

A scenic view of a river with a dam and buildings in the background. The river flows from the background towards the foreground, where it passes through a dam. The dam is a concrete structure with a series of small cascades. The water is turbulent as it flows over the dam. In the background, there are several buildings, including a large, multi-story brick building. The surrounding area is lush with green trees and vegetation. The sky is overcast.

Bringing Fish Back to Kittacuck: A Long Journey, Together

NBEP Annual Symposium 10/6/23

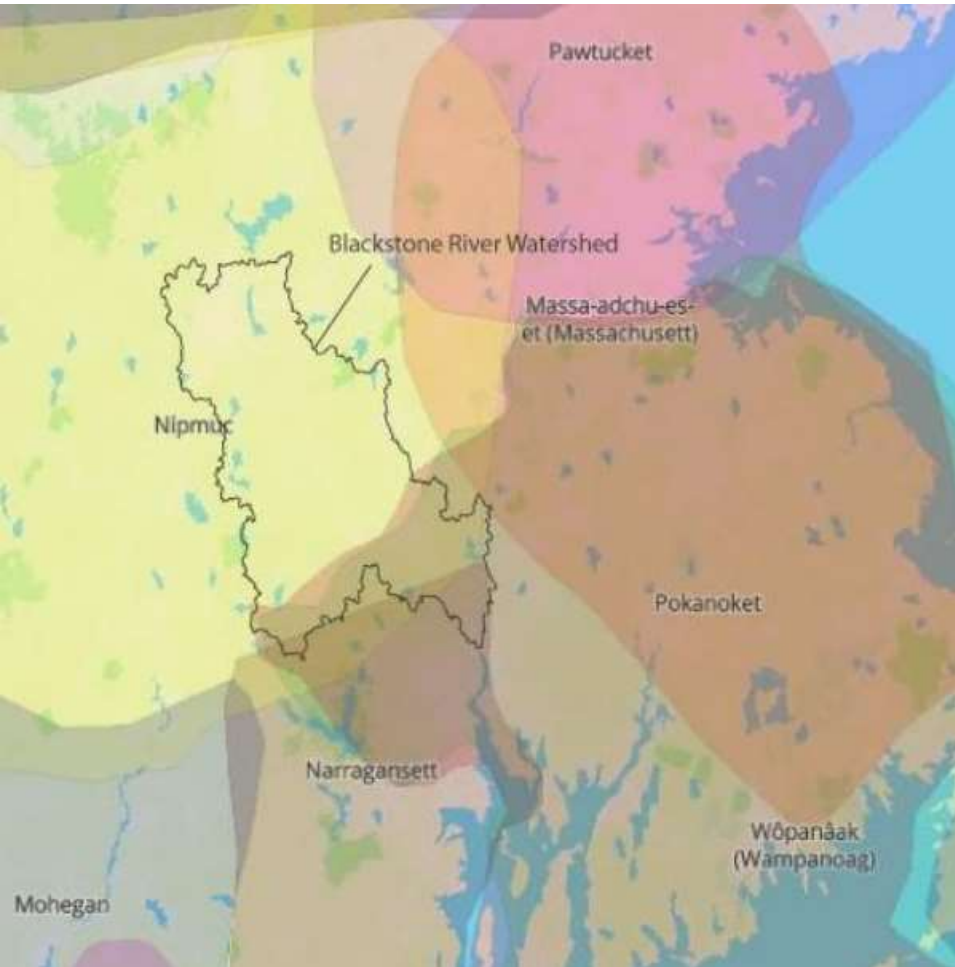
Stefanie Covino

John Marsland

Nancy Brown-Garcia



Stefanie Covino,
Blackstone Watershed Collaborative



Indigenous Land

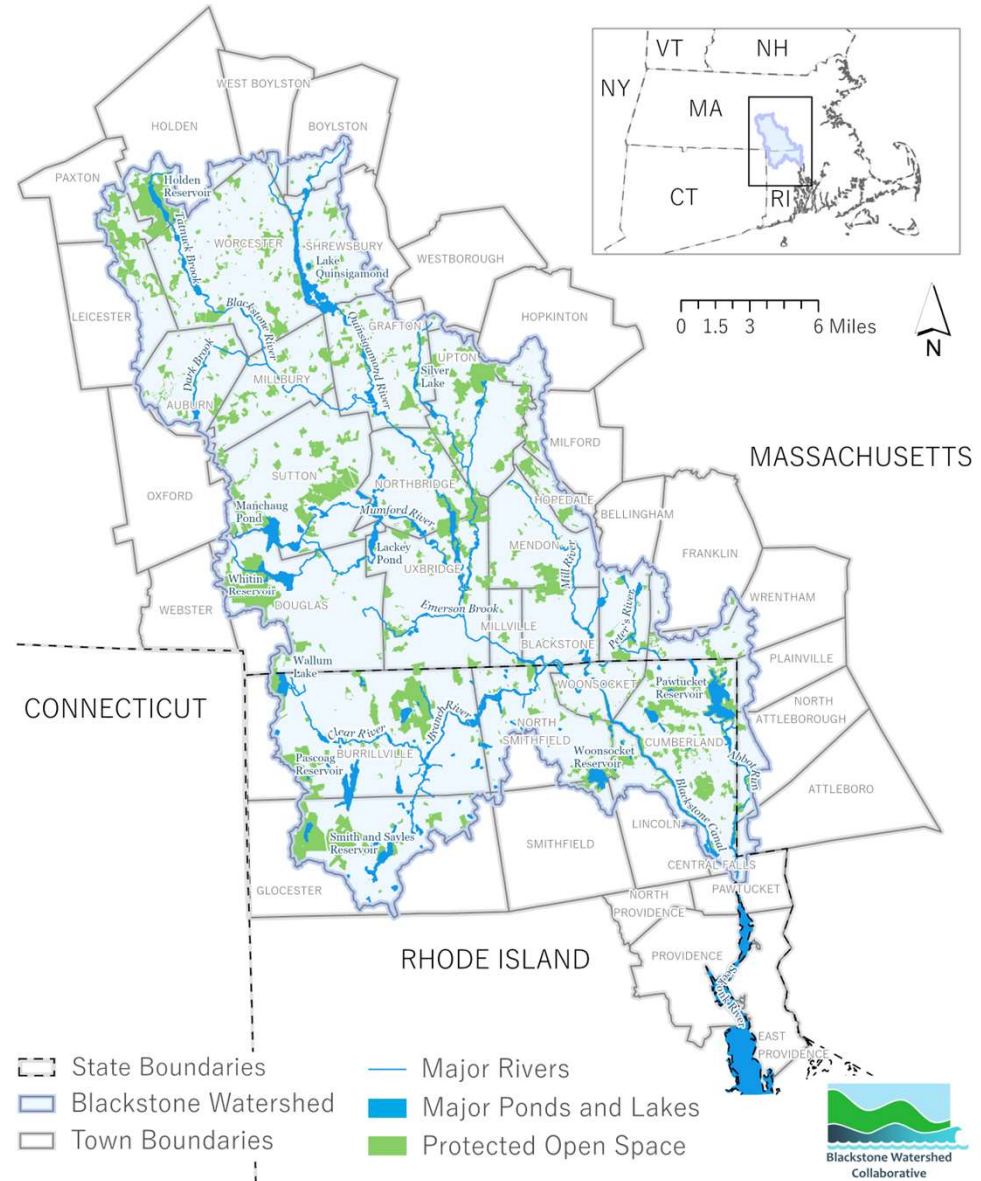
- [Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe](#)
- [Narragansett Indian Tribe](#)
- [Nipmuc Nation](#)
- [Pokanoket Nation](#)

Centuries of careful land stewardship with close ties to the river

Needs Assessment Report Figure 6: Regional Indigenous Lands (Native Land Digital 2021)

Blackstone Watershed

- 48 miles long
- Drops 438'
- 475 square miles
- 39 communities
- 2 states
- Many tribes



A Shared Watershed with Shared Goals

Enhance WQ monitoring



Enhance aquatic connectivity



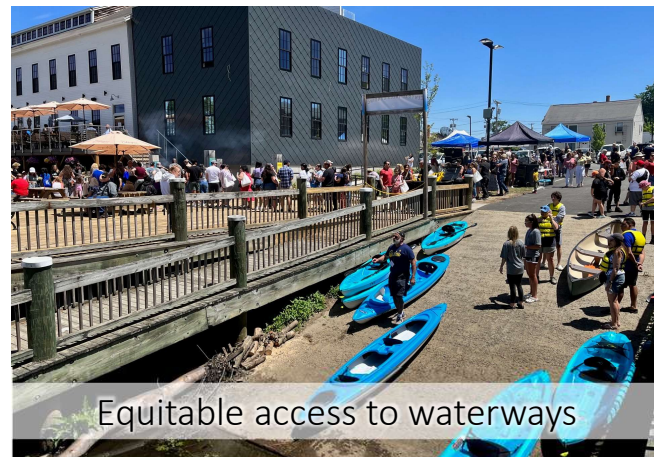
Manage water chestnut



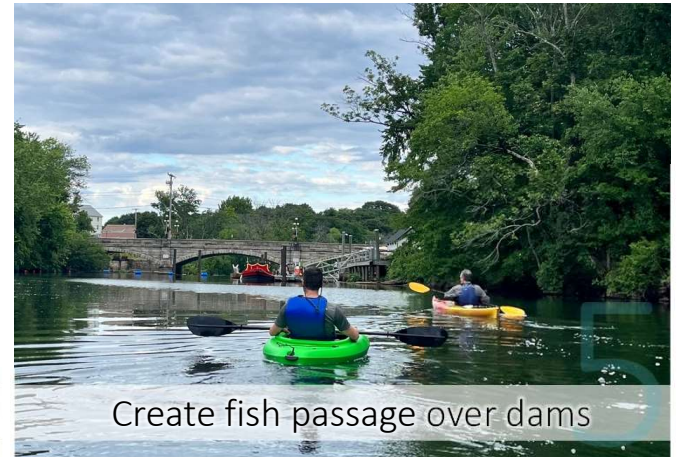
Expand the bikeway



Equitable access to waterways



Create fish passage over dams

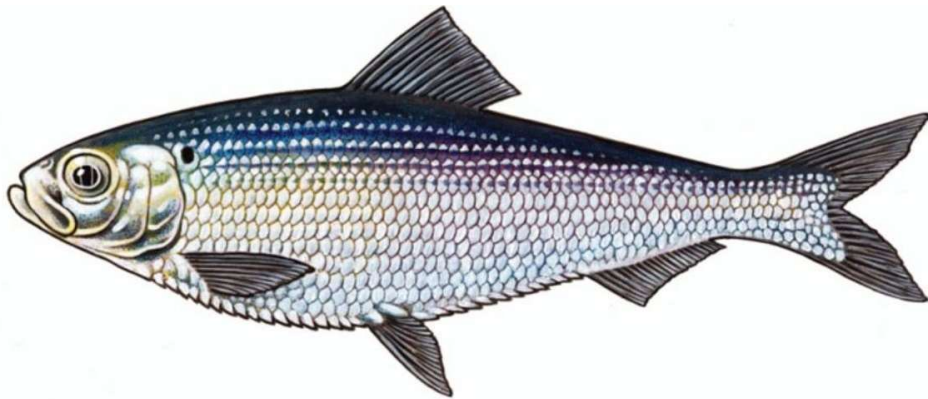


America's Hardest Working River

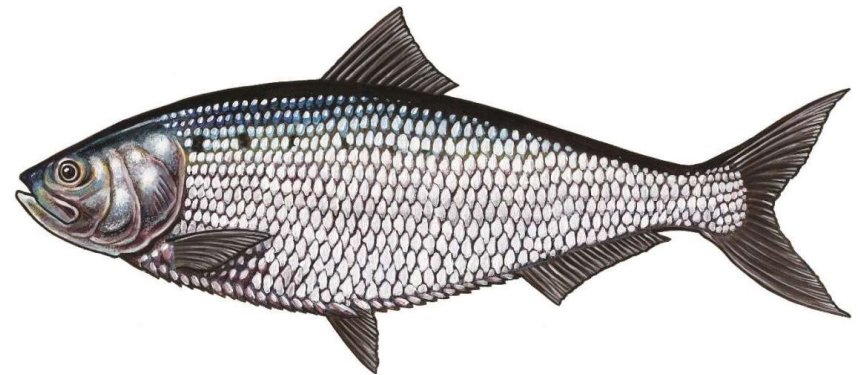


Slater Mill, America's first water-powered cotton-spinning mill in Pawtucket, RI (c.1790)

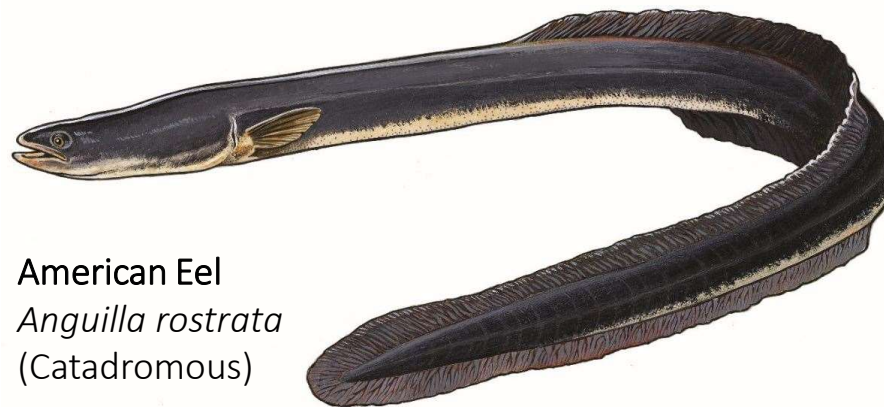
Healthy populations absent for 233 years (and counting...)



River Herring
Alosa pseudoharengus
Alosa aestivalis
(Anadromous)



American Shad
Alosa sapidissima
(Anadromous)

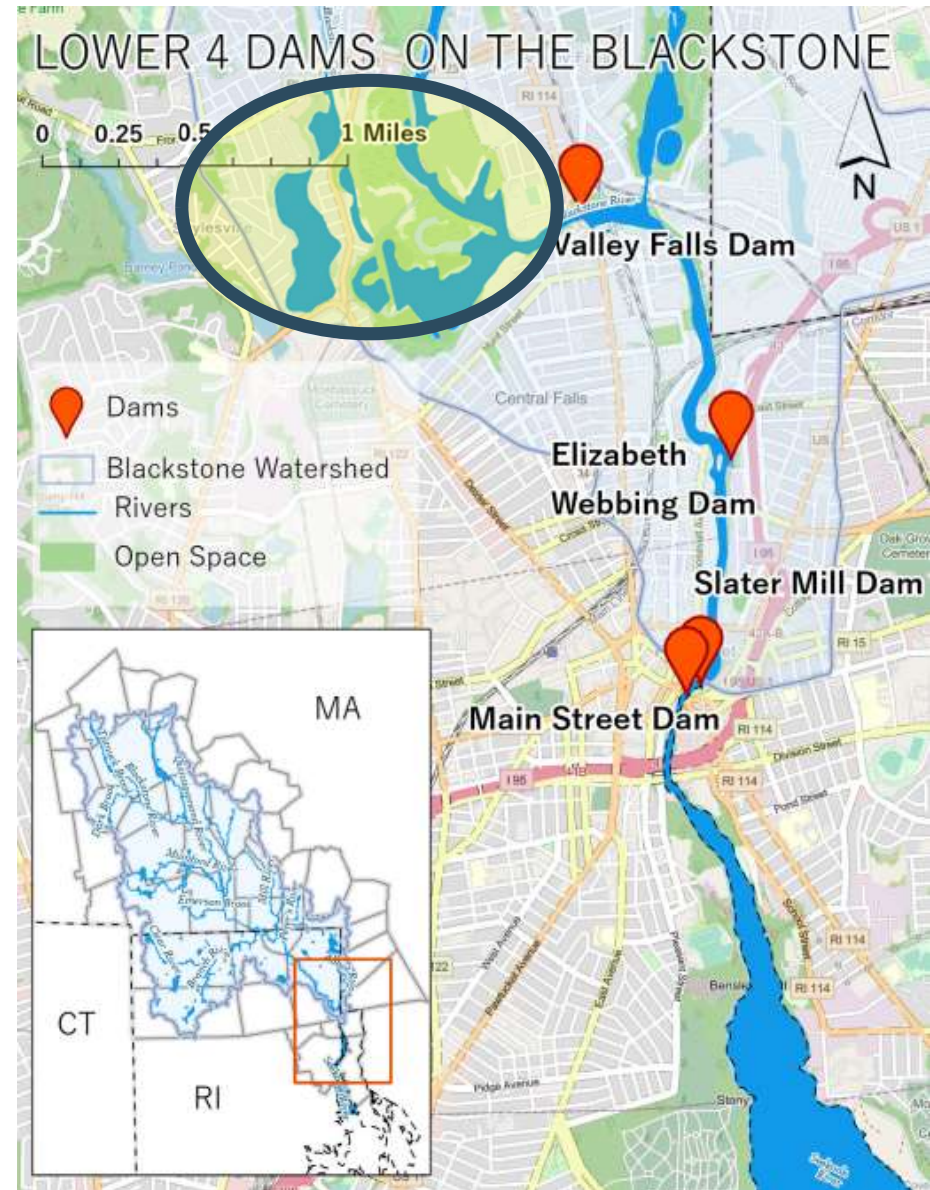


American Eel
Anguilla rostrata
(Catadromous)

Mainstem: 19 Dams Remain & Complete Continuity is Far Off...

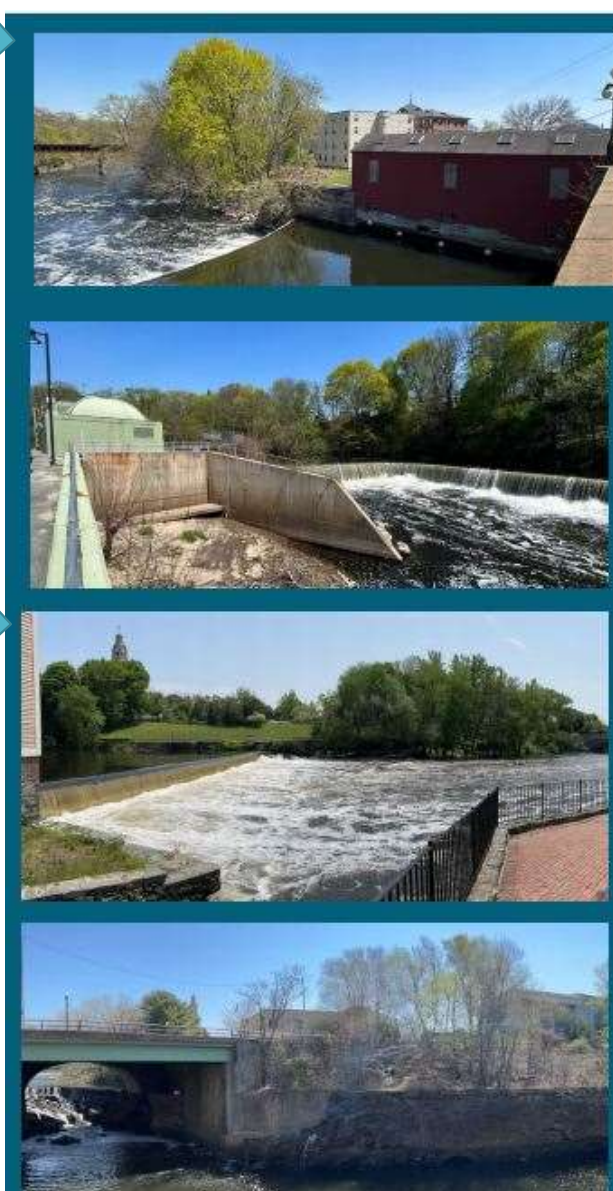
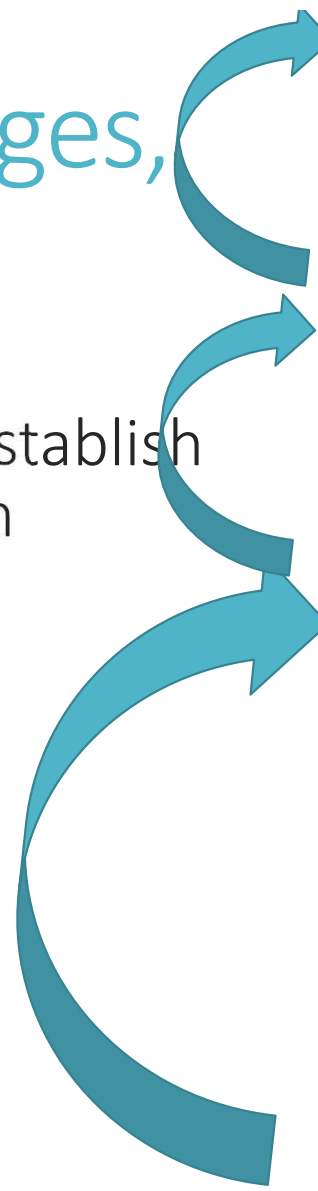


Phase 1: Lower Four to Lonsdale Marsh



Four Dams, Three Passages, A Healthy Population

DEM modeling shows that we can establish a healthy population, even with high mortality & uncertainty



Why?

- Longest tributary to the Bay
- Forage base for other fish
- Support commercial & recreational fishing
- Improve connectivity for local species
- Essential for cultural connection and sense of place



Getting to Lonsdale Marsh



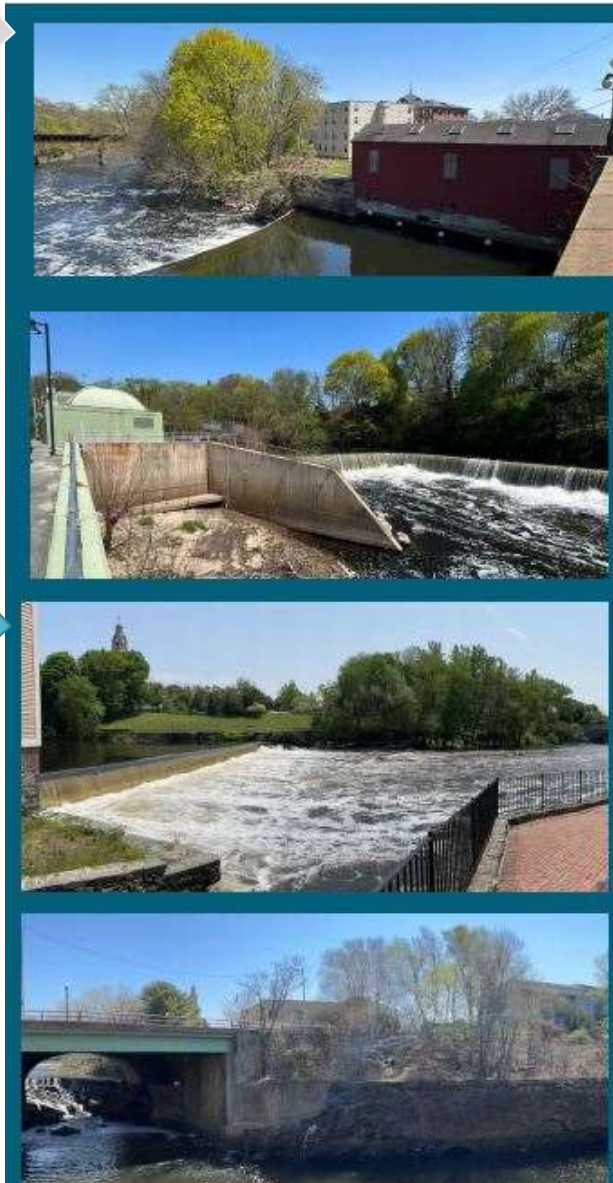
Final design,
permitting, &
construction



Further
design as
able

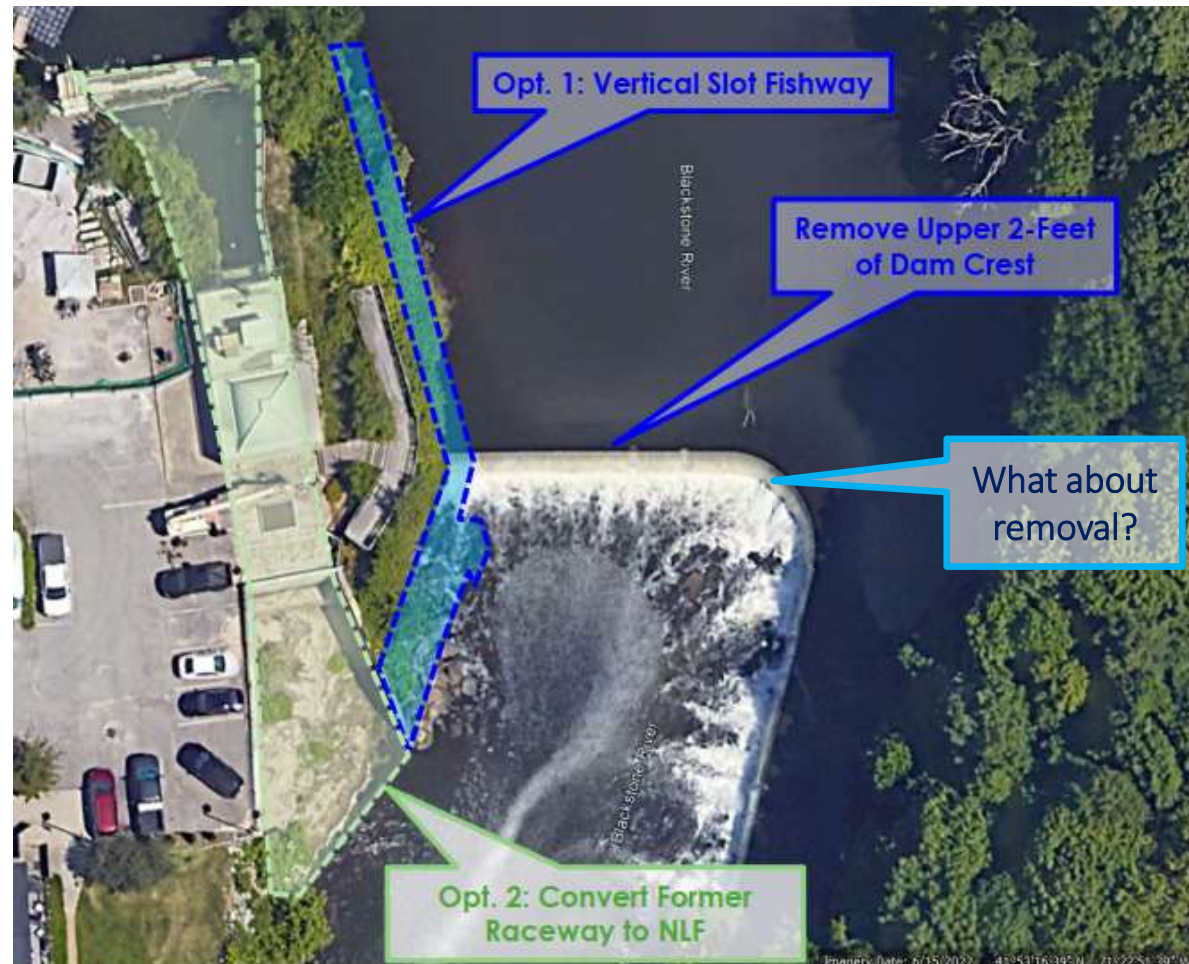


Design TBD by Valley
Falls Hydro, as required
by FERC when passage
reaches this dam



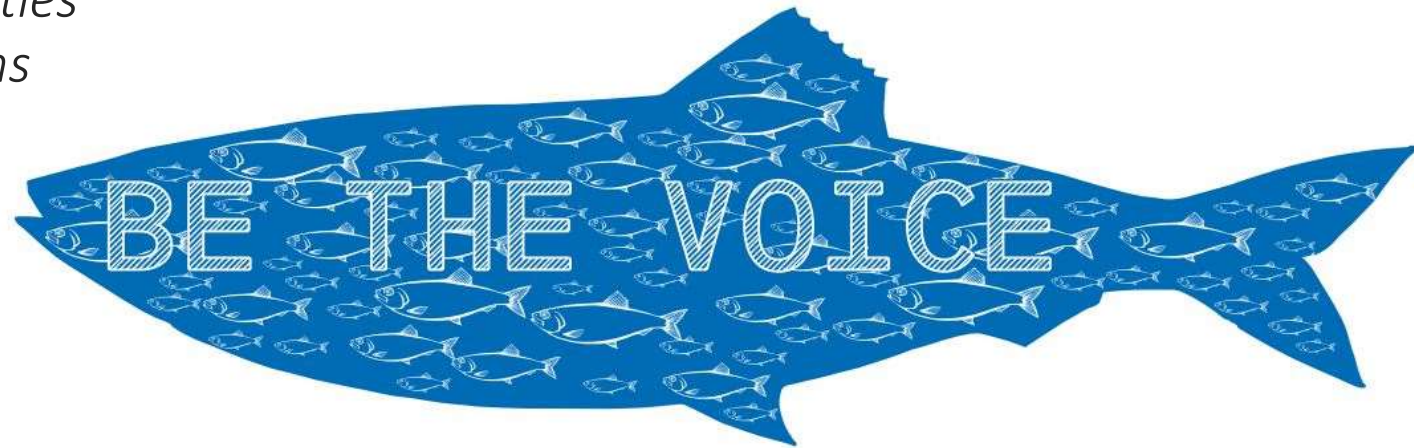
Elizabeth Webbing's Future

- Owned by DEM since 2010
- FERC pre-empts DEM if hydro license approved
- Covenant from condo association requires 2' lowering, but retain noise
- Exploring future options...?



Now we need your help!

- Project ~\$32M, NOAA up to \$20M
- DEM informational website *coming soon*
- Need to be more public in the process & gather support to make decisions
 - *Transparent decision making*
 - *Steering committee*
 - *Educational opportunities*
 - *Public charette sessions*
 - Observation area
 - Elizabeth Webbing
 - Renderings
 - Physical models





John Marsland, President,
Blackstone River Watershed Council/Friends of the Blackstone

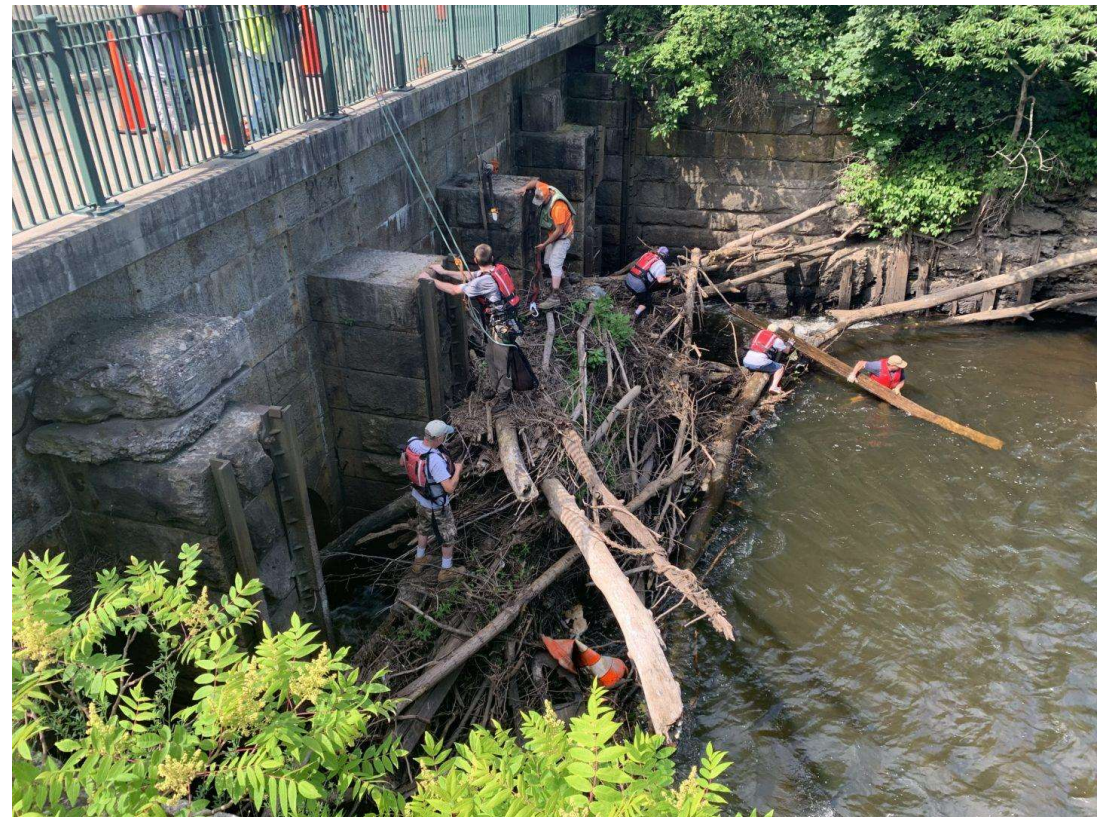


BLACKSTONE RIVER

WATERSHED COUNCIL

Friends of the Blackstone

- Started in 1990 as a fully-volunteer run organization
- Both a 501c3 (BRWC) & 501c4 (FOB)
- Rooted in the community
- Official watershed org for Blackstone
- Created & stewarded lots of new access points
- Focus on stewardship and clean ups
- Run free public programs at Sycamore Landing, a 12 acre facility on the banks of Kittacuck



Kittacuck Speaks: Be The Voice

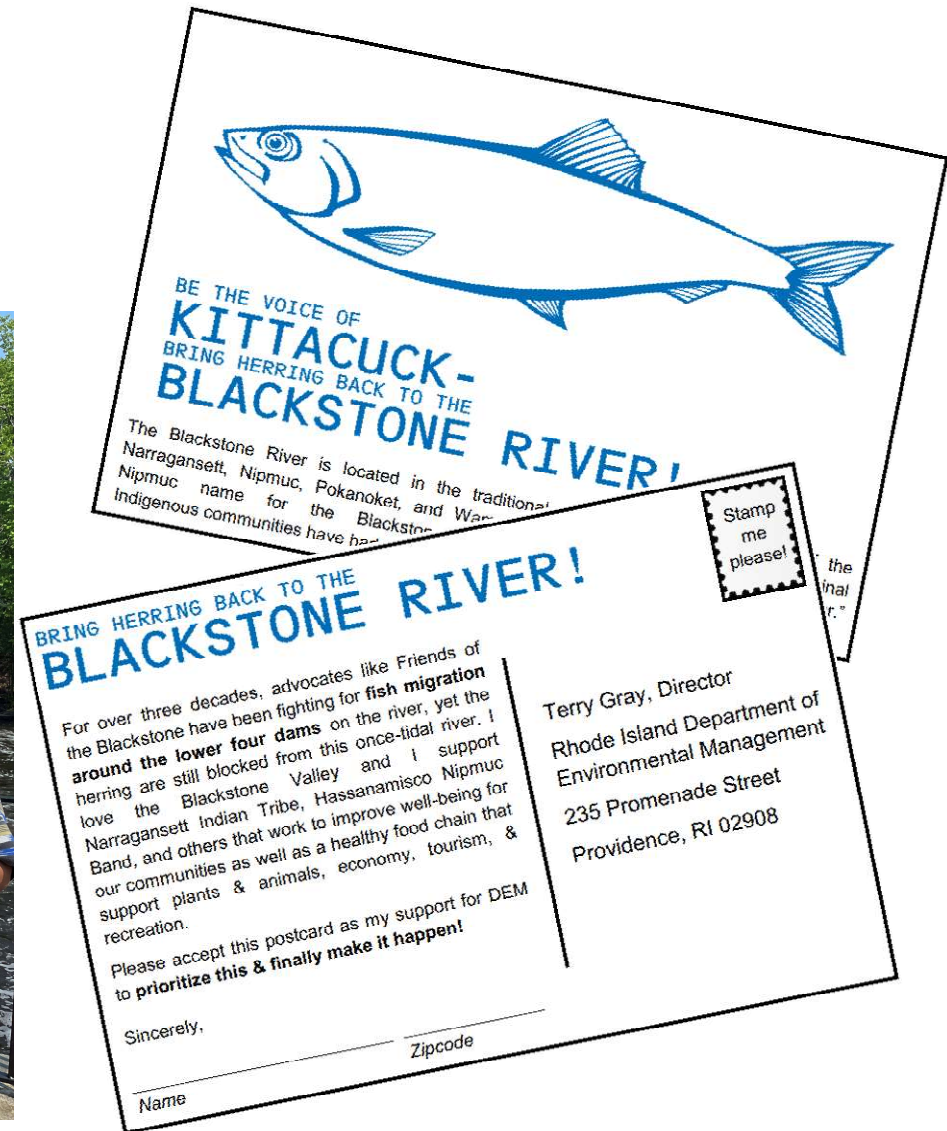


Focus on Tribal Relations & Fish Passage

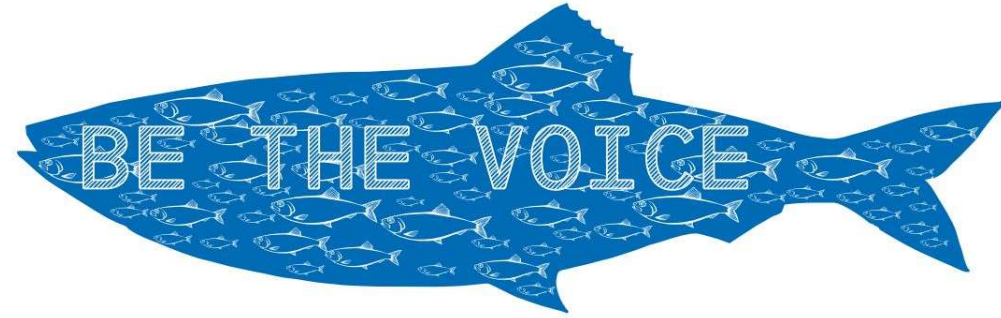
- Youth programming on indigenous cultural values with Boys & Girls Club in N RI
- Collaborated with Narragansett Indian Tribe & Hassanamisco Band of Nipmuc to host Inter-Tribal Gathering in October 2022 – historic gathering of 4 tribes at Slater Mill in Pawtucket



Fish Passage Parade



October 22 – Join Us &
of Kittacuck





Nancy Brown-Garcia
Chief Historical Preservation Officer, Narragansett Indian Tribe

Bringing Fish Back to Our River, Together

- Indigenous voices are too often left out of the conversation
- As the original and ongoing stewards of the land, our perspectives need to be considered and incorporated into decision making
- Supportive of this project and working together to bring back migratory species that have been absent too long



Blackstone NPS Superintendent Eric Breitreutz, NIT CHPO Nancy Brown-Garcia, and DEM Deputy Director Jason McNamee at the fish passage parade on 5/21

Thank you!

