



[www.epa.gov/OWOW/heritage/rivers.html](http://www.epa.gov/OWOW/heritage/rivers.html)

The American Heritage Rivers Initiative was created to advance the goals identified by river communities. The Initiative has three objectives: natural resource and environmental protection, economic revitalization, and historic and cultural preservation. No new regulatory authority is created as a result of the Initiative. Likewise, no direct federal funding is available to the Initiative. Existing federal authorities and programs are used to assist the community partners in implementation of their goals.

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# Blackstone River



#### What Makes the Blackstone River Special?

- The 46 mile long river, flows from Worcester, MA, the headwaters, and runs through 24 communities until it reaches Providence, RI encompassing more than 400,000 acres and more than 500,000 people.
- The Blackstone is documented as the “Birthplace of the American Industrial Revolution” with dams used for mills and industry along almost every mile of the river.
- The Blackstone helps form the headwaters of Narragansett Bay, an estuary of national significance.
- The Blackstone is a designated National Heritage Corridor.

#### What are the Long Term Goals?

- Fishable and swimmable by 2015.
- Create a contiguous “Riverway” that connects the river, greenway and bikeway.
- Identify and restore wetlands and riparian buffers along the main stem and tributaries.
- Protect cold water fishery streams from development impacts.
- Improve public access to the river and enhance opportunities for recreation.
- Support economic development opportunities and promote positive growth in the watershed.
- Complete the Blackstone River Bikeway from Worcester to Providence.

#### Progress/Goals for the Future

##### What Partnership Progress Has Been Made?

- Restored the Lonsdale Marsh in Lincoln, RI - the first-of-its-kind freshwater wetland restoration in RI (\$2.3 million) of more than 20 acres of the former Lonsdale Drive-In Theater.
- Restoration of streambank along the Quinsigamond River in Grafton, MA.
- Created a “Headwaters to Bay” volunteer water quality monitoring network with an approved Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP).
- 9.5 miles of the Blackstone River Bikeway have been built and another 15 miles are either in design or construction.
- Five nonpoint source grants for \$1.4 million, including matching funds, awarded for pond and lake restoration and urban runoff issues.

##### What EPA Actions are Planned for 2005-2006?

- Commit to key environmental actions outlined in the Blackstone River Bi-State Watershed Action Plan.
- Coordinate multi-agency efforts to identify and undertake wetland and riparian restoration projects in the watershed.
- Continue coordination of Brownfields projects along the Blackstone.
- Reduce bacteria, nutrient and metals loading by finalizing the levels allowable for the river in RI (TMDLs).

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AMERICAN HERITAGE RIVERS



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## What EPA Actions are Planned for 2005-2006? (continued)

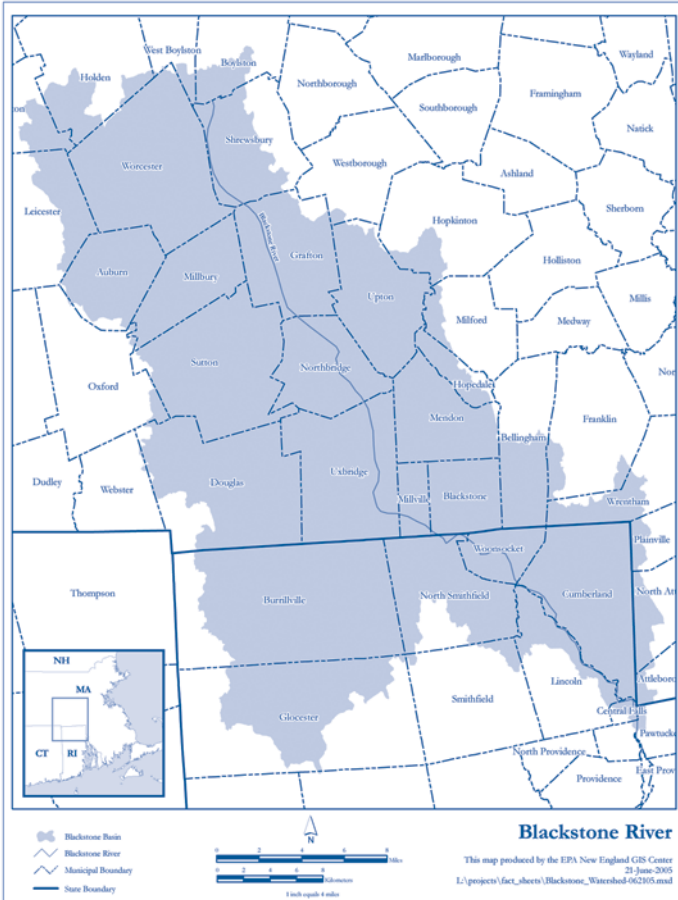
- ▶ Issue stormwater and wastewater treatment facility permits in 2005 and 2006.
- ▶ Partner with other agencies for the Army Corps anadromous fish passage feasibility study on the lower 4 dams
- ▶ Coordinate Fisherville Mill and Pond Restoration Project in Grafton, MA (Urban Rivers Restoration Initiative)
- ▶ Complete Leesville Pond and Dam Restoration in MA using \$120,000 in matching funds from the Watershed Grant received for Narragansett Bay.
- ▶ Identification and funding of innovative wastewater treatment grants for Blackstone River communities.
- ▶ Continue coordinating actions that connect the Lonsdale Mill Redevelopment with the Perterson Puritan Superfund Site and the Lonsdale Marsh.

## Who are the Partners?

Blackstone River Coalition • Blackstone Headwaters Coalition • Blackstone River Watershed Association • Blackstone River Watershed Council • Friends of the Blackstone • Save The Bay • Conservation Law Foundation • Massachusetts Audubon Society • Cities and Towns from Worcester, MA to Providence, RI (24 in the watershed) • Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce • Blackstone Valley Tourism Council • EPA New England • John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission (National Park Service) • USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service • US ARmy Corps of Engineers • US Fish and Wildlife Service • Federal Highway Administration • Housing and Urban Development • Economic Development Agency Department of Commerce • US Geological Service • National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration • USDA Forest Service • USDA Rural Development for MA and RI • USDA Farm Service • Federal Emergency Management Agency

## What is the Blackstone River Coalition?

The Blackstone River Coalition is a partnership of numerous organizations, businesses, agencies, municipalities and individuals that are concerned with the regeneration of the Blackstone River and the health of the Blackstone River watershed. The Coalition created and spearheads the Campaign for a fishable/swimmable Blackstone River by 2015.



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