

Groundwork Lawrence's 18th Annual Spicket River Cleanup a Success

More than 530 Volunteers Clean the River and connecting greenways

(Courtesy photos)

By Ian Burns, Public Affairs Coordinator

One year ago, Groundwork Lawrence cancelled its annual Spicket River Cleanup for the first time in its 18 year history due to the gas explosions that rocked the region just two days prior. This year, the cleanup was back and stronger than ever. Over 530 volunteers gathered early Saturday morning at Manchester Street Park to kick off the annual event, hosted by Groundwork Lawrence in partnership with the cities of Lawrence and Methuen.

During the cleanup, volunteers removed items that were contaminating the Spicket River, cleaned its riverbanks, and cleaned the greenway that runs alongside. Last year, when the explosions occurred, Groundwork diverted all of its resources from the cleanup to help with the emergency relief effort — a pivot made without a second thought. While there was some evidence of the skipped cleanup, the enthusiasm of this year's volunteers was proof that it had no lasting impact.

"This year's Spicket River Cleanup is another milestone in the rebuilding process after the gas explosions last year" says Heather McMann, Executive Director of Groundwork Lawrence.

"Groundwork is proud to have played a role in the recovery efforts, and proud to see the community coming together for the cleanup this year, stronger than ever. This is more than a community service day — the cleanup is emblematic of Lawrence's resilience."

As is tradition with this event, youth and school groups played a major role. Teams from Lawrence High School NHS, Lawrence High School Jr. ROTC, Greater Lawrence Technical High School, Notre Dame Cristo Rey High School, Weatherbee School, and Community Day Charter Public Schools all took part.

"We are thrilled to see so many students and young people come out for the cleanup," says Eddie Rosa, Community Engagement Director at Groundwork Lawrence, who was in charge of planning the event. "The kids here are proud of their community, and it truly shows on days like today. Everyone is pitching in to keep Lawrence clean, green, and beautiful."

The cleanup also included a team of volunteers wading in the river to clear large debris, including bikes, mattress pads, and small appliances. Cleaning at



Groundwork Lawrence's 18th Spicket River Clean Up - Kick Off - Sept 20 2019. GWL Community Engagement Director Eddie Rosa, Groundwork Lawrence Executive Director Heather McMann and a sea of ready-to-rock volunteers.

this year's event focused on three major areas along the greenway — Immigrant Place Park, the riverbanks near Vine Street, and Manchester Street Park. Additionally, Groundwork partnered with the City of Methuen to include cleaning sections of the recently completed Methuen Rail Trail which borders the Spicket River. By the end of the day, volunteers filled over 1,000 bags

of trash.

The cleanup culminated in a return to Manchester Street Park where volunteers enjoyed a celebratory cookout. SRC participants enjoyed hot dogs, hamburgers, music and dancing, celebrating a job well done and the inspirational power of the Lawrence community.



Groundwork Lawrence's 18th annual Spicket River Clean Up - making a difference. Student volunteers from Greater Lawrence Technical School Make a difference - and the after picture



Groundwork Lawrence's 18th annual Spicket River Clean Up - making a difference. Student volunteers from Greater Lawrence Technical School Make a difference - the before picture

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