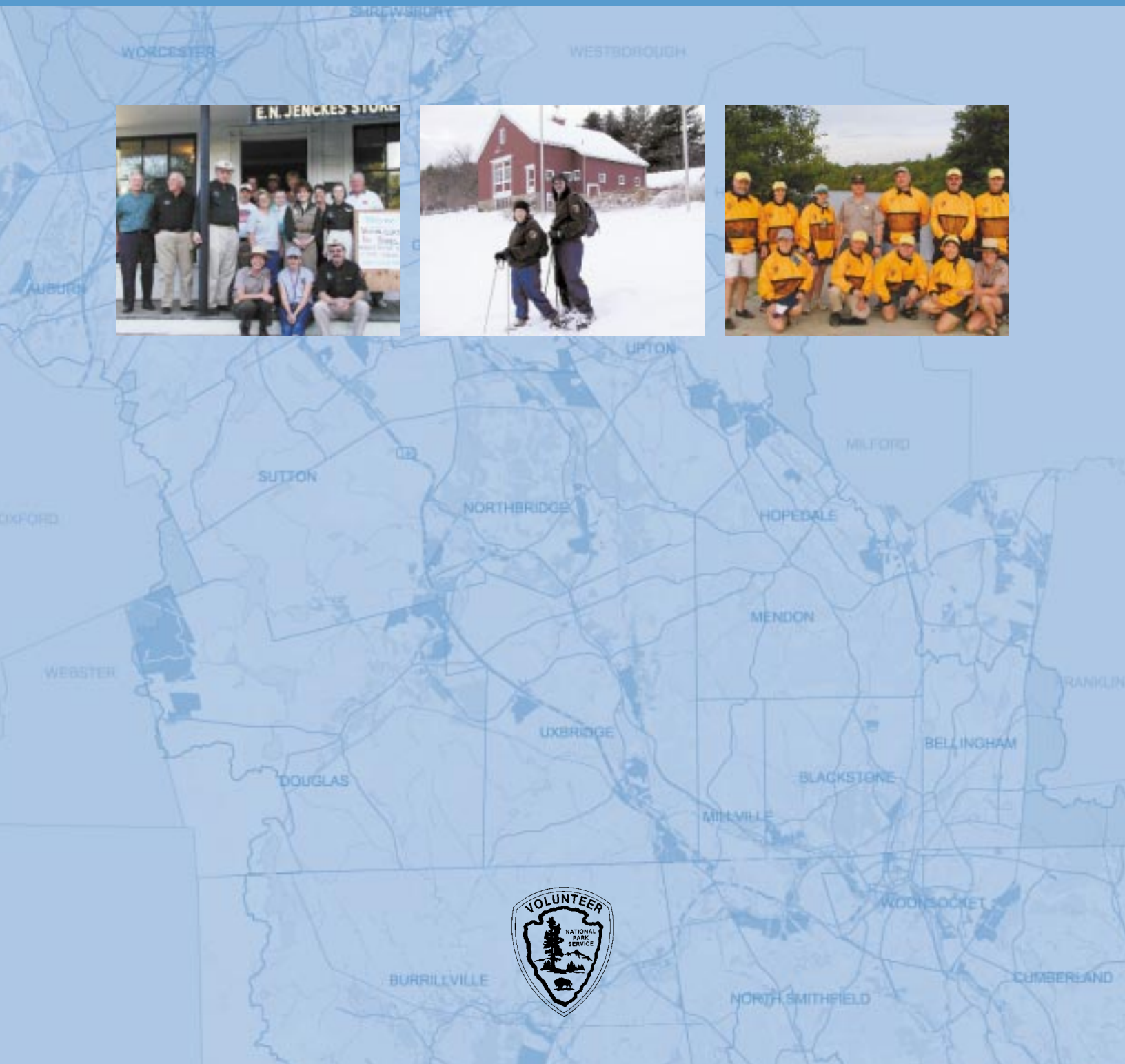
Volunteer Training Manual

VOLUNTEERS' GUIDE FOR THE BLACKSTONE RIVER VALLEY



Volunteers In Parks Program

Imagine the possibilities!

Welcome New Volunteer,

Volunteers provide a vital link between the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor and the communities that are included within its boundaries. Volunteer positions are available throughout the Bi-state Heritage Corridor. These positions provide possibilities that are as diverse as the people we are seeking to fill them. What are these opportunities and what criteria need to be met to participate in this volunteer program?

The criteria are simple. The application process is explained and the possibilities are endless! Some of the events and use of volunteer power are demonstrated throughout this publication. A glimpse of these events illustrates a collectiveness that can only be accomplished by the collaborative efforts of staff and volunteers. Volunteers foster a sense of pride and concern for the Blackstone River Valley of the past, present and future.

This manual is meant to serve as a tool to invite people to add to our efforts. First, it is important to understand why the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission exists. The mission of this board, the commissioners, and the staff here at the Depot Office are all introduced. This information should help to familiarize you with key individuals and heritage sites in the Blackstone River Valley.

There are many exciting and rewarding aspects of this program for the Heritage Corridor and for individual volunteers. One of the most exciting aspects of the Volunteers In Parks Program is that we can bring so many benefits to our heritage sites when we pool our human resources and share volunteers throughout the Blackstone Valley. We offer an "Umbrella" program that can meet a variety of needs at our heritage sites and events.

I invite you to explore the volunteer opportunities throughout the Blackstone River Valley NHC and join our volunteers: become a VIP with the National Park Service.

"Imagine YOUR possibilities!"

Ranger Suzanne Buchanan
Volunteers In Parks Coordinator
401-762-0440 x 33

Volunteer in Parks
– The National Story –

Americans have enjoyed a love affair with their national parks since Yellowstone, our first national park, was created in 1872.

Now you are helping the National Park Service care for your parks — by joining the 80,000 people yearly who volunteer their time and talents to help us safeguard this heritage.

As a Volunteer in Parks –VIP– you work side by side with the National Park Service staff. And as a VIP you are truly a Very Important Person. You show people how to enjoy their parks so future generations can too. Think how much you will learn about the park by contributing to its successful operation.

VIP's work in parks from Maine to Hawaii, from Alaska to Florida in big cities and small towns — even in remote wilderness. What are your options? We have more than 360 national parks. And whether you work behind the scene or face to face with park visitors, as a VIP you can make a real difference for parks and people. Parks are different from zoos and museums. Parks are the real places where our nation's story continues to unfold.

Who are VIP's?

The many men and women who serve with the National Park Service as Volunteers in Parks are a diverse group — park neighbors, college students, retired couples, business managers, farmers, engineers, scientists, teachers, lawyers, architects, doctors, artists, and more. What they all have in common is that each has a talent or skill that is needed in a park. While most VIP's volunteer as individuals, organized groups, too, can volunteer. Persons under 18 years of age may become VIP's with the official permission of their parents or guardians. Welcome to all the Volunteers in Parks from all over the United States and every country in the world.

"The park is my neighbor. I want it to be protected, and cared for. Anything I can do to take part in helping the Parks Service, I'm for it."

— Volunteer, Cape Hatteras National Seashore, North Carolina

"Every day is a learning experience. I've never had a dull day."

— Volunteer, Boston National Historical Park, Massachusetts

John H. Chafee
Blackstone River Valley
National Heritage Corridor

Special Thanks

to

Tracey M. Smith

who began this project as part of a
Public Administration Internship by Rhode Island College
Summer 2002

Special Acknowledgment

to

The Entire Staff and Commission
of the
John H. Chafee
Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor

The many VIP's
for proofreading and commenting on the content.

Volunteer Steve Riendeau
for the many volunteer images he captured for this manual.

Special Thanks

to

Kodak

for its generous support of
National Park Foundation Imaging Product Donation Program
and its donation of the imaging equipment used for this manual.

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As volunteer opportunities expand,
so will this manual.
Imagine the volunteer opportunities!
Edition #1

Chapter One: The John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor is...

Twenty four communities, some 400,000 acres and over 500,000 people.

But it's much more than that.

It is a distinctive region — a river valley — and a special type of National Park. It is a partnership park that stretches from the headwaters of the Blackstone River in Worcester, Massachusetts to the Narragansett Bay in Providence, Rhode Island. It's a kind of virtual park - a living landscape where its long and nationally pivotal history is still visible through thousands of structures in distinctive landscapes and accessible through the living memory of its residents.

The American Industrial Revolution began in the Blackstone River Valley. It changed the landscape of the Valley and transformed life in America. The Blackstone River provided the waterpower for the birth of industry in America with its 438 foot drop over a 46-mile length. Even today, the Valley retains its "wholeness" as a unique landscape with a concentration of historic, cultural and natural resources that represent 18th and 19th century industrial production in America.

Recognizing its national significance, Congress established the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission in 1986 to assist in protecting and celebrating the Birthplace of the American Industrial Revolution.

What's a Corridor?

The John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor, designated by Congress in 1986, is composed of 24 cities and towns on 454 square miles of land in the watershed of the Blackstone River. The watershed area extends from north of Worcester, Massachusetts south to Providence, Rhode Island. The 46-mile long Blackstone River, named an American Heritage River in 1998, is the focal point and main artery of the region.

Why is the Blackstone River Valley such a special place? The region is distinguished by outstanding resources: natural, cultural and historical. Beginning in the 18th century, the Blackstone Valley provided the setting for a remarkable transformation from farm to factory - a local story that became the model for a national phenomenon: the American Industrial Revolution. America's first textile mill could have been built along practically any river on the eastern seaboard. However, in 1790, the forces of capital, ingenuity, mechanical know-how and skilled labor came together at Pawtucket, Rhode Island where the Blackstone River provided the power that kicked off America's drive to industrialization at the Slater Mill.

The story of the Blackstone River Valley is told in a living landscape. Here history is not held back behind a velvet rope. Instead, you are welcome to roam farm fields, trek along the canal towpath and tour mill villages where people still live in the company-built houses that their ancestors inhabited a century ago. Work is the core theme of the history of the Blackstone River Valley. The Blackstone Valley is a chronicle of innovation and creativity as well as the transformation of peoples and landscapes brought about by the effort of genius and hard work. Each of the workers - farmers, mill workers, bankers, canal diggers, machinists, union organizers - has a story that adds to the tapestry. The thread that ties all of the stories together is the Blackstone River, a shallow, rocky, twisting stream that flows from Worcester to Providence and on out into the Narragansett Bay. The river attracted people here as a source of drinking water, food, and, eventually, energy. Today it attracts people as a source of recreation and inspiration.

Unlike a more traditional National Park, the Heritage Corridor does not own or manage any of the land within its boundaries. Instead, the Heritage Corridor Commission works in partnership with a variety of Federal, State and local agencies, along with many non-profit and private organizations to protect not only the sites and resources of the Blackstone Valley, but to maintain the spirit of innovation and ingenuity that makes this a special place. To reach these goals, the Heritage Corridor and its partners have undertaken a variety of tasks, from creating a system of Visitor Centers and interpretive sites to tell our story, to working with local communities on restoring Main Streets and protecting open space. Currently, our most ambitious program is Project ZAP, an initiative to restore the heavily industrialized and abused Blackstone River to water that is safe for swimming and fishing by the year 2015. It's a daunting task, but the people of the Blackstone River Valley have a proud history of using hard work and ingenuity to get the job done. Your volunteer efforts will contribute to our goals.

The Corridor Commission

The Commission and the Heritage Corridor "Experiment"

When Congress established the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor in 1986, it established a bi-state, federally-appointed commission of local and state representatives to help preserve and interpret the unique resources and qualities that made the Blackstone Valley significant both to the nation and to its residents. When the Commission was established in 1986, it was part of a then-novel idea to enlist the National Park Service in a partnership dedicated to helping states and localities conserve their special regions - those places where historical and natural characteristics had left their mark on American history. At the time, this was an ambitious experiment; no one knew whether it would work or not.

A Regional Vision

The experiment was based upon a fresh approach to thinking about regional places. Rather than conceiving of the Valley as a set of self-contained, independent municipalities divided by political boundaries, the Commission began to help residents envision the Valley as a regional entity: an interdependent place linked by a common set of economic, natural and cultural resources. If perceived as an interconnected system, this new approach might engender new attitudes that would help revitalize the Valley as a place to visit, live, work and invest. But the vision for the Corridor as a whole is much larger than what the Commission, by itself, will accomplish. Unlike traditional National Parks, the Corridor Commission did not, nor does it now, own land, control significant sites, or have regulatory powers. The vision began to make a tangible impact on public and private-sector actions throughout the Valley. Many local leaders, private investors and residents began to think in regional terms, and to assign a higher value to preserving and interpreting the Valley's historic, cultural and natural resources.

A Strategic Approach

The Commission's most effective tools in nurturing this regional attitude have been threefold: public education, which reaches out to the grass-roots level; partnerships, which pool local and national resources; and targeted investments, which focus scarce public and private dollars on highly visible projects that reinforce a sense of the Valley's national heritage story and build local pride and enthusiasm. As individuals, the Commissioners are most effective as key players who influence the direction of the Valley. They bring their combined agendas from their normal pursuits to the table, focusing and enhancing activities through the objectives of the agencies or interests they represent. As the Commission heads into its next decade, these tools and individual Commissioner's efforts will remain at the heart of the Heritage Corridor implementation strategy for the future.

The Commission

Executive Subcommittee

Robert Billington, Chairman
President, Blackstone Valley Tourism Council

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MA State Senator
Second Worcester District

Donna Williams, Secretary
Conservation Advocacy Coordinator
Massachusetts Audubon Society
Chair, American Heritage Rivers Subcommittee

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Planning Director for the City of Pawtucket

National Park Service • Northeast Region

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MA Department of Economic Development

William D. Ankner, Ph.D.

Matthew Amorello, Chairman
MA Turnpike Authority

Kenneth Bianchi, Executive Director
RI Turnpike and Bridge Authority

Paul P. Clancy, Jr.
District Three Councilor,
City of Worcester

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Cara Metz, Executive Director
MA Historical Commission

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Jan Reitsma, Director
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RI Economic Development Corporation

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RI Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission

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Lincoln, RI

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Kevin Klyberg, Park Ranger

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Volunteer Coordinator

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Television Producer

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Liz McConnell, Chief of Administration

Linda McWhorter, Secretary

Diane Angell, Budget Analyst

Barbara Dixon, Visitor Use Assistant

Pauline Lozeau, Receptionist

Roger Williams National Memorial Site

Sue Andrews, Site Manager

John McNiff, Park Ranger

Sparkle Bryant, Park Ranger

Maria Levesque, Park Ranger

Paul Coletta, Maintenance Worker

Chapter Two: History of the Blackstone River Valley

President Andrew Jackson: *"I understand you taught us how to spin, so as to rival Great Britain in her manufactures; you set all these thousands of spindles at work, which I have been delighted in viewing, and which have made so many happy, by a lucrative employment."*

Samuel Slater: *"Yes, sir. I suppose that I gave out the psalm and they have been singing to the tune ever since."*

George S. White
Memoir of Samuel Slater

Work is the core theme of the Blackstone River Valley's history. Its history and its values still speak to us from our past. From farm to factory, the Valley is a chronicle of the innovation and creativity, as well as the transformation of peoples and landscapes, brought about by the effort and genius of work.

The Valley's history is clearly visible in its remnants: hilltop market villages, riverside mill villages, town and city settlement patterns, ethnic diversity and culture, transportation systems. All convey a broad picture of agricultural and industrial history, including early farming, mining, life along Main Street and immigrant settlement, textile manufacturing, and the canal and railroad-building era in New England. Enhanced by interpretation, the Valley's history can show us not only the development of these patterns and traditions, it can also show us how we as a people respond to such tremendous economic and social forces. These are the major historical forces of technology and invention, of management and labor, of economic development, and human and environmental neglect. The Blackstone River Valley's history is a major contribution to our understanding of the "American Experience."

The First Settlers

The first settlers, the Paleo-Indians, arrived in the Blackstone River Valley about 12,000 years ago. State and Corridor inventories list hundreds of prehistoric sites in the Valley, with rock shelters and wind breaks being especially plentiful in the uplands, and larger camps and fishing stations near the river.

Indians Fishing

In the early 17th century, the area was claimed by Native Americans of three principal tribal groups: the Narragansett, the Wampanoag and the Nipmuc. These groups were loosely organized under local leaders - sachems - and lived in semi-permanent villages, which they occupied for a few years until the soil was depleted, when they would clear new fields for the annual planting of corn, beans, squash and tobacco. The rich fishery from the clean waters of the Blackstone River was a major source of protein. In their search for food and fertile soil, the Indians developed a major trail along the Blackstone River's

length and a number of minor trails throughout the Valley, which were used and developed into roads by later settlers. The arrival of early explorers, fishermen and fur traders severely disrupted this pattern of life; and infectious diseases carried by the Europeans virtually wiped out the Native American population in two major epidemics in 1616 and 1633-34.

The British Are Coming!

Like William Blackstone, after whom the Valley was named, many of the first European settlers in the Valley were religious dissidents fleeing Boston. Many early settlers were Quakers, seeking the freedom to practice their religious beliefs in a more tolerant society. Most were farmers. Some settlers saw opportunities for using the Valley's other natural resources: by the late 1660's, Gregory Dexter was mining and processing lime in Lime Rock (now part of Lincoln, RI); and in 1671 Joseph Jenkes, a skilled ironworker, who was attracted by the Valley's abundant wood, water power and proximity of bog iron, erected a dwelling and forge in the future city of Pawtucket.

King Philip's War

The year 1675 was a traumatic one for the Blackstone River Valley. Local Native Americans, roused to desperation by repeated incursions into their ancestral territories by European settlers, rose in concert under Wampanoag leader Metacomet, also known as King Philip. During this confrontation, nearly every home, cabin and barn in the Blackstone River Valley (including William Blackstone's house and the forge belonging to Joseph Jenkes) was burned to the ground; several communities had to be abandoned.

The war ended in 1677, and rebuilding began almost immediately in the southern Valley. In the north, it was delayed until the early 1700's.

Settlement Patterns

The Valley's landscape remained largely agrarian during the early years of the 18th century. Most villages in the northern Valley were built on similar patterns - a meeting house on a village green or common, with outlying farmsteads and houses clustered first around the green and then along the principal roads.

A different pattern emerged in the southern Valley. Deliberately founded without any "establishment of religion," Providence (which originally included all the Rhode Island part of the Valley west of the river) had no green or common and no church building until 1700.

> *"...the Blackstone Valley (was) the first area in North America to be industrialized. The ... Massachusetts part, which is bordered by large and spectacular wetlands, stayed mostly undeveloped, but in Rhode Island mill villages dotted the hillsides...Every town on the river was supported by a mill, and every waterfall on the river had a mill next to it..."*
>
> *from The New Yorker, "Encountering the Countryside" by Tony Hiss*

Growth of Regional Centers

Providence, though much in the shadow of the larger settlement of Newport, began to emerge as a seaport, active in both the coastal carrying trade and international commerce with England, the West Indies and Africa. Waterfront areas sprouted warehouses, wharves, shops, taverns, shipwrights and chandleries. By 1767 there was regular stagecoach service

View of Providence in 1808

to Boston. New civic buildings, a library, a printing press and a college followed in the wake of this activity. By the beginning of the Revolutionary War in 1776, Providence boasted of three hundred and fifty houses.

At the upper end of the Valley, the pace was also quickening. Rapid population growth followed Worcester's becoming a regional market center for central Massachusetts. The presence of the county courthouse, with its attendant clerks, lawyers and travelers, was an intellectual as well as an economic stimulus. In 1773, Worcester saw the founding of the American Political Society, whose members quickly aligned themselves with the Patriot cause promoted from Boston.

Two other important centers in the northern Valley were Sutton (in 1765 the region's most populous town) and Mendon. These towns took in much more territory than they do today. Roads from Boston to Hartford (and then on to New York) passed through both. Both towns owed their prosperity to a combination of agriculture, location on multiple transportation routes, and the successful development of several mill sites. Small, decentralized milling operations were, in fact, widespread throughout the Blackstone River Valley wherever water power was available. Flour, meal, boards, iron goods and hand tools were produced locally by "farmer's mills," and increased demand helped raise the size and status of towns with mills. Because the Blackstone River was impossible to navigate and the inland transportation difficult, the commercial influence of this early technology was almost entirely local.

The First Revolution

During the Revolutionary War, Worcester served the Patriots as a communications center and supply depot; the Providence area was a major focus of anti-British activity as well. As a seaport, Providence had a direct interest in opposing the British trade regulations of the 1760's and '70's. After war was declared, the city profited from privateering and the sale of naval stores, cannon and ships to the Continental Army; but the greatest local effect was the British destruction of Newport. This virtual elimination of its closest competitor allowed Providence to become the state's commercial capital in the decades following the Revolution.

Cottage Industries/Small Scale Manufacturing

Following the war, people of the Valley quickly turned their attention to the task of making a living. At the end of the 18th century, the area was still largely rural and agrarian, but processing and manufacturing occupied important secondary positions. Women contributed significantly to local economies by hand-producing a wide variety of products in the home. Weaving and spinning yarn were common activities; and goods produced in these cottage industries included straw hats, bonnets, and palm leaf hats and baskets, which were then collected, paid for and distributed by the manufacturer.

Shoemaking was also carried out in the home on a small scale. Towns such as Grafton raised large numbers of cattle, whose hides were used to make shoes, boots, saddlery, harnesses, gloves, caps, belts and whips; a variety of specialty products; and leather by-products such as soap, grease, tallow and candles.

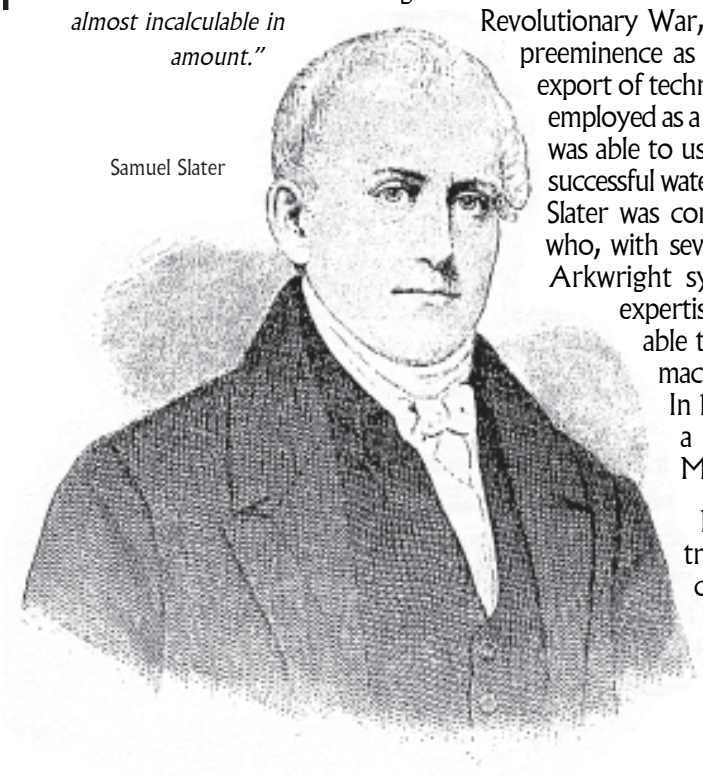
Wood, an abundant raw material in the Blackstone River Valley, especially in the more heavily forested upland towns such as Douglas, was turned into potash, pearl ash, shingles, barrel staves, tool handles, boxes, shoe lasts, spindles, furniture, boats and wagons in small, decentralized workshops. Quarrying activities were extensive, as the Valley was rich in steatite, granite and limestone. The Conklin Lime Quarry in the village of Lime Rock in Lincoln has been in continuous operation since the 1600's, possibly making it America's oldest mining industry. The lime was used to mortar the mills and sweeten acidic New England soils.

"…and these streams, more steady in their volumes than those of the western country, and descending in their short courses an elevation of from two to four hundred and fifty feet to the tide-waters of the bay and sound, furnish with their tributaries innumerable cascades, and a power of propelling machinery almost incalculable in amount."

There was also an active trade in metal products. Forges and water-powered triphammers produced edge tools for farms and workshops, using local bog iron and rhodose — or Cumberlandite — a unique form of iron ore first found in the village of Cumberland. Early weapons were produced in the Valley; in 1745, during the French and Indian War, cannon for the siege of Louisburg were forged on Abbott's Run in Cumberland.

The Second Revolution

Although the British lost dominion over the American colonies during the Revolutionary War, they fought hard not to lose their commercial preeminence as well. Britain particularly worked to prevent the export of technology or technicians. Yet Samuel Slater, formerly employed as a middle manager at the Arkwright mills in England, was able to use his knowledge to help establish America's first successful water-powered textile mill. Upon his arrival in America, Slater was contacted by Providence merchant Moses Brown, who, with several colleagues, was attempting to duplicate the Arkwright system. With the addition of Slater's technical expertise and his managerial brilliance, local artisans were able to produce a working set of mechanical spinning machines for the entrepreneurs in Pawtucket in 1790. In 1793 the thriving spinning operation moved into a new, larger building known today as the Slater Mill Historic Site.



Samuel Slater

More than any other single event, this successful transplantation of the Arkwright factory system can be said to mark the birth of the American Industrial Revolution and the complete transformation of American life and character.

The Changing Landscape

The response to Slater's achievement was slow at first but quickened with the disruption of trade caused by Jefferson's Embargo and the War of 1812. By 1814 water-powered mills occupied all the readily available dam sites in the Blackstone Valley. Most were of moderate size, though others like the Blackstone Mill of 1809 were enormous for their day. Cotton and, to a lesser extent, wool textiles predominated but other Valley industries, including axes and edge tools, textile machinery, firearm and paper manufacturing, were also beginning to adopt organizational and technological elements of the factory system. This proliferation of mills radically changed the Valley landscape. In contrast to the older pattern of dispersed farms and hilltop or crossroads villages, the new industrial development produced a series of river-side mill villages. These communities, centered on the many-windowed, multi-storied, frame, stone and brick factories, contained uniform rows of workers' houses, company stores and, as time went on, churches, schools and other community buildings. These villages represented the densest concentration of industry in the Nation; yet the presence of workers' gardens, company farms and the surrounding countryside kept this phase of industrialization a largely rural phenomenon.

Farm to Factory

The mills of the Blackstone River Valley were organized according to the Rhode Island System, which was characterized by small, privately financed mills, the use of family labor and the development of entire mill villages, with housing, schools and churches as well as the place of employment. In the early mill days, workers were frequently recruited from the surrounding countryside. Hours were long, but pay was high enough to appear attractive, especially to a family with several children. However, in these early days strong disapproval accompanied what was understood to be a fundamental change in labor in America: the change from selling your work, to selling your time. Critics called it "wage slavery," and many believed it to be a radical transformation in the American dream.

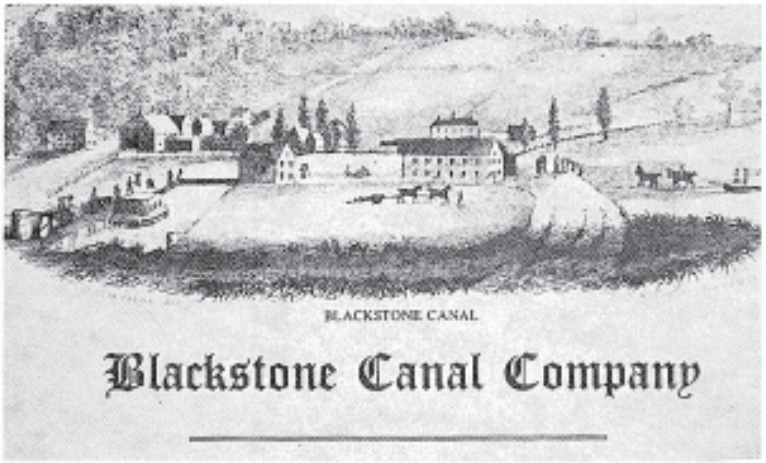
FAMILY WANTED,
To work in a Thread-Mill:
THE Mill is four miles and a half from Providence, on the Turnpike-road leading from Providence to Chepachet, one one fourth of a mile from Messrs. Richard Anthony & Son's Cotton-Mill. For particulars, enquire of Asa Sayles, on the premises. A. SAYLES & Co.
North-Providence, March 7 , 1811.

Transportation Revolution: The Blackstone Canal; The P & W Railroad

The largest problem encountered by the mills was not with the availability of raw materials or labor but with transportation to suitable markets. In the 18th century roads were uniformly poor, despite sporadic attempts to improve them. Hauling a ton of freight 30 miles over such roads cost as much as shipping it all the way to England.

In 1796 Providence merchant John Brown (brother of Slater's patron Moses Brown) had publicly broached the idea of building a canal along the Blackstone River, to Worcester and beyond.

Providence merchants saw the advantages of a canal - increased markets for their goods and increased access to products from the hinterlands. Boston merchants and politicians, however, feared the loss of the Worcester market to Providence and succeeded in thwarting the plan.



The spectacular success of New York's Erie Canal twenty years later revived canal plans in Providence and Worcester, and this time both states approved the scheme. The Blackstone Canal was completed by 1828, but after an initial success it soon proved to be a failure. Canal operations were hampered by the weather and by restrictions imposed by mill owners jealous of their water rights. The canal may have endured these problems but for an unforeseen development, the introduction of the railroad. The Boston and Worcester line, in operation by 1835, demonstrated the greater speed and reliability of the railroad. The canal felt the competition immediately but lingered on in a kind of half-life until the Providence and Worcester Railroad replaced it in 1847. Had John Brown succeeded in building the canal in the 1790's, its history would have been far different. The consequences of missing a golden opportunity through delay will be remembered by the Corridor Commission.

Industry and Labor

In the years between Slater's experiment and the Civil War, America made up for England's 50-year industrial headstart. Industrial growth soared, spurred by newly reliable railroad transportation and by the same technological development that had made the railroads possible - steam. The steam engine allowed for dramatic expansion beyond the finite limits imposed by water power. This was particularly notable in the cities, where steam permitted industrial concentration. In the mill villages, steam power created the classic image of towering stacks above rural landscape.

Mill management continued to be dominated by family-owned firms whose paternalistic attitudes are strikingly revealed in the mill villages of Albion, Slatersville, Ashton, Blackstone, Whitinsville, and the once utopian mill development at Hopedale. In addition to providing worker housing, mill owners often built ball fields, village halls, hospitals and cemeteries, and sponsored outings, clubs and band concerts. The inward-looking attitudes of employers sometimes discouraged the development of transportation networks linking the communities; but a growing divergence between mill owners and mill workers in language, religion and ethnicity tended to work against the sense of community fostered by management.

By 1830, 55% of Valley mill workers were children. Although the later immigrants lessened the need for child labor, it was not completely outlawed until the passage of the Fair Labor Act of 1938.

Labor problems arose, especially during hard economic times. The child labor issue was the first to surface. Although commonplace in Samuel Slater's day, child labor became steadily more controversial. Sensational stories about mill accidents involving children roused public opinion and eventually led to a national solution through legislation.

Adult workers also sought better conditions for themselves. Work days in the mills were long: ten hours in winter and fourteen in summer; the noise was deafening; in summer the workplaces were severely hot; and there was always the danger of disabling accidents and of contracting respiratory diseases from the fiber-filled air. The nation's first strike involving women took place in Pawtucket in 1824, when female weavers were asked to accept longer hours and a *25%* cut in wages.

The makeup of the work force had changed also. During the heyday of canal construction and following the potato famine of 1846 and other crop failures, large numbers of Irish and French and English Canadians had been attracted to work and live in the Valley. Later, Germans, Swedes and the Dutch moved into the region to farm and feed the mill workers. As the textile and manufacturing industries grew, families from southern and eastern Europe also immigrated to the Valley. Like immigrants in the rest of the country, these newcomers often experienced difficulty in gaining acceptance with the established ethnic groups. It was rather natural, therefore, that each new wave of immigrants tended to settle into its own neighborhood.

The Hardest Working River

As reflected by the many magnificent mills built during this period, the height of the Valley's prosperity came between the Civil War and World War I. By 1880 the U.S. Census noted: "It would be hard in fact to find another stream so fully utilized." In addition to the textile industry, numerous companies were established in the late 1800's, and Valley towns and cities became centers well-known for producing special products. Examples are:

- Woonsocket Rubber Company, which became a world leader in the production of rubber goods by the end of the 19th century;
- Washburn Wire Company of Worcester, which became a leading producer of wire, including the barbed wire that fenced the Great Plains;
- Dudley Shuttle Company of Sutton, which became a major producer of loom shuttles;
- Douglas Axe Manufacturing Company, which repeatedly won medals for excellence at European and American trade fairs for its manufacture of machetes, bayonets, picks, axes and other edge tools.

This period has been called the golden age of American industry, and the manufacturers of the Blackstone River Valley rode the crest of the wave.

Effects of Industrialization

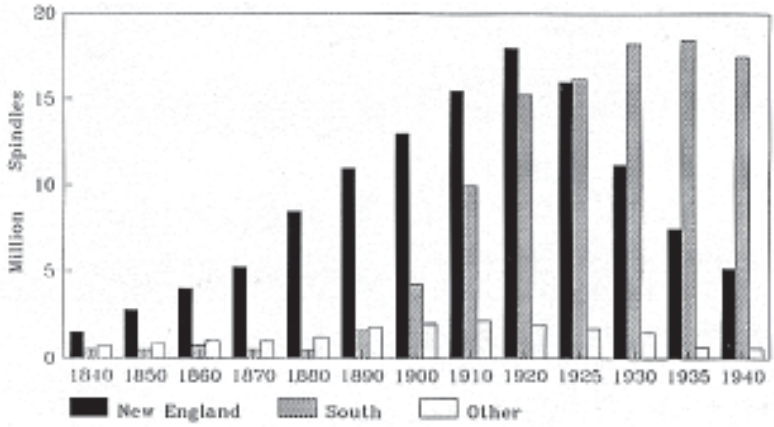
While industrialization of the Valley generally produced economic prosperity, there were adverse side effects. Over a century of hard use had taken its toll on the Blackstone River, which had served as a disposal site for every chemical pollutant incidental to the textile industry, leather making, woodworking and metal working. These chemicals, plus sewage and the practice of using the abandoned portions of the Canal as trash dumps, had produced a terribly polluted river. No anadromous fish have moved up the Blackstone since Slater built his dam in Pawtucket.

Class structure, too, was markedly less egalitarian than it had been in the early 19th century. Labor problems continued to be the subject of newspaper editorials and speeches by politicians and labor leaders at this period.

The Mills Go South

The positive economic outlook of the Blackstone River Valley's commercial interests dimmed as textile jobs and industry began to be exported South. Statistics give a clear picture: in 1880 the South produced 6.25% of the nation's cotton goods; by 1910 it produced 33%. Southern mills were often financed by New England entrepreneurs who chose to

move their business south rather than make capital improvements to existing mills. Outdated technology, labor troubles and climate were all blamed for this downward trend; by 1923 the North had lost 50% of the nation's cotton cloth production to the South. This manufacturing decline was accompanied by the most serious labor problems the Valley had yet seen. The prevailing issues were hours, proposed wage cuts and the union shop. To a certain extent, the labor unions from 1929-55 replaced for the Valley's mill workers the sense of community that had once been dominated by the life of the mill.



Statistics show the collapse of Northern textile dominance, but not the emotional, economic and social pain experienced by Blackstone Valley families for generations.

The End of an Era

The Great Depression of the 1930's struck the Valley particularly hard: mills continued to close and towns lost significant numbers of people. The economic activity of World War II provided the Valley with little more than a short respite from the prevailing downward trend, although some of the larger firms were exceptions. Providence's U.S. Rubber Company, for example, manufactured 36 million heels for shoes and combat boots during the war; the Lippitt Woolen Company in Woonsocket produced hundreds of thousands of yards of textiles for the War Department; and some local businesses benefitted from wartime naval shipbuilding at nearby yards.

Nevertheless, the populations of Valley towns declined inexorably, or at best held steady, from the 1920's to 1980. Industrial figures are starker: of the woolen and worsted mills operating in the Valley at the end of World War II, an estimated 90% have closed.

Revival

The Blackstone River Valley has seen a cultural, if not yet an economic, resurgence since 1985. Today, accelerated growth in Boston, Providence and Worcester has created new opportunities and new problems for Valley residents. Congressional recognition of the Valley as a nationally significant region has instilled a growing sense of pride, and a will to re-harness the energy of the Blackstone River to bring about Valley revitalization. Now, for perhaps the first time, residents have begun to view their towns collectively - as part of a complex, ever-changing fabric that weaves together the Valley's historic, cultural and natural resources in a unique place - a place that reflects the major contributions to American life over the last 350 years.

Chapter Three: Volunteer Opportunities

An overview of the variety
of opportunities available to our VIP's

There are always ample opportunities to join in the fun along the corridor as many different heritage sites host an assortment of musical, art and dance events.

Volunteers are needed to lend a hand with interpretation, information or hospitality at the many historic sites, cultural venues, farms, and river programs, and many special events throughout the Corridor. See what may be of interest to you and explore your possibilities!

You have a choice for volunteer opportunities during special events on the river, you do not need to be associated with any group to participate, and all you need is to have your VIP application on file to participate.

Volunteers don't get paid,
not because they're worthless…
but because they are priceless.
— Unknown

Under Our Umbrella....

The Volunteers In Parks Program of the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley NHC serves as an "umbrella" to the many various friends groups, historical societies and civic organizations throughout the Bi-State Heritage Corridor. By deploying our volunteers throughout the Corridor, we are able to offer many benefits to enhance the visitor's experience at the heritage sites and events in the Blackstone River Valley. Ranger Suzanne Buchanan, Coordinator of the VIP program in the Blackstone Valley area has explained:

"If there is a large event coming up, we can coordinate our volunteers to assist with that event. Volunteers get to know other volunteers, the work is shared, and everyone has a great experience. That's what this program is all about!"

Volunteers are a valuable asset to our corridor. Heritage sites, friends, groups and individuals can tap into the resources that our volunteers can provide.

Here's a list of who is currently under our VIP Umbrella:

Slater Mill Historic Site
Museum of Work & Culture
Woonsocket High River Club
Blackstone River and Canal State Park
River Bend Farm
Blackstone Rivers Project
Friends of the Blackstone River
Roger Williams National Memorial
Assumption School
Blackstone Valley Tourism Council

Douglas Historical Society at
E. N. Jenckes Store Museum

Blackstone Valley Paddle Club
Quinsigamond Village Community Center
Slater Memorial Park
Blackstone River Rescue & Dive Team
Wilbur Kelly House
Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management
Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management

Sustain and Participate in Ongoing Heritage Events and Programs

River Bend Farm

Ample volunteer opportunities just waiting for eager volunteers. Once a dairy farm, River Bend Farm is now an inviting recreational and educational facility. It is owned by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management. River Bend Farm is an example of how people, working together, can preserve and enhance the Valley at the Blackstone River and Canal State Park.

Themes: environment, general history, industrial history, and preservation

Volunteer opportunities:

- Volunteers are needed to help staff visitor services
- Lead interpretive walks
- To maintain trails and enhance scout participation

At this site, volunteers have lent a hand to:

- Provide hospitality for Sunday afternoon concerts along the canal
- Assist with canoe rentals, loading boats and equipment
- Celebrate the history of the Blackstone River Canal by helping with Canal Fest
- VIP's present to the public maple-sugaring program
- Educate people about the Civil War encampments in the area

Volunteer Site Contact: Ranger Val Stegemoen.

Blackstone River and Canal State Park
River Bend Farm
287 Oak St. • Uxbridge, MA 01569
508-278-7604
Website: www.state.ma.us/dem/parks/blst.htm

Captain Wilbur Kelly House

Developed by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, the Captain Wilbur Kelly House is the museum and information center of the newly emerging Blackstone River State Park in Lincoln. The museum is now installed in the former Superintendent's House of what was the Lonsdale Company's old Upper Mill at Ashton.

The Museum depicts the incredible overlay of linkages and intersections that occurred at this site along the Blackstone Canal and the modern bikeway of the park. From the Indians' use of the shallows nearby for snaring fish to the lime carts using the same shallows to move their load across the river to the market towns of Massachusetts there are fascinating images and artifacts to tell these stories. Transportation links are depicted through Kelly's efforts to develop the canal and the success of the Providence and Worcester Railroad. The use of electric trolleys, and the coming of motor cars which necessitated the handsome Ashton viaduct are also part of the museum's presentation. Kelly, himself, was a physical link between the heroic and romantic trade between Narragansett Bay and China and the redirection of the merchant's energies to focus on a fleet of mills in the meadows of the Blackstone Valley.

Volunteer opportunities:

- Assist the resident RIDEM rangers in their welcoming of guests
- Help the visitors connect all the dots of the stories on this site as well as relate the transportation story to all of the other sites and attractions in the Valley
- Extend the hospitality of the house and encourage visitors to seek out related stories by making a real journey through the Valley

Volunteer Site Contact:
RI Department of Environmental Management Rangers
Blackstone River State Park
Lincoln, RI 02865
401-333-0295

Blackstone Valley Visitor Center at Slater Mill

The Blackstone Valley Visitor Center is a 12,000 square foot state-of-the-art Visitor Center for the Slater Mill Historic Site, the City of Pawtucket, the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor and the State of Rhode Island. The Visitor Center is a comprehensive site designed to serve and provide information to visitors, travelers and residents. It is the southern primary gateway to the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor that extends from Pawtucket, RI to Worcester, MA and includes 46 miles and 24 cities and towns.

Themes: General history, industrial history

Volunteer opportunities:

- Hospitality opportunities showing the award winning film, "Hidden in the Blackstone"
- Interpretive opportunities using the fifty foot walk-on map of the entire Valley
- Directing visitors to other heritage sites throughout the Valley and RI
- Special events and visitor services
- Art Gallery staffing
- The Center is the starting point for the Slater Mill tours
- Volunteer opportunity year-round

Volunteer Site Contact:
Blackstone Valley Tourism Council: Bob Billington

Blackstone Valley Visitor Center
175 Main St. • Pawtucket, RI 02960
401-724-2200 1-800-454-2882
website: www.tourblackstone.com

Slater Mill, A Living History Museum

In 1793, Samuel Slater began a transformation on the banks of the Blackstone River when he opened the country's first successful water-powered factory in America. Today another transformation is in progress – the reinvention of Slater Mill as a living history museum where 21st century visitors can experience firsthand what it was like to take part in the American Industrial Revolution. As visitors explore historical buildings, garden and riverbank, they will meet interpreters dressed as men and women of the 1830s. The interpreters are dedicated to making visits enjoyable and educational as they answer questions about the facility, its history, the history of Rhode Island and other sites located in the Blackstone Valley.

Themes: 1830 living history and industrial history

Volunteer Opportunities:

- Working in the garden and park
- Sewing historical costumes for adults and children
- Assisting in the office
- Helping with special events
- Housekeeping in the buildings
- Working with the interpretive staff
- Hands-on demonstrations
- Volunteer opportunities are available year-round

Volunteer Site Contact: Joyce Gilbert
Slater Mill, A Living History Museum
67 Roosevelt Avenue
Pawtucket, RI 02862-0696
401-725-8638
Website: www.slatermill.org

Blackstone Valley Tourism Council

The Blackstone Valley Tourism Council informs and educates people about nature, culture, and history of the Blackstone Valley communities. The council services residents and visitors in Burrillville, Central Falls, Cumberland, Glocester, Lincoln, North Smithfield, Pawtucket, Smithfield and Woonsocket and their environs.

Themes: Environment, general history, industrial history, preservation, and cultural events.

Volunteer opportunities:

- Present programs in the classroom, on the riverboat the "Explorer," or in the fields teaching the eco-industrial story of the Blackstone River Valley
- Guide walking tours or trolley tours and even the new double-decker
- The River Classroom program introduces the history of the River Valley in a classroom setting
- Riverclassroom, on the riverboat the Blackstone Valley Explorer

  or the Spirit of the Blackstone,
  or canal studies featuring the Samuel Slater, an authentic British Canal Boat.

The Blackstone Valley Tourism Council hosts many unique events:

- The Polar Express aboard the Providence & Worcester Railroad
- The "Chinese Dragon Boat Races"
- Volunteer opportunities available year-round

Volunteer Site Contact:
Bob Billington
Blackstone Valley Tourism Council
175 Main St.
Pawtucket, RI 02860
401-724-2200
Website:
www.BVTourism@aol.com

Daggett House

Daggett House, 1685, is the oldest standing house in Pawtucket and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Eight generations of Daggetts lived on the farm surrounding the area that is now known as Slater Memorial Park. Since 1902, the Pawtucket Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution have restored and maintained the building. All artifacts displayed in the house are original.

Themes: general history, farming, and preservation

Volunteer opportunities:

- Assist the ladies of the DAR Chapter in providing interpretive tour of the house, housekeeping, and hospitality during several special events
- "Christmas at Daggett House Tours," seasonal theme events in partnership with Slater Memorial Park
- Volunteer opportunities available throughout the year

Volunteer Site Contact: Joslin Brooks
Daggett House
Slater Memorial Park
Pawtucket, RI 02861

Roger Williams National Memorial

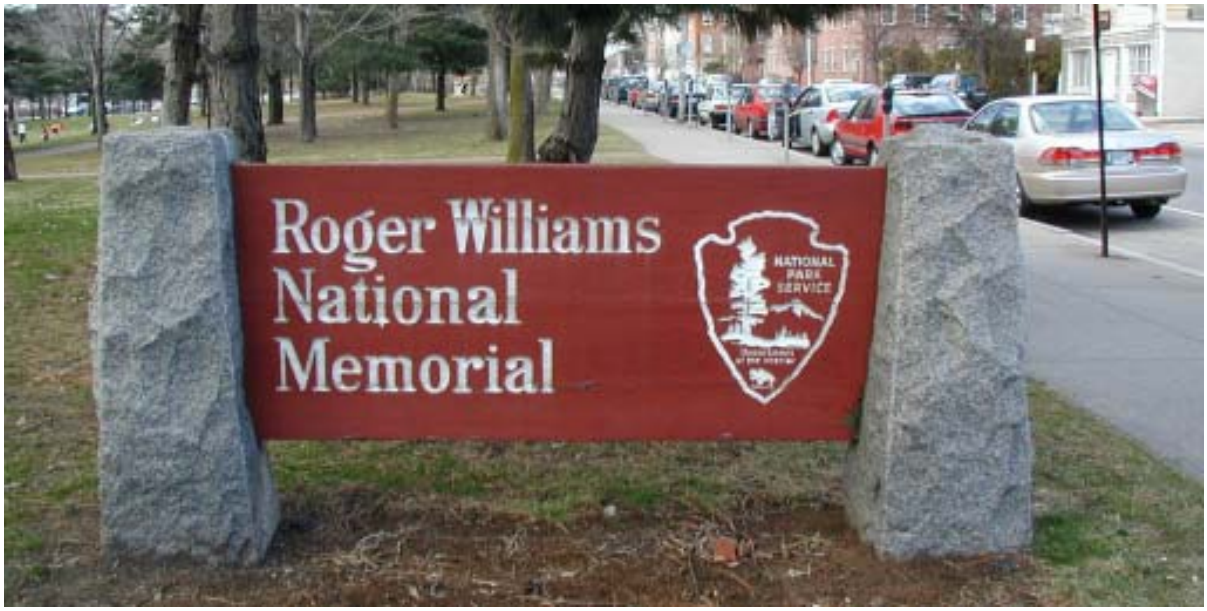
Roger Williams National Memorial commemorates the life and work of the founder of Rhode Island and a champion of the ideal of religious freedom and the ideas underlying modern democracy. Williams, banished from Massachusetts for his beliefs, founded Providence in 1636. This colony served as a refuge where all could come to worship as their conscience dictated without interference from the state. The Memorial is located on a common lot of the original settlement of Providence and includes 4.5 acres of landscaped park.

Themes: Environment, Rhode Island history and general history, geography, and preservation

Volunteer Opportunities:

- Front desk visitor services
- Interpretive program in the Visitor Center as well as walks in the Park
- Outdoor landscaping opportunities
- Special Events ongoing
- Year-round volunteer opportunities available

Volunteer Site Contact: Ranger Suzanne Buchanan
Roger Williams National Memorial
282 North Main St
Providence, RI 02903
401-521-7266 • Website: www.nps.gov/rowi



Museum of Work and Culture

The Museum of Work & Culture is an interactive museum that presents the compelling and touching story of the French Canadian immigrants who left the farms of Quebec for the factories of New England and how they came to identify themselves as working class Americans. Its exhibits recreate the remarkable story of the community's preservation of its faith, French language and culture, and the rise of the Independent Textile Union.

Themes: general history, industrial history, and preservation

Volunteer opportunities:

- Interpretive guided tours of the museum
- Tours featuring hands-on displays, videos, films, interactive audio stations
- Assisting in the Museum store and front desk
- Assisting with special events
- Living History Presentations
- Volunteer opportunities available throughout the year

Museum of Work & Culture
Market Square, 42 South Main St.
Woonsocket, RI 02895
401-769-9675 • Website: www.rihs.org

Waters Farm

Waters Farm is a living history farm museum that emphasizes 19th century rural life. The farmhouse and its contents used over 200 years by the same family, are intact. Located on 130 acres of open fields, woods and frontage on Manchaug Pond, the farm is an educational, cultural, and recreational resource for the town of Sutton and surrounding areas.

Themes: environment, general history, and preservation

Volunteer opportunities:

- Guided interpretive tours of the farmhouse, blacksmith shop and shingle mill
- Assist with housekeeping, chores on the farm and costumed interpretation
- Many special events throughout the year, Waters Farm Days, Chain of Lights, apple crisps baking
- Volunteer opportunities available throughout the year

Waters Farm Preservation, Inc.
4 Uxbridge Road
Sutton, MA 01590
508-865-0101

E. N. Jenckes Store Museum

The E. N. Jenckes Store Museum in Douglas, MA is home to the Douglas Historical Society. Step back in time as you tour this wonderful 19th century general store built in 1835.

Themes: general history, preservation

Volunteer opportunities:

- Interpretive tours of the Museum Store on weekend or by appointment
- Special events for volunteer opportunities throughout the year

Douglas Historical Society
E. N. Jenckes Store Museum
283 Main Street • P. O. Box 176
Douglas, MA 01516
508-476-3856

Quinsigamond Village Community Center

The Quinsigamond Village Community Center is located in the village of Quinsigamond, Worcester MA. The center, located in the heart of the village, is working to establish a sense of community pride.

Themes; general history, preservation

Volunteer opportunities:

- Become involved in preparing new walking tours of the village, most known for the Swedish connection
- Soon the new Northern Gateway Visitor Center will be opening in the village and programs need to be developed for future visitors
- A great opportunity to get in on the early programming

Volunteer Site Contact: David Johnson
Quinsigamond Village C C
16 Greenwood Street
Worcester, MA 01607
501-755-7481

VIP's in the Classroom

Teachers, start a student VIP chapter in your classroom!

Teachers interested in becoming a classroom VIP coordinator for their class are to submit a written request explaining how student volunteers will assist the Commission in achieving Corridor goals. Sponsorship for this program is obtained through corporate giving. Annual donations of $350.00 will supply participating students with Volunteers-In-Parks t-shirts and caps and other necessary supplies.

The River Club 2001 - 2002

The River Club

The River Club is a VIP program at Woonsocket High School in partnership with the National Park Service. Club members work on water quality testing, researching effective methods to conduct chemical tests on the river and, present various workshops to elementary school children. Workshops have been conducted on water quality and macroinvertebrates that live in the river. Educator, VIP Michael Ferry, coordinates the program with the hope that students will become more involved in community issues.

VIP's in the Classroom con't.

VIP's in the Classroom Program 2001 - 2002

Assumption School, Millbury, MA, 8th grade class. An exceptional 8th grade class and its teacher, VIP JoAnne O'Connor Holahan, helped learn more about the Blackstone River via a unique and exciting study of storm drain run-off of the river's major sources of pollution. Gathering samples and conducting research, these students explored all of the storm drains within a one-block radius of Assumption School. They presented their findings to the head of the Millbury Highway Department, as well as the Millbury Board of Selectmen, helping draw new attention to this key challenge for river communities.

VIP's in the Classroom Program 2002- 2003

The students in VIP Ms. Paige Williar's class of Touchstone School, Grafton, MA produced a "Children's Guide to the Blackstone Valley." This publication was undertaken as a student-in-the-classroom VIP project. The children researched the sites listed in the book by visiting them on field trips. This guide will lead families throughout the Valley on fun family visits. You can be sure it has received the children's "seal of approval."

Educational Programs

"Enviroscape"

"Enviroscape" is a unique, interactive and educational tool used to promote awareness of water pollution. The working model contains a community that is complete with houses, factories and a working storm drain. "Enviroscape" is an exciting way to teach children about environmental needs. Volunteers can take this exhibit to schools, scouts and community events.

Water Quality Studies

From the headwaters of the Blackstone to the Central Falls Landing there are various groups that perform water quality studies. **The Blackstone River Watershed Education Project** is a high-school level water quality-monitoring program that takes place in fifteen high schools throughout the watershed. There are three different testing days throughout the school year. Dissolved oxygen, biochemical oxygen demand, phosphates, nitrates, pH, temperature and coliform bacteria are each analyzed. Students and volunteers also work to stencil storm drains with "**Do Not Dump".** These projects can often benefit from having a few more volunteers on hand.

The Blackstone Valley Watershed Vernal Pool Program

A collaborative effort between workshops held in various schools and communities to identify vernal pools. Vernal pools are temporary ponds in which wood frogs and mole salamanders seek refuge in order to breed. On the first rainy, spring night over 300 volunteers come together to help these animals cross from their upland burrows to vernal pools. This event is called "Big Night." Sign up to be on the volunteer "Big Night Hotline."

I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I do know: The only ones among you who will be really happy are those who have sought and found how to serve.

— Albert Schweitzer

A New Coat for Anna Reading Program

A New Coat for Anna is a traveling exhibit that is geared to students from first grade to third grade. This story hour explains how a low income, single mother must barter with several people in the community to provide a new coat for her daughter, Anna. Then, the whole process of making the coat is explained to the youngsters. The sequence of events leads us on a journey from the farm to the finished product, the coat. Volunteers will be trained to present this program in schools, to scouts and at community events.

New Program Makes Scouts VIP's, too

The National Park Service is partnering to promote a new program called "Service to America" that joins the Boy and Girl Scouts of America with the Volunteers-in-Parks program. Scouts volunteering a minimum of 12 hours to a National Park can receive a "Service to America" badge that acknowledges their contribution to America's parks. "Our Scouts live in our National Park," Buchanan stated. "We are looking forward to a terrific response from the scouts who live and go to school right here in the Blackstone River Valley!"

Blackstone River Programs

There are many activities happening on the Blackstone River. This section will highlight the organizations making a difference for the river's health. You are welcome to join in their efforts, either by becoming a member of their organization, or helping out during the year with special events or program.

Friends of the Blackstone River Inc.

The Friends of the Blackstone, (FOB) have been active with river-related activities for many years and they have been very successful in their efforts. Join a monthly meeting to meet this dynamic group. Get involved with river-related activities, river clean ups, planning of their annual "Riverfest" canoe race, canoe trips on the Blackstone. This organization is all volunteer-based and active with the VIP program.

John Marsland,
Chairman
6 Valley Stream Dr.
Cumberland, RI 02864
401-334-2153

"ZAP" the Blackstone

Many of our VIP organizations support the "Zap" the Blackstone River clean up efforts. All work together for the betterment of the river. Call the Corridor office to hook up with an upcoming clean up or a future event.

Blackstone Valley Paddle Club — Team Leaders

This very successful program would not have happened without the excellent dedication from the VIP's who played a key role as "Leaders." VIP's assisted NPS Rangers, as they signed up for their choice of guiding trips on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings —making sure all slots for leaders were filled. For the 2002 season, 726 folks participated in the paddle program. Volunteer opportunities for "Leaders" are available from May – September. Strong knowledge of paddling skills required.

You have a choice for volunteer opportunities during special events on the river, you do not need to be associated with any group to participate, and all you need is to have your VIP application on file to participate.

Bugs of the Blackstone

This program provides an introduction to benthic macroinvertebrates (Bugs that live on the bottom of the Blackstone River) and how the absence/presence of these bugs can indicate the health of a river. Depending on the age of the audience, we have three distinct (age-appropriate) lessons. Younger students will create Bugs of the Blackstone using gumdrops and toothpicks. Older students will learn about the Macros by closely examining preserved specimens. Volunteers can present programs throughout the school year and to scouts and camps.

Blackstone Valley Rivers Project

This educational course is presented by several of our active VIP's. These professional folks have designed a curriculum around six content units to be used by the teacher during a one month period. Each unit is organized around field trips to the river and involves collecting river data. Training participant are taught to use the river for chemistry, biology, earth science, geography, language arts, and mathematics. Volunteers have received scholarships to attend this weeklong course. Volunteers with an interest in river studies are encouraged to become involved with this exciting program.

Volunteer Site Contact: Mike and Jan Ferry
Blackstone Valley Rivers Project
One Pine Street
Manville, RI 02838
401-765-2579
Ride3938@ride.ri.net

Blackstone River Rescue & Dive Team

A unique group of professional volunteers from local Fire & Rescue Departments. This organization has developed a rescue plan for people using the Blackstone River for recreational purposes. If someone should need rescue assistace while on the river or the bikepath this team will be there to respond by implementing their river rescue action plan! The group has an active committee and attends many local events to assist in safety planning prior to and during the event. Volunteers with the VIP program have first passed the professional requirements required by the Blackstone River Rescue & Dive Team.

Volunteer Site Contact:
Armand Morin
Blackstone River
Rescue & Dive Team
401-333-1242

Fly-tying Workshop

A new VIP program was organized in partnership with the United Fly-tyers Association. A six week fly-tying course was offered in Woonsocket to the general public. An incredible turnout for the program: 42 students each week with many on the waiting list to join. A total of 9 VIP instructors taught the six weeks' class to 42 students of all ages. Watch for upcoming programs —fly casting clinics and fly fishing the Blackstone River.

Winter Fun Volunteering

Many volunteer opportunities still go on throughout the winter.
A short description follows:

Tracking

Assist the rangers or lead a group of your own. Help visitors learn how to identify an animal from its tracks and to discover the many ways of forest creatures like bobcats, weasels and foxes.

Winter Photography

Winter offers wonderful photographic opportunities. If photography is a hobby, assist with presenting outdoor photography programs. Held throughout the Valley.

If you want to change the world — be that change.

— Ghandi

Cross Country Skiing and Snowshoeing

Weather permitting, (if we have snow.) If you have knowledge of cross-country skiing or snowshoeing and have your own equipment, you can be of great assistance to the NPS Rangers as a Team Leader for tours through scenic trails of the Valley.

Maple Sugaring — *"How sweet it is"*

A dedicated group of VIP's hold a 6 week maple sugaring demonstration at River Bend Farm, Uxbridge, MA. Assist with tapping trees for sap, boiling the sap, public presentations of the process and, best of all, tasting of the finished product.

Interpretive programs — *"Have story will travel!"*

Many of our heritage sites have interpretive opportunities for the volunteers. In addition to the programs already listed, the following programs can be presented throughout the Blackstone Valley:

- Interpretive programs aboard the Blackstone Valley Trolley
- Interpretive programs aboard the Blackstone Valley Explorer
- Interpretive programs aboard the Blackstone Valley Sightseeing Double-Decker Bus
- Interpretive programs while staffing the Corridor Traveling Cart
- Interpretive programs along the towpath highlighting history, nature and transportation.

Walkabout tours throughout the villages and historic sites of the Blackstone River Valley have been led by NPS Rangers and volunteers each Thursday evening throughout the summer. Assist with interpretive presentations.

Off-site Volunteers

Off-Site Volunteers are warmly welcomed.

Various needs can be met by those people who enjoy contributing to our Corridor's goals in a less conspicuous way. Here is just a brief list of some of the important tasks that Off-Site Volunteers have contributed to in the past.

Cyber-Volunteers

Updating database, creating flyers for events, and researching Blackstone Valley history.

Newsletter

Assist in publishing "Volunteer News".

Depot Office

Help with various daily office tasks.

Technical Imaging Assistance

Scanning photos and slides.

Library

Cataloguing and organizing various media.

Maintain Scrapbook

Organize our many VIP-in-action photos into photo albums. Help us to date, categorize and identify volunteers and the events they participate in.

Coordinate Large Mailings

Help is always welcomed in editing our mailing lists, addressing and mailing out information, notices, and newsletters.

Bi-Monthly Networking Meetings

On the third Thursday of every other month a VIP networking session is held for volunteers to visit a Corridor heritage site. It is a great opportunity to learn about the host site's contributions to the Blackstone Valley and how they utilize volunteers. These meetings are perfect venues to pique your interests in future volunteering (perhaps at that particular site) and to meet and get to know your fellow VIP's.

Each meeting features a training component and a "behind-the-scenes" tour. There is a chance to discover unique stories while being educated about the site. Upcoming volunteer opportunities are highlighted and details given on volunteer involvement.

Past meetings have been held at…

River Bend Farm	Uxbridge, MA
Roger Williams National Memorial	Providence, RI
Quinsigamond Village Community Center,	Worcester, MA
Stagecoach Inn	Chepachet, RI
Heritage Corridor, Depot Square	Woonsocket, RI
E. N. Jenckes Store Museum	Douglas, MA
Slater Mill Historic Site	Pawtucket, RI
Blackstone Valley Visitor Center	Pawtucket, RI
Kelly House	Lincoln, RI
Museum of Work & Culture	Woonsocket, RI
Waters Farm Living History	Sutton, MA
Forestdale School House	Forestdale, RI
Hearthside	Lincoln, RI

Chapter Four:
VIP Uniform

The Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor VIP uniform has its own unique look. The uniform program has been designed so that the volunteer can be identified as both a volunteer with the Heritage Corridor and the National Park Service. With volunteers coming together under the VIP umbrella, we can highlight the uniformed VIP volunteering at the many diverse volunteer sites and events. The uniforms make a connection and a good impression for our visitors and residents within the boundaries of the Heritage Corridor.

The VIP uniform and VIP NPS Arrowhead patch are nationally recognized. Many volunteers enjoy the idea of being part of the bigger NPS picture. The uniform also makes for a smoother transition for the VIP to volunteer throughout the Corridor, for, automatically, when in uniform they become part of the "VIP team"!

Uniforms will be distributed to volunteers according to their volunteer duties. The items listed are offered to the VIP at no charge. We ask that when no longer able to volunteer, your uniforms be returned to the uniform coordinator if they are in condition to be recycled.

Field Uniform

Class A Uniform

Field Uniforms

Field Uniforms are to be worn while volunteering for physical or casual activities (River cleanups, paddle programs, trail maintenance, water testing and fieldwork)

Field Uniforms consist of the following:

- T-Shirt with the VIP logo on front and BVRVNHC logo on back
- Baseball cap embroidered with Corridor logo and "volunteer"
- Water bottle
- Jeans can be worn with Field uniforms.

Class A Uniforms

Class A Uniforms are to be worn when VIP is presenting formal interpretative programs, representing the Corridor as a VIP Ambassador, staffing Corridor exhibit or receiving an award. This "Class A" uniform consists of:

- Tan pants or skirt (NO JEANS)
- Long/short sleeve hunter green denim shirt with NPS patch on left sleeve
- The BRVNHC logo is embroidered on the right front
- "Aussie Hat" This can be positioned in a variety of ways to meet the needs of the particular event for which one is volunteering.
- Name tag will also be provided

Note:

The two logos on the uniform signify the connection between the national partnerships of the National Park Service and the local Heritage Corridor.

Some sites have also added their own patch to be sewn on the right sleeve. This added patch allows the volunteer the opportunity to be identified with their site and still maintain their NPS "Volunteer" identity.

Student Uniforms*

Student Uniforms will be issued to volunteers that are of school age and enrolled in no higher than high school.

Student Uniforms consist of:

- T-Shirt with student VIP logo on front
- BRVNHC logo on back
- Baseball cap with Corridor logo and "Volunteer" logo
- Water bottle

**Teachers of VIP-sponsored classrooms receive* Field *and* Class A *uniforms.*

Miscellaneous items that can be borrowed by VIP:

- VIP orange, reflective vest
- Two-way radio
- VIP tote bags
- Winter Vest, hats, scarves (each designed to identify the volunteer when presenting winter programs)
- Five-gallon water jug
- Waders

To become a volunteer…

A volunteer is required to

- donate time and effort
- represent the Corridor proficiently
- be enthusiastic, reliable and responsible
- wear the appropriate volunteer uniform

In return volunteers receive…

- Ample opportunities to network and form valuable contacts
- Knowledge-filled experiences that will heighten awareness of the Blackstone River Valley corridor and enhance community involvement
- Training sessions
- Press recognition, awards and promotional tools
- Satisfaction that you are making a positive contribution to an important mission and to the goals of the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley NHC

How to apply…

- Complete personal interests form
- Fill out formal application
- Attend an interview
- Provide a copy of a valid driver's license (if applicable)
- Select upcoming events to volunteer at
- Log hours

Be sure to look for continually updated information on the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor in the monthly publication, *The River Valley Current*. Look for the *Revolutions* series in the Valley Current. Or check out our website at *www.nps.gov/blac/home.htm*

Time Sheets

Keeping track of your volunteer hours will require commitment on the part of the VIP. Each month you will be sent a timesheet with your VIP Newsletter. Please take the time throughout the month to enter the hours that you have volunteered. At the end of the month, return the sheet to Suzanne. You can also e-mail hours or leave a message about your hours on the VIP extension. 401-762-0440 ex 33, or e-mail her at Suzanne_Buchanan@nps.gov

This information is recorded in a main VIP database. Then these records are placed in your VIP file. Recording hours aids in tallying the total hours volunteered by everyone throughout the Corridor on a yearly basis. These hours are also forwarded to the **regional** VIP coordinator and the **national** coordinator in Washington.

Please follow the following format to record information:

- Enter date that you volunteered
- Place, site, event
- Type of program (codes on bottom of time sheet)

  A **Administrative** (office work, mailings, computer work)

  I **Interpretive** (presenting programs, walks, leading tours)

  R M **Resource Management**
  (river cleanups, trail maintenance, library, photo and slide, signage)

  O **Other** (River programs, staffing exhibits, VIP related meetings)

Please provide detailed description that further explains the appropriate letter code.
Example **RM=scan slides onto CD at Depot**

Also record if it applies:

- the number of people attending the event
- the number of hours volunteered
- total hours for this time sheet

The VIP program of the
Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor
does not require a set amount of hours each month.

We strive for ***quality*** volunteer hours — ***not quantity*** of hours!

Volunteer Program Hours Monthly Report

Mail to
Attn: Ranger Suzanne Buchanan
John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley NHC
One Depot Square • Woonsocket, RI 02895

Type of Program Code

A - Administrative
I - Interpretive
RM - Resource Management
O - Other

Volunteer Name: _____ Month: _____

Date Volunteered	Place Site Event	Type of Program	Number attending program	Hours Volunteered
6/1/02	Canal Fest	I-lead walks along towpath	17	6.00
6/4/02	Depot-large mailing	A-stuffed evelopes	NA	4.00
6/6/02	Leo Savoie School	I-New Coat for Anna 1st graders	23	3.00
6/11/02	Depot	RM-scanned slides onto CD	NA	4.50
6/15/02	Riverfest - Vally Falls	O-staffed Corridor exhibit	72	7.00
6/20/02	Waters Farm - VIP meeting	O-VIP monthly meeting	NA	2.00
		Totals:	**112**	**26.50**

Please call in at 762-0440 x 33,
e-mail to Suzanne_ Buchanan @nps.gov or
mail this form at the end of each month.
I will then record your hours and place this form in your file.

Volunteers Receive Training

Volunteer Training:

There are many opportunities for the VIP to receive ongoing training. The following list highlights several sessions that VIP's have attended.

Volunteers are updated with new visions for the Heritage Corridor, so that they can be informed and pass correct information on to residents and guest of the Valley.

CPR training is held each year for VIP's to receive first aid training and Community CPR.

VIP's are given opportunities to travel and train with the best instructors so they can assist and lead quality programs.

VIP's have received scholarships to attend:

- The Interpretive Training Institute , Gorham, NH
- Blackstone Rivers Project, weeklong course, Woonsocket, RI
- Blackstone Rivers Project, one day workshop, Woonsocket, RI
- RI Docent Symposium, Roger Williams Park & Zoo
- Computer Training
- Cross Country Skiing Instructors Course
- Canoe training & certification

Volunteer Recognition

Volunteers Recognized for their Outstanding Efforts

Throughout the year VIP's are recognized for the outstanding contributions they have made to the Corridor Commission's goals. The National VIP Program as well as many partners throughout the Blackstone Valley have presented awards to our VIP's.

Outstanding Volunteer Award

Julia Grassini received the 2001 Outstanding Volunteer Award from the Greenway Challenge Committee for her outstanding volunteer efforts. She contributed in planning the Challenge as well as assisting on the day of the event.

John H. Chafee, Environmental Award

VIP Keith Hainley received the "2002 John H. Chafee, Environmental Award" from the Blackstone Valley Watershed Association for his tireless efforts in cleaning up the Blackstone River. This is the third year a VIP has received this award:

- 2001 VIP, John Marsland
- 2000 VIP, Frank Matta

In April we celebrate "National Volunteer Week" and what a great week to recognize the many volunteers who have made wonderful contributions to the Valley.

John H. Chafee Heritage Award

Janice and Michael Ferry were presented the 2002 John H. Chafee Heritage Award. This husband-wife team of VIP's and educators brings the Blackstone River alive in local classrooms, helping a new generation understand the importance of the river. Janice teaches at Mount St. Charles Academy and Michael at Woonsocket High School, and both share a love of the river. Projects they have spearheaded include the Community Pollution Prevention Project, the Blackstone River Project for teacher education, and many other unique programs.

VIP Margaret Carroll of Millville, MA, received this award in 2001. Anyone spending time in the Valley is bound to meet Margaret Carroll and hear one of her rousing speeches singing the praises of her home, Millville. In fact, Margaret Carroll has brought the history of Millville alive by her unflagging preservation efforts. A retired teacher in the Blackstone/Millville school system, she has continued her passion for education as a volunteer and advocate for the Heritage Corridor.

Volunteering can be fun.

You can have fun with the volunteers you meet even when you're not volunteering!

Team VIP participated in the Greenway Challenge

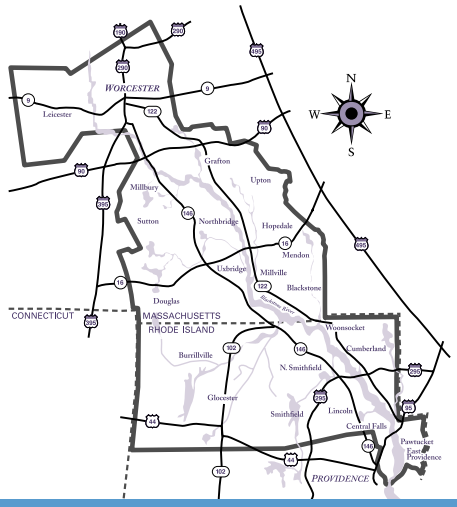
Relax and have some fun at the annual VIP Picnic. Participate in the annual "Watermelon Seed Spitting Contest"

A fun time was had by all as we celebrated "National Parks Day" with the Pawtucket Red Sox.

Several VIP's representing 'Team Zap" competed in the Chinese Dragon Boat Race and finished with a gold medal for the recreational division!

BLACKSTONE RIVER VALLEY NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR

The American Industrial Revolution began in the Blackstone River Valley. It changed the landscape of the Valley and transformed life in America. Recognizing its significance, Congress established the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission to assist in protecting and celebrating the Birthplace of the American Industrial Revolution.



John H. Chafee
BLACKSTONE RIVER VALLEY
National Heritage Corridor Commission

ONE DEPOT SQUARE, WOONSOCKET, RI 02895

PHONE 401 762-0250

WWW.NPS.GOV/BLAC/HOME.HTM