project, in particular the southern segments, where it already owns a significant portion of the land. Funds would be transferred from DOT to DCR to allow it to finish the design and begin construction. Since then, DCR has already engaged Vanesse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. (VHB) as lead consultant on Segment 1 (in Blackstone and Millville). From a previous meeting the Commission had with DCR, it knew that DCR is committed to making the bikeway a reality. DCR will also have more flexibility to use design standards that are compatible with preserving sensitive resource areas, including its own parks.

The Commission commends the two agencies, and the Valley legislators who were pushing behind the scenes, for cooperating with each other to come up with a new project management approach. It is hopeful (and will be vigilant to make sure) that this means real change and real progress. The Commission will continue to offer its support to the agencies, and work with its partners, especially CorridorKeepers, the Volunteer Bikeway Patrol and others, to keep advocating for the project.

[Back to top](#)



Visit our website at www.nps.gov/blac

Adventure Packs (con't)

The concept came about as Park Rangers discussed creative ways to help the public learn more about the Blackstone River Valley and rich history right in their own back yards. "Each pack has a guide booklet and give-a-ways as well as maps, brochures and coupons. A family could use a pack to plan a whole week of activities for a summer adventure of their very own," Buchanan said. "We wanted to keep their costs to a minimum and we've successfully achieved that goal. At the same time, we have lots of partners who understand that this is a great way for them to reach an audience that is interested in learning more about their sites and what they do."

For more information, pick up a "Blackstone Valley DeTour" map highlighting the sites where packs can be rented at visitor information centers around the valley or visit www.nps.gov/blac/forkids.

[Back to top](#)