

The PRISM

the newsletter of the Blackstone Canal Conservancy
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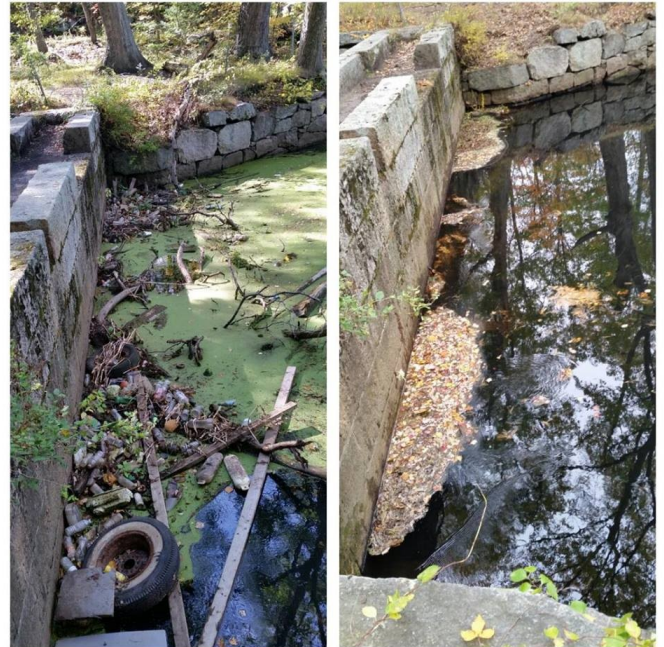
November, 2015

Canal Clean Up

On Saturday, October 24th, Bonnie Combs with the Blackstone River Heritage Corridor and the assistance of the Blackstone River Watershed Council / Friends of the Blackstone recruited a team of seven volunteers to attack the collected floating trash at the head gate structure for the hydro plant at Factory Pond in Blackstone, MA. This section of the Blackstone Canal carries water around the Blackstone Gorge to the power plant located just south of the Rte. 122 and Providence & Worcester Railroad Bridges. The trash would be visible from the longer Blackstone Greenway Factory Pond Bridge which is just north. This is the second cleanup of Blackstone Canal sites in Blackstone this year and a significant step forward. After meeting at the Blackstone Gorge parking area, we launched boats and paddled around to the site on the other side of the island.

One amusing high note was that a wedding was also planned at the Blackstone Gorge at the same time we were launching boats. Fortunately, the wedding party had left by the time we returned grubby and with much trash.

In several hours of work, we managed to pull out of the water nine tires on wheels, many bags of floating bottles and styrofoam, and wrestled out many large trees and other wood. There was also one plastic chair and a long garden soaking type hose. The situation is now much improved. The Woonsocket Call printed a nice article in its October 29th edition.



Bonnie Combs photos

Before and after views of the site



Bonnie Combs photo

Wrestling a tree out of the water on the cleanup.



Bonnie Combs map

The site of the clean up

SNETT / Greenway Progress

Further progress on the Southern New England Trunkline Trail (SNETT) / Blackstone Greenway construction has occurred since the last newsletter. Status as of 10/29/15 is as follows:

- 1) The final layer of paving over the Church Street tunnel was placed on Monday, October 26th and the street was reopened to traffic, late the next day.
- 2) On Wednesday, October 28th, it was observed that all construction fencing had been taken down at Old Mendon Road and final landscaping was in process there and further east at the depot parking area.
- 3) On October 27th, DCR's Acting Chief Engineer, Robert Lowell, addressed the Blackstone Selectmen and members of other Blackstone boards about the Greenway. He reported that the state has retained Gill Engineering to inspect the Blackstone Viaduct and determine its usability for the Greenway route. Many consider the viaduct route as the best option. Gill Engineering was working on site and expects to report in December.
- 4) Mr. Lowell mentioned a Greenway ribbon cutting next spring.
- 5) Mr. Lowell also mentioned that he personally had been discussing options with Mass Department of Transportation for a link across the interruption of the SNETT at Routes 146A and 146 in Uxbridge.
- 6) On October 31st, it was observed that construction fencing had been placed across the entrances to the new Main St. Bridge and the cut leading into the new Church St. tunnel.



Bonnie Combs photo

Seven of the nine tires recovered



Bonnie Combs photo

Most of the crew of volunteers.



The view south along Church Street over the Church Street Tunnel, Blackstone, 10/28/15





The view south of the Greenway from Church St., Blackstone towards Old Mendon St. and the depot, 10/28/15.



View of the Old Mendon St. area on 10/2/15 looking towards the old firehouse and the Main St. Bridge. All fencing is now gone. Fencing remains across the end of the Main St. Bridge and at the entrance to the tunnel cut.

SNETT work in Bellingham

Work has now concluded on the project to install a water line between Center St. and Lake St. in Bellingham and improve the Southern New England Trunkline Trail in that section. A new trail surface has been installed and a ramp built down to Lake St. at that end. Landscaping, stop signs at each end, and vehicle obstacles have also been installed.



View east of the rebuilt SNETT from Center St., Bellingham on 10/28/15



View of the SNETT looking east across Lake St. in Bellingham on 10/28/15. The rebuilt trail is in the foreground with unrebuilt trail on the far side. Just to the right of the yellow diamond highway sign and on the left of the photo at the rocks is the former gate at this end which, it is hoped, that DCR will be able to reuse elsewhere.

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; Blackstone Canal Conservancy, 16 Ballou Road, Hopedale, MA 01747-1833

Blackstone Viaduct Inspection

DCR has hired Gill Engineering to inspect the seven arch portion of the Blackstone Viaduct and prepare a report, due in December, on its usability for the Blackstone Greenway. During the last days of October, Gill was on site, inspecting. That work included using a water cannon to remove three areas of concrete on the eastern arch of the seven arch portion. The eastern arch is the longest of the arches and the most easily accessed. Removal was reported to be easy and appeared to show very nice granite underneath.



Mary Bulso photo

A view of the eastern arch abutment showing the granite masonry and the old concrete and square rebar.



View of exposed masonry at lower part of eastern pier.



Blackstone Viaduct engineering testing work underway on 10/2/15



Eastern arch of the seven arch viaduct showing areas where masonry was exposed by water cannon.



View south across St. Paul St., Blackstone. The railings on both sides of St. Paul St and the rebuilt bridge are visible. On the far side is the new, black fence along the railroad on the right. This fence continues ahead across the entrance to Bridge B-13-008, which crosses the canal and Canal St. and could access the viaduct.

SNETT Progress at Rte. 126

Progress continues on the new tunnel under Rte. 126 in Bellingham. A look on October 31st showed that a culvert had been installed behind the north wall to provide for drainage from the right of way east of the tunnel and that work was proceeding on the west wing walls. The floor of the tunnel has been covered with fill, probably to protect it from the construction equipment. Both side walls have been cast several feet high, but need to go still higher.



View of the work underway to replace the Rte. 126 Bridge in Bellingham looking east on 10/31/15.



View of the SNETT looking west from the present Rte. 126 tunnel construction on 10/31/15.

Triad Bridge Update

A visit to the Triad Bridge on the SNETT / Greenway on November 1st showed little change on the bridge from earlier visits. The upper level of steel on the truss bridge over the river remained in primer paint only, and much scaffolding remained in place. But, at the Millville, Central St. Parking area there was a 40' highway trailer carrying steel beams and pedestals. Examination of the drawing of the bridge from the April 2014 public meeting shows that these are to be installed on top of the present structure to support the deck on the river section. This will ramp up from the grade west of the bridge to match the section over the railroad that was raised at some time in the past to clear higher railroad traffic. Apparently, further work had been waiting on delivery of this steel and can now proceed.

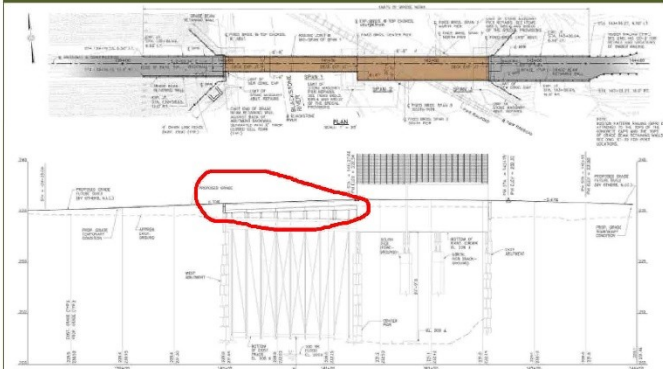


Triad Bridge looking east on 11/1/15. The "jersey" barriers are new.



Steel beams & pedestals at Central St., Millville on 11/1/15. These are to be installed on the Triad Bridge.

Triad Bridge – Proposed Conditions



Triad bridge plan & elevation showing new steel ramp on over the river section (from April, 2014 DCR presentation).

Millville Lock Update

A visit to Millville Lock on November 1st showed that the trees growing along the side of the lock had been cut. The roots of such trees have a negative impact on lock masonry.



The scene at Millville Lock on 11/1/15 looking north.

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 someone 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.



A view along the Southern New England Trunkline Trail across West St., Uxbridge on 10/12/15



Finished canal repair work where the downed trees that used to strain debris south of Church St., Northbridge once were.

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