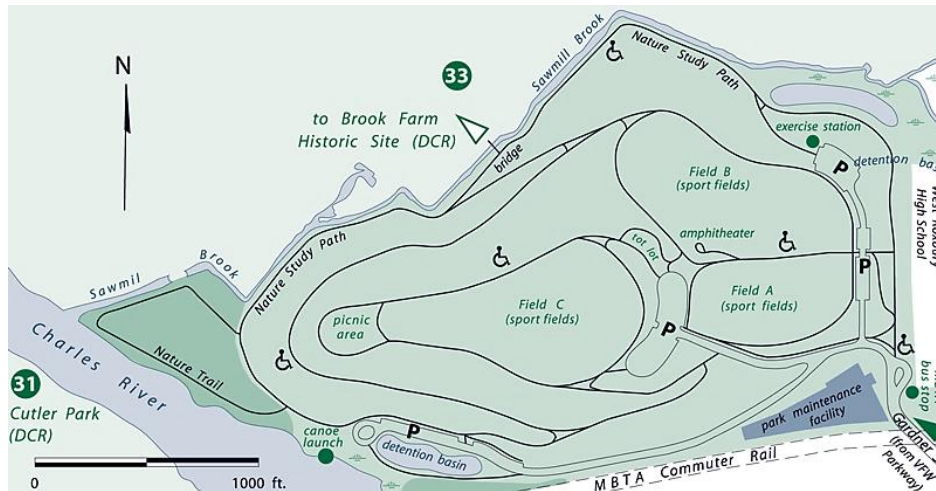


New Pond Park

Conservation and Management Plan 2020-2025



*A former Superfund site, Boston's 100-acre Millennium Park demonstrates how an old landfill can be transformed into a valuable public park.
Can Cumberland do as well with its Superfund site?*

Town of Cumberland



Jeffrey Mutter, Mayor
Planning Department
Department of Public Works
Town Solicitor

Adopted May 20, 2020

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Early American entrepreneurs transformed the Blackstone River. They built a 45-mile canal, numerous water impoundments, a series of mills and mill villages, and a railroad. One of the impoundments, formed by the flooding of wetlands just north of the Pratt dam and earthen levee in Cumberland, became “New Pond”.

By the 1950’s, New Pond was drained, and for the next 30 years the site today known as “Operational Unit 2” (OU2), was operated as a private landfill. Industrial waste and 2.1 million cubic yards of trash was dumped in and along this mile-long stretch of the Blackstone.

By the 1970’s, Congress outlawed such activity. Starting with Earth Day in 1970, environmental activism took root and RIDEM developed a new Blackstone River Greenway. Today, OU2 lies in the heart of this park system, which now includes an 11.6-mile bike path, historic sites, and hiking trails.

OU2 is now a Superfund site. It is to be remediated and capped. Contaminated material excavated from the 25-acre *Unnamed Island* will be deposited on an existing hill on the 30-acre *J.M. Mills Landfill* and the 7-acre *Nunes parcel*, located between the Stop and Shop plaza and the Pratt Dam. Impervious caps will be covered with clean soil and re-vegetated. Methane ventilation wells will be installed. The River embankment will be fortified to withstand floods.

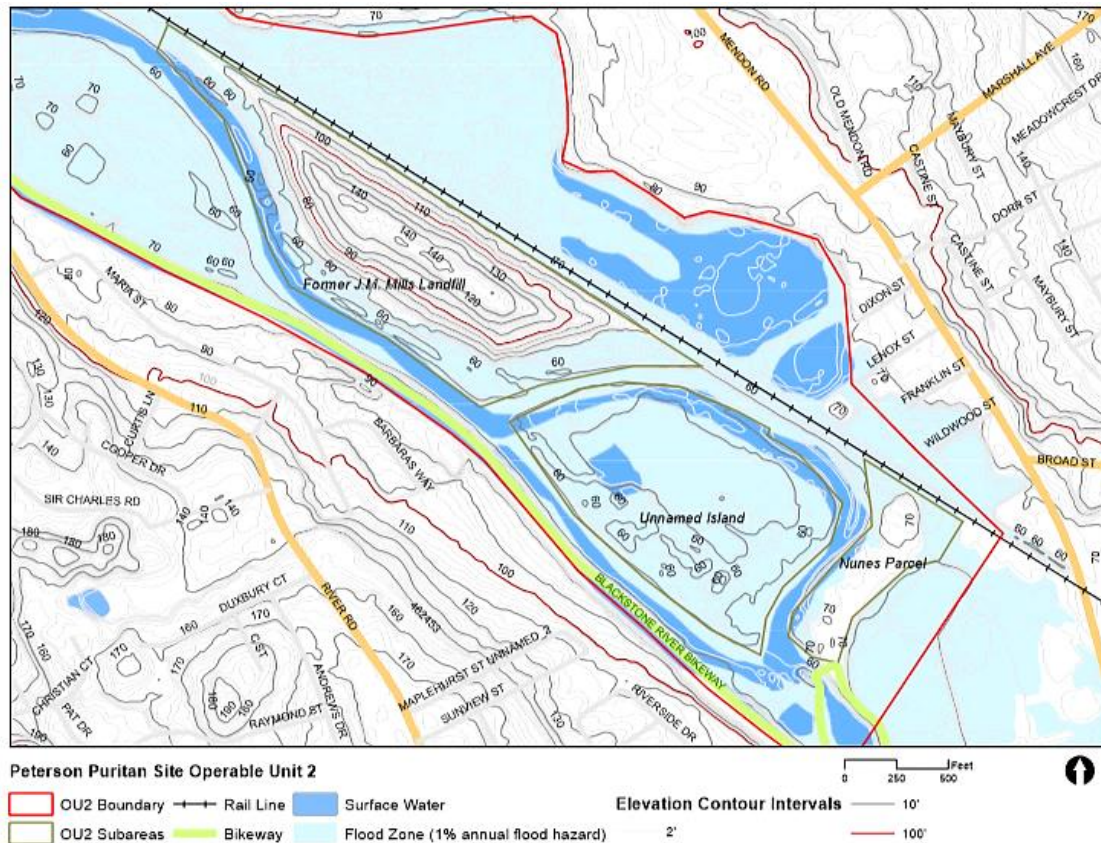
The future of the OU2 site depends on whether the Town takes ownership. If the Town petitions Rhode Island Superior Court to “clear the title” of the tax lots comprising the site, it would be in a position to negotiate the final site design features with EPA and the “SPD group”, the companies responsible for cleaning up the site. Opting out of ownership would jeopardize public access and recreational opportunities.

With the support of expert outside legal and engineering consultants, the Town could enjoy a new park, connected to the Blackstone River Bikeway and including hiking trails, paved walkways, a playground, a ball field, and enhanced river access. The park’s topography could be creatively sculpted and the river’s embankment softened with strategically-designed landscaping. Successful examples of landfill conversions to parklands are included in this Plan.

The Town’s objective would be to conclude successful negotiations, including liability indemnification, with EPA and the SPD group. Only then would the Town move to take ownership of the property, paving the way for a new 62-acre Town park on the Blackstone River.

1. THE SITE

Once a water impoundment named *New Pond*, the Peterson/Puritan Superfund “operable unit” (OU2) site is a mile-long (5,600 feet) and varies in width from 1,200 to 1,900 feet, with a total area of about 62 acres.



The *Nunes parcel* abuts the Stop and Shop Plaza, the Pratt Dam and the Blackstone River Bikeway. The *Unnamed Island* is subject to frequent flooding. The *J.M. Mills landfill* to the north is notable for a hill about 80 feet in height with a 300-yard long summit.

The Providence and Worcester Railroad (P&W) tracks abut to the east. To the west is the main channel of the Blackstone River, which flows east around the Unnamed Island, and a secondary channel of the river flows west. Part of the Unnamed Island is in the Town of Lincoln.

North of the J.M. Mills landfill is a narrow lot running along the P&W rail line to Martin Street.

2. ALTERING THE BLACKSTONE 1815-

For a thousand years before Europeans immigrated to New England, the Narragansetts lived in harmony with the *Kittacuck*, meaning “the great tidal river”. Today, the Blackstone River is widely recognized as the birthplace of the American Industrial Revolution. Entrepreneurs transformed the geography of the Blackstone for waterpower and transportation. In doing so, they also systemized the lives of their workers in mass producing woven fabrics and other products to be distributed throughout the United States and beyond.

Samuel Slater and Moses Brown designed and built America’s first commercially successful textile mill on the Blackstone in Pawtucket in 1793. A second mill was built in Quinville, across the river from what is now the Ashton Lofts, in 1810. Over the next 70 years, a succession of mills and accompanying mill villages were built northward to Worcester.



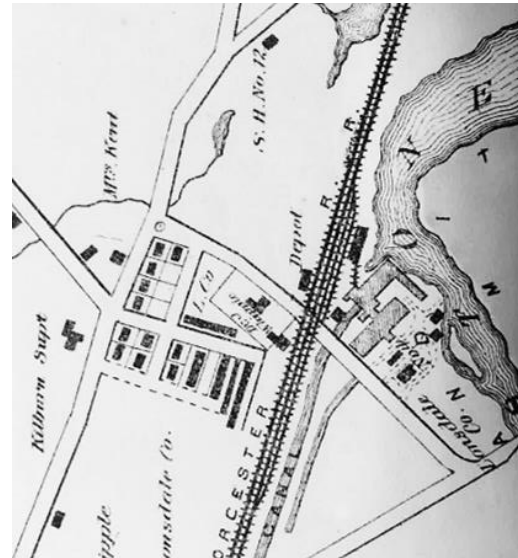
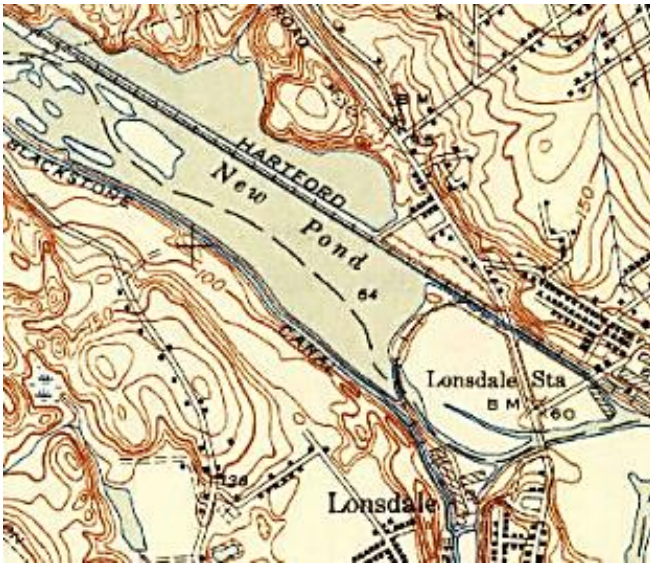
(left) Quinville mill (1810), photo taken in 1903. (right) Blackstone Canal ca. 1832
(Rhode Island Historical Society)

The construction of the Blackstone Canal began in 1824. It took 1000 men, including African Americans and Irish immigrants, 4 years to build the 45-mile canal. Forty-eight granite locks enabled barge traffic to traverse the 438-foot vertical drop from Worcester to Providence.

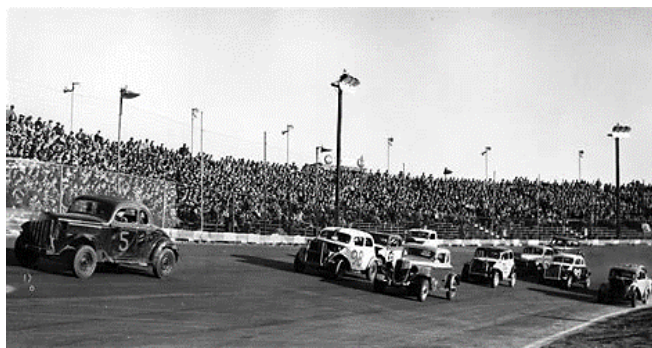
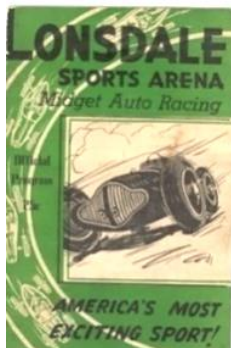
Between 1831 and 1833 the Lonsdale WaterPower Company built the Lonsdale Mill, one of the largest and most advanced American textile mill villages of the period. Over the next 50 years, the Lonsdale Company built a succession of larger and more complex mills and mill villages, Ashton (1867), Berkeley (1872) and Ann & Hope (1886).

The Providence and Worcester Railroad was completed in 1847. The railroad track was built on what is assumed to be an elevated earthen embankment.

In order to maintain adequate flow to power the mills in the dry summer months, a series of impoundment ponds were also created. Earthen levees and granite dams forced spring floodwaters to inundate wetland areas and be stored, to be later released when needed. A levee and the Pratt Dam built across the Blackstone River, 2000 feet north of what is now the Lonsdale Mill in Lincoln created an impoundment called “New Pond”.



(l) a US Geological Survey map shows New Pond. The Blackstone Canal can be seen along the river's west side. A rail spur line can be seen running along the Pratt Dam and northern edge of the levee, across the Blackstone, and along the canal to the Lonsdale Mill in Lincoln. In the 1880's the Lonsdale Company built a half-mile head race channel along the Providence and Worcester rail line, which provided power to the Ann and Hope mill. (r) the Lonsdale Company mill and village ca. 1870.



In 1934, local road builder Edward A. McNulty bought the earthen levee area holding back New Pond. He excavated sand and gravel from the site for his road building business. In 1947 he built on the site the Lonsdale Sports Arena, a 1/3-mile paved car racing track which operated until 1956.

In the late 1950's the levee was breached. New Pond was drained and the river's main channel moved to the west. The railroad spur was also removed. Once submerged areas were now available for expanded sand and gravel excavation.





1952



1972

From 1954 to 1986, J.M. Mills operated the site as a private commercial landfill, receiving toxic industrial waste, trash, and construction debris. The fill created three distinct land masses.

The *J.M. Mills landfill* to the north along the P&W rail line was subject to the disposal of 2.1 million cubic yards of trash and hazardous material, including dioxin, PCB's, and pesticides. By 1986, what was once a pond 6 feet deep had become a hill 100 feet above the Blackstone. Sinking and compressing over time, it is now 80 feet high. There is also a narrow strip of land running just west of the P&W track to Martin Street. J.M. Mills accepted enormous amounts of demolition debris along the rail line north of the landfill.

Immediately southwest and across the river channel from the J. M. Mills site the *Unnamed Island* was used for sand and gravel excavation and then served as a repository of 39,500 to 44,000 cubic yards of trash and hazardous waste. The island's soils were mined from "borrow pits", well below the water table in some cases, and used to provide daily cover materials for landfill operations. Some of the pits were used as additional disposal sites.

By 1963, the 7-acre *Nunes parcel* began receiving trash and toxic waste material, ultimately totaling 56,000 cubic yards. The site served as the gateway to the entire property. At one point, aerial photos showed pools of discolored liquids, stained soils, leachate outbreaks, and at least 500, 55-gallon drums.

In 1987, J.M. Mills sold that parcel to Nunes Disposal, Inc. who continued to operate the landfill as a transfer station until about 2003. The adjacent Stop and Shop Plaza was built in the early 1990's.



1981



1997

In 1979, four drinking water wells (Quinnville and Lenox Street) were found to have volatile organic compound levels exceeding EPA drinking water guidelines. In 1983, EPA placed a 920-acre area in Lincoln and Cumberland on the National Priority (“Superfund”) List. The site included the Peterson/Puritan factory on Martin Street, and was identified as a major pollution source.

In 1992, EPA constructed a security fence, and removed drums containing hazardous wastes including lead, zinc, copper, barium, chromium, and VOCs, from the base of the landfill. In 1999, EPA issued an “administrative order of consent” to the responsible companies.

In 2002, RIDEM removed an abandoned 59-ton excavator and 600 gallons of degraded fuel and hydraulic oil from the Unnamed Island. In 2003, Owens Corning Company agreed to remove 55 tons of waste from the Unnamed Island. To do so they built an access crossing, enabling additional site investigations.

EPA completed its investigation in 2005. EPA held public hearings in 2012 and 2014 on plans to remediate, cap and re-use the site. The Blackstone River Watershed Council/Friends of the Blackstone testified that they “would like to see measures taken to transform the former landfill eyesore into a recreational and scenic amenity for the Town of Cumberland, a natural habitat for wildlife and passive recreational use by the public.”

EPA issued a Record of Decision (ROD) in 2015. In 2017, EPA entered into a “consent decree” with the Settling Performing Defendants “SPD group”, agreeing upon a statement of work to remediate and cap OU2. Current site development plans are at the “10 percent” design phase, and do not yet declare how excavated material from the Unnamed Island will be distributed at the J.M. Mills Landfill and the Nunes parcel.

On April 4, 2020, EPA approved the SPD group's Landfill Cover Design Report. The design will now proceed to the 30 percent stage. At that point, EPA will decide on the distribution of contaminated material, including the size and footprint of the areas to be capped by the cover systems. It should take as much as 2 years to finalize the plans, and the \$40 million construction project is expected to take another 12 to 18 months. Improvements to the New Pond Park would likely be phased in over a number of years.

3. RECLAIMING THE BLACKSTONE 1970-

By no means was the exploitation of the OU2 site an isolated circumstance. Without adequate environmental laws, dumping waste on embankments of rivers and coastal areas was very common. In fact, Cumberland operated its own municipal landfill on the Blackstone River from 1954 to 1983. The Town is just now preparing the remediation and capping design, and is planning to install a solar farm to help pay for the project.

By the late 1960's, public outrage over the abuse and destruction of natural resources had grown significantly. With the advent of Earth Day in 1970, Congress passed a succession of environmental laws, most notably the *Clean Water Act* (1970); the *Resource Conservation and Recovery Act* (1976) which established proper management of hazardous solid waste; and the *Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act* (1980), better known as "Superfund," which forces hazardous waste polluters to clean up sites.

Locally, *Zap the Blackstone* was organized in 1971 and 1972. Ten thousand volunteers in Massachusetts and Rhode Island waded into the river, collectively removing 10,000 tons of trash and debris along the Blackstone's entire length. This has since inspired annual strategic small-scale clean ups.



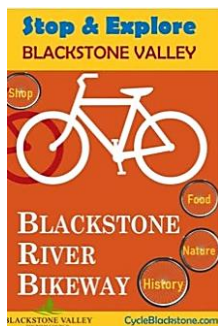
In the last 30 years, the *Blackstone River Watershed Council/Friends of the Blackstone* (BRWC/FOB) has been the leading advocate for the Blackstone. They plant trees, pick up trash, removes debris clogging dam bypass tubes, maintain trails, cut down invasive plant species, repair wood fencing along the Blackstone Bikeway, perform water quality monitoring, hold canoe tours, and advocate for enforcement of environmental laws. They have testified at the hearings on planning for the proper closure and adaptive re-use of OU2 as a public park. They also were awarded a 2010 EPA technical assistance grant 2010 to have a peer review of remediation documents.

The Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor was established by Congress in 1986, in recognition of the "unique and significant contributions to our national heritage of certain historic and cultural lands, waterways and structures within the Blackstone River Valley" including the region's textile milling, agricultural and transportation

infrastructure history. A corridor commission was also created, which for the past 34 years has coordinated numerous recreational improvements and activities.

That same year, RIDEM completed the *Blackstone River State Park Master Plan*. The Plan identified numerous natural and historic sites, providing a blueprint for park development, visitor centers, and a circulation system of ‘riverways’-routes for canoeing, hiking, biking, and driving.

RIDEM had already acquired a 25-acre parcel in Lonsdale for the purpose of creating new parkland. The last remaining Blackstone Canal segment with waterway and tow path intact, 3 miles long, was donated to the state in 1983. By the early 1990’s, a total of 150 acres between Albion and Lonsdale had been accumulated.



In 1997, RIDEM and RIDOT began constructing the *Blackstone River Bikeway* with a segment from Lincoln to Ashton Village. In 1998, the bike path was extended north to Manville. A mile-long segment from the old Lonsdale Drive-in to the Pratt Dam was opened in 2008. In the course of constructing wetlands to offset the filling of wetlands to construct the path, RIDOT’s contractors uncovered a toxic hot spot immediately south of the Nunes parcel. It cost the state \$4 million to remove 12,000 tons of contaminated soil and solid waste.

After years of effort, the state’s congressional delegation persuaded Congress to establish the *Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Park* in 2014. The Town of Cumberland has signed a general cooperative agreement with the National Park Service to collaborate on historic preservation initiatives and enhancement projects strengthening the public’s access to and appreciation of the historic and natural resources along the Blackstone River.

4. OU₂ LAND OWNERSHIP AND DESIGNING A NEW PARK

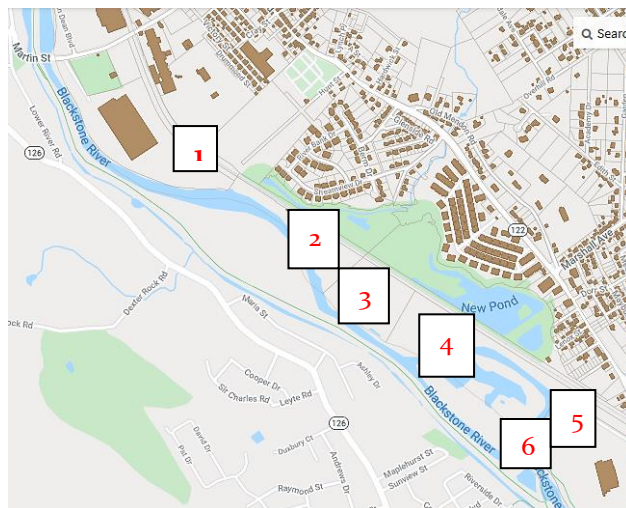
Landfills throughout America have been transformed into valuable parks and recreational facilities. Golf courses, sports fields, nature preserves, hiking trails, bike paths and playgrounds can be constructed on top of an impermeable landfill cover.

EPA’s 2015 Record of Decision states that future land options depend on whoever owns the OU₂ property: “reasonably anticipated future land uses within and adjacent to OU 2 is expected to include recreation and open space considerations”. However, “*future use decisions are under control of the owners of the properties within OU₂.*”

EPA's 2018 Reuse Assessment states that the Town will have to become a *viable owner and stewardship partner* to enable public access to any part of the site. Recreational stewardship support services will be needed for maintaining cleanliness, safety and security of site.

If the Town opts out of ownership, it is possible the SPD group could fence off the site and simply fulfill minimum EPA regulatory compliance standards.

The actual OU2 lot owners have paid no property taxes in years, which gives the Town the right to petition the Rhode Island Superior Court to exercise its "right of redemption" to take exclusive ownership. The Town would only proceed to take ownership as a condition of concluding of successful negotiations with the EPA and the SPD group.



No.	AP lot	Fmr owner. Site location	acres	Fmr owner	Present owner
1	34-249	JM Mills landfill	3.08	JM Mills	SeaconkeWampanog Tribe / Cumberland Tax Title. Last year taxes paid 2000, Town took tax title 2006
2	14-25	JM Mills landfill	10*	JM Mills	condemned by Town for water supply purposes July 13, 1964
3	14-23	JM Mills landfill	14*	JM Mills	SeaconkeWampanog Tribe / Cumberland Tax Title.
4	12-12	JM Mills landfill & Unnamed Island	28*	JM Mills	JM Mills et al Town / 44 Mendon Rd. Realty. Last year taxes paid 2006. Town took tax title 2009. Federal Lien put into place in 2008 against JM Mills.
5	12-18	Nunes parcel	5.68	Nunes	Casey Realty / Cumberland Tax Title. Last year taxes paid 2000, Town took tax title 2006
6	12-21	Nunes parcel	1.3	Nunes	Marszilkowski & JM Mills / Cumberland Tax Title. Town took tax title 1998

*part of the Unnamed Island is in Lincoln

As sole owner, the Town would have leverage with the SPD group to negotiate landscape and grading design, suitable plantings and buffers, river access points, bikeway connections and recreational development. The SPD would actually prefer the Town own the property because that would bring more certainty to the planning process.

The Superfund law's "BonaFide Prospective Purchaser" provision would protect the Town from legal liability related to the remediation and capping. The Town would need to receive a Covenant Not To Sue from EPA and RIDEM and third party liability protection. Additional indemnification instruments are also available. Otherwise, the Town's risk exposure would be the same of as that of any other Town park or facility.

As owner, the Town could apply for RIDEM recreational development grants and Brownfield grants. The Blackstone River Watershed Council/Friends of the Blackstone has expressed an interest in helping the Town develop and maintain a trail system on the site. The SPD group could create a fund to help pay for park maintenance. The Town would also have the right to capture and sell biogas, potentially creating another revenue stream. The SPD group would remain responsible for long-term monitoring and management of groundwater, surface water, sediment, and performance monitoring for cap effectiveness.

Cumberland's Comprehensive Plan supports creating new park land:

"Acquire, protect, and manage property, both institutional development and open space, for recreation, protecting the environment, and enhancing community character."

"There is a sustained demand for active recreation, especially mini-parks and playgrounds in densely-developed Valley Falls and Lonsdale/Berkeley."

Design Consultant. The Town should consider hiring a landscape architecture and engineering consultant experienced in designing decommissioned landfills. The firm would help the Town negotiate specifications, including the "sculpting" of land masses and capping and covering treatments that allow for strategic plantings of vegetation that mitigates the relatively stark appearance of the embankment and capped areas, installation of trails and public access points, and other recreational improvements.

Environmental counsel. Assuming the Town enters into negotiations, an outside counsel with an expertise in environmental law, and landfill closures in particular, should be engaged. The outside legal counsel would assist the Solicitor in negotiating desired design and improvements.

Stewardship Partners. Organizations such as the BRWC/FOB and the Cumberland Land Trust, already long-term stewardship partners of the Town, could assist in evaluating design details. Public meetings would be held to allow input from Cumberland residents and businesses.

5. REDEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS

Virtually the entire area will be cleared and grubbed. A single-layer geomembrane is the default capping material. A second cap will be required by EPA in certain areas. The SPD group is requesting an earthen cover for the sloped areas, which would allow a wider variety of plantings and landscape installations.

As much as 250,000 cubic yards of contaminated material are to be removed from the Unnamed Island. As much as 150,000 cubic yards are to be redistributed on the Nunes parcel and as much as 200,000 cubic yards on the J.M. Mills site.

An impermeable cap is to be installed over the top of the two repositories, covered by a layer of clean soil and vegetation. It will take two to three years for vegetation to significantly reestablish. Methane collection vent systems are to be installed.

Because trash and hazardous material were deposited all the way to the shoreline and beyond in some areas, much of the mile-long embankment will likely be capped and covered. Pulling the waste back from the river and depositing clean soil in some areas would allow for vegetated embankment buffers, including specie trees. Low lying areas will have to designed to withstand major flooding events

The SPD group confirms the “overarching objective” is to minimize detrimental impacts from the capping of the landfills and ensure that aesthetic considerations are incorporated into the design and are compatible with recreational uses of the site.

6. REUSE OBJECTIVES

a. *The Nunes parcel: conserve site topography; install park gateway, bike path connection, boat portage site, emergency vehicle access to Pratt Dam, and recreational amenities*

This parcel presents an excellent opportunity for recreational development in the densely populated and underserved Lonsdale and Valley Falls neighborhoods. With the entrance by the Stop and Shop Plaza and Mendon Road, the site would serve as the gateway to New Pond Park.

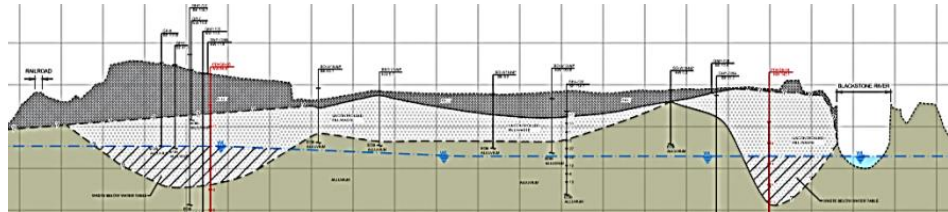
The Nunes parcel could include: a paved extension of the Blackstone River bikeway and emergency vehicle access, and paved walkway to the J.M Mills landfill (gray), a playground or other community/recreational space (purple), small ball field (green), and portage spot above Pratt Dam (yellow).



Based on public comments received at hearings on August 21 and October 8, 2014, the EPA's September 2015 Record of Decision (ROD) for OU2 aspires for the site to have publicly accessible passive and active recreation facilities. These could include, but not be limited to: boat launch area, hiking trails and paved walking path look north to J. M. Mills landfill and west to the Unnamed Island, the Pratt Dam, and Blackstone Greenway bike path, a small ball field, a playground, and a community raised bed garden.

Conserve topography.

The seven-acre site is approximately 880 by 280 feet and relatively flat. Every effort should be made to preserve the existing profile as much as practicable.



(top) open field on Nunes parcel, (bottom) existing interpreted subsurface profile

The remediation plan calls for between 100,000 and 347,000 cubic yards of contaminated material to be removed from the Unnamed Island and deposited on the Nunes parcel and J.M. Mills landfill. Currently, SPD group plans to deposit about 40 percent on the Nunes parcel and 60 percent on the J.M. Mills landfill. Just enough material could be deposited on the Nunes parcel to preserve a footprint for optimal recreational development.

The J.M. Mills landfill appears capable of receiving the balance of the material. As there are few publicly accessible visual vantage points into the site, a small proportional increase in the height of the existing hill should be acceptable.



Pratt Dam portage. The existing Pratt Dam portage locations above and below the dam would be improved, with a high anchor to secure lines during rescue operations, and emergency vehicle access. Other improvements would include: on-river signage warning at portage take-out location; a small dock or pier for fishing access and a canoe/kayak rack with local yearly rental options.

Bike path extension. A paved extension between the Blackstone River Bikeway and the entrance at the Stop and Shop Plaza would be installed.

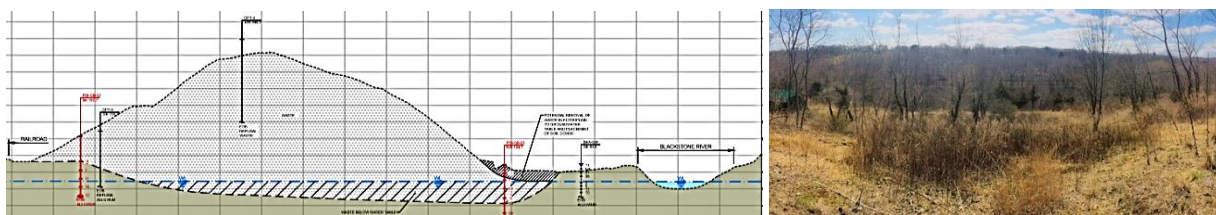
Preserve and showcase historic resources. EPA is committed to avoiding, minimizing, and/or mitigating direct and indirect impacts to historic properties and archeologically sensitive areas from remedial activities. The ROD pledges to protect the visible remains of

the 1903 Power Canal Gate foundations, traces of the former canal, the Hunt Dam (located immediately north of the Pratt Dam).

Allowed uses. Allowed public uses would balance public access and restore wildlife habitat. This would include walking, hiking, biking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and small boat use. Prohibited uses would include: ATVs, off-road motorcycles, dirt bikes and snow mobiles.

b. J.M Mills landfill: design an aesthetically sculpted hill and landscape

The 30-acre J.M. Mills landfill is 2,000 feet long and 560 feet wide with an elevation change above the surrounding terrain of approximately 60 to 70 feet and a maximum elevation of 85 feet above the Blackstone River riverbed.



(left) Interpreted subsurface profile of J.M. Mills landfill, looking south. The Blackstone River is to the right, and the water table level is noted by the dotted line. (right) view from the top of the hill

Under present plans, the adding of dredged material would re-contour the hill to a 3:1 slope. A cap is to be installed, topped with soil and vegetation.

The site designer should carefully consider other landfill reuse projects notable for their superior aesthetic and recreational design, including Millennium Park in Boston.

Success story: Millennium Park, Boston MA

This 100-acre park is the site of the former Gardner Street Landfill. Material excavated from the Big Dig was used to cover over the top. In 2000 it opened as a park and recreation center, trails, biking, scenic views, playground, toilet facilities, meadows, skiing, woods trail, ball fields, and picnic areas. It has 6 miles of handicapped-accessible walking trails, playing fields, and a canoe launch.



1969



2019



It is envisioned that this site would be open fields with a system of paved walking paths and hiking trails. The ROD states “To the extent practical, all areas covered by the protective cap will be planted primarily with native grasses, plants, and shallow rooted shrubs and bushes designed to attract wildlife including migratory birds.” Methane wells would be buffered with strategic plantings.

c. River embankment- design to vegetate and soften its appearance

The mile long OU2 embankment is to be cleared and re-graded. Cofferdams will be installed in the river at the extent of the contamination, the shoreline will be dewatered, and contaminated material excavated and removed.

Because most of the embankment will be radically transformed into essentially a field running down to the water’s edge, the Town should negotiate with EPA and the SPD group to include critical landscape design elements that soften and buffer what will otherwise be a starkly different appearance than what exists today. The ROD states “The adjacent floodplain will be planted with native trees, bushes, plants, and grasses designed to address local riparian buffer and wildlife concerns.”

EPA’s preference is to plant tall vegetation in flood plains or buffer between river edge and side slope. To prevent riverbank erosion, appropriate native grasses, wildflowers, shrubs, and trees should be planted.



River edge and flood plain areas could include existing stone walls near Pratt Dam (left), vegetated mats and on-site materials for a more naturalized edge (center), re-grading to see native grasses and flood tolerant plants (right).

Along or within site of the river, hardscape materials such as rip rap should be avoided or effectively screened. Walkways along the river should be included wherever possible.

Inspiration for a quality design can be derived by a number of successful projects, three of which are noted below.

Success story: River's Edge Recreation Center, Woonsocket RI

The City landfill (Brownfields site) was capped in 2006. There are plans now for a fenced dog park.



1972



2019



today

Success story: Scalloptown Park and Nature Preserve, East Greenwich

Once the Town landfill, this former brownfields site is at the end of Rocky Hollow Road and overlooks Greenwich Cove. The park offers a one-mile walking trail loop with benches and vistas of the cove.



1972



2019



today

Success story: Sachuest Point National Wildlife Refuge, Middletown, RI

Between 1958 and 1973, the Town of Middletown burned trash but after complaints about odor and smoke, they buried the waste. This activity ceased with the transfer of the 21-acre site to the US Fish and Wildlife Service (NFWS) in 1972. The site is now part of the 242-acre Sachuest Point National Wildlife Refuge.

NFWS initiated a remediation plan in 1995. The project used some clean dredge material from adjacent marinas and soil from adjacent areas of the refuge, creating a 15-acre saltmarsh and wildlife habitat.



2002



2006

d. *Unnamed Island- nature preserve, hiking trail, day camp*

The 25-acre Unnamed Island is located within the 100-year floodzone. Present plans call for waste deposits and contaminated soils to be excavated and removed off site. Wetland and floodplain habitats are to be restored.



Over time, the area is to be revegetated and returned to its natural state. A desired reuse would have nature trails and “day camp” amenities such as picnic tables.

e. *Future bike path north from J.M. Mills landfill to Martin Street*

There is a narrow lot about 50 feet wide and 1/2 mile long, connecting the J.M. Mills site with Martin Street.



At some point in the future a bike path with security fence along the Providence and Worcester rail line could be built.

7. A PATH FORWARD

After many years of investigation and public meetings, EPA's 2015 Record of Decision specifies remediating and capping standards to be applied to the Peterson/Puritan Operational Unit 2 Superfund site. Virtually the entire area will be cleared and grubbed. An impervious geomembrane cap is to be installed, with an earthen cover.

The ROD also calls for the site to be reused as a public park. It is possible for the Town to enjoy a new park, connected to the Blackstone River Bikeway and including hiking trails, paved walkways, a playground, a ball field, and enhanced river access. The park's topography could be creatively sculpted and the river's embankment softened with strategically-designed landscaping.

If the Town engages outside legal counsel and engineering consultants, and is able to conclude successful negotiations with EPA, RIDEM and the SPD group, including liability indemnification, then assuming ownership of the site would be worthwhile in order to create and develop a new 62-acre Town park on the Blackstone River.

References

- * *Record of Decision, Peterson/Puritan, Inc. Superfund Site* CERCLIS EPA ID# RID055176283 Operable Unit 2, Cumberland and Lincoln, Rhode Island (September, 2015)
- * *Reuse Assessment, Operable Unit 2 - Peterson/Puritan, Inc. Site, Lincoln and Cumberland RI* (EPA/SKEO Design, March 2018)
- * *Federal Register* Volume 82, Number 16 (January 26, 2017) Notice of Lodging of Proposed Consent Decree (OU2) United States v. ACS Industries, Inc. et al., Civil Action No. 1:16-cv-00665-S-LDA
- * *Revised Landfill Cover System Design Report: Peterson/Puritan, Inc. Superfund Site Operable Unit 2 Cumberland and Lincoln, Rhode Island* (Golder Associates Inc. Mt. Laurel NJ)
- * *Peterson/Puritan Superfund Site OU-2 Remediation Project, Creating an Environmentally Responsible Solution that Benefits the Community*
- * *Case Summary: Settlement Addresses Soil, Sediment and Groundwater Contamination at the Peterson/Puritan, Inc. Superfund Site in Rhode Island* <https://www.epa.gov/enforcement/case-summary-settlement-addresses-soil-sediment-and-groundwater-contamination>
- * *PETERSON/PURITAN, INC. LINCOLN/CUMBERLAND, RI Announcements and Key Topics* www.epa.gov/superfund/peterson
- * *Memorandum to EPA February 4, 2013* Friends of the Blackstone/GeoInsight, Inc.
- * *Ashton-Pratt Corridor Redevelopment Plan*. Crossman Engineering, 2004
- * *The Revitalization Handbook- Revitalizing Contaminated Lands: Addressing Liability Concerns*, EPA Office of Site Remediation Enforcement/Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance (June 2014)
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- * *Natural Run and Artificial Falls: Waterpower and the Blackstone Canal*, Richard Greenwood, Rhode Island History. Vol 49 no 2, May 1991
- * Rhode Island State Digital Archives, Office of Secretary of State
- * US Geological Survey/ESRI maps



Lonsdale, ca. 1954, during a flooding event (likely Hurricane Carol).
The northern area, to the right of the Lonsdale Sports Arena, is now the OU2 Nunes parcel.