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Powering the Rebirth of Our Mighty Blackstone

Bringing Migrating Fish Back to Our Valley



Blackstone River Watershed Council/ Friends of the Blackstone

www.blackstoneriver.org

A Great American Heritage River

There was a time in the Valley

when migrating fish drew crowds of people, flocks of birds, and many other wildlife species to the banks of the Blackstone. Over 200 years ago, this ancient process stopped, when the river's flow was abruptly interrupted by dams of the Industrial Revolution.







Today we no longer rely upon

these dams to power our economy. Many remain in place however, continuing to not only block fish from their native spawning grounds, but keeping wildlife and people from enjoying the resources and excitement of annual fish runs.

Our Goal is to construct fish

ladders or remove dams so that the river can once again draw people and wildlife to its banks.

It's not a possibility, it's a reality...



...and you can help!



Join us as we Power the Rebirth of Our Mighty Blackstone

by bringing fish back to their native breeding grounds.

A Historic Valley

Most people in the Blackstone River Valley, are familiar with its industrial history. They may not be as familiar with the impacts of this industry.



Valley Falls Dam

At one time, the Blackstone was a wide, wild river—habitat for many species of fish and other wildlife. The Blackstone was breeding territory for shad, herring, and even Atlantic salmon. These are andromous species which hatch in freshwater, migrate to the ocean, and return to their native river to breed (spawn).

Deterioration of the River



Slater Mill Dam

The construction of Slater Mill Dam in 1793 initiated the decline of anadromous fish in our area. Dams and mills along the river blocked migration and contributed to heavy pollution of critical habitat.

Bringing the River Back

In the past 30 years, the Blackstone has seen dramatic improvements. As a result of community efforts and environmental legislation (especially the Clean Water Act of 1972), freshwater fish and wildlife are abundant, and people are once more enjoying nature along the Blackstone.



What Now?

With improved water quality and the success of the Lonsdale Drive-in Wetland Restoration Project, breeding habitat is available, and the return of anadromous species is possible. The Blackstone is ready and beckoning. It is time that wild, native fish return to complete the Rebirth of Our River. With the help and support of our government, community organizations, and citizens, we can make our fish ladder project a reality.



Main Street Dam



Lonsdale Marsh and Bike Trail

Progress & Vision

In the past few months, members of the organizations involved have met with town, state, and federal officials, receiving support and commitment. We are actively seeking the support of dam owners along the river to find options that are beneficial for all.



Elizabeth Webbing Dam

Phase 1: Complete the master plan focused on the first four dams (see map), and begin passage installation.

Phase 2: Complete the goal of bringing shad, herring, and even salmon back to their native spawning grounds in Massachusetts by installing passage systems on the 4 dams between Valley Falls and the Massachusetts border.

First four dams on the Blackstone River



This project is part of the Campaign for a Fishable/Swimmable Blackstone River by 2015

Project Benefits

Restoration of anadromous fish to the Blackstone River would provide substantial ecological benefits for the Blackstone River watershed and the Narragansett Bay Ecosystem, as well as economic benefits for the communities of the Blackstone Valley and beyond. Specifically, the re-established fish runs would provide:

- Forage for valuable commercial and recreational fish species such as bluefish, striped bass, bass and pickerel.
- Forage for predatory birds such as waterfowl, wading birds, and osprey
- Enhanced fishing opportunities for urban anglers
- Educational opportunities and aesthetic benefits to visitors at Slater Mill and other areas
- Enhanced opportunities for tourism and recreation in the Blackstone River Valley Heritage Corridor.

What can YOU do?



- Contact your municipal and legislative officials to show support for the project.
- Give support to participating dam owners
- For more details, visit **www.blackstoneriver.org**
- Join the effort by e-mailing **mightyblackstone@gmail.com**

Our Partners

Blackstone River Coalition • Narragansett Bay Estuary Program • Mass Audubon • Trout Unlimited • Save the Bay • Blackstone Valley Tourism Council • Cumberland Conservation Commission • Rhode Island Rivers Council • Lincoln Land Trust • Pawtucket Neighborhood Alliance • Corridor Keepers • J.H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor • US Environmental Protection Agency • US Fish and Wildlife Service • Natural Resources Conservation Service • RI Department of Environmental Management • NOAA • State and Local representatives • Local towns