

The PRISM

the newsletter of the Blackstone Canal Conservancy
<http://www.blackstonecc.org>

No. 48

December, 2014

October 25th Workday

The October workday followed several days of heavy rain. So there was water in the middle of the canal at our usual work site. So, we did our work just south of the southern towpath bridge where we could easily cross from side to side. At this point, the water on outside of the towpath and berm begins moving away from them, allowing more space for cut materials. This left an area between where we worked and our prior work for future workdays.

Franklin – Bellingham SNETT Cleanup

The Franklin Bellingham Rail Trail Committee held a cleanup of part of the rail trail in Bellingham on Saturday, November 8th. A small group of volunteers met at Fox Run Road, and worked picking trash west to the Blackstone town line. This is west of the Rte. 126 bridge (which is planned for replacement with a tunnel) and Old Elm Street. We encountered mostly small trash such as beverage containers. In 2012, the Bay State Trail Riders had had an extensive work day in this area which removed heavier debris.



One of a pair of rail storage chairs on the SNETT west of Fox Hill Road on 11/8/14. The companion chair was in a thicket.



Volunteers on the FBRTC cleanup approaching the Rte. 126 bridge on 11/8/14

Blackstone Bikeway Update

An inspection of the bikeway in Blackstone on November 2nd showed that work in Blackstone had been tied up for the winter with a smooth grade from Old Mendon Road through the Church St. cut to the Factory Pond Bridge. Further west, all of the right of way had been cleared from Factory Pond to Rte 146A and the Adams St. parking area in Uxbridge. Construction trailers had been moved into the Central St. parking area in Millville. Apparently, further work will await spring.



Telephoto view from Old Mendon Rd. to Factory Pond bridge in Blackstone on 11/2/14



Triad SNETT bridge looking west on 11/2/14



View of cleared SNETT looking west from Rte. 126 on 11/2/14 with Triad Bridge in the background.



View east along SNETT at Adams St. parking lot, just east of Rte. 146A on 11/2/14



View west on SNETT across Rte. 146A on 11/2/14. A bridge across the highway is proposed here.



View east along SNETT at Rte. 146. 11/10/14



Signs at the junction of the SNETT & Rte 146. These may be illegally on state property.

SNETT @ Prospect St., Franklin

The SNETT passes Prospect Street in Franklin in a deep cutting with a long masonry wall on the south side. Originally, the street crossed the railroad on a bridge, but this was removed after the tracks were removed. The latest plan is to replace the fill with a tunnel.



The SNETT looking east just west of Prospect St., Franklin. The trail is deeply “Whaled” in this area by ORVs.



View eastward on the SNETT just west of Prospect St., Franklin showing the high masonry wall on the south side.

Membership

Membership in the Conservancy is open to all that are interested in the Blackstone Canal, its history and its preservation. Annual dues are:

Student: \$7	Adults: \$10
Family: \$15	Organizations: \$25

Applications and dues (payable to the Blackstone Canal Conservancy) should be sent to the Membership Secretary;

BRWA Fall Clean Up

In early October, I learned that the Blackstone River Watershed Association would not be holding a fall cleanup on October 25th as I had first expected. So, I scheduled a Conservancy workday then. Early in the week of the event, I learned that a few BRWA volunteers had decided to move forward anyway and were going to be working at the usual floating trash trap south of Plummers Landing. So, on that morning, two groups met at Plummers Landing. The Conservancy group went further south to our usual work site. On our return, we found the BRWA group having emerged from the canal with many bags of trash and some larger objects. These, the state picked up a few days later. After their work, the canal debris field looked much better.

November 15th Workday

On our November 15th workday, we proceed to our usual work area and removed more brush from the prism. This time, we began where we had finished in September and worked south towards the October work area. There is still more to do between the two areas and we will attack that in December if the weather allows.

Future Work Days

The next work days are planned for Saturday, December 13th and January 10th. Meet 9 AM at the west parking lot at Plummer's Landing, Church St., Northbridge. The plan is to work on clearing debris in the dry bed of the canal. Volunteers are requested to bring loppers, bow saws, brush cutters, and work gloves. No power tools will be used. Dress appropriately for the weather and ground conditions. Expect to get muddy.

Please volunteer to help on any work day you can make time available. **You** can help make a noticeable difference! The more people present, the more that we can do to improve the canal and adjacent trails.

St. Paul St. Bridge, Blackstone

One canal structure that is little noticed is the twin arch, masonry, St. Paul St. Bridge in Blackstone. This structure was built in 1851 (just after the canal closed in 1848) by Daniel Simmons who later built the Saranac and Rolling Dams, also in Blackstone. The bridge is 57 feet long, and 32 feet wide including an 8 foot wide separately supported concrete extension on the upstream side. The bridge was built as part of the original St. Paul St. construction of the same era. St. Paul St. is a major local road carrying heavy traffic. The bridge is barely noticeable due to much vegetation around it. Just west of the bridge on St. Paul St., is the junction with Canal St. and then the recently rebuilt SNETT bridge followed by the

of center leads to the east side of the fill. The masonry wall on the right extends through the fill.



South view of the St. Paul St. Bridge in Blackstone 11/25/14. Notice that the two arches are barely visible even without leaves on the trees.



North view of the St. Paul St. Bridge in Blackstone 11/25/14. The left arch is visible under the concrete sidewalk, but the right arch is totally obscured.



The SNETT at Prospect St., Franklin looking east 11/13/14 at the fill that replaced a former bridge. The culvert to left

Blackstone Canal Conservancy
16 Ballou Road
Hopedale, Ma 01747



ORVs are prohibited on the SNETT like here, just west of Rte. 146.



The north abutment for the “Titanic Railroad” Bridge at Castle Hill Way, Bellingham

Wanted

- 1) The volunteer services of an experienced surveyor with the needed equipment to determine the close location of the sites of Milestones 26, 27, and 29 along the towpath from the known location of Milestone 28 despite the current watered gaps in the towpath. Also, determine the elevation of the top of the breast wall at Goat Hill Lock and where that elevation lies at Church Street Lock.
- 2) The help of some one with a winch equipped jeep or truck to pull trees out of the canal on work days to allow for their cutting up and disposal.

Canal Calendar

Members knowing of canal related events are requested to submit them to the editor so that they may be included.

December 13th: Blackstone Canal Conservancy work day,
9 AM, Plummers Landing west parking area,
Church St. Northbridge, MA

January 10th: Blackstone Canal Conservancy work day, 9
AM, Plummers Landing west parking area, Church
St. Northbridge, MA