

Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Dear Friends –

Welcome to the first newsletter for your new Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park. As of December 19, 2014, Blackstone became the 402nd unit of the National Park Service. What an accomplishment! Thank you to everyone who made this park a reality. The National Park Service is honored to be able to tell the story of “the Birthplace of America’s Industrial Revolution,” here, in the Blackstone Valley.

While the park has been legislatively established, there is still some work to do. First and foremost, the National Park Service (NPS) is working on drawing the park boundary. We are meeting with state government agencies, nonprofit organizations, municipalities, stakeholders, community members and volunteers to help us define this boundary. We would love your input and hope to hear from you.

Though we don’t yet have an official boundary, NPS Rangers are out in the Valley this summer. We have rangers supporting summer camps, giving Walkabouts, attending events, and meeting visitors at important sites. We are working on publishing outreach materials and Jr. Ranger books. National Park Passport stamps will be coming soon!

On behalf of all of us that have the honor to work for the NPS, we appreciate your support in our mission to create a world-class National Park in the Blackstone River Valley. I’m excited to be on this journey with you.

Sincerely,
Meghan Kish
Meghan Kish
Superintendent
Blackstone River Valley
National Historical Park



Meet the Staff



Meghan Kish is the Superintendent for Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park, New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park and Roger Williams National Memorial. Meghan is meeting with key stakeholders to discuss the creation of a park boundary, where to commit staff expertise and time, and how to promote the existence and mission of the new park. She is excited and honored to be part of the Blackstone team. Meghan has an office at the Depot in Woonsocket as well as in New Bedford, MA. She can be reached by email at Meghan_Kish@nps.gov.



Jennifer Smith serves as the Management Assistant for both Roger Williams National Memorial and Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park. She is responsible for supervision, general operations, cooperative agreements, communications, and community planning initiatives. Jennifer splits her time between an office in Providence and the Depot in Woonsocket. She can be reached by email at Jennifer_Smith@nps.gov.



Chuck Arning is an Interpretive Park Ranger/AV Specialist and has worked for the National Park Service in the Blackstone River Valley for 22 years. Chuck has been the lead on the very successful Along the Blackstone cable television series and will continue to support the operations of the new park using his skills in writing, videography, interpretation and building partnerships. Chuck's office is at the Depot in Woonsocket, and he can be reached by email at Chuck_Arning@nps.gov.



Kevin Klyberg is an Interpretive Park Ranger who has been with the National Park Service for 18 years, all at Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor. Kevin has worked extensively with valley partners on interpretive training, development of curriculum-based education programs and front-line delivery of interpretive programs as well as serving as the park's web and social media coordinator. Kevin's office is at the Depot in Woonsocket and he can be reached by email at Kevin_Klyberg@nps.gov.



Michelle Spink is the Administrative Officer for Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park as well as New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park and Roger Williams National Memorial. Michelle describes her role as taking care of the business side of the house. She focuses her work on budget, human resources, procurement, contracting, and IT. Michelle's primary office is in New Bedford but, like all of the shared staff of the park, she also spends time at our Woonsocket office. Michelle can be reached by email at Michelle_Spink@nps.gov.



Cara Pearson is a Visual Information Specialist for Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park, New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park and Roger Williams National Memorial. Cara is the coordinator for the NPS Centennial initiative across the three parks, is working with staff to design outreach materials for the new park, and is the lead on the new park brochure as well as this newsletter. Cara spends most of her time at her office at New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park and can be reached by email at Cara_Pearson@nps.gov.

A Brand New Park

What is in the Park Boundary?

We are currently working on determining the boundary. What we can tell you is that the legislation passed on December 19, 2014 states that:

- Blackstone River State Park; and
- the following resources, as described in Management Option 3 of the study entitled "Blackstone River Valley Special Resource Study—Study Report 2011":

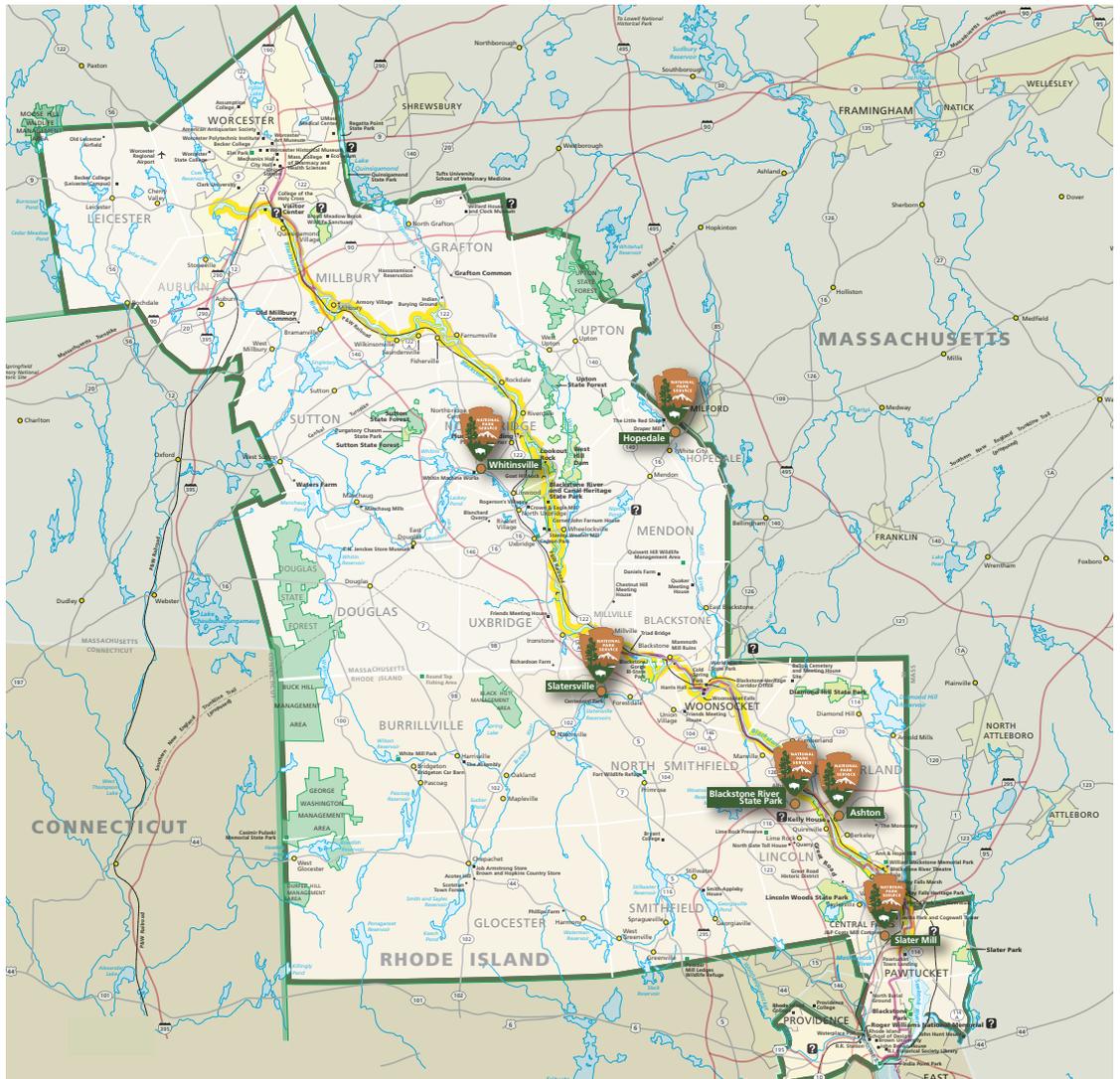


- Old Slater Mill National Historic Landmark District
- Slatersville Historic District
- Ashton Historic District
- Whitinsville Historic District
- Hopedale Village Historic District
- Blackstone River and the tributaries of Blackstone River
- Blackstone Canal

Park Legislation

Click image to download or visit: go.nps.gov/BLRlegislation

Proposed Map of Sites



What's Happening in the New Park?

Planning the New Park with our Community Partners

National Park Service (NPS) staff is visiting sites and meeting with a variety of partners, including Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, Old Slater Mill Association, and the leadership from the mill villages named in the park legislation. These meetings are focusing on what the new park's boundary will look like. Many thanks to all the partners for taking the

time to sit down and start the planning process!

To help make this process go smoother, and to lend expertise to our mill village partners, the park has brought on an intern from the University of Pennsylvania's graduate programs in city and regional planning and historic preservation. Jessica Neubelt is currently researching historic districts and historic commissions in the mill villages

and will, with NPS staff, develop preservation recommendations to meet the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation.

Look for stakeholder meetings in the fall, both Rhode Island and Massachusetts, to discuss this the planning process and to answer any questions the public has about the new park. *Meeting dates and locations will be announced soon.*



Blackstone Summer 2015 Ranger Walkabouts

Our first summer as a National Historical Park and Rangers are already offering great programs to introduce the public to park sites! Each Thursday evening this summer, a Park Ranger explores a different perspective of America's journey towards industrialization. Walkabouts kick off at 6:30pm on Thursdays and are a great

way for people to find the "hidden gems" of the valley. Since 1997, NPS Rangers have been conducting free public programs throughout the Blackstone Valley. These stories cover the mill villages of the valley, the Underground Railroad, the Canal, ice cream socials, and even the Bikeway. There is something for everyone! Come discover how

the story of the Blackstone Valley is America's story. Check our website for details: nps.gov/blac.



Summer Camp Fun

What's summer without camp? The National Park Service is pleased to introduce an exciting partnership with our wonderful environmental partners, Mass Audubon at Broad Meadow Brook Wildlife Sanctuary and the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management. With matching funds from

Mass Audubon and National Park Service, together we were able to create a rich historical and environmental field trip experience at Blackstone River State Park- including a trip on the 40 passenger Blackstone Explorer. Thanks to all our partners for making this pilot project a success!



Coming Soon!

National Park Service Centennial

While the Blackstone River Valley NHP is brand new, the National Park Service is turning 100 years old in 2016. The NPS Centennial celebration has already begun and will continue through the end of next year. The Centennial is both a celebration of our work for the past 100 years and a start of a second century of stewardship of

America's national parks. The NPS staff will continue to engage communities through recreation, conservation, and historic preservation programs. Visit findyourpark.com to learn about all of the different ways that you can participate in the Centennial celebration. Look for great Centennial programs coming your way soon!



National Park Service Centennial Challenge Award



The Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park is excited to be one of the first recipients of the the National Park Service's Centennial Challenge program. These funds were matched by the Blackstone Heritage Corridor, Inc. Together, the partners are creating new outreach, educational, and interpretive

materials for the new National Historical Park.

The purpose of this project is simple; now that the Blackstone National Historical Park exists, we need to let people know about it! This funding will allow us to create new materials and a small display to talk about the new

park and our relationship with the Blackstone Heritage Corridor. It will also allow us to produce videos to let folks from around the world get a peek at the new park. Finally, we are working together to create a new Junior Ranger program that will help introduce the wonders of the Blackstone River Valley to our younger visitors and their families both in person and virtually.

The Centennial Challenge program is a \$26 million initiative that will help over 100 parks prepare for visitors during the National Park Service's Centennial in 2016.

"Ticket-to-Ride" Transportation Grant

Bringing schools to parks can be challenging - due in no small part to the cost of transportation. However, thanks to the National Park Foundation and the generosity of Disney, transportation is no longer a barrier in getting our youngest visitors out into the valley. Roll those buses! A good field trip experience is built on strong relationships between the park and the schools. Fortunately, while the park is new, the historic landscape that tells the story of America's journey towards industrialization is not and NPS Rangers have worked closely

with educators to connect the "landscape of industry" with their curriculum.

The Innovation & Technology Academy at Doherty High School in Worcester, MA is a great example of the park working with educators to develop field trips that meet curriculum guidelines. Field Trips to the Slater Mill Historic Site, the Blackstone Canal, the Captain Wilbur Kelly Transportation Museum and historic Slatersville help bring the academics to life for these young minds.



A Model in Partnership

New National Park Cements Ties with Blackstone Heritage Corridor, Inc.

Transitions are always a little confusing, so it is understandable if the relationship between the Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park and the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor appears to be a bit muddled. In addition to having similar names, the Heritage Corridor was affiliated with the National Park Service for 26 years and managed by had a Federal Commission.

Today, the Heritage Corridor is managed by Blackstone Heritage Corridor, Inc., a 501-(C)(3), nonprofit that works in partnership with state, municipal, and federal agencies, as well as local businesses, nonprofits,

educational institutions, and residents to preserve and promote the Valley's historic, cultural, natural and recreational resources for current and future generations. Recently, Congress expanded the Corridor boundaries to include the Town of Auburn in Massachusetts and several neighborhoods in Providence, Rhode Island including the Jewelry District, Downtown Providence, and the Woonasquatucket River Corridor.

The new unit in the National Park System, the Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park, actually fits within the Heritage Corridor boundaries. Park staff will continue

working with Blackstone Heritage Corridor, Inc. to define this new and exciting relationship as we build on the past successes and investments of the National Heritage Corridor and embark upon on telling the story of industrialization in the Blackstone River Valley.



Blackstone Heritage Corridor, Inc.

Look What's Coming....

National Park Passport Stamps

One of the most popular activities for visitors to National Park Service sites is the "Passport to your National Parks" program. You can collect a passport stamp from every National Park that you visit. Passport stamps will soon be available for Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park. Initially, these stamps will be available at Slater

Mill, Blackstone Valley Visitor Center in Pawtucket, the Kelly House in Blackstone River State Park Visitor Center in Lincoln and at park headquarters in Woonsocket, RI. We will add additional stamps as the park's official boundaries are established. The stamps will state which site you visited - see if you can collect them all!



Contact Us

Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park



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