

# PROJECT ZAP: **Blackstone River** Cleanup

Examine the image on the right.

**How would you describe the  
Blackstone River  
and its surrounding areas?**

**What activities can  
you do here?**

Type your answers on the next slide.



# Description

# Activities

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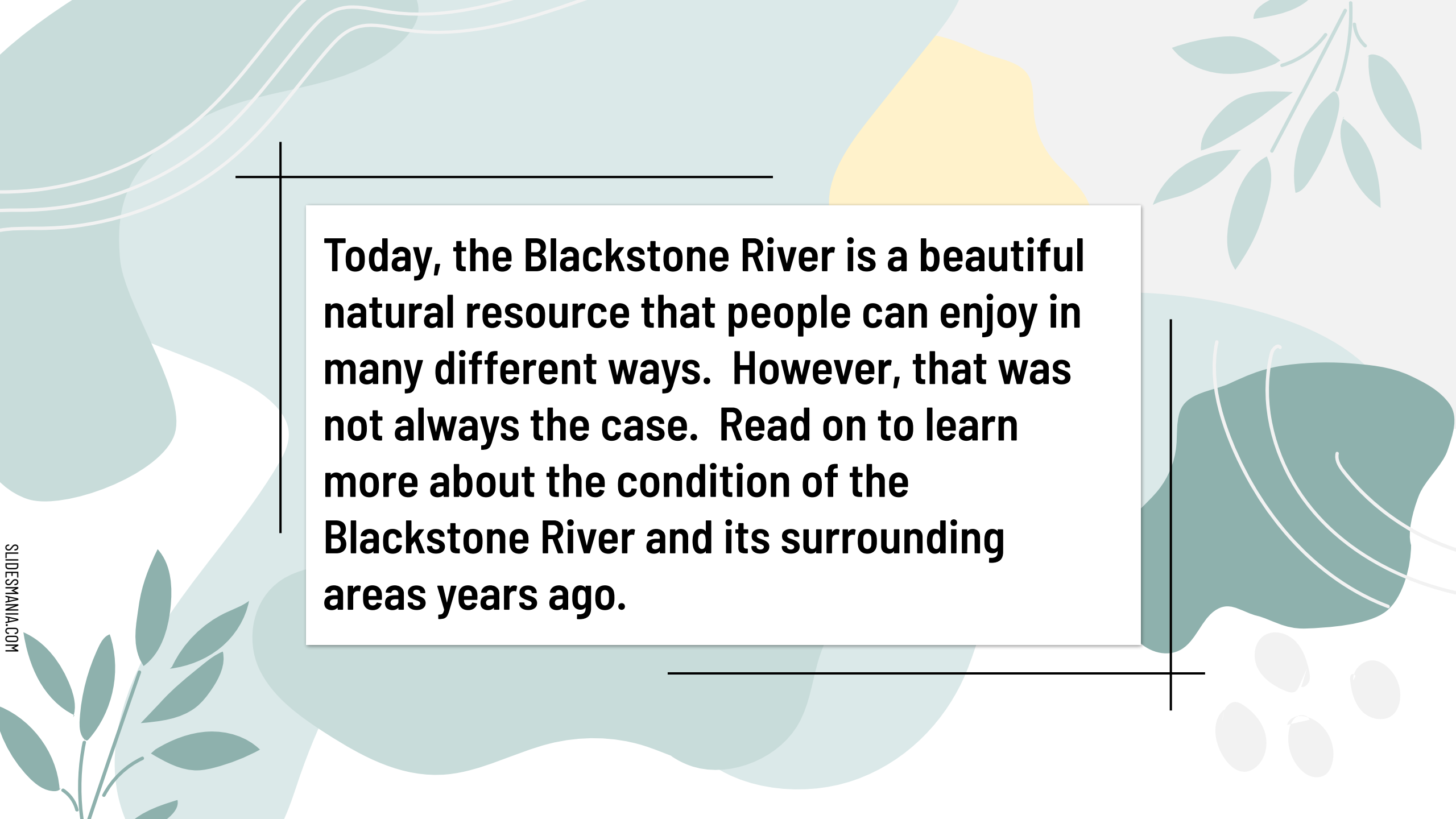
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## Description

- Clean
- Peaceful
- Beautiful
- Calm

## Activities

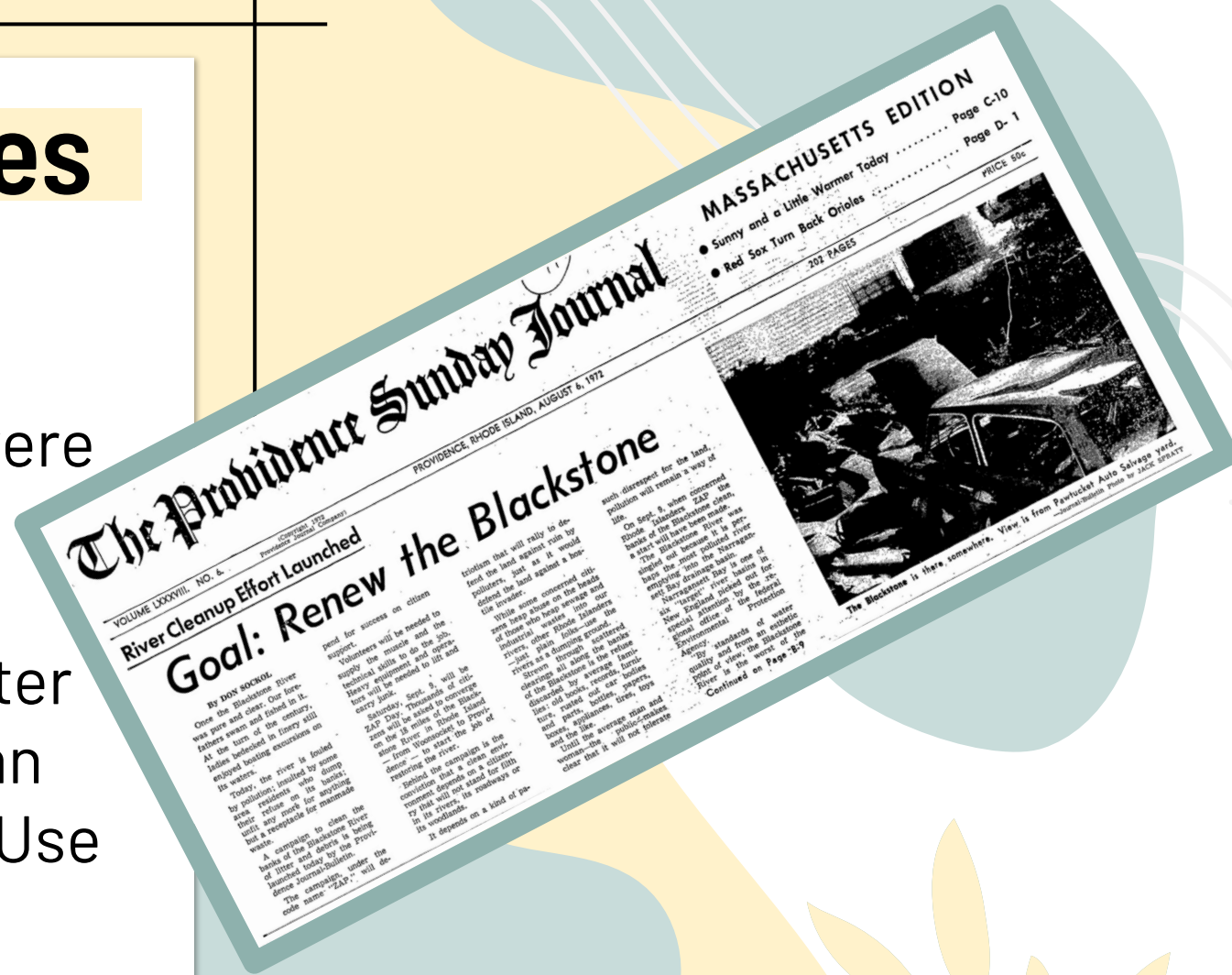
- Canoeing, kayaking
- Boating
- Bike Riding
- Walking, running
- Picnicking



**Today, the Blackstone River is a beautiful natural resource that people can enjoy in many different ways. However, that was not always the case. Read on to learn more about the condition of the Blackstone River and its surrounding areas years ago.**

# Primary Sources

Primary sources help us learn about the past. They are documents and objects that were created during the time of the historical event. A newspaper from the past created by a writer who was there at that time is an example of a primary source. Use your copies of the newspaper articles to learn more about the Blackstone River's history.



Use your copies of the Primary Source Analysis Worksheet to record key facts about each newspaper article related to Project Zap.

## Primary Source Analysis Worksheet - Newspaper Article

**Make observations.**

1. What is the title of the article?
2. Who wrote the article?
3. Who was the intended audience?
4. When was this article published?
5. Where was it published?
6. What words did you not know in the article? Write their definitions.



**Reflect upon the document.**

7. What is the main idea of the article?
8. Use text evidence (quotes or words from the document) to support the main idea.



# The Providence Sunday Journal

MASSACHUSETTS EDITION

- Sunny and a Little Warmer Today ..... Page C-10
- Red Sox Turn Back Orioles ..... Page D-1

VOLUME LXXXVIII. NO. 6. (Copyright 1972 Providence Journal Company) PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND, AUGUST 6, 1972 202 PAGES PRICE 50c

## River Cleanup Effort Launched

# Goal: Renew the Blackstone

By DON SOCKOL

Once the Blackstone River was pure and clear. Our forefathers swam and fished in it. At the turn of the century, ladies bedecked in finery still enjoyed boating excursions on its waters.

Today, the river is fouled by pollution; insulted by some area residents who dump their refuse on its banks; unfit any more for anything but a receptacle for manmade waste.

A campaign to clean the banks of the Blackstone River of litter and debris is being launched today by the Providence Journal-Bulletin.

The campaign, under the code name "ZAP," will de-

pend for success on citizen support.

Volunteers will be needed to supply the muscle and the technical skills to do the job. Heavy equipment and operators will be needed to lift and carry junk.

Saturday, Sept. 9, will be ZAP Day. Thousands of citizens will be asked to converge on the 18 miles of the Blackstone River in Rhode Island — from Woonsocket to Providence — to start the job of restoring the river.

Behind the campaign is the conviction that a clean environment depends on a citizenry that will not stand for filth in its rivers, its roadways or its woodlands.

It depends on a kind of pa-

triotism that will rally to defend the land against ruin by polluters, just as it would defend the land against a hostile invader.

While some concerned citizens heap abuse on the heads of those who heap sewage and industrial wastes into our rivers, other Rhode Islanders — just plain folks — use the river's as a dumping ground.

Strewn through scattered clearings all along the banks of the Blackstone is the refuse discarded by average families: old books, records, furniture, rusted out car bodies and parts, bottles, papers, boxes, appliances, tires, toys and the like.

Until the average man and woman — the public — makes clear that it will not tolerate

such disrespect for the land, pollution will remain a way of life.

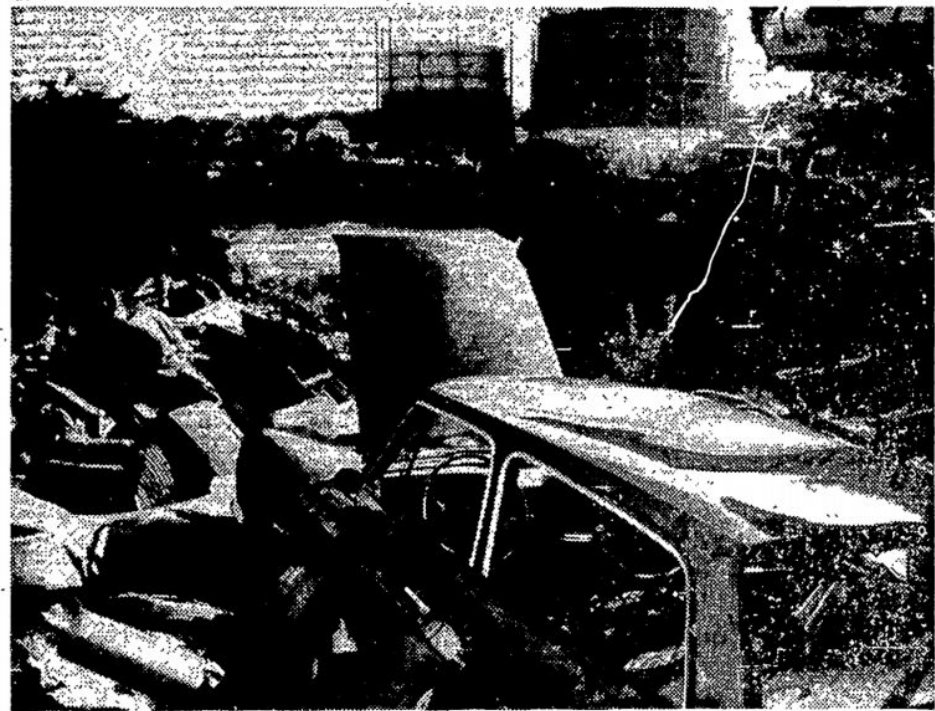
On Sept. 9, when concerned Rhode Islanders ZAP the banks of the Blackstone clean, a start will have been made.

The Blackstone River was singled out because it is perhaps the most polluted river emptying into the Narragansett Bay drainage basin.

Narragansett Bay is one of six "target" river basins in New England picked out for special attention by the regional office of the federal Environmental Protection Agency.

"By standards of water quality and from an esthetic point of view, the Blackstone River is the worst of the

Continued on Page B-9



The Blackstone is there somewhere. View is from Pawtucket Auto Salvage yard. —Journal-Bulletin Photo by JACK SPRATT



Based on the reading from "Goal: Renew the Blackstone," what caused the pollution of the Blackstone River?

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Based on the reading from "Goal: Renew the Blackstone," what caused the pollution of the Blackstone River?

- People dumped their trash along the riverbanks
- Litter
- Industrial waste was poured into the river
- Old books, records, furniture, car parts, bottles, papers, and tires were dumped there
- People disrespected the land and the water

# Earnest Volunteers Agree Job Was Long Overdue 1st Step

## Article #2

Please use the magnifying glass feature to enlarge the article.

By JOEL H. SEKERES  
 Perspiration dripped from Norman Beauvais' face like rain as he guided his small rowboat against the bank of the Blackstone River behind the Old Slater Mill in Pawtucket yesterday.

He jumped ashore, his blue jeans and T-shirt splattered black with river muck, and, with weary grunts, began unloading his boat's slimy cargo of small tree limbs, a discarded auto tire, a large piece of plywood and a car's axle assembly with a tire and wheel attached.

"People are fed up with pollution," he muttered. "Government hasn't been tough enough and the people just had to take things into their own hands to help make the river clean. It's everybody's job."

And it seemed yesterday

that everybody took the job seriously. Mr. Beauvais, a 34-year-old self-employed contractor of 72 New York Ave., Cumberland, was one of thousands of volunteers who toiled beneath leaden skies and intermittent rain for Project ZAP.

He was part of an unlikely mixture of construction workers, students, housewives, music teachers, secretaries, engineers, Boy Scouts, factory workers, truck drivers and a multitude of others who labored and sweated together, united in a common fight against pollution.

### Riverbanks Lined

From Woonsocket to Providence, knots of humanity lined the riverbanks, using hoes, rakes, shovels and gloved hands to remove tons of paper, dead tree limbs, cans, boxes, worn tires and

## Article #2 Continued.

Please use  
the  
magnifying  
glass feature  
to enlarge  
the article.

other junk that had been so casually discarded there.

Men and women in rowboats, canoes and rubber rafts hauled up any debris they could get a grip on.

And a team of volunteer scuba divers, often unable to see more than six inches in front of their faces, went beneath the surface of the murky waters to pry engine blocks, refrigerators, bed springs, pipes and auto doors from the mud below.

If there was a consensus among the volunteers, it was that Project ZAP was an overdue first step in what should become a continuing statewide effort to clean up all of Rhode Island's polluted rivers. Every one of nearly two dozen volunteers interviewed yesterday emphasized that one day of involvement is not enough, that sanitizing riv-

erbanks is helpful but still not enough and that industries and institutions must be stopped from dumping waste into the rivers if marine life is to be saved.

# CAUSE and EFFECT

Causes tell us the reasons **why** something happened. Effects tell us **what** happened. Slide each effect on the right to match its correct cause on the left.

## CAUSE

People were fed up with pollution.

Many volunteers were needed.

Different tools were required.

Waste and debris were removed.

## EFFECT



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# CAUSE and EFFECT ANSWER KEY

Causes tell us the reasons **why** something happened. Effects tell us **what** happened. Slide each effect on the right to match its correct cause on the left.

## CAUSE

People were fed up with pollution.

Many volunteers were needed.

Different tools were required.

Waste and debris were removed.

## EFFECT



People took things into their own hands to help make the river clean.



About 10,000 community members participated in Project Zap.



People brought rakes, hoes, shovels, and trucks to clean up the area.



The Blackstone River became cleaner and was used by the community.

# Zap the Blackstone

Watch the video to see the river and its surrounding areas before and after Project Zap.



# How can you protect the **Blackstone River?**

Turn and talk to your neighbor to brainstorm at least 3 different ways to keep the Blackstone River clean.





**Ways to keep our river and surrounding areas clean include the following:**

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# Ways to keep our river and surrounding areas clean include the following:

- Throwing trash in the barrel.
- Picking up litter.
- Recycling plastic bottles.
- Cleaning up after your pet.
- Properly disposing of hazardous items, such as paint, cleaners, and engine oil.

# Design Projects

Click Here To  
Promote the  
Project Zap Revival

Click Here To  
Create a  
Then/Now Poster

# Promote the Project Zap Revival

Design a poster for the Project Zap Revival event advertising the 50th anniversary of Project Zap, which will take place on September 9, 2022. Be sure to include illustrations representing facts learned in the newspaper articles and video.

# Then and Now

Draw a line separating your paper into two halves. Design a poster comparing the Blackstone River **before and after** the 1972 Zap cleanup occurred. Be sure to include illustrations representing facts learned in the newspaper articles and video.

# Sources

"Operation Zap - Blackstone River Cleanup 1972." *YouTube*, Blackstone Valley Tourism Council, 24 Feb. 2020, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=dpYtjdfAYro](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dpYtjdfAYro).

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