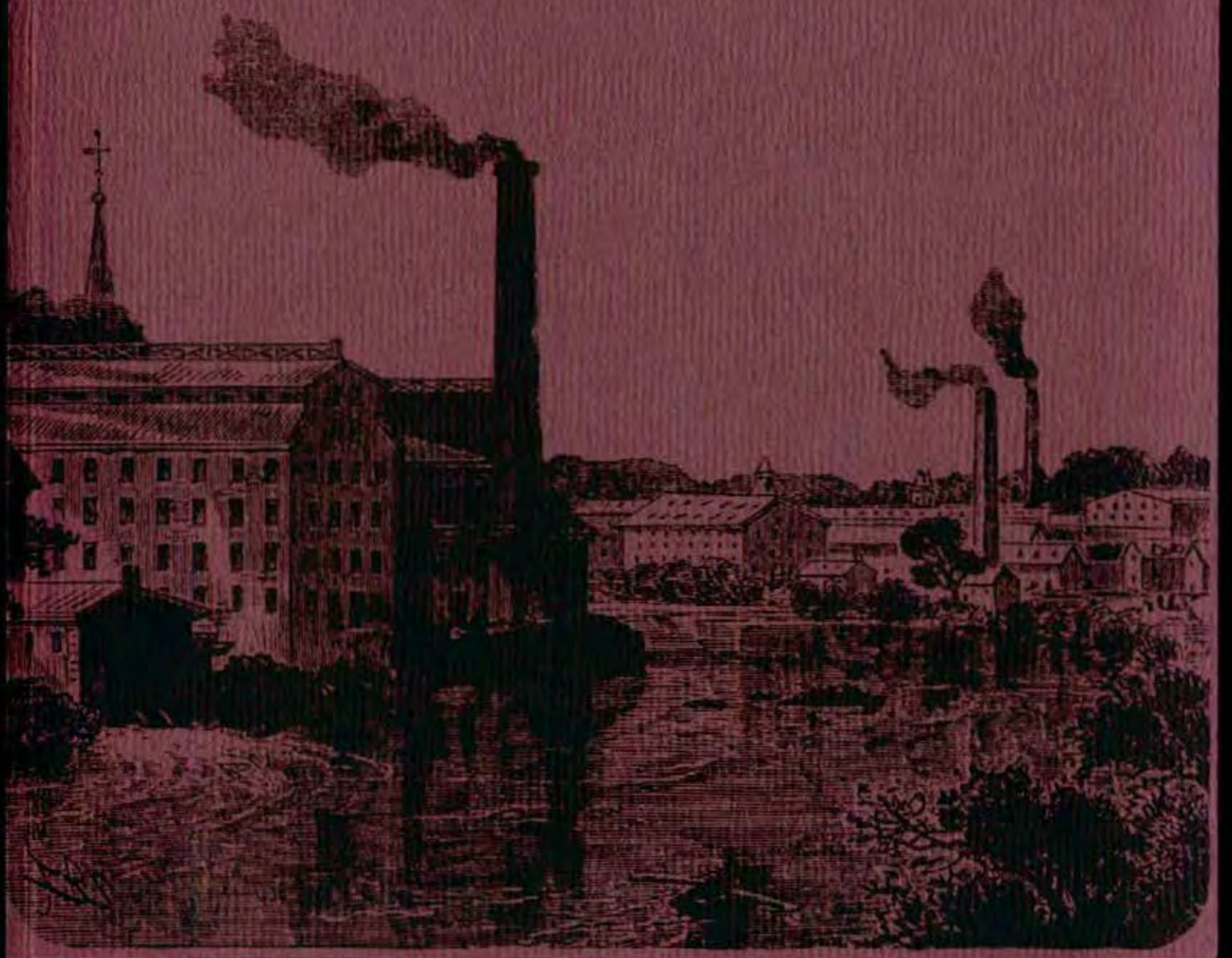
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CULTURAL HERITAGE and LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN for the

BLACKSTONE RIVER VALLEY NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR



CULTURAL HERITAGE
a n d
LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN
f o r t h e

BLACKSTONE RIVER VALLEY NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR



As approved by Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission / October 21, 1989

SUBMITTED FOR REVIEW AND APPROVAL TO
The Governor, Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Governor, State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
The Secretary of the Interior

Color Scans
1/8/2004

LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

"The hardest working river, the most thoroughly harnessed to the mill wheels of labor in the United States, probably in the world, is the Blackstone." Winthrop Packard, writing in the October 1909 edition of the Technical World magazine, proclaimed the dramatic industrialization of the Blackstone River Valley. Packard's proclamation was made a little more than a century after the American Industrial Revolution was born along this same Blackstone River at Samuel Slater's mill in Pawtucket, Rhode Island.

In the eighty-years since that startling claim was published, the Blackstone Valley has experienced a transformation that mirrors much of the economic history of the United States. The industries which caused the Valley's countless brick mills to shudder continuously throughout the 19th century fell quiet as this century progressed. A region that once, like Ellis Island, whose buildings were constructed with Blackstone Valley granite, welcomed masses of immigrant workers later had fewer and fewer jobs for their children. A long period of depression consumed not only money and industry, but the confidence and self-esteem of the people who lived in the towns, mill villages, and cities along the Blackstone River and its tributaries.

Paradoxically, the neglect which cast long dreary shadows over the Blackstone Valley also allowed the Valley's special character to survive. We can still see the outline of the 19th century industrial society in the mill villages, the farms and market towns, the roads, rails and canal, the cities, the ethnic neighborhoods, and the magnificent mills. Much of the very best of our past is still here. As development returns, we have the chance to avoid the tragic development mistakes made by others.

We have much to treasure from our past. The Blackstone River Valley once typified the explosion of American entrepreneurial creativity and confidence. The Valley's story is one of work in America. It reflects the interdependence of engineering and nature, and of labor and management. It is also a story of independence of thinking and of religion, the story of a region that resisted the dictates of a distant theocracy and oligarchy in Puritan Boston.

After decades of neglect, growth and change have arrived in the Blackstone River Valley. In recent years, we've witnessed the initial impact of what has irrevocably changed much of America. Economic experts boldly assert that this once neglected valley, which stretches along the third side of a "golden triangle" linking New England's three largest cities, is the next area to experience major economic growth.

About fifty years ago, in 1936, as the Great Depression gripped the Blackstone Valley and the Nation, a citizens committee first proposed a Blackstone River National Park. Their ambitious plan envisioned a seven-thousand acre park featuring a major horticultural collection and a national memorial to Thomas Jefferson. Within a few years, however, the plan for a national park in the Blackstone Valley was shelved and all but forgotten. More recently, several years of planning by Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and the National Park Service culminated this year with the development of an equally visionary Cultural Heritage and Land Management Plan for our 46-mile Corridor.

The unique cultural and natural resources of the Valley are as important to our national heritage as battlefields or homes of presidents. Yet, located as they are amid a living community, many of these resources cannot, and should not, be managed or cared for in isolation from the Valley communities of which they are a part. Consequently, Congress came up with the National Heritage Corridor designation as the right way to protect the Valley's significance.

The Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor provides an unparalleled opportunity for both the Blackstone River Valley and the Nation. This new, more ambitious plan represents a revolutionary departure from the traditional concept of national parks, as well as from the Blackstone River National Park plan proposed in 1936. It is also different from the newer riverfront parks currently being designed by Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

The National Heritage Corridor is unlike a traditional park or historic site where people come to view historic or natural resources. The Corridor seeks to preserve nationally significant cultural and natural

assets right where the people of the Blackstone Valley actually live and work. The concept salutes their proud and common heritage.

Ours is the first bi-state National Heritage Corridor. Unlike a national park, primary management in our Corridor is the responsibility of twenty local governments, two state governments, and innumerable private land owners — all coordinated by a citizen's commission.

The challenge facing our National Heritage Corridor Commission, in the coming years, is to make the implementation of our plan different from that 1936 plan — not just in its revolutionary concept, but by actually making it happen!

The Corridor can be a national model of outstanding management of resources in dynamic communities IF we can learn to work together for the common good. That is the purpose of this plan.

The lessons of history — good and bad — are vivid in the Blackstone River Valley. That is why we have much to offer to the growing number of Americans who are learning to appreciate their heritage. There was a time when blue collar areas had little appeal to historic preservationists. That time is past. We know that human experience, creativity, and productivity are too precious to waste. We understand the value of a clean environment. We can see why history is important. As economic development comes, we can guide it to enhance our values and our heritage. We cannot afford to miss this opportunity. The Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission is excited to be at the focus of the Valley's revitalization. We know that no group or government alone can save the thousands of buildings or miles of natural landscapes in the Blackstone Valley. To do it right, we need to work together to protect our Valley.

At a celebration marking the opening of the Providence and Worcester Railroad in 1847, the Blackstone Canal's epitaph was delivered in the form of a toast: "The two unions between Worcester and Providence — the first was weak as water, the last is strong as iron." Paraphrasing that historic toast, I suggest to you that the 1936 Blackstone River National Park plan proved to be weak as water, but our new Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor promises to be as strong as iron — not straight iron rails, but as the links of a chain which binds together the people of the Blackstone Valley — a chain which links our communities, businesses, and cultural organizations — a chain which pulls together the resources of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and our national government. The Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor will preserve forever a vital link between our rich historic past and a bright and promising future.



Richard T. Moore, Chairman
Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission

BLACKSTONE RIVER VALLEY NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR COMMISSION

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BLACKSTONE RIVER VALLEY NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR





With poor roads and an unnavigable river, goods moved slowly through the Valley, until the Canal and the railroad opened it to worldwide commerce.

The Blackstone River Valley is one of the Nation's richest and best preserved repositories of landscapes, structures and sites that recall a neglected era of the American past: the Age of Industry. Thousands of structures and whole landscapes still exist which represent the entire history of the American Industrial Revolution and the complex economic and social relationships of the people who lived and worked here.

The Valley is the story of people at work. It is the story of entrepreneurs; of families at work in factories and on farms; of social utopians and labor organizers; of builders of roads, canals, and railroads; of industrial managers; of waves of immigrants; and of religious dissidents and conformists. It is the story of innovation, boom, collapse, and recovery. In particular, it tells a dynamic, graphic story of Man and Nature: how natural and human resources can be wisely harnessed and cherished; how costly is their thoughtless abuse and essential rehabilitation.

The Blackstone River Valley is an unusual "park" because it is a living, human environment. People still live and work in and around the nationally significant historic communities and buildings. The Valley is the real thing, not a fanciful display behind a red velvet rope. Although it includes magnificent structures and graceful natural and scenic areas, at heart and soul it is the story of the genius of the America of industrial ingenuity with a Blue Collar. How this America copes with the future is an important part of the story, too.

This is an important story to tell. There is no better place to tell it.

Because all the elements of industrial organization, supply, production and transportation can be found in this comparatively small valley, one can easily see and understand the changes that revolutionized American life.

The Challenge

Years of industrial stagnation and neglect have spared many of the structures, mill villages, and much of the landscape from destruction. But now these resources are threatened daily by demolition which will erase the character of the past before people realize what is being lost. More threatening, an imminent surge of haphazard suburban sprawl is likely to engulf the Valley character in the next ten years. That is, if we do nothing.

How can the character and resources of the Blackstone Valley be preserved and interpreted?

Although the resources of the Valley are clearly nationally significant, it is unrealistic to think the federal government can save it all. The heroic salvage work by the National Park Service at Redwoods National Park or at Lowell National Historical Park surely cannot be contemplated for the Valley in the reasonable future; the cost in today's dollars would be too high as the government struggles to manage its budget deficit. Yet the National Park Service must have a role, for it is the federal agency responsible for the recognition, protection and interpretation of the nation's heritage.

The States of Rhode Island and Massachusetts cannot do it alone, either. They have experience and technical ability in the areas of land protection and park and economic development. But having absorbed greater and greater responsibilities from the federal and local governments, they are unable to shoulder significant new projects. Local governments and private businesses are of course reluctant to surrender to state or federal government the power necessary to protect a living organism like the Blackstone River Valley. New England values of independence and self-reliance would find that intolerable.

Yet even if all the local governments were willing to exert the necessary control and the private sector were able to pay the cost of protecting and interpreting the character of the Valley, they lack the tools to develop and implement a Valley-wide vision. For this is a region of 250,000 acres divided between two states, containing twenty local governments and many more villages, a half million people, and many small tracts of land primarily in private ownership.

Consequently, the U.S. Congress decided something special was needed.

The Congressional Strategy: Partnership

The Congress established the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor, thereby recognizing the Valley's national significance. In addition, a unifying Commission was established by the Congress as the advocate and umbrella agency needed to develop the vision, set the clear course, and assemble a partnership required to achieve the Valley's potential.

Because it was recognized that the potential of the National Heritage Corridor (NHC) must be achieved cooperatively, the Commission has no power to compel consistency with the vision. It cannot own or manage land, or regulate activities or enforce mandates.

The National Heritage Corridor can achieve its vision only if the people, businesses, and governments of the Valley become devoted partners on behalf of the Valley. The Commission has learned through this planning process that there IS a common vision for the future of the Valley. People are willing to dedicate themselves to achieve it.

Vision of the Corridor in Twenty Years

Twenty years hence:

- The Blackstone River Valley is a model for balanced preservation, recreation, and economic revitalization.

- Wise land use and redevelopment actions enable the communities of the Valley to retain their distinction as individual villages and cities rather than succumb to haphazard growth.
- Residents hold a strong sense of pride growing from their awareness of the Valley's remarkable heritage, its national importance and their accomplishment in its rebirth.
- The Blackstone River is clean and enjoyed for its parks and recreation all along its banks, a living symbol of the unity and commitment of Valley residents.
- The National Heritage Corridor's biking, hiking, boating and other recreation activities are enjoyed by residents and visitors alike.
- The Corridor's innovative interpretive programs, exciting museums, information centers and annual special events engage people of all ages as participants in the Valley's heritage.
- New businesses are good neighbors, many occupying the Valley's historic mills, bringing with them jobs and a promising future for the Valley's young people.
- In the Valley there is a strong continuity of values, emphasizing family and the identification with community; newcomers are accepted and put down roots, in ways that build upon the cultural and social strengths of the Blackstone River Valley's traditions.
- A new level of cooperation exists among the twenty local governments and the two states, as well as among the many civic organizations instrumental in achieving the Valley's regeneration. Together, they have been working in harmony toward strong, commonly held goals.

These goals emerged from the Commission's public planning process and describe the actions that are vital to the realization of this vision. Goals are:

- PROTECT the Valley's historic, cultural and natural resources in an integrated manner;
- EDUCATE and INTERPRET the Corridor's importance to the people of the Valley and its visitors;
- FOSTER specific activities that tap the Valley's unique resources and invite people to enjoy and celebrate them;
- ENCOURAGE public and private investment in the Valley's physical and human resources that reinforce these values;
- STIMULATE the research necessary to understand the Valley's role in the American Industrial Revolution and the lessons it holds for our times; and,
- COORDINATE and ENCOURAGE all the partnerships that will be necessary to achieve these goals.

To achieve NHC purposes, the Congress directed that this plan be developed to guide Commission actions. It was developed by the public and the Commission and its consultants during the one-year planning process, and it provides a broad overview of the Commission's strategies and areas of concentration. Each year the Commission's work plan will detail priority activities.

With small amounts of funding available from the federal government and matching assistance from its partners, the Commission will be able to do some of the work by itself, collaborate with others to achieve more, and inspire others to help. On balance, the Commission itself will only be able to implement a part of the plan for the Corridor. To be successful, the Corridor plan must be for all the people, governments, and businesses of the Valley.

So we give this plan to you, and ask to work with you to achieve our common vision.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Plan is founded on:

- the significant historic, cultural, and natural resources of the Blackstone River Valley;
- the Congressional strategy and purpose in the Act of Congress that established the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor;
- the findings of studies prepared for this Plan and earlier surveys and plans;
- the contributions of the public and the BRVNHC Commission.

The National Significance of the Blackstone River Valley

The Blackstone River Valley is a region whose long and nationally pivotal history is still visible through its structures and landscapes and accessible through the living memory of its residents. Its concentration of mill villages and towns separated by extensive rural landscape is a characteristic feature. The Blackstone River and its tributaries were unusually reliable sources of water power. Along its 46-mile length the river drops a significant 438 feet, of which 400 feet were harnessed for power.

Several factors distinguish the Blackstone River Valley from other industrial regions in the United States and New England:

- It was the birthplace of the American Industrial Revolution;
- It represents the first widespread industrial use of water power in the United States;
- It was where the Rhode Island System of manufacturing was developed;
- It was the first ethnically and religiously diverse area of New England; and
- Its industrial and transportation systems were crucial to the development of the second and third largest cities in New England.

Today, the most significant resource of the Blackstone River Valley is its "wholeness," the unique survival here of representative elements of entire 18th and 19th century production systems. Few places exist where such a concentration of integrated historic, cultural and natural resources has survived and can be made accessible by interpretation, preservation and other management strategies.

With boundaries entirely within a single river basin, the Blackstone Valley is an ideal unit for planning and management; yet its complex political jurisdictions demand creative planning strategies. To date, although surrounded by the three largest cities of New England, the development boom of the Eastern megalopolis has overlooked the Valley. As a region that has experienced every phase of American economic development, it can be a national model for recovery through sensible growth management and environmental restoration.

Legislative Purpose and Mandate

Congress passed the Act to establish the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor in Massachusetts and Rhode Island for the purpose of "preserving and interpreting for the educational and inspirational benefit of present and future generations the unique and significant contributions to our national heritage of certain historic and cultural lands, waterways and structures within the Blackstone River Valley" in order to "provide a management framework to assist the states...and their units of local government in the development and implementation of integrated cultural, historical, and land resource management programs in order to retain, enhance and interpret the significant values of the lands, waters and structures of the Corridor." (Public Law 99-647, November 10, 1986.)

The Congressional strategy is a management framework, or PARTNERSHIP, to implement unified programs in the Corridor's behalf.

In addition to establishing the Corridor, this legislation:

- recognized the national significance of the Blackstone River Valley;
- established a Commission to develop and implement a plan to accomplish Corridor purposes;
- directed the Secretary of the Interior to help prepare and implement the plan and provide interpretive services;
- directed all federal agencies to coordinate their activities with the Corridor plan implementation, and directed these agencies to the maximum extent practicable to avoid adverse effects on the Corridor; and
- authorized an annual federal appropriation of no more than 50% of its total operation, requiring a non-federal match.

How the Plan was Developed

Congress directed the Commission, with the assistance of the Secretary of the Interior, to prepare a plan to complement state plans and unify Corridor historic preservation and interpretation. In response, necessary reports, plans, and studies were developed as the basis for this general Cultural Heritage and Land Management Plan. Those reports are found in the Appendix and include:

- *Historic Resources Inventory:*
  a Corridor-wide inventory of those historic properties which should be preserved, restored, managed, developed, maintained or acquired because of their national historic or cultural significance;
- *Design Guidelines and Standards:*
  guidelines for the construction, preservation, restoration, alteration and use of all properties within the Corridor;
- *Interpretive Plan:*
  a sourcebook of programs, activities and strategies for presenting and interpreting the Corridor's resources for and to the public;
- *Land Use Management Plan:*
  a report containing the land use policies and actions necessary to retain the character of the Corridor's landscape, protect the Corridor's historical, cultural, scenic and natural resources, and enhance the water quality of the Blackstone River in a manner consistent with healthy economic revitalization;
- *Economic Assessment:*
  a review of the economic conditions of the Valley, and an analysis of the significant economic trends and their possible affects on the opportunities for guiding Corridor growth.
- *Tourism Resources Inventory:*
  a component of the Economic Assessment, this report identifies the travel and tourism resources in the Valley.

All of these reports provide a wealth of information and contributed to the formulation of the Action Agenda for the Commission, the states and local communities. Summaries and recommendations from these reports are included in Chapter 2.

The Commission has drawn resource descriptions, threats, and opportunities, and recommended strategies and actions from these reports to develop this general Plan. Much new information, strategies, and recommended actions were generated for the Plan by the public and the Commissioners themselves. Material was also drawn from other reports and previous studies. There are many more ideas in this Plan and the reports than can be accomplished by the Commission's budget alone. As the Commission finds partners to help implement this Plan, these additional ideas can be mined to achieve the National Heritage Corridor's potential.

Public Participation

The public was involved in an active participation program both to develop this Plan and to develop the partnerships necessary to see it successfully implemented. The Commission and planning team conducted a series of scoping discussions, public presentations and public meetings to present the NHC concept, develop ideas, and share planning progress. During this time, over twenty public field trips were also held, eleven Commission meetings were open to the public after public notice, eight open planning committee meetings were held, and three public workshops and a public hearing were conducted. After public notice, written comments were also received and considered.

How Plan is to be Implemented

- *Action Agenda*

The implementation program is detailed in Chapter 3 and describes an Action Agenda for the Commission, state and local governments and private groups and individuals. The Commission will focus action in seven areas:

- Coordination and Consistency
- Historic Preservation
- Interpretation
- Environmental Conservation
- Land Use Management
- Recreation
- Economic Development and Tourism.

The implementation strategy emphasizes integrated, linked actions rather than single, stand-alone projects. Balanced action in each of these areas is critical to achieving harmony among preservation, recreation and development.

The level of action will depend on available funding and willing partners. The Commission will seek the help needed to implement the Plan.

Each action, each initiative in the Action Agenda will be consistent with the overall goals of the Corridor. Some actions are short-term (one-to-three years) high-profile projects; others are long-term or on-going. All activities are designed to produce spin-off effects and stimulate further actions.

- *Annual Work Plan*

An annual work plan will specify project priorities for the Commission and its partners for each federal fiscal year, yet respond flexibly to community initiative, interest or critical need.

• *Evaluation*

The Plan is a dynamic tool, and will be evaluated and updated regularly. Similarly, Commission activity will be assessed to assure that the Corridor purposes are being achieved, as will the Commission's by-laws, structure, and legislation. Opportunities for public involvement will be a part of the Commission's assessment and decision process.

Regular reports, assessing progress and describing necessary revisions to the legislation or the organizational and financial structure of the Commission to better achieve the purposes of the National Heritage Corridor, will be submitted to the Secretary of the Interior, the Congress and the public.

Coordination and Consistency

The Act of Congress establishing the Corridor requires the Plan to include a coordination and consistency component, detailing the ways in which local, State and Federal programs may best be coordinated to promote the purposes of the Act. The elements of the coordination and consistency program are in Chapter 3.

In implementing the Plan, partnerships will be coordinated through the Action Agenda, annual work plans, and evaluation. Contributions intended to match the federal appropriation will be accepted if consistent with the agenda. Consistent standards for Commission activities will be maintained in technical areas by working with and through the expertise of appropriate federal, state and local agencies, such as the Secretary of Interior's standards for the rehabilitation of historic buildings, or State and local realty expertise when engaged in land protection efforts.

The specific strategy for Coordination and Consistency is based on leveraging prior commitments from partners through the development of cooperative agreements to implement programs in the Action Agenda. The Commission will use its broad authority to enter into cooperative agreements when the activities to be accomplished link Corridor purposes, goals and resources, and are catalytic.

***President Andrew Jackson**: "I understand you taught us how to spin, so as to rival Great Britain in her manufactures; you set all these thousands of spindles at work, which I have been delighted in viewing, and which have made so many happy, by a lucrative employment."*

***Samuel Slater**:"Yes, sir. I suppose that I gave out the psalm and they have been singing to the tune ever since."* *George S. White*
Memoir of Samuel Slater

Work is the core theme of the Blackstone River Valley's history. Its history and its values still speak to us from our past. From farm to factory, the Valley is a chronicle of the innovation and creativity, as well as the transformation of peoples and landscapes, brought about by the effort and genius of work.

The Valley's history is clearly visible in its remnants: hilltop market villages, riverside mill villages, town and city settlement patterns, ethnic diversity and culture, transportation systems. All convey a broad picture of agricultural and industrial history, including early farming, mining, life along Main Street and immigrant settlement, textile manufacturing, and the canal and railroad-building era in New England. Enhanced by interpretation, the Valley's history can show us not only the development of these patterns and traditions, it can also show us how we as a people respond to such tremendous economic and social forces. These are the major historical forces of technology and invention, of management and labor, of economic development and human and environmental neglect. The Blackstone River Valley's history is a major contribution to our understanding of the "American Experience."



Indians Fishing

The First Settlers

The first settlers, the Paleo-Indians, arrived in the Blackstone River Valley about 12,000 years ago. State and Corridor inventories list hundreds of prehistoric sites in the Valley, with rock shelters and wind breaks being especially plentiful in the uplands, and larger camps and fishing stations near the river.

In the early 17th century, the area was claimed by Native Americans of three principal tribal groups: the Narragansett, the Wampanoag and the Nipmuc. These groups were loosely organized under local leaders — sachems — and lived in semi-permanent villages, which they occupied for a few years until the soil was depleted, when they would clear new fields for the annual planting of corn, beans, squash and tobacco. The rich fishery from the clean waters of the Blackstone River was a major source of protein. In their search for food and fertile soil, the Indians developed a major trail along the Blackstone River's length and a number of minor trails throughout the Valley, which were used and developed into roads by later settlers. The arrival of early explorers, fishermen and fur traders severely disrupted

this pattern of life; and infectious diseases carried by the Europeans virtually wiped out the Native American population in two major epidemics in 1616 and 1633-34.

The British Are Coming!

Like William Blackstone, after whom the Valley was named, many of the first European settlers in the Valley were religious dissidents fleeing Boston. Many early settlers were Quakers, seeking the freedom to practice their religious beliefs in a more tolerant society. Most were farmers. Some settlers saw opportunities for using the Valley's other natural resources: by the late 1660's, Gregory Dexter was mining and processing lime in Lime Rock (now part of Lincoln, RI); and in 1671 Joseph Jenkes, a skilled ironworker, who was attracted by the Valley's abundant wood, water power and proximity of bog iron, erected a dwelling and forge in the future city of Pawtucket.

King Philip's War

The year 1675 was a traumatic one for the Blackstone River Valley. Local Native Americans, roused to desperation by repeated incursions into their ancestral territories by European settlers, rose in concert under Wampanoag leader Metacomet, also known as King Philip. During this confrontation, nearly every home, cabin and barn in the Blackstone River Valley (including William Blackstone's house and the forge belonging to Joseph Jenkes) was burned to the ground; several communities had to be abandoned.

The war ended in 1677, and rebuilding began almost immediately in the southern Valley. In the north, it was delayed until the early 1700's.

Settlement Patterns

The Valley's landscape remained largely agrarian during the early years of the 18th century. Most villages in the northern Valley were built on similar patterns — a meeting house on a village green or common, with outlying farmsteads and houses clustered first around the green and then along the principal roads.

A different pattern emerged in the southern Valley. Deliberately founded without any "establishment of religion," Providence (which originally included all the Rhode Island part of the Valley west of the river) had no green or common and no church building until 1700.

"...the Blackstone Valley (was) the first area in North America to be industrialized. The...Massachusetts part, which is bordered by large and spectacular wetlands, stayed mostly undeveloped, but in Rhode Island mill villages dotted the hillsides....Every town on the river was supported by a mill, and every waterfall on the river had a mill next to it..."

from The New Yorker, "Encountering the Countryside" by Tony Hiss

Growth of Regional Centers

Providence, though much in the shadow of the larger settlement of Newport, began to emerge as a seaport, active in both the coastal carrying trade and international commerce with England, the West Indies and Africa. Waterfront areas sprouted warehouses, wharves, shops, taverns, shipwrights and chandleries. By 1767 there was regular stagecoach service



View of Providence in 1808.

to Boston. New civic buildings, a library, a printing press and a college followed in the wake of this activity. By the beginning of the Revolutionary War in 1776, Providence boasted of three hundred and fifty houses.

At the upper end of the Valley, the pace was also quickening. Rapid population growth followed Worcester's becoming a regional market center for central Massachusetts. The presence of the county courthouse, with its attendant clerks, lawyers and travelers, was an intellectual as well as an economic stimulus. In 1773, Worcester saw the founding of the American Political Society, whose members quickly aligned themselves with the Patriot cause promoted from Boston.

Two other important centers in the northern Valley were Sutton (in 1765 the region's most populous town) and Mendon. These towns took in much more territory than they do today. Roads from Boston to Hartford (and then on to New York) passed through both. Both towns owed their prosperity to a combination of agriculture, location on multiple transportation routes, and the successful development of several mill sites. Small, decentralized milling operations were, in fact, widespread throughout the Blackstone River Valley wherever water power was available. Flour, meal, boards, iron goods and hand tools were produced locally by "farmer's mills," and increased demand helped raise the size and status of towns with mills. Because the Blackstone River was impossible to navigate and the inland transportation difficult, the commercial influence of this early technology was almost entirely local.

The First Revolution

During the Revolutionary War, Worcester served the Patriots as a communications center and supply depot; the Providence area was a major focus of anti-British activity as well. As a seaport, Providence had a direct interest in opposing the British trade regulations of the 1760's and '70's. After war was declared, the city profited from privateering and the sale of naval stores, cannon and ships to the Continental Army; but the greatest local effect was the British destruction of Newport. This virtual elimination of its closest competitor allowed Providence to become the state's commercial capital in the decades following the Revolution.

Cottage Industries/Small Scale Manufacturing

Following the war, people of the Valley quickly turned their attention to the task of making a living. At the end of the l8th century, the area was still largely rural and agrarian, but processing and manufacturing occupied important secondary positions. Women contributed significantly to local economies by hand-producing a wide variety of projects in the home. Weaving and spinning yarn were common activities; and products produced in these cottage industries included straw hats, bonnets, and palm leaf hats and baskets, which were then collected, paid for and distributed by the manufacturer.

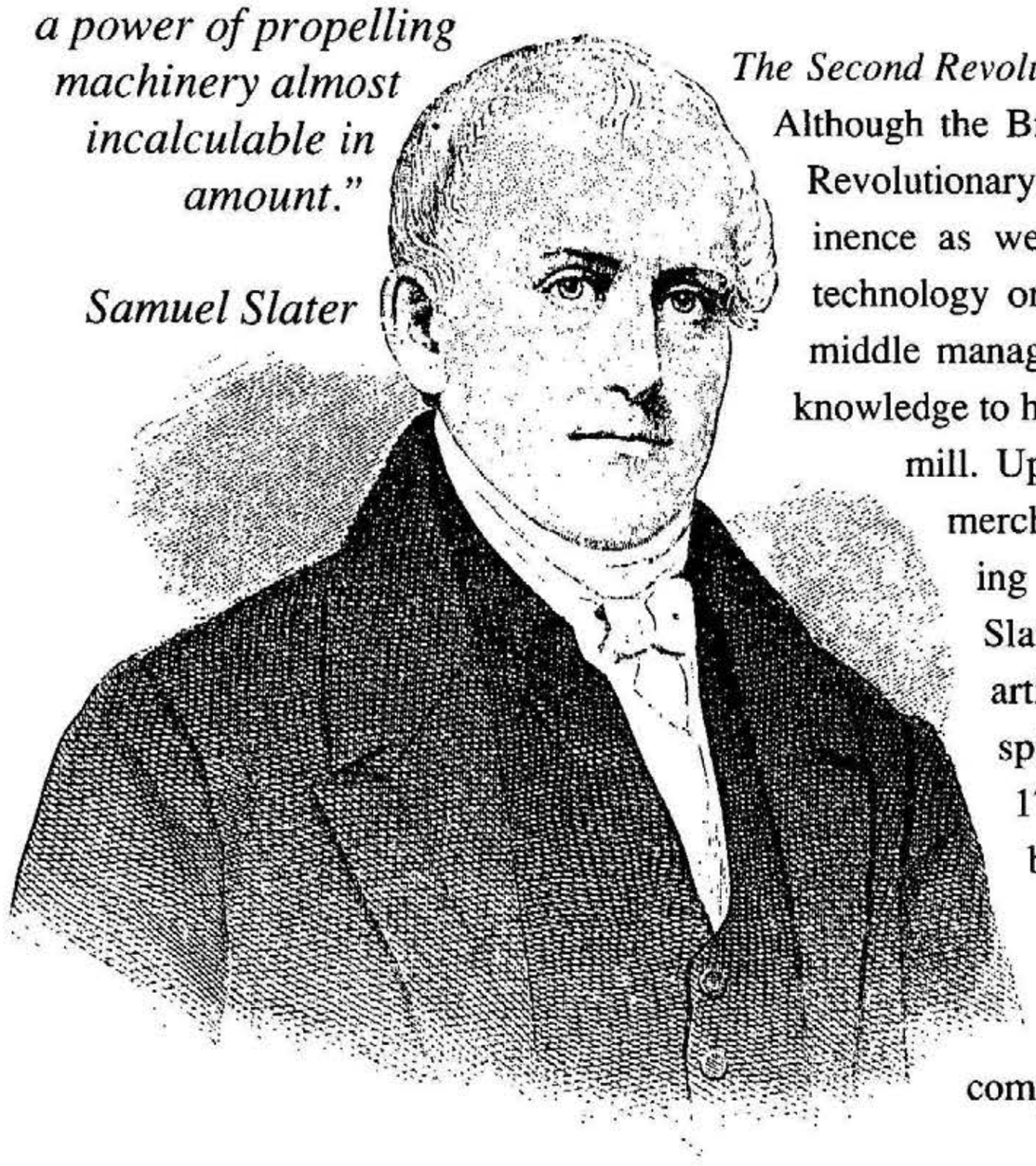
Shoemaking was also carried out in the home on a small scale. Towns such as Grafton raised large numbers of cattle, whose hides were used to make shoes, boots, saddlery, harnesses, gloves, caps, belts and whips; a variety of specialty products; and leather by-products such as soap, grease, tallow and candles.

Wood, an abundant raw material in the Blackstone River Valley, especially in the more heavily forested upland towns such as Douglas, was turned into potash, pearl ash, shingles, barrel staves, tool handles, boxes, shoe lasts, spindles, furniture, boats and wagons in small, decentralized workshops. Quarrying activities were extensive, as the Valley was rich in steatite, granite and limestone. The Conklin Lime Quarry in the village of Lime Rock in Lincoln has been in continuous operation since the 1600's, possibly making it America's oldest mining industry. The lime was used to mortar the mills and sweeten acidic New England soils.

There was also an active trade in metal products. Forges and water-powered triphammers produced edge tools for farms and workshops, using local bog iron and rhodose — or Cumberlandite — a unique form of iron ore first found in the village of Cumberland. Early weapons were produced in the Valley; in 1745, during the French and Indian War, cannon for the siege of Louisberg were forged on Abbott's Run in Cumberland.

"...these streams, more steady in their volumes than those of the western country, and descending in their short courses an elevation of from two to four hundred and fifty feet to the tide-waters of the bay and sound, furnish, with their tributaries, innumerable cascades, and a power of propelling machinery almost incalculable in amount."

Samuel Slater



The Second Revolution

Although the British lost dominion over the American colonies during the Revolutionary War, they fought hard not to lose their commercial preeminence as well. Britain particularly worked to prevent the export of technology or technicians. Yet Samuel Slater, formerly employed as a middle manager at the Arkwright mills in England, was able to use his knowledge to help establish America's first successful water-powered textile mill. Upon his arrival in America, Slater was contacted by Providence merchant Moses Brown, who, with several colleagues, was attempting to duplicate the Arkwright system. With the addition of Slater's technical expertise and his managerial brilliance, local artisans were able to produce a working set of mechanical spinning machines for the entrepreneurs in Pawtucket in 1790. In 1793 the thriving spinning operation moved into a new, larger building known today as the Slater Mill Historic Site.

More than any other single event, this successful transplantation of the Arkwright factory system can be said to mark the birth of the American Industrial Revolution and the complete transformation of American life and character.

The Changing Landscape

The response to Slater's achievement was slow at first but quickened with the disruption of trade caused by Jefferson's Embargo and the War of 1812. By 1814 water-powered mills occupied all the readily available dam sites in the Blackstone Valley. Most were of moderate size, though others like the Blackstone Mill of 1809 were enormous for their day. Cotton and, to a lesser extent, wool textiles predominated but other Valley industries, including axes and edge tool, textile machinery, firearm and paper manufacturing, were also beginning to adopt organizational and technological elements of the factory system. This proliferation of mills radically changed the Valley landscape. In contrast to the older pattern of dispersed farms and hilltop or crossroads villages, the new industrial development produced a series of riverside mill villages. These communities, centered on the many-windowed, multi-storied, frame, stone and brick factories, contained uniform rows of workers' houses, company stores and, as time went on, churches, schools and other community buildings. These villages represented the densest concentration of industry in the Nation; yet the presence of workers' gardens, company farms and the surrounding countryside kept this phase of industrialization a largely rural phenomenon.



Old Slater Mill

Farm to Factory

The mills of the Blackstone River Valley were organized according to the Rhode Island System, which was characterized by small, privately financed mills, the use of family labor and the development of entire mill villages, with housing, schools and churches as well as the place of employment. In the early mill days, workers were frequently recruited from the surrounding countryside. Hours were long, but pay was high enough to appear attractive, especially to a family with several children. However, in these early days strong disapproval accompanied what was understood to be a fundamental change in labor in America: the change from selling your work, to selling your time. Critics called it "wage slavery," and many believed it to be a radical transformation in the American dream.



FAMILY WANTED,
To work in a Thread-Mill:

THE Mill is four miles and a half from Providence, on the Turnpike road leading from Providence to Chepachet, and one fourth of a mile from Messrs. Richard Anthony & Son's Cotton-Mill. For particulars, enquire of ASA SAYLES, on the premises. A. SAYLES & Co.

North-Providence, March 7 . 1[illegible]

Transportation Revolution: The Blackstone Canal; The P & W Railroad

The largest problem encountered by the mills was not with the availability of raw materials or labor but with transportation to suitable markets. In the 18th century roads were uniformly poor, despite sporadic attempts to improve them. Hauling a ton of freight 30 miles over such roads cost as much as shipping it all the way to England.

In 1796 Providence merchant John Brown (brother of Slater's patron Moses Brown) had publicly broached the idea of building a canal along the Blackstone River, to Worcester and beyond.

Providence merchants saw the advantages of a canal — increased markets for their goods and increased access to products from the hinterlands. Boston merchants and politicians, however, feared the loss of the Worcester market to Providence and succeeded



in thwarting the plan. The spectacular success of New York's Erie Canal twenty years later revived canal plans in Providence and Worcester, and this time both states approved the scheme. The Blackstone Canal was completed by 1828, but after an initial success it soon proved to be a failure. Canal operations were hampered by the weather and by restrictions imposed by mill owners jealous of their water rights. The canal may have endured these problems but for an unforeseen development, the introduction of the railroad. The Boston and Worcester line, in operation by 1835, demonstrated the greater speed and reliability of the railroad. The canal felt the competition immediately but lingered on in a kind of halflife until the Providence and Worcester Railroad replaced it in 1847. Had John Brown succeeded in building the canal in the 1790's, its history would have been far different. The consequences of missing a golden opportunity through delay will be remembered by the Corridor Commission.

Industry and Labor

In the years between Slater's experiment and the Civil War, America made up for England's 50-year industrial headstart. Industrial growth soared, spurred by newly reliable railroad transportation and by the same technological development that had made the railroads possible — steam. The steam engine allowed for dramatic expansion beyond the finite limits imposed by water power. This was particularly notable in the cities, where steam permitted industrial concentration. In the mill villages, steam power created the classic image of towering stacks above rural landscape.

Mill management continued to be dominated by family-owned firms whose paternalistic attitudes are strikingly revealed in the mill villages of Albion, Slatersville, Ashton, Blackstone, Whitinsville, and the once utopian mill development at Hopedale. In addition to providing worker housing, mill owners often built ball fields, village halls, hospitals and cemeteries, and sponsored outings, clubs and band concerts. The inward-looking attitudes of employers sometimes discouraged the development of transportation networks linking the communities; but a growing divergence between mill owners and mill workers in language, religion and ethnicity tended to work against the sense of community fostered by management.



By 1830, 55% of Valley mill workers were children. Although the later influx of immigrants lessened the need for child labor, it was not completely outlawed until the passage of the Fair Labor Standards Act in 1938.

Labor problems arose, especially during hard economic times. The child labor issue was to first to surface. Although commonplace in Samuel Slater's day, child labor became steadily more controversial. Sensational stories about mill accidents involving children roused public opinion and eventually led to a national solution through legislation.

Adult workers also sought better conditions for themselves. Work days in the mills were long: ten hours in winter and fourteen in summer; the noise was deafening; in summer the workplaces were severely hot; and there was always the danger of disabling accidents and contracting respiratory diseases from the fiber-filled air. The nation's first strike involving women took place in Pawtucket in 1824, when female weavers were asked to accept longer hours and a 25% cut in wages.

The makeup of the work force had changed also. During the heyday of canal construction and following the potato famine of 1846 and other crop failures, large numbers of Irish and French and English Canadians had been attracted to work and live in the Valley. Later, Germans, Swedes and the Dutch moved into the region to farm and feed the mill workers. As the textile and manufacturing industries grew, families from southern and eastern Europe also immigrated to the Valley. Like immigrants in the rest of the country, these newcomers often experienced difficulty in gaining acceptance with the established ethnic groups. It was rather natural, therefore, that each new wave of immigrants tended to settle into its own neighborhood.

The Hardest Working River

As reflected by the many magnificent mills built during this period, the height of the Valley's prosperity came between the Civil War and World War I. By 1880 the U.S. Census noted: "It would be hard in fact to find another stream so fully utilized." In addition to the textile industry, numerous companies were established in the late 1800's, and Valley towns and cities became centers well-known for producing special products. Examples are:

- Woonsocket Rubber Company, which became a world leader in the production of rubber goods by the end of the 19th century;
- Washburn Wire Company of Worcester, which became a leading producer of wire, including the barbed wire that fenced the Great Plains;
- Dudley Shuttle Company of Sutton, which became a major producer of loom shuttles;
- Douglas Axe Manufacturing Company, which repeatedly won medals for excellence at European and American trade fairs for its manufacture of machetes, bayonets, picks, axes and other edge tools.

This period has been called the golden age of American industry, and the manufacturers of the Blackstone River Valley road the crest of the wave.

Effects of Industrialization

While industrialization of the Valley generally produced economic prosperity, there were adverse side effects. Over a century of hard use had taken its toll on the Blackstone River, which had served as a disposal site for every chemical pollutant incidental to the textile industry, leather making, woodworking and metal working. These chemicals, plus sewage and the practice of using the abandoned portions of the Canal as trash dumps, had produced a terribly polluted river. No anadromous fish have moved up the Blackstone since Slater built his dam in Pawtucket.

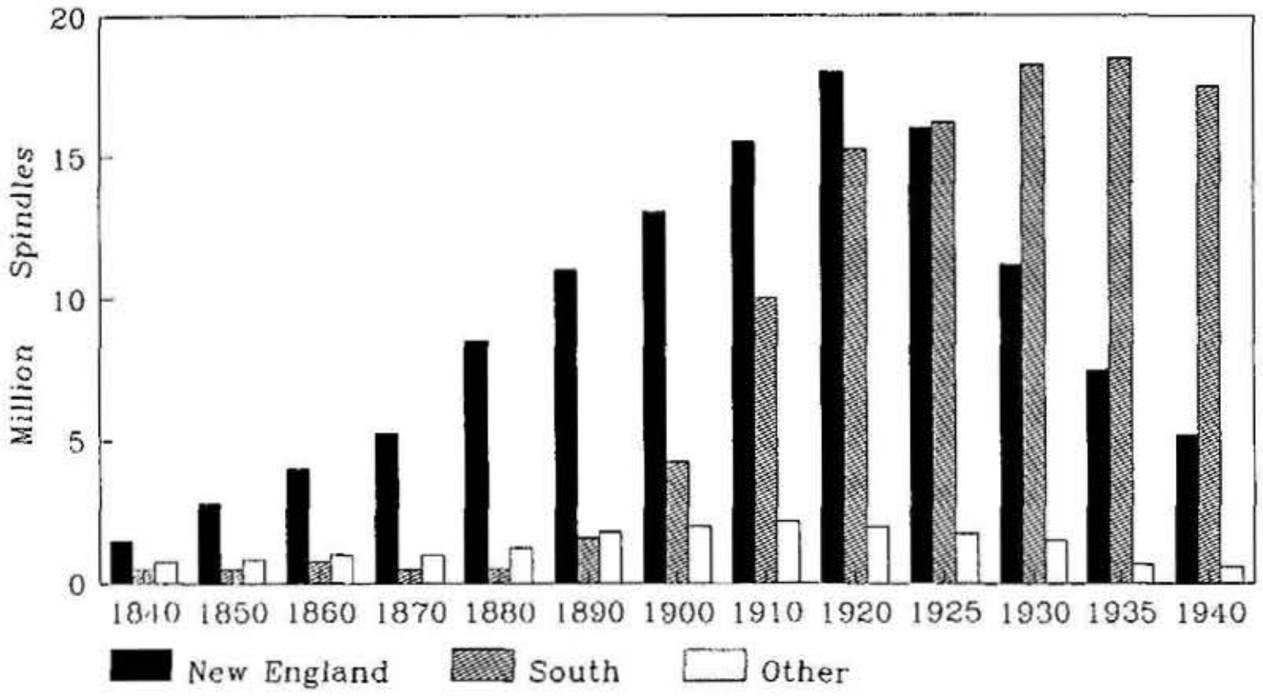
Class structure, too, was markedly less egalitarian than it had been in the early 19th century. Labor problems continued to be the subject of newspaper editorials and speeches by politicians and labor leaders at this period.

The Mills Go South

The positive economic outlook of the Blackstone River Valley's commercial interests dimmed as textile jobs and industry began to be exported South. Statistics give a clear picture: in 1880 the South produced 6.25% of the nation's cotton goods; by 1910 it produced 33%. Southern mills were often financed by New England entrepreneurs who chose to

move their business south rather than make capital improvements to existing mills. Outdated technology, labor troubles and climate were all blamed for this downward trend; by 1923 the North had lost 50% of the nation's cotton cloth production to the South. This manufacturing decline was accompanied by the most serious labor problems the Valley had yet seen. The prevailing issues were hours, proposed wage cuts and the union shop. To a certain extent, the labor unions from 1929-55 replaced for the Valley's mill workers the sense of community that had once been dominated by life of the mill.

Active Cotton Spindles In U.S. Mills 1840-1940



Statistics show the collapse of Northern textile dominence, but not the emotional, economic and social pain experienced by Blackstone Valley families for generations.

The End of an Era

The Great Depression of the 1930's struck the Valley particularly hard: mills continued to close and towns lost significant numbers of people. The economic activity of World War II provided the Valley with little more than a short respite from the prevailing downward trend, although some of the larger firms were exceptions. Providence's U.S. Rubber Company, for example, manufactured 36 million heels for shoes and combat boots during the war; the Lippitt Woolen Company in Woonsocket produced hundreds of thousands of yards of textiles for the War Department; and some local businesses benefitted from wartime naval shipbuilding at nearby yards.

Nevertheless, the populations of Valley towns declined inexorably, or at best held steady, from the 1920's to 1980. Industrial figures are starker: of the woolen and worsted mills operating in the Valley at the end of World War II, an estimated 90% have closed.

Revival

The Blackstone River Valley has seen a cultural, if not yet an economic, resurgence since 1985. Today, accelerated growth in Boston, Providence and Worcester has created new opportunities and new problems for Valley residents. Congressional recognition of the Valley as a nationally significant region has instilled a growing sense of pride, and a will to re-harness the energy of the Blackstone River to bring about Valley revitalization. Now, for perhaps the first time, residents have begun to view their towns collectively — as part of a complex, ever changing fabric that weaves together the Valley's historic, cultural and natural resources in a unique place — a place that reflects the major contributions to American life over the last 350 years.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS 2

The Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor's Cultural Heritage and Land Management Plan is based on existing state planning efforts. Congress directed the preparation of additional studies to coordinate those plans, identify gaps in information or policy discrepancies between the two states, and present a unified plan and data base for the Corridor. As mandated, the Commission and its consultants prepared the following reports as part of the overall plan:

- Historic Resources Inventory
- Design Guidelines and Standards
- Interpretive Plan
- Land Use Management Report
- Economic Assessment
- Tourism Inventory.

Chapter 2 summarizes these reports and their major findings, and incorporates the findings and recommendations from earlier plans and from the public. This summary describes the significance of the National Heritage Corridor resources, threats to their survival, opportunities for their use or re-use, and recommendations for future action. Full texts of the six planning reports are included as Appendices.

REPORT SUMMARIES

Historic Resources Inventory

prepared by Slater Mill Historic Site

The Historic Resources Inventory identifies over 500 historically significant structures and sites within the Corridor. The listed properties are prominent examples of the thousands of important buildings, man-made landscapes, engineering structures, archaeological sites, and other cultural features in the Valley. The inventory team studied the history of the Blackstone River Valley, selected the properties to be included in the inventory, and collected and entered basic information in a computerized data base.

The inventory is based primarily on data collected in previous inventories, surveys, and National Register nominations in Massachusetts and Rhode Island. The inventory project identified the need for immediate action in specific areas of preservation and data collection, and for long-term projects that will expand our knowledge of the wealth of cultural resources in the Valley. The inventory provides a foundation for the continuation of inventory efforts, and the report makes specific recommendations for future research efforts.



Pawtucket Falls, 1789.

The structures and sites selected for the inventory are either significant in their own right or representative examples of important types found in the Valley. The inventory, designed to achieve geographical spread, includes a number of structures and/or sites from every town in the Corridor. Additional information on historic properties in each town is contained in the report's list of entries in the National Register of Historic Places. The report's essay on "Historic Themes, Cultural Patterns, and Material Evidence" also discusses the significance of many of the individual inventory listings in the context

of Valley history.

Each structure or site in the inventory has been listed under one of six basic types: non-industrial buildings, industrial buildings, complexes (agricultural, industrial, commercial, religious, etc.), engineering structures (including bridges), archaeological sites, and historic landscapes. There is information on location and dating, as well as a set of thematic connections used in interpretive planning. This data base uses the standard program of the National Park Service, dBase III Plus, and incorporates many of the features of cultural resource data bases now in use by various state and federal agencies. The structure of the inventory data base can support the entry of additional information, as more historical research is done.

Information from the inventory report was used to prepare the interpretive plan. Up to three historical themes are assigned to every inventoried property — the themes being: industrial development, industrial decline, transportation, technology, labor and management, ethnicity and immigration, religion, early settlement, community development, social reform, commerce, agriculture, architecture, and Native Americans.

Triple-decker mill housing is found throughout the Valley. Poor renovations eliminate character.





With sensitive maintenance, mill housing will remain a strong part of our identity.

Design Guidelines and Standards

prepared by the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities

This report gives design guidelines and standards for the construction, preservation, restoration, alteration and use of all properties in the Corridor. While its emphasis is on historic buildings and districts, the report is designed to guide owners and reviewers in making historically appropriate alterations to properties of all periods. It also can be used to guide the design of new construction so that it is compatible with the existing historic fabric.

Part I of the report is a brief summary of the architectural styles popular in the Valley from the late 1700's through the early 20th century. Key features of each style are explained and illustrated. The sheer number of intact groups, multi-family and mill housing are character-defining and significant within the region. A special emphasis is placed on this building type.

The more people know about their buildings, the more they will understand their value and how to protect them. Knowledge of the architectural styles used over time will help owners determine the approximate construction date(s) of their properties, help them recognize design elements that give their buildings a particular stylistic character, guide them in retaining and maintaining those design elements, and guide them in making appropriate adaptions and/or alterations to their buildings.

Part II gives design guidelines and standards for both existing structures and new construction. These guidelines and standards are based on three basic concepts:

- Preserve rather than destroy;
- Rehabilitate in ways that preserve and complement the existing historic fabric and style of a building;
- Design new buildings that respect the historic character and values of the neighborhood.

Part III focuses on common building materials and maintenance. Understanding building materials and how they work will help owners detect and correct materials and systems failures before they lead to the unnecessary loss of historic fabric.

The report encourages Corridor cities and towns to adopt local historic district and zoning ordinances and by-laws to prevent loss of character of historic centers. These design guidelines and standards can be readily adapted for this purpose. They can also be helpful to owners who want to get federal funds, permits, or licenses for historic properties.

The report appends a glossary of common architectural terminology, a building maintenance check list, and a reference list of informational sources.

Interpretive Plan

prepared by Timelines, Inc

Imaginative interpretation can bring to Valley residents the spirit and pride that has for too long been undernourished. It can also make the Valley much more accessible and attactive to visitors and scholars. Interpretation makes history and nature exciting and meaningful. Museums, talks by Park Rangers, signs, brochures, nature walks, self-guided tours and films are just a few of the typical examples of interpretive opportunities.

The Interpretive Plan for the Corridor is wide-ranging. It contains recommendations for programs, approaches, and themes; establishes a management framework; and offers strategies for using the Valley's historic and cultural resources to enhance the understanding and appreciation of the Valley's unique role on the regional and national stage.



The National Park Service Ranger. Skilled interpreters can make the Valley's stories come alive. The NPS presence symbolizes the Corridor's national significance.

Part One of the report advocates the value of interpretation in the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor. The value of a regional plan for management and marketing is described; interpretive planning and activities currently being undertaken by the Commission, the National Park Service, the states of Massachusetts and Rhode Island, and local communities are discussed; and the tools communities need to develop their own interpretive programs with the assistance of the above-mentioned partners are listed.

The plan emphasizes community-based interpretive efforts, and suggests activities that can be undertaken by Valley schools, youth groups, historical societies, regional tourism promotional organizations, and civic organizations — activities that are designed to build a base of understanding and ownership through broad participation. Part One also recommends several programs for the Commission and its partners to establish, followed by a list of priority actions. The Action Plan section proposes a schedule for projects and strongly recommends that first priorities be highly visible and relatively easy to accomplish.

The interpretive message is aimed at three distinct audiences: the local people, visitors from the general region, and the transient audience. Interpretive and tourist activities need to reach and be geared to each audience. Major attention is given to improved wayfinding and publications, exhibitions and special events, the location of visitor centers, interpretive kiosks and gateway markers.

Major Themes - Blackstone River Valley NHC Interpretation

Part Two gives a summary history of the Blackstone River Valley as a unifying basis for Valley-wide and community-based interpretive efforts. For the same reason interpretive

themes are recommended, with a special section that describes the important and unique contributions and potential themes of each Corridor community. Interpretive themes were derived from previous studies, scholars and ideas and perceptions identified through public meetings, questionnaires, and in interviews with Valley residents.

Major themes are:

Work —The River at Work and The People at Work. These themes encompass the major elements that came together to create the heritage of the Valley: the power of nature harnessed by human ingenuity.

The Birthplace of the American Industrial Revolution as a major theme explores the unique set of factors that led to the transformation of a group of New England farming communities into a world-renowned center for textile and machine manufacture.

The Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor as a national model of conscious self-revitalization based on heritage is a major theme. It discusses the partnership strategy of the NHC and opportunities for communities to work together thematically and substantively to make significant progress.



Singing Dam Site, Sutton MA, today.

LAND USE ISSUES

Summarized from the Land Use Management Plan.

The problem is not the absolute amount of growth, but the decentralized pattern it is taking. Current local land-use controls aggravate threats to Corridor resources from new development.

The historic development pattern is compact. Today's zoning encourages us to consume open space and blur the "edges" of town centers with low density residential sprawl and miles of roadside commercial strip development.

If trends and current zoning continue, subdivisions will obliterate the Valley's historic settlement patterns by the year 2000. The Valley could well lose its distinctive blend of historic and cultural resources and open space.

Alternative approaches to residential, commercial, and industrial development can accommodate an equal amount of development, while preserving open space and narrow, country lanes.

Other major issues needing attention are:

- Preservation or restoration of the Valley's natural resources, including the river, wetlands, floodplain, wildlife habitat, scenic vistas.
- Public access and use of land and water resources.
- Gateways to, and the access routes between special historic or natural sites.

CHOICES

The Singing Dam area in Sutton faces choices typical to many places in the Valley. These sketches show the site today (A), the site in the future with conventional development (A-1), and how it could look with creative development (A-2).

The Blackstone River flows through the center of the site, with an extensive gravel pit in the foreground and, in the background, a series of agricultural fields, an historic farm and the summit of Lazy Hill, a local landmark.

Conventional development and continued zoning provisions encourage sprawl across both the agricultural lands at the top and the former gravel pit.

Creative development protects open space, the Canal, the river and the wetlands, while allowing development well-sited and well suited to Valley traditions.

Land Use Management Report

prepared by the Center for Rural Massachusetts, University of Massachusetts at Amherst

The Blackstone River Valley has a special character — its regional identity is a composite of its people, institutions, history and natural resources. This report describes the vision and land use policies necessary to retain that character in the face of rapidly encroaching change. It considers and details appropriate land and water management techniques, including changes in local zoning, the use of innovative sub-division designs, conservation easements and development of intergovernmental cooperative agreements, which can be used to protect the Corridor's resources.

The report makes practical recommendations to achieve an improved and integrated system of land use management within the Corridor, a system to help retain and renew the Valley's distinctive character, through the decades of inevitable change which lie ahead.

The document provides guidelines for the Commission to work with local governments to encourage effective strategies to protect the integrity of the Valley's cultural landscapes and to integrate new development compatibly into the Corridor's natural and historic fabric. For private landowners and investors, it describes the special character of this region and encourages them to design and site new buildings in a way that reinforces the Valley's traditional settlement pattern of compact development surrounded by open space.



Site After Conventional Development.



Site After Creative Development.

"Of concern is not the absolute amount of growth, but the decentralized pattern it is taking."

The report's policy recommendations share a twin focus: conservation and development — objectives which need not be mutually exclusive. The authors stress that creative thinking by governmental entities, non-profit organizations, property owners, land developers, and professional designers can make an enormous difference in the way the next generation of change is managed.

The Land Use Management report examines four sites within the Corridor, which together illustrate eight different "landscape types" that are distinctive of the region. These sites represent a combination of problems and opportunities and were chosen to illuminate conditions and future choices facing private and public decision-makers throughout the Valley.

The report helps readers to imagine the myriad possibilities (both positive and negative) which await the National Heritage Corridor, based upon existing and potentially improved land use approaches and techniques. It proposes a vision for the future which not only protects but builds on the best of the past, a vision in which developers and conservationists can play mutually supporting roles.

Economic Assessment

prepared by the University of Rhode Island, Office of Travel, Tourism and Recreation and the Department of Resource Economics.

The Economic Assessment report addresses the need to protect the significant historical and cultural resources of the Corridor in the pursuit of appropriate economic revitalization activities. It identifies ways to enhance economic development in the Valley arising from opportunities presented by the National Heritage Corridor designation, and it provides decision-makers with information about future growth in the Valley and strategies for guiding growth. The report emphasizes the mixed economy of the Valley and describes how the economic nature will change. The researchers' three objectives were to:

- Identify businesses, particularly those related to tourism, that are likely to be affected by the National Heritage Corridor and provide an inventory of resources for development;
- Assess likely scenarios of future economic development in the Corridor and its communities. A growth model was used to project alternative visions of the Valley's future. These scenarios reflect the choices communities can make to capitalize on opportunities; and
- Assess economic effects of alternative growth scenarios on the Corridor as a region.

Tourism Inventory

prepared by Slater Mill Historic Site through URI

The tourism industry, stimulated by changes related to the establishment of the Corridor, is expected to play an increasingly larger role in the economic vitality of the Valley. The Tourism Inventory summarizes information that will help decision-makers understand the travel and tourism-related resources in the Valley: current resources (attractions and facilities) and how they are distributed among Valley communities; the capacity of these resources to serve visitors; their current level of use; and the mix of tourists and residents using these attractions and facilities. The report also identifies key historic sites in the Corridor which could be adapted for use as visitor information stops or centers.

The inventory report recommends an on-going program for collection and evaluation of information: a continuing source of data will signal any changes in the results of program development and can provide data that may be used for specific, periodic analysis and to assess increases in revenues due to tourism. All data was computerized in an inventory framework to allow data to be summarized by community, or Corridor-wide.

The Blackstone River Valley is distinct from other industrial regions:

It was the birthplace of the American Industrial Revolution;

It represents the first widespread industrial use of water power in the United States;

The Rhode Island System of manufacturing was developed here;

It was the first ethnically and religiously diverse area of New England;

Its industry and transportation were crucial to the development of the 2nd and 3rd largest cities in New England.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BLACKSTONE RIVER VALLEY

The Blackstone River Valley is an organism, a unified working landscape of scenic mill villages, commercial town centers, rural open space, and urban areas. The interrelationship of the mills, millyards, multi-family residences, mill housing, commercial and institutional buildings, agricultural land, and open spaces contributes to the distinct "sense of place" that is the Blackstone River Valley. The mills, villages, transportation networks and the social history of the people who lived and worked in the Valley together tell the story of the industrialization of 18th and 19th century America. The technology and organization of manufacturing pioneered in the Blackstone River Valley influenced industrial development in the rest of the country; and the textile machinery manufacturing centers that developed in Pawtucket, Millbury, Hopedale, Northbridge, Worcester and Providence constituted one of the most important machine-making districts in the Nation. From the Blackstone River Valley, an appreciation of the larger national patterns of industrial development, decline and rebirth may be gained.

The most significant resource of the Blackstone River Valley, however, is its "wholeness," the unique survival here of representative elements of entire 18th and 19th century production systems: power and transportation methods, labor and laborer's communities, workplaces and machinery. Few places exist where such a concentration of integrated historic, cultural and natural resources have survived and can be made accessible by interpretation, preservation and other management strategies.

It is this context of a working valley of mill villages, farms, cities and towns, transportation systems, river and canal, that makes the individual elements of the Blackstone River Valley significant.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

In the preparation of this plan, historians from the Slater Mill Historic Site conducted a broad, Corridor-wide inventory to supplement National Register and state and local historical surveys. While all these inventories confirm the number and diversity of historic resources in the Corridor, they have only tapped the surface — particularly as one moves out from the Blackstone River into the area beyond, where significant early resources are known to exist. The most important types of historic resources are described below.



Voss Farm in Uxbridge typifies the once agrarian holdings in the Valley. The farm is now part of the MA State Heritage Park. Interpretation on this site would focus on the transition from farm to factory.

Historic Farms and Hilltop Villages

The earliest European cultural landscapes still can be seen in the Valley, reflected in the many historic farms and agricultural market towns. These communities and farms are connected by the Valley's earliest roads, and illustrated by communities, such as Blackstone, made up of 5-cornered nodes. In villages such as Mendon, Sutton, and Upton the

day-to-day agrarian activities are still reflected in the landscape. Although most agriculture was subsistence, it was also commercial. For example, Sutton includes the site of the first commercial cranberry operation, at the Merrill Pond area.

Mill Villages

In many parts of the Valley, mill owners planned and built entire towns around their mills with housing, shops, schools, libraries and town halls. Most villages clustered around a single feature — a waterfall, pond or factory building — and extend from the river's edge to high ground. Life in the villages was often confined to a quarter-mile distance between the mill and the village edge; most workers had only to walk a couple of hundred feet from their doorstep to the factory. Some of these planned communities, such as Hopedale and Whitinsville, have retained their cohesive character, but many are in danger of being lost to inappropriate in-fill and new development. Study findings show that these villages are one of the most distinctive and historically significant features of the Valley. There is the need to preserve their scale; attention needs to be given not only to the individual buildings but to the spatial relationships between buildings.

Mills

The mills and factory buildings of the 18th and 19th centuries with their towers, size, variety and evocative power create a constantly recurring presence throughout the Valley. Mill complexes, often referred to as the "cathedrals of their time," are the most prominent symbols of the Valley. These sturdy industrial structures are set in a landscape that has, for the most part, escaped dramatic alteration; but the future of the mills is uncertain. Many of them are either vacant or only marginally used. While adaptive re-use is possible, the range of uses has thus far been somewhat limited — housing, discount outlets, and, in a few cases, offices and specialty retail stores.

Slater Mill in Pawtucket, Rhode Island is the most noted mill building in the Valley. It was here in 1790 that Samuel Slater, Moses Brown and William Almy built the first water-powered cotton spinning mill in the United States. Slater's 1793 Mill is one of the few wooden textile mills still in existence. Today it stands as part of a museum complex known as Slater Mill Historic Site. The museum is the primary interpreter of the history of the Blackstone River Valley and of the textile industry, and produces exhibits, publications and tour programs that examine the physical development and cultural patterns of this region. The Stanley Woolen Mills (Uxbridge) is one of a few remaining wooden textile mills and is still in operation.



Ashton, RI. "If you lived here during the last century, your whole day, and much of your life would have been confined to the ¼ mile distance between the mill and the edges of the village. Most workers had only to walk about 200 feet from their doorstep to the factory."
Working Water

"...You knew who worked where by where they lived, that's the way it worked...THEY lived on the Hill. WE lived in the Valley...Now this was not oppression: in a sense, the housing here is...100 years old and still fine housing..."

1989 Oral interview of Spaulding Aldrich, Town Administrator, Whitinsville

Mill Housing

Another important architectural symbol commonly found throughout the Valley is mill housing. Housing for mill workers took many forms — cottages, duplexes, triple deckers and numerous 6-family houses; but most typical is the two-family attached houses, densely arranged in orderly villages.

The housing pattern of the mill towns often physically reflected the hierarchy within the mill economy. Houses of factory workers were commonly built adjacent to the mills and factories, while supervisors' houses were set further up the hill. In some communities the mill owners lived still higher in spacious mansions. While many of mansions have been torn down, a few have been converted into inns, real estate offices and other uses. Also, some mill housing has been rehabilitated and is used as low-cost housing. There is the opportunity to rehab more of the mill houses, especially those constructed of brick, which have held up well over time.

Duplexes are in demand and are still being built in the Blackstone River Valley. There is the opportunity to encourage the development of this type of housing as well as other multi-family housing that continues the Valley's traditional housing patterns.



Mill housing is special, revealing throughout the Valley an array of handsome vernacular architectural styles. But mill housing is underappreciated, which is a threat to its survival.

Individual Structures

Historic inventories show that the Valley still contains a wealth of historic buildings, despite the many that have been torn down or otherwise destroyed. There are enclaves of noteworthy 19th century commercial buildings representing most architectural styles. Many of these are on the National Register of Historic Places, and many more are potentially eligible. These commercial buildings provide the "Main Streets" of the Corridor with a rich variety of textures and ornamental details while displaying a common context of scale, setback and masonry materials.

Agriculture was the principal economic acitivity in the Blackstone River Valley prior to industrialization and continued to be important in the industrial period. Farms, farm buildings and grange halls represent some of the oldest landscapes and structures in the Valley and need to be preserved in order to tell that portion of Valley history. The Capron/ Voss Farm in Uxbridge, once a prosperous dairy farm, and the Waters Farm in Sutton, one of the first commercial orchards in New England, are prime examples of historic agricultural sites.

Commerce had been the cornerstone of the colonial economy of Providence, and it was essential for the success of both industry and agriculture in the Valley. As industry grew, the commercial networks grew with it. Marketplaces, banks, general stores (such as the Jenkes Store in Douglas) and inns (such as the Uxbridge Inn) represent that era of growth. Many of these late 19th century buildings are still being used, some for their original purposes.



Chestnut Hill Meeting House, established in 1769 to meet the community needs of settlers living in a remote area.

The earliest governmental structures in the Valley were meetinghouses. Important civic buildings include the Chestnut Hill Meeting House (1769), Worcester City Hall (1898), and the Old State House (1762) in Providence; school buildings, such as the Masonic Building and Academy (Uxbridge, 1819) and the Brick Schoolhouse (1767) in Providence, which housed one of the first free schools in the United States.

Transportation Systems

The development of efficient and cohesive transportation systems unified the Blackstone River Valley economically and culturally, and linked local industry with national markets.

Roads

Early European settlers found a network of Indian trails and adapted many of them for their own use. While some mill owners deliberately inhibited connections between towns in order to retain a monopoly on providing services and goods to the mill workers, routes inevitably developed between mill towns and farms/suppliers of produce and other materials to townspeople. With the establishment and growth of mills and towns, however, these early roads proved inadequate for the speedy transport of goods to suitable markets.

While most older roads have disappeared or undergone extensive changes, some remnants remain. One of the oldest and least altered is Great Road, which follows an old Indian trail and was built in 1683 to connect Providence with the inland markets around the thriving town of Mendon. Another historically important road is Route 122, which hugs the river and canal. It is considered the "Valley highway" and is the Main Street for many of the historic mill villages.

Boston Road in Sutton, once known as the "Old Connecticut Path," which later crosses the Blackstone River in Grafton's Saundersville section, is recorded as early as the 1600's as an Algonquin trail. While Postmaster General, Benjamin Franklin is said to have had markers installed along this Post Road between New York and Boston. There are also numerous narrow country lanes throughout the Valley, which add to the character and visual identity of the Corridor.

Additionally, some of the roadside buildings that served early travellers remain — such as Northgate, formerly a tollhouse, tollkeeper's residence, company meeting site and hotel, on the Old Louisquissett Pike (Route 246). Today Northgate serves as headquarters for the Blackstone Valley Historical Society and the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council.

Route 146, the principal north-south route that links Providence with Worcester, is a four-lane, generally limited access arterial, roughly a mile west of the river. It parallels the river, canal and railroad through the center of the Valley. The construction of Route 146 was a breakthrough of regional cooperation and proved the value of working together.

Several east-west routes through the northern Valley are congested, particularly where traffic concentrates in historic town centers. Public access to the river, canal and other resources is difficult. Signage throughout the Valley is generally unsightly and cluttered. Directional signage to recreation and historic sites is minimal, if not altogether missing.

Along the Canal, hikers and canoeists encounter mysterious remnants of machinery used to divert the river's water for transport or power. The riverside is a great place for discovery and interpretation.



While past inaccessibility has helped preserved the river, canal and mill villages, it presents challenges for interpretation. At present, although there is bus service in parts of the Valley in Rhode Island, there is no Valley-wide public transportation. Residents and visitors must rely on automobiles or charter buses to explore the Corridor. Better transportation must take in the need to protect scenic and historic resources as well as visitor needs. Residents and visitors need clear, uncluttered directional and informational signs to historic, cultural and natural sites and events, and to Valley businesses and services.

Canal

The American Canal Society lists the Blackstone Canal as one of the important canals in

the early American canal period of 1786-1851. The regional significance of the canal stems from its influence in the development of Providence, Worcester and the towns of the Blackstone River Valley as prominent centers of manufacturing and trade. And its history teaches us the lesson of "too little, too late." Had it been built when proposed, the canal's effects would have been tremendous.

The canal opened to traffic in 1828 and followed the western side of the Blackstone River, by-passing its falls. Forty-nine locks were required to help boats negotiate the 438-foot descent. While the canal was planned as a cheaper method of moving goods than hauling them over land, problems of freezing, insufficient water, competition with mill owners over water rights, and an economic downturn plagued its operation.



The Blackstone Canal could not compete with the railroad. Although shipping freight via canal was cheap, the railroad was faster and did not freeze in winter.

Although short-lived as a transportation route, the Blackstone Canal has left considerable physical evidence. Much of the towpath is intact, as is the Millville Lock, one of a few stone locks remaining in New England — other surviving locks are in Northbridge and Uxbridge. In addition, portions of aqueduct, spillways and many remnants of canal machinery still exist and provide good opportunities for interpretation. These remnants, however, are threatened by deterioration, vandalism, lack of proper maintenance and lack of water in some canal sections.

Today, state and local park planners see numerous opportunities for using the canal and its towpath for recreational activities. The canal is already being used by canoeists and kayakers. State plans are being developed to provide better access to the canal and to provide bicycle and hiking trails, interpretive displays and kiosks, and picnic facilities along the towpath. In addition, Heritage Homecoming, a local, non-profit organization, is raising private funds to build a working replica of the Lady Carrington, the Blackstone Canal's first boat.

Railroad

Rail transportation completely eclipsed and was far more significant to the Valley than the Canal. It made the textile and other industries dominant by allowing railcars to haul coal to power steam engines and move finished goods to wider markets. Many mills had their own railspurs, connecting them to the main line. The Norfolk County, the Boston & Worcester, and the Providence & Worcester railroads all contributed to the region's evolution and to the demise of the Blackstone Canal.



The Providence & Worcester Railroad is the oldest American railroad in continuous ownership and operation. Its opening in 1847 greatly expanded the markets for Valley textiles.

The Providence & Worcester (P&W) Railroad is the oldest American railroad in continuous ownership and operation and still operates as an independent short line. Its route, bridges, stations and related buildings are important reminders of the evolution of transportation in the Valley. Several handsome rail stations are listed in the Corridor's historic inventories, as are a number of railroad bridges. The Triad Bridge in Millville and the stone viaduct in Blackstone stand out as relics of these early engineering achievements and merit National Register nomination. Graphic evidence of the interrelationship of industry and railroading is seen in the Harris Warehouse in Woonsocket, where its stone walls were curved to accommodate a railroad spur.

By the end of 19th century a network of electric streetcar systems connected Valley towns and provided "Inter-urban" trolley service between Providence, Woonsocket, and Worcester. Trolley lines also helped to develop city dwellers' taste for rural recreation at locations such as the Nipmuck Pond Resort Cottages (Mendon, ca. 1890).

Transportation Opportunities

As the natural spines of the Valley, the canal, railroad and river are the principal constant physical elements of the region. There is an exciting opportunity to interpret the evolution of the railroad and its related bridges, sites and engineering practices, but these structures are threatened by deterioration and vandalism. Today the P&W is used almost exclusively for freight, but has occasional tourist excursions. Railroad officials have shown interest in working with tourism groups, state park planners and the Commission in the development of additional rail excursions and in the development of recreation opportunities along the river corridor. Care must be taken in pursuing these projects to protect public safety along the railroad right-of-way.

There is an additional opportunity to explore the feasibility of developing a multi-modal transportation system for moving visitors throughout the Corridor. Within the river-canal-railroad corridor, rail, bus, water, bicycle and walking options could be developed and integrated into the total system. Rail and water-borne transportion options present viable alternatives for moving large numbers of people throughout the Corridor and Heritage State Parks, and would provide an enjoyable interpretive experience. River and rail excursions, coordinated with special events and coinciding with other interpretive planning and cultural experiences, would substantially add to the success of the Corridor's interpretation program.

"If current trends and zoning continue, the Blackstone Valley by the year 2000 could well lose its distinctive blend of historic and cultural resources, open space, and community character..."

Preservation Threats and Opportunities

The inventories prepared by Slater Mill Historic Site and state and local historic preservation offices confirm the extraordinary number of historic structures in the Valley. Field work has also confirmed losses of historic resources — especially of the canal and industrial structures — to demolition, neglect and improper maintenance.

While deterioration of historic structures has often been related to the economic misfortunes of their owners, contemporary development pressures are increasing the rate of loss. Ironically, "neglect" has actually helped preserve the architectural integrity of many historic buildings. Because owners could not always afford to make repairs or renovations, the original style and detailing of the building were kept intact.

Many well-intentioned rehabilitation efforts have significantly changed or erased the historic character and architectural style of individual buildings. Vinyl siding often masks the details of once-beautiful buildings and allows rot to go undetected. Sandblasting can damage masonry and lead to the deterioration of masonry and mortar. The cumulative

damage of deterioration and inappropriate renovations threatens to obliterate historic resources and diminish the significance of the Valley.

Despite losses of individual buildings, the historic fabric of the Blackstone River Valley is remarkably intact. This cultural landscape is an organism of elements absorbed and integrated over more than 300 years. The Valley has seen some excellent restorations of individual buildings -- particularly housing. There have also been a number of sensitive rehabilitations and adaptations of mill buildings, mostly into housing. A few key portions of the Canal have been stabilized, largely due to state heritage park initiatives. Study findings emphasize that the best way to preserve historic buildings is to USE them.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Americans are increasingly interested in learning about their roots. The past decade of community involvement and planning that led to the creation of two state heritage parks and the Blackstone National Heritage Corridor has raised public awareness and heightened enthusiasm for understanding the Valley's diverse heritage. No existing history of the Valley tells the whole story. Older residents and former mill workers can help fill in the missing pieces, and communities and ethnic groups can celebrate their special identity and their contributions to the social, economic and labor history of the Valley. This early industrial history is largely based on the development of the Rhode Island System of manufacturing.

Rhode Island System of Manufacturing

The mills of the Blackstone River Valley were organized according to a system transferred from England by Samuel Slater, whereby children and later whole families were employed to work the mills. To attract people from the surrounding farms (and later from Canada and Europe) to work in the mills, manufacturers often created entire villages — with housing, schools and churches around the workplace or mill. The villages were usually financed by a small group of investors, at least one of whom oversaw mill operations. This pattern of manufacturing in small mill villages, privately financed and using family labor, has become known as the Rhode Island System of Manufacturing.

The Rhode Island System is often contrasted with the Waltham System, which was first developed in the 1810's by Boston investors and was typified by larger, corporate, industrial enterprises such as Lawrence and Lowell, and which initially hired young women and housed them in large boarding houses.

The implications and manifestations of the Rhode Island System were many —and can be seen, heard and felt today in the Valley. The mill villages, mill housing, ethnic neighborhoods, and the preservation of languages and traditions all have their roots in this system.

Comparison of Mill Systems

Classic Features	***Rhode Island System***	***Waltham System***
Example	Blackstone Valley	Lowell
Ownership	Families and partnerships	Joint Stock
Capitalization	Often minimal	Large
Power at Site	Less than 1,000 HP, often less than 100	More than 1,000 HP, often much higher
Distribution	Arranged independently by each mill	Power canal system shared by several mills or companies, often leasing power from a promotional agency
On-Site Management	Owner	Agent
Labor	Children and families	Young women preferred
Housing	Family houses and tenements	Boardinghouses
Product	Emphasis on diversity	Emphasis on mass production
Sales	Sold direct	Agency
Community Form	Village	City

Adapted from Dunwell, Steve. 1978. The Run of the Mill. Boston, MA.

Ethnic Neighborhoods

The larger urban areas of the Valley saw the development of neighborhoods, which were stratified and separated by classes and cultures. Not only was mill worker separated from mill owner, but the various immigrant populations settled respectively into their own "place" in the city. While the demography and level of cultural influence of the urban neighborhoods continue to change and be redefined in terms of new immigration populations, there are constant reminders in the landscape (churches, ethnic/social halls, restaurants) of their presence, both past and current.

Mill Villages

In creating self-contained communities, mill owners often fostered feelings of self-sufficiency and inward-looking attitudes. In having everything provided for them, workers depended on and strongly identified with their own small communities. When the mills closed, many communities languished.

Despite numerous signs of economic revitalization in the Valley, there are still signs of the economic decline. Negative feelings about the mills, the mill closings and loss of jobs persist in a lack of pride in the Valley, the community and the past. Vacant mill buildings represent unemployment and decline.



Waves of immigrants brought energy and diversity to the Blackstone Valley. Each new group formed ethnic enclaves to preserve its language, religion and traditions in the New World. Today, this diversity can be experienced in the Valley's churches, neighborhoods, cultural centers, and festivals.

Ethnic and Religious Diversity

Numerous ethnic groups have settled in the Blackstone Valley, bringing with them distinctive family traditions, religious practices, languages and social structures. Today, Valley churches, ethnic neighborhoods and community festivals reflect this diversity.

Native Americans: The Blackstone Valley has been populated for about ten thousand years. When European colonization began, the northern end of the Valley was populated

by bands of the Nipmuc tribe, and people of the Wampanoag and the Narragansett tribes were found in the south. Native Americans still live in the Valley.

The Blackstone River Valley has experienced waves of European immigration, beginning with the arrival of Englishman William Blackstone. A magnet for most of these groups has been job opportunities in the factories in the Valley.

English: the first immigrants to the Valley, they claimed the land, built the mills, possessed the capital and dominated the Blackstone River Valley economically and politically well into the 20th century. The English who first settled in what is now Rhode Island were drawn from Massachusetts by the promise of religious freedom. Some religious dissidents later moved back to the northern, or Massachusetts, portion of the Valley.

Irish: the first major non-English, Roman Catholic group to migrate to the once Protestant, Anglo-Saxon Blackstone Valley were the Irish, who during the 1820's and 30's were attracted to the region by such projects as the building of Fort Adams, the construction of the Blackstone Canal, the railway boom and the expansion of the textile, base metal and precious metals industries. The Irish impact on Rhode Island was enormous. The 1885 state census showed over 125,000 of Rhode Island's 304,000 inhabitants were of Irish stock. Significant numbers of Irish settled in the northern Valley as well.

French Canadians: arrived in the Blackstone River Valley, beginning in 1815, to escape small crop yields and bare subsistence farming, although many were already experienced in the domestic production of textiles. The French Canadians established their own national parishes where their language and culture would be preserved.

Germans and Swedes: arrived in smaller but substantial numbers. Much of the German immigration was spawned by economic factors and political discontent, whereas the Swedes suffered from a decline in the timber industry, general agricultural depression and a devastating famine which hit in the late 1860's. The Swedes were mainly farmers, while many of the German migrants were skilled craftsmen. Both groups established Lutheran and Episcopal churches.

British: immigrants from England, Scotland, and Wales continued to settle in the Valley, after a large-scale exodus from England of Lancashire textile workers, followed shortly by one of Yorkshire woolen operatives and a smaller migration of silk workers. These skills were ideally suited to the industries of the Valley.

Dutch: arrived in significant numbers in the early 1900's, and were notably employed in the Valley dairy industry.

Mediterranean and southern Europeans: large numbers of Italians, Greeks, Portuguese, Armenians, Syrians and Lebanese migrated to the Valley during 1899-1914 and were considered the "new immigrants."

Slavic and non-Slavic groups and eastern Europeans: Poles, Lithuanians, Ukrainians, Serbs, Czechs, Slovaks, Slovenes, Ruthenians, Hungarians, Austrians, Romanians, and Jews from Poland and Russia were uprooted by a combination of forces: political or religious oppression, or economic change.

African Americans: migrated from the South post-World War II to the industrial cities of the North and the Valley.

Portuguese: attracted by coastal fisheries and then by the growing colony of their fellow-nationals, the region contains the highest concentration of Portuguese in the U.S. This

migration continues today in Rhode Island; half the Portuguese population has arrived in the past decade.

Southeast Asians and Latin Americans: are continuing the Blackstone Valley pattern of immigration and diversity. Among southeast Asian peoples, Woonsocket is home to half of Rhode Island's Vietnamese. People from Puerto Rico, Cuba, Venezuela, the Dominican Republic, Mexico and especially Colombia are among the latest newcomers to the Valley.

Study findings show that members of the Valley's numerous ethnic communities can provide important information on the impacts of industrial growth, as seen and felt by different groups at different times. Communities are made up of residents whose families worked in the mills and who have been here for generations. Oral histories, photographic research and the study of ethnic fraternal, religious and union societies are rich fields for further investigation of the adaptation of different cultures to the American industrial experience. The Valley's residents are "living treasures" who have an enormous wealth of knowledge that is in danger of being lost or forgotten if not made part of the record.

Interpretive Programs

Study findings point to numerous interpretive programs and activities currently being held in the Valley. A small sampling includes:

-- SLATER MILL HISTORIC SITE: Already draws thousands of visitors and school groups annually to its exhibits and tours and acts as the southern gateway to the corridor.
-- TOURS:
  - Summer and fall interpretive canoe, walking, bus and rail tours, sponsored by the Commission, NPS, and RI DEM.
  - Driving tours of the RI section of the Valley.
  - Self-guided walking and driving tours of Woonsocker, Pawtucket, Central Falls; Fall Foliage package tours; and interpretive bus tours, designed by the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council.
-- BROCHURES: Corridor brochures and Valley events, produced by NPS and the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council.
-- SCHOOL EVENTS.
-- LOCAL FAIRS AND EXHIBITS.
-- FESTIVALS: Hertiage Homecoming, Autumnfest, and Octoberfest.

Canoeing in the Blackstone River and Canal is delightful, close to home, and the best way to explore the 46-mile Corridor. A major Commission goal is to make the river more accessible to the public. Since the Corridor's establishment, the NPS, RI DEM, and the Commission have sponsored popular interpretive canoe tours to attract people to the river.

To build upon these and other activities, planning studies recommend the development of interpretation centers, traveling and wayside exhibits, community-based activities, and the development of easily-identifiable Corridor signage to make the Valley's historic, cultural and natural resources more accessible and visible. There are also recommendations to assist Slater Mill to broaden its scope to become a nationally recognized museum.



Interpretation Potential

Much of what is considered "natural" along the Blackstone River is, in fact, "cultural." Dams, canals and mills have altered the flow and hydrology of the river. The Grand Trunk Railroad bed is an integral part of the Valley Falls Marsh. Catastrophic floods have influenced the design of berms, dams and bridges. The interpretation of these sites can build linkages between people and institutions that typically focus on either natural or cultural resources.

The potential for interpretation of the Valley's cultural resources is great. With the richness of historical fabric and artifacts, coupled with the quality of collections in libraries, historical societies, town histories and the Valley's elderly residents, opportunities abound to make the Valley's stories come alive via exhibits, festivals, and community-based programs, information exchange among interpreters, school activities, and other interpretive programs.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Despite generations of development and change, the Blackstone River Valley hosts a rich array of natural resources, evident in its rivers and tributaries, wetlands, farms, forests, fields and rock outcroppings. These natural resources, combined with the Valley's historic and cultural resources, provide numerous interpretive and recreation opportunities; but the conservation of these natural resources is the most difficult and costly environmental challenge to the people of the Valley. Thus far, they have not been managed comprehensively. Although well used by some residents, the Valley's natural resources are unknown to many who live nearby and to virtually everyone outside the area.

The environmental challenges faced by the Blackstone River Valley are not unique. Within commuting distance to several large metropolitan areas, the region is experiencing the influx of new residents and the development of commercial and retail establishments to serve them. The growth resulting from these forces is juxtaposed with the Valley's attempt to recover from industrial and economic decline.



The Blackstone River drops 438 feet along its 46-mile course, a rate faster than the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon. The river is a major source of Narragansett Bay's fresh water, and is a critical part of the vitality of the Bay's ecosystem.

Blackstone River

The Blackstone River has always been vital for life in the region. The river's basin, with its tributaries, lakes and ponds, supports numerous wildlife and vegetation habitats. Native Americans enjoyed the abundance of the Valley's natural resources — a profusion of wild berries and river salmon and fertile soil for growing crops — as did early colonists, who established farms and fished for the plentiful salmon.

The year 1790 marked the beginning of the American Industrial Revolution and the initial decline in the water vitality of the Blackstone River and its tributaries. A dam to generate power for Slater's Mill was constructed despite protests of upstream farmers and fishermen: the effect of the dam was to destroy the anadromous fishery migration.

As many more mills were built along the river where the waters descended in falls or rapids, the intensifying industrial activity and accompanying settlement polluted the Blackstone River with untreated sewage, detergents, solvents, heavy metals and other industrial wastes. Modern industrial processes of the 20th century only exacerbated the problem. Not only was the Blackstone River known as "the hardest working river in America," it had become one of the nation's most polluted. The passage of antipollution laws and the establishment of municipal wastewater treatment plants have improved the quality of the river in recent years, but more must still be done.



United geographically and historically, the Valley is politically fragmented.

Study findings show that, despite the progress made on water quality, significant problems remain. As development within the watershed continues, the volume of discharge from wastewater treatment plants and polluted runoff from built-up areas will increase. Combined sewer overflows are a significant water pollution problem at both ends of the Valley. Not all municipal treatment plants are meeting their discharge permits. There are places within the Valley where valuable wetlands are still being filled and vegetated buffer zones are being destroyed either illegally or, in some cases, inappropriately. This worsens non-point pollution and diminishes the river's wildlife and scenic values. An unknown source of metals pollution has a significant impact on the river's water quality.

Natural Areas

Away from the main stem of the Blackstone River, however, a relatively undisturbed natural environment can still be found. The traditional settlement pattern of mill villages surrounded by farms and forests not only produced an aesthetically pleasing landscape, but left large tracts of open space that serve as excellent wildlife habitats.

Through their Natural Heritage Programs, Massachusetts and Rhode Island have identified sites of statewide significance that shelter threatened or endangered species and important natural communities. The Massachusetts program has identified fifteen such sites in the upper Blackstone River Valley where thirteen varieties of rare plants and animals have been sighted. The North American Waterfowl Management Plan has identified the Blackstone River corridor as an important flyway for migratory waterfowl.

The Lonsdale Marshes in Lincoln are considered to be the most valuable wetland habitat in northern Rhode Island, and have been identified as one of fourteen statewide priority sites. Although the site of dumping and fill and in need of intensive clean-up, the marshes are an extraordinary wildlife habitat. There is an opportunity to explore the marshes and open water by boat, fostering interpretive and recreation activities. But early action is necessary if these marshes are to be protected from further development.



The inlet to the Blackstone Gorge. Despite its long industrial history, the Blackstone River Valley contains many areas of scenic beauty.

Despite its long history of human habitation and heavy industrialization, the Blackstone River Valley contains unexpected areas of scenic beauty. One such area is the Blackstone Gorge — also known as High Rocks — located on the Massachusetts/Rhode Island border. Here the river narrows and drops over 20 feet through a rocky channel; granite cliffs tower more than 100 feet over the river; and the banks are heavily forested with eastern hemlock and mountain laurel. In the 46 miles from Worcester to Providence, the Blackstone River drops nearly 450 feet — a more precipitous drop than the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon — but its power was harnessed so intensely that there is little remaining evidence of the river in its natural, free-flowing state. Blackstone Gorge is a reminder of the magnificence of this once wild river and one of the few remnants of what the Valley looked like before it became the nation's first industrialized region. While fully qualified as state park land and deserving special protection, the Blackstone Gorge is privately owned and its future is uncertain.

The glaciers that once covered the Valley left a landscape of gently rolling hills and rocky acidic soils. Glacial deposits lie over a bedrock of granite and limestone, both of which were economically important building materials as the Valley was settled and grew. Centuries of quarrying operations have left their mark, particularly near river and stream banks. Quarrying is an important industry in the Valley, especially for sand and gravel, and more extensive now than at any time in the past. With continued development, it is likely that quarrying activities will accelerate. There is the need to more imaginatively screen and

restore these areas.

While there are opportunities and widespread support for developing parks and recreation areas along the Blackstone River and Canal, problems must be overcome. Large sections of the river and canal corridor remain unprotected; easements or fee title to land are needed to create a continuous 46-mile greenway park and recreation trail. Although water quality has improved substantially, further improvements would encourage more recreation use. Littering and dumping are still major problems, especially along used stretches of the riverbanks. Creeping suburbanization threatens to engulf the 18th and 19th century rural landscape and to interrupt the feeding and migration routes of wildlife, and to fragment wildlife habitat.

Both state Departments of Environmental Management, in previous planning studies, call for a focus on the clean-up of the Blackstone River and its adjacent lands in order to provide a healthy environment and to encourage wider use of the Valley's natural resources. During the preparation of this plan, the major issues voiced by the public were environmental — especially cleaning up the Blackstone River.



Purgatory Chasm.

RECREATION RESOURCES

With its unusual combination of historic, cultural and natural resources, the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor possesses tremendous potential for recreation and exploration. Opportunities abound for sightseeing, hiking, boating, bicycling, fishing and other leisure activities. Recreation is especially important in this area as the Corridor cuts through some of the most densely populated areas of New England. It connects Providence and Worcester, the second and third largest cities in New England, and is only 25 miles away from Boston, the region's largest city. More than 6 million people live within 50 miles of the Corridor and could enjoy its resources if they were made more accessible.

The Blackstone River and Canal are already focal areas for recreation activities. Residents take advantage of recreational fishing, canoeing and kayaking on the river. Boating enthusiasts enjoy some of the best views of the Valley's scenic beauty as well as the unanticipated discovery of industrial remains at the river's edge, but access is sporadic and difficult and portage is frequent. While present pollution levels allow only recreational fishing in the Blackstone River, there is the opportunity to enhance the fishery on the river, and to form a constituency to build support for water quality improvement.



The most important natural resource of the Valley is the Blackstone River itself — upgrading its water quality and maintaining its flow are priority actions.

Both state Departments of Environmental Management (DEM) are developing State Heritage Parks in the Blackstone River Valley. In doing so, the states are working to improve the river's water quality, to improve access to the river, and to develop canoe portages. Massachusetts has developed plans and guidelines for land use, potential interpretive sites and environmental protection in its parks. Rhode Island has prepared a master plan for a river greenway park system from Providence to Slatersville. This plan is being used by RI DEM and the localities to create local and state parks along the river. Both states have already acquired significant parcels of riverfront land. RI DEM has acquired over 200 acres and controls about 4 miles of the riverbank in Lincoln and another 4 miles in Cumberland. The holding includes 3 1/2 miles of river and canal with an intact towpath. MA DEM owns 1000 acres in Northbridge and Uxbridge, which form the core of its Heritage State Park.

RI DEM has prepared plans for the construction/preservation of selected sites and for the development of a bikeway from Providence to the Massachusetts line. At present, it is very difficult to see, access and enjoy the river, canal and historic sites by automobile — no roads run for any distance along the river. While there are problems to overcome in the development of river-canal-towpath access, railroad officials have expressed a desire to work with the states to resolve potential trespass and safety problems on the railroad right-of-way.

The continuation of the bikeway to Worcester would provide an exciting and enjoyable way for residents and visitors to experience the Corridor and its recreation and historic attractions. The planned biking and walking trails, in conjunction with proposed sub-trails, require a range of support services in relatively close proximity to the trail system. Low-impact camping and picnic sites, combined with American Youth Hostel facilities, inns, canoe outfitters, bike rentals, etc., would reinforce and encourage broad public use.

LAND USE AND REGIONAL IDENTITY

"There are places in this country that we look at every day, but we never really see. They are the landscapes of heritage; places that seem so natural that they often go unrecognized, misunderstood, unprotected and mismanaged."

Robert Melnick

The Blackstone River Valley's character, or regional identity, is determined by its historic, cultural, natural and recreation resources. The many historic farms and market towns clearly display the original European settlement pattern. Overlaid upon that is the industrial development that shaped the dominant pattern that is visible today in the Valley. Water-powered industry initially developed in the southern Valley, with the most dense clustering towards the lower end of the river where the number of falls and power were the greatest. Further north, where the floodplain broadens, settlement was more dispersed, and there was less expansion into rural areas. With the decline of the textile industry and the economic depression that engulfed the region, development pressures were low in the Valley until recent times.

The Blackstone River Valley is one of the few places in the highly urbanized Boston-Washington megalopolis where one can experience the once widely prevalent settlement pattern of compact industrial towns and villages separated by countryside. But today that settlement pattern (and regional identity) is threatened by rapid, uncoordinated growth. Coupled with haphazard growth is a general carelessness about the stewardship of the Valley's resources. Unscreened mineral extraction, junk yards, dumps and random disposal of trash along back roads are commonplace. Dumping of pollutants into the river is still a problem. Existing land use regulations encourage sprawl via suburbanization and commercial and residential strip development. Unchecked, this type of development threatens to overwhelm the Valley's specialness, unique resources and quality of life by the end of this century. Planned, it could protect vital resources and unique Blackstone River Valley character while providing for a healthy economy.

Local land use controls vary greatly over the twenty local jurisdictions in two states. Enabling legislation for local use regulations in Massachusetts is provided by the Zoning Act (MA General Law, Chapter 40) and the Subdivision Control Law (MGL, Chapter 41). In Rhode Island, the relevant statutes are found in Title 45 of the General Laws of the state. The preparation and adoption of a comprehensive or master plan is optional in Massachusetts, but required in Rhode Island where such plans must also conform to the state plan. Rhode Island municipalities must adopt comprehensive plans by 1990, within eighteen months after which the local zoning regulations must conform to the comprehensive plan. Zoning ordinances and subdivision regulations are, in effect, the primary land use controls at the local level in both states. With notable exceptions, many of the Valley's local planning commissions have no full-time staff and lack the resources to do much more than review permit requests.



Mendon is a typical hilltop, agricultural village. The hilltop and crossroads villages were settled before the Age of Industry. Most retain their historic character.

Land Use Types

Just as the Historic Resources Inventory describes the most important types of historic resources in the Valley, the Land Use Management report identifies nine distinct land use types in the Blackstone River Valley. Each landscape has its own character or identity, which can be preserved and enhanced through various land use mechanisms. These land use types include:

River and Canal Corridor

The river and canal corridor represents the natural spine of the Valley and the principal constant physical element for the region. Recommendations for preserving this corridor are discussed throughout this plan, particularly in Chapter 3 "Action Agenda".

Agricultural/Open Land

Despite development, agriculture and open land remain strong landscape features in the Blackstone River Valley, particularly in its upper regions and as one moves away from the river and canal. Because agriculture predates mill development, farms are some of the oldest settlements in the Valley. Farmers continue to raise cattle, horses and sheep and maintain small orchards on working farms. Other farm lands are being divided into new housing plots, and many unused agricultural fields are reverting to forests. While the amount of agricultural land has been decreasing slowly but steadily since the 1950's, recent growth pressures from Boston, Providence and Worcester have hastened the loss of open space in the Valley.



Wise zoning can preserve the rural "feel" of a scenic road.

The Land Use Management report stresses the importance of retaining active agricultural production; of preserving the aesthetic and visual attributes of the landscape, which provide scenic linkages between industrial/urban/canal sites; and of preserving features important to the integrity of this type of landscape: country roads, stone walls, barns and other farm-related buildings.

Mill Villages

The mill village is a unique, specialty community. As one of the most distinctive and historically significant landscapes in the Valley, it represents the hierarchy of the mills and their influence on the social life of the workers.

There is a need to preserve the scale and historic quality of these nuclear villages, their architectural style, and the spatial relationships among their buildings. The Land Use Management report and the Design Guidelines and Standards propose several preservation and enhancement techniques, including compatible infill and building design guidelines, re-use of buildings, appropriate landscaping treatments, gateways to define and create an image for the village, public access to the river/canal through the village, institution of local historic districts, improvements in local zoning practices, and purchase of facade easements to finance facade restoration of key buildings.

Mill Complexes

The Valley's mill buildings are its most prominent symbols; they represent the birth, decline and rebirth of the Valley's economy and sense of self. In rural settings, mills dominate the landscape; in more settled areas and towns, they create the center of the density that characterizes these urban manufacturing centers. They are one of the Blackstone Valley's most pressing preservation challenges - either in continuing manufacturing use, or converted to housing, offices or other commercial purposes.

Town Centers

Town centers developed, separate from mill villages, as seats of local government and commerce and represent former centers of commerce for the remote farms and hill villages. Numerous studies have addressed the need for their revitalization by encouraging businesses to expand or locate in town centers rather than to locate in strip developments or "mini-malls." Several other recommendations for preserving and reinforcing town centers are described in the Land Use Management and Economic Assessment reports.

The classic New England Common in Grafton. Compact town centers are a special part of the Valley character. Good planning can preserve the distinct "edges" of the village common, the historic district, the town center.





Historic view of Pawtucket.

Cities

The cities in the Corridor — Worcester, Providence, Pawtucket, Woonsocket and Central Falls — are not just "grown up towns." Unlike the linear form or orderly square around which smaller towns developed, the cities grew tightly and amorphously, building up rather than out to concentrate workers at the workplace and to cluster businesses and services that are central to the populace. A result of this settlement is a diversity of building types (mills, storefronts, triple deckers, churches, grand municipal structures) that vary in style and design, suggesting the myriad activities that thrive in these urban centers. The downtown commercial areas of the cities exemplify through their architecture, the importance and connectedness of commerce, trade and finance to the vitality and expansion of the textile industry. The "hard" edge of the Blackstone River where building meets water also characterizes the density and efficiency with which space was used in urban areas; and lands officially designated for public purposes (parks, plazas, squares) offer opportunities for cultural events and festivals.

Gateways to Cities and Towns

Transition areas between towns or distinct landscapes can provide a sense of arrival to a special place. More often than not, however, town borders accumulate strip developments, fast-food franchises and other development that often do not work or fit in town centers. Gateways need welcoming and directional signage, landscaping and appropriate development to indicate a clear sense of place.

Sprawl Areas

Growth has also produced less desirable landscapes, such as transition and sprawl areas. Strip commercial and residential development and subdivision development in remote, former open spaces have begun to blur the distinct landscapes that give the Valley its visual strength. These areas represent the fragile nature of "regional identities" and highlight the immediate need to site new development in a way that complements the existing historic settlement patterns of the Valley.

Derelict Sites

Sites that have developed as the spoils of human occupation — trash dumps, gravel pits, and junkyards — represent neglect and lack of pride in an area. There is the need to develop a restoration policy for these sites, starting with their return to a more natural condition, and allowing development that is sensitive to the surrounding landscape; the need to place sites with hazardous or toxic waste residues on state and federal Superfund lists; and the need to institute guidelines for screening active and highly visible derelict sites.





Rice City Auto in Uxbridge, before and after. Derelect sites can be reclaimed. This project was accomplished swiftly and cheaply by MA DEM.

Derelict sites also offer great opportunities as demonstration projects. They can showcase what can be done to make something extremely negative into something positive, as was done by MA DEM when it acquired an automobile junkyard in Uxbridge and restored it into parkland.

Land Use Opportunities

Study findings indicate that there are real opportunities for the Commission and its partners to guide new development and to exert a positive influence on land use within the Corridor. The first step in guiding this change is to open people's eyes about the importance of what is here: the relatively untouched mill villages, with their vernacular multifamily housing styles; the surviving Canal segments and remnants; the bucolic countryside with its pre-industrial village centers; the rivers and adjacent lands that are recovering from many decades of abuse; and the many mill buildings and other industrial artifacts that tell of an earlier age.

ECONOMIC RESOURCES

The birthplace of the American Industrial Revolution has seen constant economic evolution during the past two centuries. Today, the Blackstone River Valley is on the verge of an economic resurgence. An important question facing people living and working in the Valley is: "What kind of economic future do we want?" Do we allow developers to "take the money and run" or encourage those who reinvest in the character and future of the Valley? The key to successful economic development is to recognize that the people of the Valley have CHOICES.

When Congress established this National Heritage Corridor, it instructed the Commission to not only preserve and interpret the Corridor's special resources, but to support public and private efforts in economic revitalization that are consistent with these preservation and interpretation efforts.

The Economic Assessment report confirmed that "Work" is the core of the history of the Blackstone River Valley. Farming, mill work, metalworking and other kinds of manufacturing activities have all contributed to the Valley's economy. The development of the Blackstone Canal, railways and road systems contributed to the economic growth of the Valley by transporting those goods to market and supplies to the Valley. New technologies, in turn, further stimulated the growth of industry and manufacturing activities and led to the associated growth of commercial, government and retail establishments.

The cultural life of Valley communities was also shaped by Work. The closing of mills and ensuing unemployment led to a lack of pride by the people in their community and in their past. Today's rapidly changing technologies and consumer demands require new skills by Valley workers, who have opportunities to learn these skills at nearby technical/ vocational schools, colleges and universities. While unemployment has steadily declined over the past eight years, it is still high compared to other regions in Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Personal income and education levels are rising, but so are housing and public service costs in communities with little ability to raise revenues.



At the Stanley Woolen Mill, a worker today continues America's longest industrial tradition.

While the rate of change in the Blackstone River Valley will be strongly influenced by the relative strength of the national and regional economy, additional industrial, commercial and residential development will occur in the Valley in the coming decade.

- Companies seeking to compete in the age of information and technology are drawn to Massachusetts and Rhode Island because of their wealth of educational facilities and their highly skilled workforces and relatively cheap labor.
- The increasing numbers of high technology, biotechnology, fiber optics, high-test materials and other high-growth companies in Worcester County will help draw the next wave of industrial development into the Valley.
- The insurance, real estate and finance industries are making their way to Worcester and Providence.
- High land and infrastructure costs in the Boston and Providence metropolitan areas are pushing industrial, commercial and residential development west of Interstate 495.

- Consumer demand from Boston commuters for relatively less-expensive housing in the northern Valley is encouraging residential development in that area.
- Improvements to Route 146 and the expansion of the state Heritage Parks are making the Valley more accessible and attractive to businesses, new residents and visitors.

Public officials and residents of the Valley can respond to growth and change or they can ignore it — choice again. If people do not actively seek to manage the change in the Valley, the future will become a pattern of bland suburbanization dominating the landscape. Some new businesses may help diversify and strengthen the economy, others may not. Important public facilities, like Route 146, may become unattractive and overdeveloped. Town centers are likely to suffer as malls are built, and old mills remain empty. Open spaces will diminish. Young adults who grew up in the Valley may find themselves priced out of the housing market.



Housing is often the best adaptive reuse for old mills; all are not suitable for modern industry. This mill, formerly the Valley Falls Mill in Central Falls and built in 1849, was adapted in 1979.

On the other hand, if Valley residents, public officials, the media and the private sector work together, a very different kind of economic future can be created — a future where a strong diversified economic base exists and expands over time; an economy that provides both jobs and affordable housing to the citizens of the Valley; and an economy where industrial, commercial and residential developments reinforce a sense of community, minimize strain on existing infrastructure and protect environmental and historic resources.

One of the characteristics of heritage parks and National Heritage Corridors is the intent to balance improved economic opportunities with preservation and wise stewardship, capitalizing on the increased pride and exposure brought about by the area's enhanced image and rise in visitation. While to some it may seem that the two forces — economic development and preservation — are contradictory, properly managed they can and do result in synergy. Regional examples abound, including Lowell, Providence, and the many communities that have prospered via the Massachusetts Main Street Program.

It may be possible to put some of the Valley's historic mill buildings back to work, housing manufacturing or industrial uses. Not only would this add to the Valley's economic conditions; but as meaningful workplaces, these imposing buildings could return to life as the social center of the communities that surround them.

TOURISM RESOURCES

The Valley provides a variety of possible visitor experiences. It is important that tourism be developed as a system of attractions and events that appeal to diverse audiences: families, seekers of active and passive recreation, special interest tours, etc. Achieving a systematic approach calls for continued cooperation among the Corridor communities, the state DEMs and the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council (RI). It is a particular concern of the Commission that tourism initiatives be designed to enhance and not detract from the Valley for the people who live here.

Study findings indicate that the Blackstone River Valley's potential tourism market includes:

- Regional visitors from New England who may spend one-to-three days in the Valley and who could become repeat visitors were there special events or changing experiences to draw them back.
- Special interest visitors, such as canal or steam railway enthusiasts, avocational historians, canoeists and kayakers, bicycle clubs, and those who may combine a trip to the Valley with one to Lowell or Sturbridge Village.
- Travellers to major regional destinations (Boston, Cape Cod, Maine, etc.) who might include the Blackstone River Valley if its attractions were more widely promoted.

In the early years, implementation of key elements of the Interpretive Plan will assist tourism development. By making the Blackstone River Valley's attractions more visible, easier to find, understood and appreciated, the appeal will be broadened. The addition of gateways, visitor centers, trails, bikeways, maps, guidebooks, and special events will enhance the visitor's experience. Heritage tourism, begun in the Valley by the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council, has the advantage of creating a constituency for Valley history and historic preservation, and should be encouraged and expanded.

Study findings show that there are numerous existing successful recreational activities and events that do not depend on expensive infrastructures and that can be built on, expanded, supported and encouraged, especially by the private sector. These activities include: interpretive tours, boating, picnicking, hiking, bicycling, nature walks, rail excursions; and special events, such as Heritage Homecoming, Autumnfest, Octoberfest, and Fall Foliage Tours, which are developed by area Chambers of Commerce, the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council, and non-profit organizations.

How Plan is to be Implemented:

The implementation of the Corridor's Cultural Heritage and Land Management Plan depends on a few, but key, factors:

- *partnerships*
- *a clear agenda*
- *annual work plans*
- *evaluation.*

Partnerships

The successful completion of any Corridor project or program depends on the active support and participation of many agencies, state and local governments, businesses, cultural and civic groups, and individuals. Section One of this chapter identifies the partnerships needed to carry out the Action Agenda and the roles of each partner. In some cases, state governments will be the lead agencies; in others, local governments or private enterprise. In a few cases the Commission will take the initiative, but generally it will act as a catalyst — it will leverage action by others, coordinate the efforts of others and forge contingent commitments.

Clear Agenda

To gain the support and participation of these partners, a commonly-held vision and action plan is needed in the Corridor. The Commission has spent the past year developing a consensus among Valley people as to what projects or programs deserve immediate attention. Based on the findings of previous planning studies and recommendations by the public, it was determined that action was needed in seven basic areas:

- coordination and consistency
- historic preservation
- interpretation
- environmental conservation
- land use management
- recreation
- economic development and tourism.

Section Two of this chapter describes these actions and strategies for their implementation.

Annual Work Plan

In coordinating the efforts of various public and private groups and individuals, the Commission will often need to be opportunistic -- to be able to respond effectively to interest, community initiative or critical need. Yet, aware of its own limited resources, the Commission will carefully choose where and how it sets its priorities. While the Action Agenda broadly describes recommended types of activities, an Annual Work Plan will detail and budget specific projects.

Near the end of each budget year the Commission will draft its Annual Work Plan for the following year. Public involvement will be sought and encouraged in both the drafting and evaluating stages.

Evaluation

The National Heritage Corridor program is a new strategy to preserve and protect nationally significant resources. Federal, state, local and private entities are being asked to direct financial and human assistance toward this end. Monies and people must be prudently managed so that Corridor goals are developed and implemented in a cost-effective manner.

Plans and actions must be evaluated to make sure they are on course -- that the purposes of the National Heritage Corridor are being achieved. The Commission and its staff and consultants, state agencies, and the National Park Service have spent a year preparing the Corridor's Cultural Heritage and Land Management Plan. While eager to "stop planning and start acting," the Commission realizes that any plan, to be effective, must be a growing, evolving, working document -- not one that sits on a shelf gathering dust. The plan must represent the existing data, knowledge and thinking of the day. As such, it must be reviewed, evaluated and updated regularly. In the course of preparing this plan, the Commission has identified gaps in information or inconsistent information in certain areas -- information that will be gathered in the next few years as staffing and funding allow.

The Commission will prepare an Annual Report, which will describe and evaluate the achievements in implementing the Plan, and the effectiveness of the Plan's strategy in preserving and interpreting the Blackstone River Valley. The Report will be made available to the Secretary of the Interior, the Congress, and the public.

From time to time, the report may contain recommendations relating to the Corridor legislation. Key legislative issues include:

- *Corridor Boundaries*

Current boundaries are based on the core cultural areas and landscapes found within the Blackstone River Valley watershed. Boundary changes require amendments to the Corridor legislation. Inclusion or exclusion of resource areas or communities could be evaluated by the Commission and its partners. The Commission would assess and justify any revisions to the boundary, using Corridor purposes as the measure, and would make a recommendation to the Secretary, with a statement of expected impact on Commission plans and goals.

- *The Operation of the Corridor and Commission*

The existing law contemplates the renewal of the Commission for five additional years in 1991. As necessary, but at least by 1991, the Commission will assess for Congress the effectiveness of the law in achieving Congress's purposes, and will recommend any necessary new provisions, in addition to its recommendation for Commission renewal. Because many of the approaches of P.L. 99-647 are experimental or incompletely tested, a review of the Commission's experience in implementing the plan and strategy should be useful during consideration of Commission renewal.

SECTION ONE: PARTNERSHIPS

The vision shared throughout the Valley to protect, enhance, and interpret the Corridor can only be achieved by ACTION. If we wait, or just talk or just plan, the Valley will in time lose the resources that make it special.

So, we must act. We need to implement the plan to achieve the vision.

The implementation of this plan is built on active partnerships. The gain for each partner will be greater than the contribution each makes.

The purpose of the U.S. Congress in designating the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor is to recognize the Blackstone River Valley's national significance, and provide for its preservation, enhancement, and interpretation.

To do that, the U.S. Congress recognized the need for partnership to harness the combined energy and vision of two states and their many agencies, twenty local governments, the National Park Service and other federal agencies, as well as the Valley's many business and civic organizations. Congress felt that extensive land acquisition and administration by a single federal agency would be impractical, costly, and counter to the objective of preserving the Valley's cultural diversity and indigenous character. But active, willing partners can effectively build our future together.

Over the last several years, individuals and separate groups have made substantial progress towards Valley revitalization: rebuilding the economic base, upgrading the environment and preserving the cultural heritage. However, many came to understand that the full realization of the Corridor's potential required focused effort and action. An umbrella organization was needed. That umbrella organization is the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission.

The Commission's job is to stimulate whatever public and private actions are needed to achieve the purposes of the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor.

THE COMMISSION'S ROLE

The Commission can and will be a forceful Corridor champion of government and private interests when advocacy is necessary to hold the partnership together. The Commission was established by the U.S. Congress in Public Law 99-647 "to provide a management framework to assist the states of Massachusetts and Rhode Island and their units of local government in the development and implementation of integrated cultural, historical and land resource management programs in order to retain, enhance and interpret the significant values of the lands, waters and structures of the Corridor."

Because willing partners can best achieve the Congress' purpose for the Corridor, the Commission is not tied down by regulatory authority, or by land management and administrative responsibilities. Instead, the Commission is to be a leader. It will define roles and set clear goals. It will be committed to powersharing. It will include, not exclude. It is responsible for formulating effective cooperation among many agencies and organizations — some of which have heretofore not recognized their common ground.

The Commission's role, therefore, is to be the advocate for the protection of the character of the Blackstone River Valley as a whole.

To be effective, the Commission will carefully target its available energy. The Commission is authorized and will conduct fundraising campaigns, and will work to obtain necessary resources from government and private sources. Nevertheless, its funding will

remain comparatively small. Through incentives, through advocacy, through the force of ideas and public opinion, through task forces and demonstration projects the Commission will leverage the participation of its state, local, civic and (especially) individual and business partners.

Members of the Commission lead or represent many of the Corridor's partners. As such, they can reach into their communities or call on their agencies to help achieve Corridor goals. They can also identify other partners, other positive and energetic people and organizations, whose help will be critical to the Corridor's success. As Commissioners, they can lend a hand to many private efforts when that will make the difference between success or failure.

The Commission can provide professional expertise where needed. To do so, the Commission must have adequate staff and the necessary resources to provide leadership, to set quality standards, and to channel the actions of others effectively and with purpose.

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ROLE

In designating the National Heritage Corridor, Congress established a management framework to target federal resources to set consistent standards and leverage broad-based community and government action. To do this, the federal government:

- Determined the national significance of the Blackstone River Valley,
- Provides funds and resources to leverage other public and private investment in the NHC,
- Provides and monitors standards,
- Provides professional expertise,
- Appoints the Commission, and
- Assures consistency of federal policies and actions with NHC purposes.

National Park Service, U. S. Department of the Interior

The National Park Service (NPS) is the federal agency most responsible for the recognition, protection, and interpretation of our national heritage.

The NPS has particular expertise in park management designed to protect area-wide character (similar to National Heritage Corridor needs), and expertise in historic and natural resource preservation, restoration, interpretation and education. The NPS provides funding for land acquisition through the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and provides assistance for historic preservation.

There are additional reasons why the NPS is the federal agency with the strongest role in the implementation of the National Heritage Corridor Plan. In recognizing that activities outside parks affect national resources inside parks, and that all nationally significant resources requiring protection are not within park boundaries, the NPS has developed important expertise relating to protecting resources where people live, beyond park boundaries.

Congress established the National Heritage Corridor as an affiliated area of the National Park System to make the NPS tradition of management available to the Blackstone River Valley.

The Director of the NPS is represented on the Blackstone Commission by the Regional Director of the North Atlantic Region. Congress provided for the NPS to assist the Com-

mission with the design and development of interpretative materials, including brochures and displays, in addition to providing technical assistance to prepare and to implement this Plan. Assistance from NPS programs such as Historic American Engineering Record, Historic American Building Survey, National Register, signs program; and technical assistance in the areas of interpretation, historic restoration, public affairs, planning and design, resource preservation, legislation and administration will be important during plan implementation.

One key role of the NPS would be to include base funding for the NHC in the regular appropriation process of the NPS; this will avoid the need for constant ad hoc federal funding efforts while providing Congress with assurance of professional review of Corridor budgets. Another role for the NPS is to assist the Commission as a clearinghouse of federal environmental and resource compliance activities.

The continuing participation of the National Park Service is vital to the quality and future of the National Heritage Corridor. The vision and leadership provided by the NPS Regional Director (NARO) will continue to be essential. The NPS's active and visible presence in the Corridor is an important symbol of the Blackstone River Valley's national significance to residents and visitors.

Other Federal Agencies

Mandate: The federal legislation establishing the Blackstone River Valley NHC (P.L. 99-647) requires any federal agency conducting or supporting activities directly affecting the Corridor to:

- consult with the Secretary of the Interior and the Commission with respect to such activities;
- cooperate with the Secretary and the Commission in carrying out their duties under the Act and, to the maximum extent practicable, coordinate their activities with these duties; and
- to the maximum extent practicable, conduct or support such activities in a manner which the Commission determines will not have an adverse effect on the Corridor.

This is a significant direction of Congress to federal agencies, but it also requires the Commission to take affirmative action to determine the effect of federal activities on the Corridor. As the delegate of the Secretary, the NPS will assist in this compliance process; NPS and the Commission will make sure federal agencies are aware of the Corridor and their role.

Key federal agencies include:

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation monitors and comments on federal agency procedures to protect historic resources, to ensure that all federal agency plans and activities contribute to the preservation and enhancement of historic properties. Consultation with the Commission on all such federal plans and activities in the National Heritage Corridor is required by law.

Army Corps of Engineers is a major player on water-oriented projects such as dredging on navigable waterways, flood control activities, and assessment of hydroelectric projects. The Corps considers effects upon recreation and water quality and is involved in flood plain determinations.

Coastal Zone Management Program, Department of Commerce. Within the designated Coastal Zone, Commerce coordinates through intergovernmental review consistency of activities with CZM plans.

Coast Guard regulates the construction of bridges and overhead structures of navigable rivers.

Environmental Protection Agency sets standards for clean air and water programs that are managed by states, but can intervene when impacts cross state lines; manages priorities and funding to states for the Superfund cleanup program; and assists in funding for water pollution cleanup.

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission licenses hydroelectric projects and natural gas pipelines.

Federal Highway Administration, Department of Transportation administers Section 4f of the Transportation Act, which protects federally designated recreation or historical lands under certain circumstances from federal highway project impacts, and administers funds for grants for highway projects. The FHWA also provides funding for bikeway projects.

Fish and Wildlife Service provides the studies and much of the data for such federal development programs as Army Corps projects, and is the authority/adjudicator of the endangered species program. FWS also administers various funding programs for the protection of wildlife habitat.

National Environmental Policy Act process has the effect of requiring all federal agencies undertaking major federal actions to consult with the Commission and the National Park Service on the impact of the activities on the National Heritage Corridor.

STATE GOVERNMENT ROLE

For more than a decade, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the State of Rhode Island have played major roles in gaining wider understanding of the importance of the Blackstone Valley and taking bold initiatives in resource protection. The states provided leadership and important preliminary planning for the Corridor. Without this support, Congress could not have gone forward with the designation of the Blackstone River Valley as the Nation's second National Heritage Corridor.

Each state has three key government representatives on the Commission; their help and the help of their agencies will be a decisive part of the Corridor's success. They can help focus the agenda of the Commission, and focus state programs to meet Commission goals. The state government representatives are:

Massachusetts	Rhode Island
Commissioner, Department of Environmental Management	*Director*, Department of Environmental Management
Director, Office of Economic Development	*Director*, Department of Economic Development
Executive Director, MA Historical Commission	*Executive Director*, RI Historical Preservation Commission

The Departments of Environmental Management from the two states demonstrated leadership and creativity in spearheading the establishment of the linked state heritage parks and gaining National Heritage Corridor designation; it took unusual wisdom to see the advantages of collaborating across state lines.

These agencies plan, design, staff, and manage state parks and forests; have technical realty, assessment, and land protection expertise; have the capacity to provide interpretive services; conduct the necessary engineering, archaeological, and other studies required for park development; construct park recreation facilities; purchase land; and provide grants for community parks. Both states have programs to protect agricultural lands from development and can protect and restore historic structures in state parks. In Rhode Island, DEM is also responsible for environmental protection programs to protect the state's land, water, and air resources.

Department/Office of Economic Development can help the Corridor's communities retain or find appropriate businesses or needed investment capital. Both states also have tourism offices and other economic offices or departments which can assist in the development of tourism and other revitalization initiatives.

The State Historic Preservation Offices (Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission; Massachusetts Historical Commission) are key to planning for and protecting historic and archaeological properties. Each SHPO maintains a comprehensive inventory of historic and archaeological assets, nominates properties to the National and State Registers of Historic Places, and implements state and federal environmental laws to protect these resources. Their technical assistance and incentive programs of grants and tax benefits help owners protect historic buildings. Each office includes staff with outstanding knowledge of the history and historic resources of the Blackstone River Valley, expertise in historic preservation, and the ability to assist communities to develop zoning to protect their historic character.

Other state agencies offer significant sources of assistance, even during times when budgets are tight. Coordinating and targeting available assistance during the implementation stage of the National Heritage Corridor could have a massive impact on attaining Corridor objectives.

For example, the *Department of Transportation* can provide more than comprehensive transportation services (such as transportation studies and the design and location of highways and interchanges such as the Interstate 90 -Route 146 interchange), and can be involved in a variety of diverse projects such as channeling federal highway money for bikepath development, funding historic bridge surveys, and cooperating with Corridor, historic, and tourism signage programs.

The *RI Office of State Planning* can be an important Corridor partner during this exciting time in Town Planning in the State: each town must adopt comprehensive planning to be followed by conforming zoning. The Corridor Commission proposes the adoption of this Cultural Heritage and Land Management Plan within the Rhode Island state planning guidelines. In Massachusetts, the *Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission* offers important services to communities. Both offices could assist the Commission

implement its plan through their community services, such as providing assistance to local goverments on land use issues.

The *Massachusetts Departments of Environmental Protection* and of *Fisheries, Wildlife, and Environmental Law Enforcement* include some of the environmental protection responsibilities housed in Rhode Island with the DEM. For both states, the Commission proposes that this National Heritage Corridor plan be considered as part of the Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plans (SCORP). Fisheries & Wildlife in Massachusetts is the home of the *Riverways Program,* which has emerged as a major partner of the Commission in identifying land status and land protection needs along the river, and as an advocate for citizen involvement in both cleaning up the river and in river recreation use. *The Blackstone River and Canal Commission* is empowered to help direct the planning of the State Heritage Park in Massachusetts, and to review all new development projects adjacent to the river.

In addition to these agencies, the Commission will seek to work with and through the many other state offices and programs that can provide information, technical assistance, program funding, and award grants in areas ranging from housing and community development, to arts and humanities, to public works.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ROLE

Ultimately, local government can and must be the most important partner in protecting and enhancing the National Heritage Corridor.

The decision to protect or lose the visible heritage of the Blackstone River Valley will be made primarily through zoning decisions, made by local governments. Effective local master planning, zoning, and government initiatives can synergize heritage protection with economic enhancement to achieve historic and visual integrity of village, town, and city centers; to maintain scenic landscapes and public recreation resources; to adopt effective historic district zoning where appropriate; to work with sister towns and cities to coordinate land planning, tourism, and transportation objectives; and to keep the Corridor Commission informed of local issues important to the future of the NHC. If a local government is willing, the Commission could help find resources for that government to achieve mutual goals.

Key partners will be *Mayors,* and *City Councils, Town Councils* and *Boards of Selectmen, Planning Boards* and *Zoning Boards of Appeal, Conservation Commissions, Historic Commissions,* and *Historic District Commissions.*

LOCAL SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Local schools can be a major focus and forum of Corridor activities, and *school committees, school superintendents, principals, teachers, libraries and archives* are major players in the life of communities today and for the future. Heritage, environmental, and outdoor education activities are among the obvious potential areas of cooperation; others include programs to develop student skill in oral history programs, in archival and historic preservation, in environmental problem solving, as well as volunteer programs such as junior rangers, ethnic celebrations and pageants, and community clean-up projects and river recreation events.

Children who understand their roots, choices, and responsibilities are irreplaceable assets, and catalysts for the Corridor.

Universities and scholars can be sources of exciting ideas and solutions; the Commission will regularly sponsor conferences and other activities designed to encourage new research into Blackstone River Valley history. The assistance of colleges and universities of the region will be necessary to encourage much-needed scholarly research, to generate the ideas in both process and substance needed for the Corridor strategy to succeed, and to provide credibility for the Corridor Commission to scholars and professionals outside the Valley.

BUSINESS, INDUSTRY, AND LABOR

Private sector individuals and organizations can be the most imaginative, resourceful, and progressive force for revitalization in communities. These people know that good schools, effective planning, good transportation, and a beautiful and healthy environment are important attractions for new business and good jobs.

Industry and labor are primary themes of the National Heritage Corridor. National organizations such as the *National Association of Manufacturers*, the *AF of L - CIO* and local affiliates, and the *Chamber of Commerce of the U.S.* can help the Corridor celebrate their role in the American Industrial Revolution, and the Blackstone River Valley as a model of revitalization. The Commission seeks to combine the positive energies of the business community and the environmental movement. The Commission's vision of mutually supportive resource protection and economic revitalization, if successful, will help eliminate winless, destructive polarization.

At the local level, in addition to the contributions of individual businesses, partnerships with private sector organizations will continue to be essential. The *Blackstone Valley Regional Development Corporation,* the local *Chambers of Commerce,* and the *Blackstone Valley Tourism Council* are among the organizations whose help is bringing us closer to Corridor objectives.

Without private sector investment, most of the historic mills of the Blackstone River Valley will not be saved. When possible, industrial use is the best way to maintain these structures, because that use can preserve more of the historic fabric, is linked to Valley tradition, and provides good jobs. Many mills cannot be easily adapted to industrial use, but creative entrepreneurs have shown many other good uses, such as commercial, office, residential, and visitor center use.

Business people can take the lead in commercial center revitalization, and the Commission will need to work with the business community to plan an appropriate tourism strategy. The Commission will seek the technical expertise and advice of professionals in fields such as *preservation services, architecture, planning, design,* and *communications.*

Civic, cultural, and *public interest groups* can infuse the Valley character with imagination and energy, animate government and spark business opportunity.

Ethnic and *fraternal organizations, watershed associations, museums, historic* and *preservation societies, recreation* and *environmental groups,* and *garden clubs* are among those that can bring the humanity, fun and festival into seemingly dry Corridor activities of government and economics. The *Slater Mill Historic Site* is providing more recognition to the Blackstone Valley than any other single entity, and its success and enhancement are

key to the fulfillment of the National Heritage Corridor purposes: new high quality museums will be assets. Already ethnic celebrations and festivals such as the Blackstone Valley Heritage Homecoming, Autumnfest, and Octoberfest bring excitement and a sense of anticipation to the Valley. The fact that these are private or volunteer activities are an important part of their success. The Commission will respect this independence while providing encouragement as necessary for activities consistent with Corridor purposes.

SECTION TWO - ACTION AGENDA

To tap the tremendous potential of the National Heritage Corridor during the years ahead calls for an integrated series of actions undertaken in a climate of cooperation. The Commission's strategy calls upon public agencies at local, state and federal levels, and the private sector to take coordinated steps to implement these actions and to make modest investments to stimulate further actions, including the attraction of significant private investment. Over the past year, the Commission has held workshops, hearings and meetings to generate input from the public. Typical public comments on the Action Agenda are shown as quotes in the sidebar.

The Action Agenda describes types of Corridor activities recommended by the Commission, its planning team, and the public. Some projects, more than others, will capture people's imagination. For that reason, the agenda describes actions that are needed and that appeal to a variety of interests: historic preservation, interpretation, environmental conservation, land use management, recreation, economic development and tourism.

The agenda represents a multi-year agenda; the Commission's annual work plan will specify which projects or programs taken from this comprehensive list can be done in any given year. All actions will be based on available funding and commitments from willing partners. Contributions intended to match the federal appropriation will be accepted if consistent with the agenda.

Projects listed in the Action Agenda are multidisciplinary. The seven categories of the Action Agenda were chosen simply for organization. Environmental Conservation projects directly relate to Recreation or Land Use Management projects; Historic Preservation projects relate to Economic Development projects, and so on. While Coordination and Consistency projects represent the <u>most</u> overlapped projects - those that span the entire Corridor, it is the very nature of all these projects that they overlap categories and integrate with many disciplines. Each should be a microcosm of Corridor purposes.

COMMENTS at PUBLIC MEETINGS

"Get local people involved, busy, together."

"ACT NOW before we lose any more important resources. "

"Identify sources of money for local communities and non-profit organizations."

"Publicize what is happening in the Corridor and address how people can get involved."

"Help towns with planning and design review."

"Educate the public about design standards and guidelines."

"Pick 'a win' to demonstrate success."

"Do a project in every community."

"Do projects that link communities."

"Meet directly with every community, down to the neighborhood level."

COORDINATION AND CONSISTENCY

In all its policies and actions the Commission will be mindful of its key strategic concepts:

- Partnerships
- Linkages
- Catalytic actions
- Contingent commitments

Overview

National Heritage Corridor purposes cannot be achieved without high, consistent standards. With so many necessary partners, how can the standards be maintained? How can the work be coordinated?

The Commission cannot require communities, businesses, and governments to help fulfill the Valley's potential. We know cooperative action among the state and local governments, cultural organizations, civic groups, schools, planning boards, environmental activists, businesses, private landowners —and many, many others — will be necessary to get the needed results.

Actions inconsistent with Corridor purposes — even well-meaning but uncoordinated action — can waste money, time, and opportunity. Valuable resources can be lost or mismanaged.

The Commission will be a catalyst. It will need dedicated partners to be effective. Corridor projects must link the Valley's resources and communities together: linkages symbolizing the Plan's multiple goals and strategies.

To get the most out of limited funding and time, the Commission has carefully set its priorities — yet it needs to take advantage of critical but unexpected opportunities. To keep standards high and to avoid re-inventing the wheel, the Commission will remain aware of the limits of its professional expertise and will use the available skill of its partners when technical assistance is needed.

The Corridor purposes, goals, and strategies will be used to assess and choose the Commission's Action Agenda for the coming year. By choosing when, where, and how to act, the Commission can spark significant investment of time, money and energy in the implementation of this plan. But the essential element of this strategy is CONTINGENT COMMITMENTS by partners.

The Commission is prepared to make resources and/or assistance available IF a partner — state, town, organization, individual — commits to take certain specific action in return. Depending on the situation, the partner's commitment could include time, money, staff time, or policy revision. For example, the Commission could assist a town with economic development or tourism if the town is willing to protect its resource value and Corridor identity through:

a zoning plan or historic district zoning which avoids the loss of the town's distinct, compact center through inappropriate development;

OR

the protection of the natural viewshed in the greenbelt along river, canal, walking trails or bike paths;

OR

targeting for development clean, well-sited, economically viable industries that want to work as Corridor partners;

OR

partnership in regional transportation planning designed to manage and mitigate impacts on Valley-wide transportation while protecting town and village centers, historic roads, or other key features critical to the Blackstone River Valley's special character.

There are many possible combinations to this approach, depending upon the project and the opportunity.

In its role as an umbrella organization, orchestrator, coordinator, and convenor, the Commission in all of its policies and actions will pursue its key strategic concepts in order to accomplish the integrated implementation of this Cultural Heritage and Land Management Plan.

Listed below are those types of projects that will help form these partnerships and linkages and commitments throughout the National Heritage Corridor. Projects that integrate many Corridor purposes will receive higher priority than others.

CORRIDOR ACTION TEAMS

Make professional and technical expertise available to communities or organizations who are ready to move ahead with activities on the Plan's Action Agenda, such as interpretive programs, park and recreation development, preservation and/or adapative use of important historic buildings.

The Commission will assemble Corridor Action Teams of professionals, Commissioners, and other volunteers to work WITH the community/organization to craft an action agenda. The action agenda will be tailored to meet the community need and overall Corridor goals.

All Community/Corridor Action Team agendas will be multi-disciplinary. MANY Corridor goals will be integrated into the action agenda. Therefore, the Corridor Action Team will also be multi-disciplinary, including people in fields such as recreation, urban design/land planning, interpretation, community development, etc. Representatives of appropriate state assistance programs will be included. The work will be intensive, so that the community representatives on the Team can carry the developed skills and Action Agenda into their community. The Team will help them obtain the resources necessary to implement the Action Agenda.

The Action Agenda can form the basis for a negotiated cooperative agreement or compact between the community or organization, the Commission, or appropriate state or other partner, outlining the commitments each is prepared to make contingent upon the commitments of the other parties.

A key goal in the selection of communities to receive CAT attention will be the likelihood of swift, tangible results — not just more planning. Action Agendas must be models of excellence and be consistent with Corridor purposes. They are intended to get integrated actions underway to stimulate other communities to take action themselves.

Many real possibilities for this approach exist. For example, in South Grafton town planners are working on an idea to enhance the Corridor in a variety of ways. A

collaboration that could involve the owners of a magnificent but unused mill, the town, the MA Waterways project, the DEM, the Blackstone Valley Redevelopment Corp., and the Commission could lead to the rehab and reuse of the mill for commercial, residential and interpretive purposes, the donation of town land to the state heritage park, the enhancement of valuable waterfowl habitat, and development of the recreation potential of both the Blackstone River and Canal at that site. The South Grafton mill villages are classic examples of the distinctive character of the Blackstone River Valley and should be protected and enhanced, and the town and business community appears ready to act.

VALLEY-WIDE IDENTITY PROGRAMS

Although held together by its common river system and common history, the many political boundaries can distract us from seeing the advantages of working together. Special attention will be paid to activities that symbolize the unity of the Valley. Such activities include:

Celebrate the Bicentennial of America's Industrial Revolution, 1990-1993

- Seek the support and endorsement of the President and the Congress to celebrate this important event on a scale consistent with its significance in the nation's history.
- Since the Valley symbolizes entrepreneurial innovation, labor history, manufacturing, and transportation, involve as partners organizations representing these activities today. In its efforts at regeneration, the Corridor symbolizes our national hope for the future as well as the significance of our past.

Sponsor activities which lead to the use and interpretation of the river, the canal, the railroad

The Commission will work with partners to preserve and use the riverway:

- develop a Providence-to-Worcester bike path;
- develop walking and ski trails;
- support agreements and zoning to protect the natural viewshed of the river and as much adjacent land as is necessary to protect the natural landscape,
- support canoe races, river recreation activities and clean-ups of the watershed associations;
- develop portages around dams and put-in places for boaters; and
- interpret river, canal, and railroad significance.



A major Commission objective is a Worcester-to- Providence bikeway. RI is already moving on its portion of the route. The bikeway, along with nature trails and boating on the river and Canal, will open the riverway to local families and visitors for recreation. Projects that link Valley-wide resources will be Commission priorities.

Valley-Wide Interpretation

An aggressive interpretation program begins with way-finding and identity. Thematic and design consistency are essential to convey the Corridor's identity in a coherent and integrated manner. The Commission will design and develop National Heritage Corridor highway signs, and will design other necessary graphic systems, directional signs, and historic and trail markers. Cooperative agreements developed to assist in the development of exhibits or museum displays will contain assurances of consistency with NHC themes and design standards. As pioneered at the first National Heritage Corridor, the Illinois & Michigan, and if funding permits hiring an interpretive staff, uniformed NPS rangers could be used to emphasize the Valley's national significance and to raise public awareness.

Communication and consultation will be encouraged among private and public interpretive efforts.

Valley-Wide Planning

The Commission will encourage and advocate Valley-wide planning. Efforts such as those of the Blackstone River and Canal Commission to protect the river, the Blackstone Valley (MA) Chamber of Commerce to develop Valley-wide transportation planning and a single telephone calling area, the Blackstone Valley (RI) Tourism Council to develop appropriate visitor services, and the Blackstone Valley (MA) Selectmen's Association to promote better communication and action among towns will be encouraged; and the Commission will advocate extending such activities across state lines whenever possible. Because there is a serious need for better coordinated zoning, economic development, and mitigation of transportation impacts from one town's activities on another, organizations and forums which assist in these Corridor goals will be supported or started if necessary. An example is the efforts of planners from Woonsocket and Lincoln to organize the "Rhode Island Coalition of Blackstone River Valley Communities" to advocate coordinated local, regional, and state effort and funding for the Corridor and to encourage comprehensive planning consistent with Corridor purposes.

GOOD NEWS

The Commission will communicate successes to the public; practical people are inspired by working examples. This is the best way to explain NHC purposes and goals.

Building of the Month

Advocate the development of a monthly or weekly column in Valley newspapers honoring historic preservation and re-use success stories.

Government Focus on the Blackstone River Valley

Develop a strategy both with state governments and with the National Park Service to provide focus to their technical assistance programs. Because government budgets are tight, it is imperative that their available programs are coordinated to help achieve National Heritage Corridor objectives. Although the Commission will advocate improved programs, this is more a matter of organizing available services and programs to create maximum impact.

Commissioner Networking

Each Commissioner will help focus attention on the actions and "good news" in the interest-area each represents, and will work to accomplish NHC goals there.

National Park Service Energy and Imagination

For the National Heritage Corridor to succeed, the Commission must continue to work closely with the National Park Service to maintain high protection standards, advocate continued and regular NPS technical assistance and appropriation, and include the Blackstone River Valley NHC Commission annual base funding request within the regular NPS appropriation request. Develop, through the NPS, organized communication among

"heritage" areas, and among NPS staff for standards development and policy analysis.

TAKE OUR SHOW ON THE ROAD

Commissioners will be ambassadors on behalf of the Corridor Plan to communities, individuals, and organizations. To assist in this effort, produce a videotape about the National Heritage Corridor, the actions being taken to achieve its protection and rebirth, and the roles and benefits for each of its partners. The objective will be to spark specific commitments and action plans by communities, individuals, and organizations.

COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS

Enter into cooperative agreements with Corridor partners to leverage limited Commission funding. These agreements will be tangible expressions of cooperation, and of consistency with Corridor purposes.

The Commission strategy is to accomplish the most with the least money, by helping willing partners to help themselves. Cooperative agreements will be reviewed and prioritized in accordance with the strategy of partnerships, linkages, catalytic actions, and contingent commitments. For example, through the linkage concept, an interpretive exhibit which leverages the rehabilitation of an historic building would be a higher priority than one which led to new development.

Cooperative agreements involving Commission support of historic building rehabilitation activities or other Commission preservation awards will be considered if the building is on the Corridor inventory or if the building is on or qualifies for the National Register. Priorities for action will be based upon degree of threat and significance. All such cooperative agreements will be submitted in advance to the State Historic Preservation Officer of the respective state for review and consultation. As required by the legislation, the Commission shall give priority to actions which help:

- preserve and interpret the historic resources of the Valley;
- complete State and local parks in the Corridor; and
- support the public and private efforts in economic revitalization consistent with the goals of the Cultural Heritage and Land Management Plan.

Through careful investment of its own resources and coordinated action of many other players, the Commission seeks to achieve Congress's National Heritage Corridor strategy to promote wise resource stewardship and wise economic development. The Commission is aware that the only alternative strategies for Valley protection would be far more costly to the federal and state governments.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Policies

History, more than any other factor, is the foundation of Blackstone River Valley significance. Hundreds of structures and sites stand as strong physical reminders of the Valley's history and contribute to its character. Protection of the historic character of the Valley is essential to the enduring success of the National Heritage Corridor; it is also the prerequisite for interpretive and tourism programs, and education and research activities. The Commission has no higher priority than the preservation, restoration, and use of these sites.

Consequently, it is the Commission's objective to nurture a public committed to historic preservation; the actions and strategies below reflect that objective. After years of feeling abandoned by industry and society, many people of the Valley need to be encouraged that their vernacular architecture is special; that, for example, their mill housing should be placed within local historic zoning to be recognized and protected.

With its partners, the Commission will work to protect significant buildings, mill villages, districts, and the integrity of town, city, and rural areas. The Commission will recognize and champion good restoration efforts and good design review procedures to encourage compatibly designed infill projects, and provide good maintenance and other information to the public. The historic character as a whole is as important to the Commission as saving any notable, but individual building. Generally, use and maintenance are essential to preservation, and the best adaptive use often comes closest to a structure's original use.



The Slater Mill Historic Site in Pawtucket, 1793. Samuel Slater and his partners built their first water-powered cotton spinning mill here in 1790, beginning a fundamental change in American life and economy.

Actions and Strategies

Continue to inventory historical and archaeological resources, as a first step in safeguarding them.

- Pursue information and funding (through local governments, business community and civic organizations) to develop Historic American Building Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER) documentation in those towns lacking comprehensive documentation on historic structures and sites.

Preserve key historic districts, properties, and sites that define the character of the Blackstone River Valley.

- Identify properties that are threatened by development pressures, deterioration or inadequate resources.
  - -- Properties selected for priority action must be listed on Corridor inventories, and priorities determined by significance and threat. Targeted properties include Slater Mill, the Blackstone Canal, Waters Farm, Kelley House, and the Chestnut Hill Meeting House.

- Develop strategies for the protection, restoration and/or enhancement of these and other sites.

-- SLATER MILL is not physically threatened. Yet as the flagship Corridor historic and interpretive site, Commission and its partners will work with Slater Mill as necessary to maintain site viability and high quality programs.

-- BLACKSTONE CANAL

- Seek to place entire canal on National Register.
- Support stabilization or rehabilitation of canal features where appropriate and feasible.
- Support state efforts to restore those sections of canal which it owns and make them accessible to the public through interpretation.

-- WATERS FARM

- Support local efforts to restore the 1757 farm as a living history center.
- Work with Waters Farm to develop high quality programs linked to the Valley's "Farm to Factory" theme.

-- CHESTNUT HILL MEETING HOUSE

Meeting houses and houses of worship are central to the Valley's early history. The Chestnut Hill Meeting House is the Valley's oldest meeting house. The structure has retained its 18th century character and is a primary example of such key cultural resources.

- Support rehabilitation and restoration efforts as appropriate.
- Assist with efforts to make it more accessible to the public through signage and programming.

-- Other Corridor properties now receiving attention from partners and in which the Commission is interested include Moffitt Mill in Lincoln, Mammoth Mill in North Smithfield, the Hannaway Blacksmith Shop in Lincoln, Grant's Mill in Cumberland, and the mill at Fisherville in South Grafton.



Unlike the Waltham System represented by Lowell, the small Moffitt Mill in Lincoln is a classic example of the RI System of Manufacturing, typified by entrepreneurial, family ownership. Preservation of this mill is a Commission priority.

- Provide direct financial and/or professional assistance as incentives to protect key properties and sites, in accordance with Commission criteria and priorities, and following the Commission's strategy of cooperative agreements and contingent commitments.

- Work directly with the owners of such properties and provide information and assistance to them in applying for preservation and other grants to assure their protection.

- Other strategies include: historic easements, adaptive re-use, program assistance, matching grants, marketing strategy, evaluation of interpretive program, assistance in training guides, assessment of management alternatives, acquisition of development rights.

Provide professional planning assistance to Corridor towns and cities

- Work with local governments and State Historic Preservation Offices to gain listing on the National and State Registers of Historic Places for all sites, properties, and districts that meet the criteria.

- Assist local governments to adopt historic district zoning and other protective by-laws for those areas determined to be of primary importance to the National Heritage Corridor's integrity.
  --In creating local historic districts, involve the business community and explore and promote the use of historic tax credits and incentive programs.
  --Where appropriate, create National Register historic districts, whereby building owners within the district are eligible to receive significant tax credits when undertaking historic rehabilitation of their properties.

- Work with towns to implement the State Historic Preservation Offices' design guidelines for historic districts and provide guidelines/preservation planning for areas outside historic districts.

- Create and/or target incentive programs (low-or no-interest revolving loan funds, grants, etc.) for the sensitive and compatible building rehabilitation.

- Establish historic preservation priorities in each Corridor community.
  --Work with local historic commissions to define their goals, including the revitalization of historical societies and commissions.

Provide information to the public about available professional assistance, grants and guidelines for historic preservation, restoration, and maintenance

- Distribute the Corridor's "Design Guidelines and Standards for Preservation, Restoration, and New Construction."

INTERPRETATION



The City of Woonsocket, working with the business community, the State of RI, and the Commission, plans to rehabilitate the historic Falls Yarn Mill for use as a center for the interpretation of the Valley's labor and ethnic history.

Policies

Interpretation can open up the heritage of the Blackstone River Valley to visitors and residents and make it exciting. Interpretation also helps build the public support necessary to protect resources. Like all Commission programs, interpretation activities that pull together many elements will be emphasized. Integrated approaches in our communication will be emphasized as well, and the Commission will find ways to encourage Valley interpreters to share ideas.

Interpretation is the fastest, easiest way to demonstrate the change coming to the Valley as the result of the National Heritage Corridor. Many people in the Valley have important stories to tell that will help us understand our history. The National and State Park Services will be enlisted to develop good interpretive programs, materials, and publications. Training and evaluation programs are needed. Communities and ethnic groups can help us celebrate our special identity. To give interpretation substance and accuracy, research and education are priorities, and the accessibility and protection of historic documents are essential.

Actions and Strategies

Seek the development of museums/information centers in Pawtucket, Woonsocket, Uxbridge, and Worcester

- Support/encourage public officials, private developers and the states to develop museums in the above-mentioned cities.
- Provide discussion and presentation forums.
- Participate in design reviews.

Develop consistent, Corridor-wide interpretation program

- Provide interpretive planning services to Corridor communities and organizations to coordinate the efforts of state, local, historical and tourism groups.
- Provide interpretive training and evaluation of programs at visitor centers and museums.

Design and develop permanent, travelling, and wayside interpretive exhibits

- Work with National Park Service and state interpretation offices to develop Corridor-wide system of interpretive exhibits for visitor centers and rehabilitated mill buildings, Corridor communities, and river and canal corridor.

Sponsor ongoing historical research and publication

- Prepare oral history guidelines, train volunteers and identify potential areas of inquiry, and collect and publish oral histories.
- Assist Valley archivists and librarians obtain funding to preserve documents and make local archives more accessible to researchers.
- Catalogue, copy or microfiche rare or fragile documents.

- Disseminate information regarding opportunities for future study and original research in the Valley.
- Sponsor seminars,workshops and conferences to stimulate scholarship and publication.
- Publish local history.
- Preserve local and corporate records and local library archives.
- Research archaeological resources.
- Provide for the collection, curation, and display of material items.

Develop a sign program for the Corridor

- Work with National Park Service, state Departments of Transportation, and local highway departments to design and install National Heritage Corridor signs to welcome and direct people to and within the Corridor, and to help interpret its resources, sites, and events.
- Work with states, towns, and property owners to make signs available.
- Provide signs and markers at major access points and on major highways, at city/ town/village boundaries, in State Parks, at canoe access points, and along trails.
- Provide plaques for historic sites, districts and buildings on Corridor inventory.

Design, produce and distribute interpretive materials — such as maps, guidebooks and brochures — that describe the historic, cultural, natural and recreation resources of the Corridor

- Design a graphics system for all Corridor locator, directional and facility signs, wayside interpretive markers, brochures and maps; and encourage local governments and organizations to use this system to promote a consistent, easily-identifiable Corridor image.
- Co-sponsor (with funding, use of name and/or logo) other organizations' efforts that are consistent with Corridor objectives.
- Where materials do not exist, produce or encourage production of guides, maps and booklets for distribution or sale to the public.
- Distribute Corridor's Interpretive Plan to organizations involved in visitor programs.

Co-sponsor community interpretive-related programs and activities

- Develop and expand existing interpretive tours of the Corridor via foot, bicycle, bus, canoe and train.
- Co-sponsor school, youth and civic programs and activities, such as plays, films, and slide shows that dramatize life in the mill towns.
- Hold special events and activities that celebrate the Valley's ethnic communities.

Train volunteer interpreters

- Seek the help of the park agencies to develop interpretive materials, conduct tours and develop training/apprenticeship program.
- Sponsor and train volunteer oral historians to collect interpretive information and identify future volunteer interpreters.



A visitor to the Blackstone River Valley can see all phases of 18th and 19th century industrial life. Interpretation can reveal the relationship between human activity and the natural environment. Learning about the choices made in the past prepares us for the choices we make for the future.

Establish a central repository of Valley historical documentation, such as maps, studies, photographs, papers, and oral histories

- Pursue the establishment of a repository in one of the proposed interpretation centers, with permanent loans from the various institutions or with copies made to ensure a comprehensive collection of all memorabilia and sources.

Develop school program to communicate the history and significance of the Blackstone Valley

- Design and develop curriculum materials.
- Sponsor interpreters for field trips.
- Initiate and sponsor research projects and essay contests.
- Work with teachers and school administrators to implement program.

Encourage the establishment of festivals for the celebration of art and culture in the Corridor.

Encourage local initiatives consistent with Corridor goals.

"...the Blackstone Valley represents the change being experienced throughout the nation by former industrial areas....It is an excellent model for other regions with diverse resources and amenity appeal that are facing similiar challenges."

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

Policies

The National Heritage Corridor presents a special opportunity for the continued improvement of the natural environment as a dynamic national model.

A clean environment is critical to the successful development of parks and recreation facilities and programs along the river and canal corridor. Natural resources significantly contribute to the character of the Blackstone River Valley. The most important natural resource of the Valley is the Blackstone River itself, and upgrading its quality and maintaining its flow are priority actions. The restored river and its banks can connect historic sites to provide a continuous recreation and educational experience. To achieve environmental protection and conservation goals and to retain the character of the Valley's natural landscape, the Commission will be a strong advocate for environmental protection and conservation actions by federal, state, regional and local environmental groups.

Conservation actions will focus on Corridor-wide protection of water resources; supporting programs to clean up pollution, toxic waste sites, dumps and eyesores that detract from the visual integrity of the Corridor and may be health risks; and identifying and attracting funds for environmental protection.

While the water quality of the Blackstone River has improved over the past few years, there is still much to be done. A major goal of the Blackstone NHC Commission is a pollution-free river — to enable Valley residents to take full advantage of the recreational opportunities on and along the river.

Effective federal/state environmental enforcement, clean-up and pollution control measures in the Corridor will keep the Valley beautiful, healthy, and inviting. State and local efforts to secure funding to reduce pollution in the Blackstone River and to clean up toxic waste dumps will be encouraged. From time to time, when it can be effective and when the character of the National Heritage Corridor may be affected, the Commission will prepare position and policy papers on significant environmental issues or actions.



Protecting the greenway along the river is a major Commission objective. Success will depend on private landowners, the state DEM's, and especially the town governments.

Actions and Strategies

Improve the water quality of the Blackstone River

- Support consideration of the need to monitor and control water level and dam safety in the Blackstone River as the level affects water quality, canal operation, and flood control.
- Build public support for water quality improvement.
- Support state efforts to enforce existing pollution controls, evaluate their effectiveness, and develop additional controls where needed; to reduce both point and non-point sources of pollution; to clean up toxic waste sites; and to eliminate litter and dumping

along the river and canal.

- Insure prevention of filling of wetlands adjacent to the river or its tributaries.
- Encourage maintenance of vegetated buffer zones along the river and its tributaries.
- Support local watershed groups such as Blackstone River Watershed Association, Save the Bay, and other watchdogs for the river, in their attention to sources of pollution, clean-ups, and in their river recreation activities.
- Investigate the possibility of nominating the Blackstone River as a "scenic river" in the State Scenic Rivers Program.
- Re-establish a balanced sports fishery with consideration given to anadromous fish.

Identify natural sites that are threatened, in need of action or assistance, and/or important to the completion or enhancement of state heritage parks

- Develop a natural resource inventory.
- Seek "Areas of Critical Concern" designation for environmentally degraded or sensitive areas, which receive priority treatment by state government agencies in research, resource protection and review of development proposals.
- Protect through land purchase critical properties to maintain the integrity of state/local parks, such as Wolf Hill in the Rice City area of the MA state park.

The Commission will utilize the expertise available from state and other agencies and groups.

Protect open space within the Corridor



The Blackstone Canal is a major resource for historic interpretation activities, and a symbol of Valley-wide unity. The Canal and towpath can be made more accessible to the public for walking, boating, or quiet contemplation.

- Establish a protected Greenway along the river and canal, with adequate setbacks and viewshed protection. Utilize appropriate protection tools, such as: conservation easements and rights-of-way; remainders following life estates; leases; voluntary agreements; acquisition of more park land; limited development; tax incentives; fee simple purchase; and regulatory powers such as floodplain zoning, riparian set-back, site plan review, and subdivision open space dedication.
- Promote the establishment of public access to and along the river and canal where feasible and appropriate.
- Mobilize local conservation commissions to actively seek out donations of open space (either fee simple or conservation restrictions) from riparian landowners.
- Request assistance from agencies such as Blackstone Watershed Association; MA Fisheries, Wildlife and Law Enforcement's Riverways Program; Save the Bay; and state DEMs in gathering information on riparian parcels and educating owners about natural values to encourage donations and to discourage inappropriate use.
- Work with local review boards to exert influence in protecting the banks of the river and canal.
- Sponsor workshops which illustrate engineering/architectural solutions for river-front access and which cover issues of liability, establishing conservation easements etc.
- Provide planning grants and/or planning assistance for comprehensive park development along the river.

- Endorse, when appropriate, individual and community applications for matching and other funds from the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund, the Massachusetts Self-Help Program, the Rhode Island Local Open Space and Recreation Grants Program, and other sources.
- Preserve special natural areas, such the Blackstone Gorge (High Rocks), the Valley Falls Marsh in Lincoln and Cumberland, and Capron Pond in Uxbridge.
  -- BLACKSTONE GORGE: give serious consideration of the Gorge as the first bi-state park of the Corridor. Discuss appropriate use of the area with the owners, the towns of Blackstone and N. Smithfield, and the two states. If park management is appropriate, but state funds are lacking, developing fundraising strategy to acquire area and donate the land for the bi-state park.

- Support designation of Millville's Triad Bridge area, and the Capron Pond and portions of Blanchard Quarry in Uxbridge as areas for special protection in Massachusetts.
- Support the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, which identifies the Blackstone River corridor as an important flyway for migratory waterfowl and calls for the establishment of 5,000 acres of protected wetland habitat along the Blackstone River.

Support state, local, private and individual efforts to enhance the environment

- Sponsor special environmental events.
  -- Sponsor river and canal clean-ups and coordinate volunteer clubs, school groups, scouts, environmental organizations and local businesses to clean a specific area, assisted by state technicians or local developers if special equipment is necessary.

- Continue to support clean-up efforts by State Forests and Parks departments and staff volunteers in state Heritage Parks.
- Establish or strengthen existing Conservation Commissions to protect and promote natural resources.
- Restore disturbed or degraded sites, such as land fills, gravel pits and abandoned lots.
  -- Establish a tree-planting program within the river corridor to screen out incompatible uses or eyesores, to enhance wildlife habitats, and to support water quality improvements.

- Support efforts to enhance wildlife habitat.
- Co-sponsor citizen initiative and recognition projects that mobilize and coordinate community involvement in Corridor activities.
  -- Support the Adopt-a-Trail and Adopt-a-Stream programs of MA Department of Environmental Management and MA Fisheries and Wildlife.

- Establish an annual Environmental Award to be given to an individual, organization, or community that has made an exemplary contribution to the protection and/or enhancement of the Corridor's natural environment.

LAND USE MANAGEMENT

Policies

Integrated planning and protection can maintain the Valley character. The character of the mill town, the historic road or turnpike, and the historic farm are all part of the organic whole that together makes the Valley special. Corridor-wide policies for land use management are critical to maintaining and enhancing the character and identity of the Blackstone River Valley. The focus here will be to increase public awareness — for the public, planners and developers — about better land use choices; to be a strong voice for clear local land use planning and regulatory measures that maximize preservation of the historic settlement patterns and "fabric"; and to act as a source of technical information and professional assistance to strengthen the efforts of state, regional and local planning commissions, governments and private developers.

The Commission and its partners will seek to identify or provide incentives, adopt plans, and enact ordinances that preserve open space and the Blackstone River Valley character, manifested through such distinctive features as mill villages, rural landscapes, country lanes, etc., and that encourage development consistent with that objective.

The mix of buildings and landscapes of different periods and purpose makes the Valley special. You can "read" the Valley history in this mosaic. Therefore, the Commission will encourage preservation and design treatments that acknowledge the Valley's variety -- the many styles over many periods of history. Good compatible modern design does not have to destroy the Valley character, but the insensitive "placeless" sprawl of suburban or strip developments could. Bad design can come in many forms; poor imitation of old styles can be among the most jarring. At the same time, a rapid onslaught of surburban and other new land use styles would smother the special Valley character. New design should fit into traditional Valley land use, patterns and forms. Design review procedures, such as those of the City of Woonsocket, will be advocated to avoid incompatible new design and development.

Actions and Strategies

Integrate Corridor Cultural Heritage and Land Management Plan into existing state and regional planning

- Encourage the Rhode Island State Planning Office to adopt this plan as part of its recent comprehensive town planning guidelines.
- Seek inclusion of this plan in state outdoor recreation planning (SCORP).

Provide information to the public about good land use practices

- Distribute the Corridor's Land Use Management report, which contains policies and recommendations for each landscape type and land use issue in the Valley.
- Provide professional planning assistance to Corridor communities to develop consistent regional protection mechanisms and to develop solutions to local land use issues and problems, such as local historic district zoning, strip commercial development, signage, river and canal bank preservation, and farmland preservation.

  -- Work with local planning commissions that are seeking to revise their zoning and

regulatory policies and to RI municipalities as they prepare comprehensive land use plans.

-- Provide information regarding successful urban plans and designs from other parts of the country to urban zoning and planning boards, city councils and public works department.

-- Provide design review, site planning, sign ordinances, zoning and other regulatory provisions to Corridor communities.

-- Seek — on a town and regional level — the dedication of open space through the use of open space protection zones, subdivision requirements for open space dedication, and a program for transfer of development rights.

-- Work with conservation commissions and land conservation trusts to identify sites for fee simple acquisition and/or the use of conservation easements to preserve sensitive areas. Encourage these agencies to actively seek out donations of open space from riparian landowners.

-- Find sources of assistance for Corridor landowners who wish to protect parcels that are important to maintaining or enhancing the Valley's character.

-- Encourage localities to require demolition delay and design review as appropriate.

-- Participate in federal, state and local reviews of major development proposals in the Corridor.

-- Identify successful and appropriate ordinances that can be revised and implemented by Corridor towns/cities.

- Encourage local use of existing planning services from RI Office of State Planning and Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission.

- Establish a Valley-wide coalition of planners, including zoning and planning boards, to develop general consensus on land use goals and to improve transition zones along community borders.

- Support the Blackstone Selectmen's Association, an organization through which the elected officials of the Corridor's Massachusetts towns act on common initiatives, and encourage the expansion of this concept to the Valley's Rhode Island communities.

- Sponsor workshops with other Valley communities to share information regarding successful incentive programs for residential/commercial rehab, design review, small business development, public space enhancement, beautification programs, etc.

- Sponsor workshops with local builders and developers to promote appropriate site planning, design and landscaping for residential, commercial and industrial developments.

- Hold forums for discussion, presentation and/or mediation in controversial land use/ management issues.

- Recognize developers, builders, civic leaders, local governments and landowners whose planning and development practices are advancing the goals of protecting and improving the Corridor's integrity.

- Develop a videotape presentation about the land use and development pressures that threaten the Corridor's integrity. Visually present the consequences of present land use/ management practices and demonstrate ways in which improved practices can accommodate new development without sacrificing the Valley's character, as described in the Corridor's Land Use Management report.

- Develop a speakers program to speak to groups and individuals.

Identify and inventory Corridor resources and conditions

- Identify and inventory land that is suitable for development, land ownership along Greenway, and environmentally sensitive areas; and make information available on a map for public use.

Enhance the character of the Valley

- Promote downtown and neighborhood revitalization efforts.
  -- Create an awareness of special features by sponsoring tours and architectural walks.
  -- Promote and demonstrate the livability and marketability of more typically Blackstone Valley alternatives to amorphous subdividisions — promote mill villages as good places to live and work and promote good examples of village-style infill.
  -- Encourage Valley communities to adopt model sign ordinances.

- Promote the establishment of public access to and along the river and canal where feasible and appropriate.

- Bring the river into the life of the cities.
  -- Make the river a focal point/gathering place in cities.
  -- Encourage development of the riverfront as an appealing civic, festival, commercial area.

- Establish Corridor-wide Greenway .

RECREATION DEVELOPMENT

Policies

The National Heritage Corridor Commission will emphasize public use of Valley resources through high-visibility recreation activities and programs. Our project focus will be on actions that link recreation areas together. Examples are the completion of the Corridor bikeway, improvements that will allow safe canoeing along as much of the river as possible, and the use of the Providence & Worcester rail line for excursions.

The Commission will work through state DEMs and other appropriate state agencies to fund and implement these activities, and will seek the help of interested non-profit groups, the business community and civic institutions to complement and supplement state actions.

Parks and park activities can be brought to the places where people live; people can have high-quality recreation in the Blackstone River Valley close to home. Many opportunities still exist to obtain high quality park lands, to develop park interpretation and recreation activities, and to determine if significant parcels and buildings should be included within park systems.

The Commission will support greater public access to and use of the river-canal-towpath area, and will encourage the rapid and effective implementation of key elements of both state heritage park plans with public and/or private funds.

Actions and Strategies

Complete or enhance state and local parks and forests within the Corridor

- Identify and preserve key parcels that deserve inclusion in park and forest systems and that are suitable for recreation development.
  -- Seek an appropriate means to protect the outstanding natural beauty of the Blackstone Gorge, assuring continual water flow through it, while making it more accessible through the sensitive development of facilities for canoeing, kayaking, hiking and picnicking.

- Determine incorporation strategies (acquisition, easements, etc.) for each; implement construction, maintenance and landscaping projects that provide greater public use and access, especially along the river/canal/towpath sections; and advocate appropriate level of state action.

- Form alliances with land conservation trusts, Valley businesses, landowners, local governments, regional foundations and groups such as the the Blackstone River Watershed Association, the Trust for Public Land, and The Nature Conservancy to insure that key open space properties are protected.

- Create a Greenway, linking together to the extent possible all river and canal banks.

- Assist state/local governments obtain resources to carry out acquisition and development plans.
  --Advocate and support priority implementation of State park programs in the Corridor.

- Provide planning assistance to Corridor communities to develop local parks and to focus efforts along the river, canal and towpath.

- Work with local governments to develop a list of suitable sites for recreation development, focussing on the river's edge, canal and towpath.
  --Include recreation opportunities/facilities which feature or are oriented to the river in the local comprehensive plans required by both states.
  --Be apprised of all withdrawals from Ch. 61 lands (first refusal lands) in Massachusetts. Share information with states in pursuit of preserving open land and establishing Greenway.

Implement construction, maintenance and landscaping projects that provide greater public use and access to the river

- *Bikeway*
  -- Develop a bikeway from Providence to Worcester, utilizing the Rhode Island section now under development, but adding to it an extension to Worcester via railroad rights-of-ways and other linkages.

- *Trails*
  --Develop Corridor-wide pedestrian recreation trails;
  --Encourage scenic trail development such as along Penn-Central right-of-way;
  --Develop alliances with area bike clubs, scout troops and other volunteer organizations to adopt sections of the bikeway, trail and towpath system and to develop, maintain and do minor construction of trails.

- *Towpath*
  --Develop the towpath into a usable hiking trail;
  --Acquire easements over towpath and riverbank parcels;
  --Provide maintenance, construction, landscaping and access.

- *Portages*
  --Identify and develop boat access sites, including portages, and put-in points;
  --Locate and establish a system of portages along the river;
  --Acquire, mark and improve portages on river and tributaries.

- *Picnic Facilities*
  --Identify sites and develop picnic facilities along the riverbanks.

- *Signs/markers*
  --Locate, design and work with private landowners and the states to place access signs, trail markers and warning signs in river/canal corridor.

- *Wayside Exhibits*
  --Design wayside exhibits for publicly owned riverfront land.

Produce recreation publications

- Endorse/co-sponsor existing recreation/tourism publications, such as maps, guidebooks, recreation brochures and calendars of events.
- Develop additional materials as necessary, including an open space guide and map, which references local and regional features and encourages usership.

Endorse special events and activities that are consistent and compatible with Corridor goals

- Endorse activities such as the Blackstone River Watershed Association's biannual canoe races.
- Sponsor interpretive walking, canoe, bus, bicycle, and train tours in the Corridor.
- Attract private river outfitters and canoe and bicycle rental businesses to the Corridor.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM

Policies

The long-term success of the various programs and projects identified in previous sections ultimately depends on the overall economic health of the Valley. We can work toward a more broadly-based and sustainable economic future in contrast to the boom-and-bust cycle of our history.

The economy can be guided to allow the special character of the Valley to be retained and enhanced — not overwhelmed by the cumulative effects of suburbanization and commercial strips. Likewise, appropriate new industry can be suitably located to best protect the environment and enhance the Valley's economy. Tourism development, as with other forms of economic development, can either enhance or hurt the special qualities of the Valley. "Quality of life" is what attracts and keeps industry, business and families in an area: good jobs, good parks and recreation opportunities, vital town and city centers, good building design, good transportation. Healthy economic development can also bring with it the capital necessary to restore and maintain the extraordinary architectural heritage in the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor.

The Corridor's economic and tourism policies encourage projects that complement and reinforce the area as a National Heritage Corridor; that is, that build on historic preservation, environmental conservation and heritage activities.

Actions and Strategies

Develop an economic development strategy for the Valley

- Assemble working group of Commission members, members of the business community, economic and tourism specialists, environmentalists, state and local officials and residents to develop consensus and strategy consistent with Corridor purposes and goals.

- Encourage the coordination of historic preservation and affordable housing programs.

- Promote real estate marketing within the Corridor which reinforces —and does not degrade — the character of the Blackstone River Valley.

- Create a clearing house for potential assistance programs that might revitalize the cultural and economic health of the region.

- Encourage local governments to include economic development and tourism strategies for the Valley in local comprehensive plans.

Enhance town and urban centers

- Work with the Corridor's business and industrial leaders to adapt historic mill buildings for modern industrial, commercial, retail, cultural and residential uses.
  -- Promote the use of available state and local incentives and assistance programs to

encourage appropriate businesses to expand or relocate to vacant or underutilized historic mill and commercial buildings.

- Develop Corridor-wide signage controls.
- Provide assistance to communities in the Valley to take advantage of state programs designed to revitalize town centers such as the Main Street program, the Massachusetts Small Cities Program, parking garage programs, and the leasing of state facilities.

Develop an inventory of sites suitable for investment consistent with the land use goals of the Corridor

- Evaluate present zoning for compatibility with Corridor goals.
- Where railroad access is important, seek locations which are suitable for appropriate development without harming the character of the town centers or river environment.

Maintain current manufacturing activity

- Help local manufacturers to become aware of and participate in state programs — such as the Economic Development Set-Aside Program, the Industrial Services Program, the Rhode Island Industrial Facilities Corporation, the Small Business Loan Fund Program, the Small Business Action Center, the Minority Assistance Program, and the Metalworking Action Project — which are designed to keep mature industries in business and improve their competitiveness.

Participate in a targeted development program to attract the next generation of industries

- Expand the Valley's manufacturing base by creating a targeted development program to attract new, compatible industries that have a strong future and are environmentally compatible — industries that enhance (and do not degrade) the environment, provide good jobs, are properly sited, and that locate in historic buildings when possible.

Develop a Corridor-wide transportation strategy which:

- Addresses the need for different levels of transportation routes while preserving the region's identity;
- Advocates sensitively sited and landscaped development along Route 146, involving limited access industrial park and commercial developments;
- Evaluates and mitigates region-wide traffic impacts from developments such as the Route 146 project and the development of a Route 146/Massachusetts Turnpike interchange on the Corridor;
- Evaluates, updates and, if appropriate, implements the proposed Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission's coordinated bi-state transportation study;
- Identifies the railroad as an element of the transportation infrastructure;
- Preserves town and village centers; i.e., avoids widening Main Streets or destroying town commons to accommodate more traffic;
- Preserves historic and small, narrow country roads that contribute to Corridor character;
- Considers and assesses alternative routing to allow through-traffic to avoid congested historic centers, historic/country roads and significant resources;

- Provides enjoyable and easy access to the Corridor's resources for local residents and visitors.
- Includes the development of a bikeway from Providence to Worcester, utilizing the Rhode Island section now under development, but adding to it an extension to Worcester via railroad rights-of-ways and other linkages.

Develop a tourism strategy and support tourism development that enhances Corridor values

- Implement historic preservation, interpretation and land use management goals to enable tourists to enjoy and learn from the Valley resources, and enhance the Valley's viability as a destination for tourists.

- Consult with tourism and business groups in the development and implementation of consistent signage program.

- Encourage and enhance the the programs of the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council and other tourism-related businesses and organizations to organize themselves as one unified entity in advertising, promotional materials and events.

- Encourage the rehabilitation and construction of appropriately designed public and private facilities — such as inns, museums and information centers, and rest stops — where necessary to support tourism.

- Adopt a consistent Corridor image and marketing communications package.

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Public Law 99-647
99th Congress

An Act

To establish the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor in Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

Nov. 10, 1986
[S. 1374]

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR

Conservation. Cultural programs. Public lands. Historic preservation. 16 USC 46 note.

SECTION 1. That for the purpose of preserving and interpreting for the educational and inspirational benefit of present and future generations the unique and significant contributions to our national heritage of certain historic and cultural lands, waterways and structures within the Blackstone River Valley in the States of Massachusetts and Rhode Island there is hereby established the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor (hereafter in this Act referred to as the "Corridor"). It is the purpose of this Act to provide a management framework to assist the States of Massachusetts and Rhode Island and their units of local government in the development and implementation of integrated cultural, historical and land resource management programs in order to retain, enhance and interpret the significant values of the lands, waters and structures of the Corridor.

BOUNDARIES AND ADMINISTRATION

Public information. District of Columbia. Federal Register, publication.

SEC. 2. (a) BOUNDARIES.—The boundaries shall include those lands generally depicted on a map entitled Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor, numbered BRV-80-80,000 and dated October 1986. The map shall be on file and available for public inspection in the office of the Department of the Interior in Washington, DC and the Massachusetts and Rhode Island Departments of Environmental Management. The Secretary of the Interior (hereafter referred to as the "Secretary") shall publish in the Federal Register, as soon as practical after the date of enactment of this Act a detailed description and map of the boundaries established under this subsection.

(b) ADMINISTRATION.—The Corridor shall be administered in accordance with the provisions of this Act.

BLACKSTONE RIVER VALLEY NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR COMMISSION

State and local governments.

SEC. 3. (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is hereby established a commission to be known as the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission (hereafter known as the "Commission") whose purpose shall be to assist Federal, State and local authorities in the development and implementation of an integrated resource management plan for those lands and waters as specified in section 2.

(b) MEMBERSHIP.—The Commission shall be composed of nineteen members appointed by the Secretary as follows:

(1) the Director of the National Park Service, ex officio, or a delegate;

(2) six individuals nominated by the Governors of Rhode Island and Massachusetts and appointed by the Secretary, who shall be the Department of Environmental Management Directors from Rhode Island and Massachusetts, the State Historic Preservation Officers from Massachusetts and Rhode Island, and the Department of Economic Development Directors from Massachusetts and Rhode Island;

(3) four representatives of local government from Massachusetts and four from Rhode Island nominated by the Governor of their State and appointed by the Secretary, to represent the interests of local government; and

(4) two individuals, nominated by the Governor of Massachusetts and two individuals nominated by the Governor of Rhode Island appointed by the Secretary, to represent other interests each Governor deems appropriate.

A vacancy in the Commission shall be filled in the manner in which the original appointment was made.

(c) TERMS.—Members of the Commission shall be appointed for terms of three years.

(d) COMPENSATION.—Members of the Commission shall receive no pay on account of their service on the Commission, but while away from their homes or regular places of business in the performance of services for the Commission, members of the Commission shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, in the same manner as persons employed intermittently in the Government service are allowed expenses under section 5703 of title 5, United States Code.

(e) CHAIRPERSON.—The chairperson of the Commission shall be elected by the members of the Commission.

(f) QUORUM.—(1) Ten members of the Commission shall constitute a quorum, but a lesser number may hold hearings.

(2) Any member of the Commission may vote by means of a signed proxy exercised by another member of the Commission, but any member so voting shall not be considered present for purposes of establishing a quorum.

(3) The affirmative vote of not less than ten members of the Commission shall be required to approve the budget of the Commission.

(g) MEETINGS.—The Commission shall meet at least quarterly at the call of the chairperson or ten of its members. Meetings of the Commission shall be subject to section 552b of title 5, United States Code (relating to open meetings).

STAFF OF THE COMMISSION

SEC. 4. (a) STAFF.—(1) The Commission shall have the power to appoint and fix the compensation of such staff as may be necessary to carry out its duties.

(2) Staff appointed by the Commission—

(A) shall be appointed subject to the provisions of title 5, United States Code, governing appointments in the competitive service; and

(B) shall be paid in accordance with the provisions of chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53 of such title relating to classification and General Schedule pay rates.

5 USC 5101 *et seq.*, 5331.

(b) EXPERTS AND CONSULTANTS.—Subject to such rules as may be adopted by the Commission, the Commission may procure temporary and intermittent services to the same extent as is authorized by section 3109(b) of title 5, United States Code, but at rates determined by the Commission to be reasonable.

(c) STAFF OF OTHER AGENCIES.—(1) Upon request of the Commission, the head of any Federal agency may detail, on a reimbursable basis, any of the personnel of such agency to the Commission to assist the Commission in carrying out the Commission's duties.

(2) The Commission may accept the services of personnel detailed from the States of Massachusetts and Rhode Island (and any political subdivision thereof) and may reimburse that State or political subdivision for those services.

POWERS OF COMMISSION

SEC. 5. (a) HEARINGS.—(1) The Commission may, for the purpose of carrying out this Act, hold such hearings, sit and act at such times and places, take such testimony, and receive such evidence, as the Commission considers appropriate.

(2) The Commission may not issue subpoenas or exercise any subpoena authority

(b) POWERS OF MEMBERS AND AGENTS.—Any member or agent of the Commission, if so authorized by the Commission, may take any action which the Commission is authorized to take by this Act.

(c) ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES.—The Administrator of General Services shall provide to the Commission, on a reimbursable basis, such administrative support services as the Commission may request.

(d) MAILS.—The Commission may use the United States mails in the same manner and under the same conditions as other departments and agencies of the United States.

(e) USE OF FUNDS TO OBTAIN MONEY.—The Commission may use its funds to obtain money from any source under any program or law requiring the recipient of such money to make a contribution in order to receive such money.

(f) GIFTS.—(1) Except as provided in subsection (g)(2)(B), the Commission may, for purposes of carrying out its duties, seek, accept, and dispose of gifts, bequests, or donations of money, personal property, or services, received from any source.

(2) For purposes of section 170(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, any gift to the Commission shall be deemed to be a gift to the United States. 26 USC 170.

(g) ACQUISITION OF REAL PROPERTY.—(1) Except as provided in paragraph (2) and except with respect to any leasing of facilities under subsection (c), the Commission may not acquire any real property or interest in real property.

(2) Subject to paragraph (3), the Commission may acquire real property, or interests in real property, in the Corridor—

(A) by gift or devise; or

(B) by purchase from a willing seller with money which was given or bequeathed to the Commission on the condition that such money would be used to purchase real property, or interests in real property, in the Corridor.

(3) Any real property or interest in real property acquired by the Commission under paragraph (2) shall be conveyed by the Commission to an appropriate public or private land managing agency, as

determined by the Commission. Any such conveyance shall be made—

(A) as soon as practicable after such acquisition;

(B) without consideration; and

(C) on the condition that the real property or interest in real property so conveyed is used for public purposes.

(h) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—For purposes of carrying out the plan, the Commission may enter into cooperative agreements with the State of Massachusetts and the State of Rhode Island, with any political subdivision of each State, or with any person. Any such cooperative agreement shall, at a minimum, establish procedures for providing notice to the Commission of any action proposed by the State of Massachusetts and the State of Rhode Island, such political subdivision, or such person which may affect the implementation of the plan.

(i) ADVISORY GROUPS.—The Commission may establish such advisory groups as the Commission deems necessary to ensure open communication with, and assistance from, the State of Massachusetts and the State of Rhode Island, political subdivisions of the State of Massachusetts and the State of Rhode Island, and interested persons.

DUTIES OF THE COMMISSION

State and local governments.

SEC. 6. (a) PREPARATION OF PLAN.—Within one year after the Commission conducts its first meeting, it shall submit a Cultural Heritage and Land Management Plan to the Secretary and the Governors of Massachusetts and Rhode Island for review and approval for ninety days. The plan shall be based on existing State plans, but shall coordinate those plans and present a unified historic preservation and interpretation plan for the Corridor. The plan shall—

(1) provide an inventory which includes any property in the Corridor which should be preserved, restored, managed, developed, maintained, or acquired because of its national historic or cultural significance;

(2) establish standards and criteria applicable to the construction, preservation, restoration, alteration, and use of all properties within the Corridor;

(3) develop an historic interpretation plan to interpret the history of the valley;

(4) contain policies for land use management which consider and detail the application of appropriate land and water management techniques, including but not limited to local zoning, use of easements and development of intergovernmental cooperative agreements, so as to protect the Corridor's historical, cultural, scenic and natural resources and enhance water quality of the Blackstone River in a manner consistent with supporting economic revitalization efforts;

(5) contain a coordination and consistency component which details the ways in which local, State and Federal programs may best be coordinated to promote the purposes of this Act; and

(6) contain a program for State and local government implementation of the plan.

(b) APPROVAL OF THE PLAN.—(1) No plan submitted to the Secretary under this section shall be approved unless the Secretary finds that the plan, if implemented, would adequately protect the

significant historical and cultural resources of the Corridor and consistent with such protection provide adequate and appropriate outdoor recreational opportunities and economic activities within the Corridor.

(2) In determining whether or not to approve the Plan, the Secretary shall consider whether:

(A) the Commission has afforded adequate opportunity, including public hearings, for public and governmental involvement in the preparation of the plan;

(B) he has received adequate assurances from appropriate State officials that the recommended implementation program identified in the plan will be initiated within a reasonable time after the date of approval of the plan and such program will ensure effective implementation of the State and local aspects of the plan.

(3) If the Secretary disapproves the plan, he shall advise the Commission in writing of the reasons therefore and shall indicate any recommendations for revisions. Following completion of any necessary revisions to the plan, the Secretary shall have forty-five days to either approve or disapprove the plan.

(c) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN.—(1) After review and approval of the plan by the Secretary and the Governors of Massachusetts and Rhode Island as provided in subsections (a) and (b) the Commission shall give priority to actions which assist in—

(A) preserving and interpreting the historic resources of the valley;

(B) completing State and local parks in the Corridor; and

(C) supporting public and private efforts in economic revitalization consistent with the goals of the Cultural Heritage Plan.

(2) Priority actions to be carried out under paragraph (1) shall include— State and local governments.

(A) assisting the States in appropriate preservation treatment of the Blackstone Canal;

(B) assisting the States in designing, establishing, and maintaining visitor centers and other interpretive exhibits in the Corridor;

(C) encouraging private landowners adjacent to the canal or river to retain or reestablish, where possible, vegetative, or other buffers as specified in the State park plans;

(D) assisting in the enhancement of public awareness of an appreciation for the historical and architectural and geological resources and sites in the Corridor;

(E) assisting the State or any local government or any nonprofit organization in the restoration of any historic building in the Corridor;

(F) encouraging, by appropriate means, enhanced economic and industrial development in the Corridor consistent with the goals of the plan;

(G) encouraging local governments to adopt land use policies consistent with the goals of the State park and the plan and to take actions to implement those policies; and

(H) ensuring that clear, consistent signs identifying access points and sites of interest is put in place.

TERMINATION OF COMMISSION

SEC. 7. (a) TERMINATION.—Except as provided in subsection (b), the Commission shall terminate on the day occurring five years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(b) EXTENSION.—The Commission may be extended for a period of not more than five years beginning on the day referred to in subsection (a) if, not later than one hundred and eighty days before such day—

(1) the Commission determines such extension is necessary in order to carry out the purpose of this Act;

(2) the Commission submits such proposed extension to the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs of the House of Representatives and to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate; and

(3) the Governor of Massachusetts, the Governor of Rhode Island, and the Secretary each approve such extension.

DUTIES OF THE SECRETARY

SEC. 8. (a) PURPOSE.—To carry out the purpose of this Act, the Secretary shall assist the Commission in preparing the Cultural Heritage and Land Management Plan. Following approval of the plan as provided under section 6 (a) and (b) the Secretary shall assist the Commission to design and fabricate interpretive materials based on the plan including—

(A) guide brochures for exploring the heritage story of the valley by automobile, train, bicycle, boat, or foot;

(B) visitor displays (including video presentations) at several locations well distributed along the Corridor, including both indoor and outdoor displays; and

(C) a mobile display depicting the heritage story to be used in the park, public buildings, libraries, and schools.

(b) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary shall, upon request of the Commission, provide technical assistance to the Commission in the preparation of the plan and for implementing the plan as set out in section 6(c).

DUTIES OF OTHER FEDERAL ENTITIES

SEC. 9. Any Federal entity conducting or supporting activities directly affecting the Corridor shall—

(1) consult with the Secretary and the Commission with respect to such activities;

(2) cooperate with the Secretary and the Commission in carrying out their duties under this Act and, to the maximum extent practicable, coordinate such activities with the carrying out of such duties; and

(3) to the maximum extent practicable, conduct or support such activities in a manner which the Commission determines will not have an adverse effect on the Corridor.

AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS

SEC. 10. There is authorized to be appropriated annually to the Commission $250,000 for the next five fiscal years to carry out the purposes of this Act; except that the Federal contribution to the Commission shall not exceed 50 percent of the annual operating costs of the Commission.

Approved November 10, 1986.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—S. 1374:

SENATE REPORTS: No. 99-488 (Comm. on Energy and Natural Resources).
CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 132 (1986):
Oct. 8, considered and passed Senate.
Oct. 15, considered and passed House, amended.
Oct. 17, Senate concurred in House amendment.
WEEKLY COMPILATION OF PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS, Vol. 22 (1986):
Nov. 10, Presidential statement.

APPENDIX

BLACKSTONE RIVER VALLEY NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR COMMISSIONERS
October, 1989

Charles C. Baldelli
Representative of local government; Mayor, City of Woonsocket, RI

Robert L. Bendick, Jr.
Representative of state government; Director, RI Dept. of Environmental Management

Robert D. Billington
Representative at large; President, Blackstone Valley Tourism Council

Herbert S. Cables, Jr.(former member)
Representative of the National Park Service; former Regional Director, National Park Service/North Atlantic Region

James C. Cleaves
Representative of local government (Uxbridge, MA)

Arthur Denomme
Representative of local government (North Smithfield, RI)

H. Warren Fairbanks, III
Representative of local government (Northbridge, MA)

Henry W. Fazzano
Representative of state government; Director, RI Dept. of Economic Development

Louis A. Fazzano (former member)
Representative of state government; former Director, RI Dept. of Economic Development

James Gutensohn (former member)
Representative of state government; former Commissioner, MA Dept. of Environmental Management

Richard E. Kendall
Representative of state government; Commissioner, MA Dept. of Environmental Management

David Scott Molloy, Jr.
Representative at large; Assistant Professor, Labor Research Center, University of Rhode Island

Richard T. Moore
Representative at large; Massachusetts State Representative

Gerald D. Patten
Representative of the National Park Service; Regional Director, National Park Service/ North Atlantic Region

Roland A. Plasse
Representative of local government (Cumberland, RI)

William J. Pontes
Representative of local government (Blackstone, MA)

Alden Raine
Representative of state government; Director, MA Dept. of Economic Development

Louise M. Redding
Representative at large; Member, Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce

Edward F. Sanderson
Representative of state government; Executive Director, Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

Burton Stallwood
Representative of local government; Town Administrator (Lincoln, RI)

Valerie A. Talmage
Representative of state government; Executive Director, Massachusetts Historical Commission

Thomas W. Taylor
Representative of local government; Commissioner, Parks & Recreation Department, City of Worcester, MA

HISTORY OF PLANNING IN THE BLACKSTONE RIVER VALLEY

The Blackstone River Valley Cultural Heritage and Land Management Plan, together with its supporting technical documents, draws from numerous valuable previous studies conducted over the past ten years by various state and regional agencies. Many of these studies led to each state's designation of key portions of the Valley as continguous state heritage parks.

In September 1983, the National Park Service (NPS) was asked by the United States Congress to assist Massachusetts and Rhode Island to develop a linear heritage park system along the Blackstone River from Worcester, MA to Providence, RI. NPS provided the states with technical advice in interpretive planning, historic preservation and canal restoration, and published a report, "The Blackstone River Corridor Study: Conservation Options." The report offered three conservation options for a regional park, emphasized that the history of the Valley was of national significance, but recommended against the establishment of a National Park in the Blackstone Valley. NPS based its decision on the fact that without a land base of federal property and with so much resource ownership control in private hands, the managerial integrity needed for federal administration of a National Park was lacking. Furthermore, the cost of purchasing land and structures to obtain a manageable unit capable of protecting the nationally significant resources was considered to be prohibitively expensive. Instead, NPS, recognizing the significance of the Blackstone River Valley, supported its designation as a National Heritage Corridor. Incentive funding and coordination by an overseer Commission was seen as the best available option to achieve the national interest in the Valley.

That report evolved out of much state and local community interest in a Heritage State park program in both states. In Massachusetts, the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) took the lead with two reports: a landscape architect's visual study of the Blackstone Valley, and an archaeological reconnaissance survey identifying relics of the Blackstone Canal and an inventory of related historic features along the river. These studies provided the basic data for a Heritage State Park master plan, which proposed development of the park in three phases. The plan included 16 interpretive sites along the Blackstone River and Canal, linked by a heritage trail and with a visitor center proposed for Uxbridge; restored canal segments; and a horse-drawn canal boat ride. Since 1978, the state had been acquiring land and, at the time the studies were commissioned, had close to 1,000 acres for a State Heritage Park.

In 1981 the Massachusetts legislature enacted Chapter 568, "An Act establishing the Blackstone River and Canal Commission" (BRCC) in order to supply legal support to the park planning effort. The purpose of the law was to create an appointed public body "to guide the restoration of public use of the Blackstone River and Canal" by authorizing the development of plans for the new park. The Commission was empowered to prepare and adopt plans, evaluate canal resources, establish park boundaries, and advise the DEM in the preparation of Heritage State Park plans. Today, this legislation has been expanded to give the Commission "watch dog" powers over new development that abuts the Blackstone River and Canal.

Equally impressive have been community efforts through Heritage Homecoming, Inc., a voluntary organization that supports the park by hosting annual festivals; by fundraising to construct a replica of a Blackstone Canal boat, the Lady Carrington; and by maintaining Valley-wide focus through the All American Cities Program.

In the years following the NPS report and prior to the Valley's designation as a National Heritage Corridor, Massachusetts continued to develop a phased master plan for the Heritage State Park to guide all aspects of site and interpretive planning. An initial bond issue allocation of $1 million made preliminary design work and acquisition of several critical, phase one parcels possible. Subsequently, additional bond issues totaling $9 million have been authorized for park development.

In Rhode Island similar efforts were evolving to promote a State Park. In 1977, community members and public officials gathered for the first Blackstone Valley Canal/ River Conference, with representation from the Massachusetts DEM and the Blackstone Valley Watershed Association. The conference focused on the issues of economic development, environmental preservation, historic restoration and recreation. Later, in 1981, a two-state Blackstone Valley Economic Development Conference was held to focus further attention on the river and the Valley in general.

In 1978 the U.S. Department of the Interior, Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, and the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission prepared an inventory of Historic Engineering and Industrial sites for Rhode Island. The work appropriately took place out of the Slater Mill Historic Site and represents one of the first comprehensive historic inventories to be developed in the Valley. This inventory was a major component of the Cultural Heritage and Land Management Plan.

The State of Rhode Island became actively involved in the development of a state park along the river in 1984 when it was given a three-and-one-half mile stretch of watered canal and towpath. In 1985 Rhode Island voters approved a bond that provided $1 million for the Blackstone River State Park. A year later the Department of Environmental Management completed a master plan for 19 miles of the Blackstone River, from Pawtucket to the Massachusetts line.

Recent planning efforts in the Valley include a study funded by the Federal Highway Administration and completed in 1987 to select a route for a major recreational bikeway along the river and canal. The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management has continued to acquire land and has added about 100 acres of land along the river in Lincoln and Cumberland. Local cities and towns, many of which also own substantial river frontage, have also been committed to park planning and design. Construction is expected to begin in the fall of 1989 on the first phase of the state park in Ashton, and six municipalities along the river are developing their own local parks as part of the Blackstone River linear park system.

Today the river is cleaner than before due to $150 million spent by both states to improve water quality. Recently, the Massachusetts Department of Fisheries, Wildlife and Environmental Law Enforcement has looked at the Blackstone River holistically for recreation, water supply, wildlife habitat and waste assimilation.

Individual and state planning efforts continue to evolve in the Blackstone River Valley, now supplemented by a regional, bi-state approach of the National Heritage Corridor.