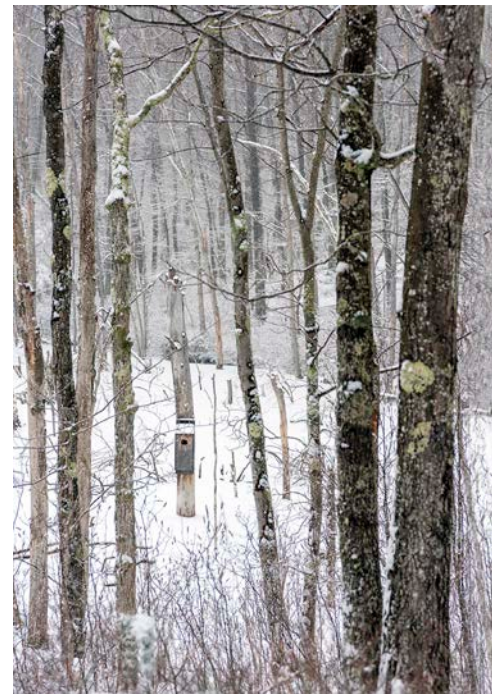


# PROTECTING LAND, CONNECTING PEOPLE



PAUL CARY GOLDBERG

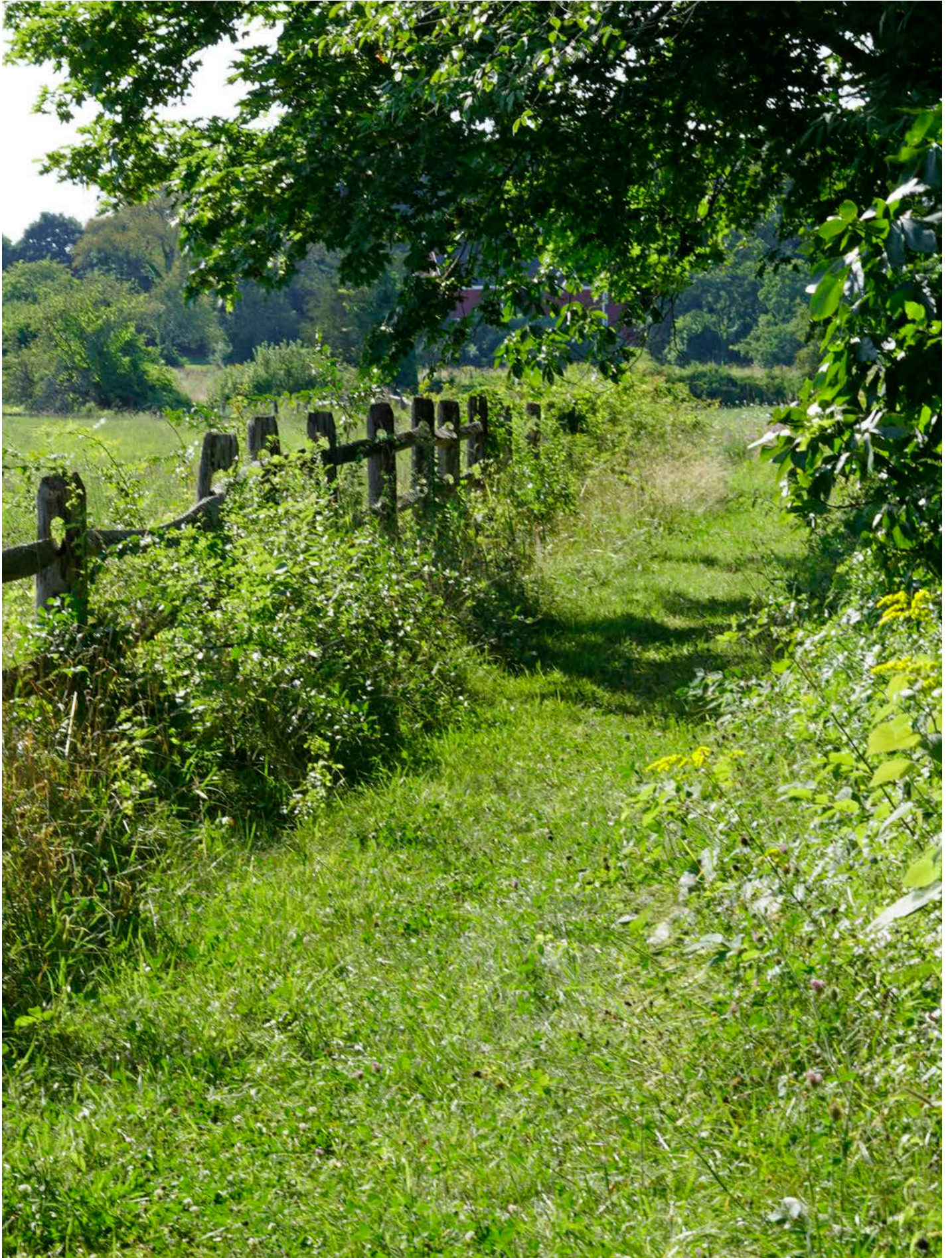


STEVE SAXE



DAVID ALDEN-ST.PIERRE









## As Essex County's land trust, Greenbelt protects land for nature and for people.

**To achieve our mission, our work must evolve to focus on areas of critical need and high impact.**

We have protected over 1,200 properties totaling more than 18,400 acres since our founding 60 years ago thanks to our members, volunteers, supporters, land donors, and partners who have helped us achieve this remarkable conservation success. As we celebrate these milestones, we embrace the challenges that face us today: the accelerating pace of sprawling development, the intensifying impacts of climate change, and the prevalence of inequitable access to nature.

With this five-year strategic plan, Greenbelt strengthens our commitment to protecting the natural landscapes and working farms of Essex County. Our work preserves and enhances the resilience of our ecosystems and our communities in the face of a changing climate. We are protecting farmland and ensuring its affordability. We recognize that expanding conservation in the Merrimack Valley is particularly important, since there are numerous large, unprotected tracts of land there.

At the same time, we will continue to expand our partnerships and build community across the county to support more just and equitable conservation and access to open space. We aim to offer a wide-open welcome to everyone to enjoy the benefits of protected land, to engage with a diverse group of visitors, and to continue to keep access to our properties free.

Stewardship of our land remains a pillar of Greenbelt's mission. As we conserve more land, and as the impacts of a changing climate are more pronounced, excellent stewardship becomes more complex, and more important. While maintaining our high standards of care of our properties, Greenbelt will also work to meet the evolving needs of our properties and ecosystems.

The depth and breadth of Greenbelt's goals require that we diversify and strengthen our financial support for this work and think hard about how our organization can be more inclusive and effective.



This five-year plan charts the course for increasing Greenbelt's reach and impact. The plan is intended to be adaptive; we will evaluate our work over time and modify our strategies if needed. Together, we will embrace the opportunities and challenges head on with optimism, strength, and shared purpose. We look forward to what the future brings, and to working in partnership with you.

Sincerely,

**Kate Bowditch**  
*President*

**Alison Falk**  
*Board Chair*

Protecting land and nature for you, our communities and the future





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## MISSION

**Greenbelt protects natural land and working farms across Essex County forever, helping to conserve healthy ecosystems, clean water, local food supplies, scenic landscapes and free, accessible places for all to benefit from nature.**

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## VISION

Abundant protected natural land and working farms of Essex County sustain healthy ecosystems, enrich the quality of life for all, and inspire current and future generations.

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## VALUES

Our core values are the principles which guide and inspire us daily. They drive our accountability to each other and to the individuals, families, organizations and 34 communities with whom we work.

**Greenbelt values:**

- **Conservation**, in perpetuity, of the distinctive landscapes and the irreplaceable natural resources of Essex County
- **Integrity** and **excellence**, deserving of public trust, expressed in our commitment to the highest standards of honesty, transparency, and professionalism
- **Respect** for the varied local conservation interests and visions of the diverse communities that we serve
- **Equitable access** to nature to benefit human health and wellbeing
- **Inclusion** of people from all backgrounds, acknowledging historic and present inequities
- **Conservation leadership** through partnership and innovation, dedicated to gaining and sharing knowledge and experience
- A **collaborative culture** of optimism and creativity that is confident, kind, and resourceful



"We're protecting important land in Essex County for climate resilience, local agriculture, habitat and recreation."

GREENBELT HAS IDENTIFIED: **50,500+**  
**UNPROTECTED ACRES**  
vital for public water supplies

**6,800+**  
**UNPROTECTED ACRES**  
providing essential urban cooling  
to densely populated areas

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Greenbelt protects and manages  
over 65 miles of trails

"Greenbelt is conserving farmland and ensuring it remains affordable to the next generation of farmers."

IN ESSEX COUNTY: **11,500**  
**ACRES OF UNPROTECTED FARMLAND**

**5,000**  
**FARMLAND ACRES LOST**  
in Essex County since 2017, the most  
of any county in Massachusetts<sup>1</sup>

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Greenbelt has identified 25 farms  
of "critical priority" for long-term  
agricultural protection

<sup>1</sup> UMass Center for Agriculture, Food  
and the Environment





JERRY MONKMAN/ECOPHOTOGRAPHY.COM

## Protect and care for the critical land of Essex County forever

**Accelerate the protection of priority land across Essex County, with a focus on land critical for farming, water supply protection, climate resilience, ecological integrity, habitat, scenic beauty, connected corridors, and other land of value to local communities**

Act quickly and boldly to protect threatened priority land with an increased focus on:

- Land of significance to local communities, including those communities with less access to open space
- The Merrimack Valley
- Farmland and farm affordability
- Vital resources of regional importance to climate resiliency, including the Great Marsh
- Land critical for protecting drinking water

**Care for the land we protect for ecological health, wildlife habitat, and people's enjoyment while ensuring that properties are free, welcoming, well maintained, and available to all**

- Manage and steward properties with goals based on their potential users and uses, natural resources, and other characteristics, and with consideration for the impacts of the changing climate and threats to biodiversity
- Reduce Greenbelt's carbon footprint at headquarters, at our meetings and events, and in land management



"Everyone deserves to enjoy the benefits of protected land."

Access to open space

**IMPROVES PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH**

Neighborhoods within a 10-minute walk of open space

**CAN BE UP TO 6° COOLER**

than neighborhoods farther away<sup>1</sup>

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Greenbelt is on track to complete our third accessible trail in the past three years

"Greenbelt is committed to meeting our conservation mission in ways that take into consideration historic and present inequities."

ESSEX COUNTY PROTECTED LAND:

**3% METHUEN**

**6% LAWRENCE**

**49% IPSWICH AND NEWBURY<sup>2</sup>**

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**26%**

**OF PEOPLE SPEAK A LANGUAGE  
OTHER THAN ENGLISH AT HOME<sup>2</sup>**

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Greenbelt recently completed nine conservation projects in Haverhill, Peabody and Lawrence

<sup>1</sup> Trust for Public Land's *The Heat is On* Special Report, 2021

<sup>2</sup> Essex County Community Foundation's *Impact Essex County*, 2019





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## Welcome all people to enjoy and benefit from Greenbelt's conserved land

### **Welcome all to our properties for recreation, health, and enjoyment**

- Develop programming in support of our core mission that celebrates land and its beauty, promotes science-based ecological education, and builds a sense of community
- Welcome and provide guidance for a variety of visitors to our properties (e.g., translation services, innovative technology, interpretive signage, and all access trails)
- Support increased access to and use of Greenbelt's open space

### **Commit to accountability and action around diversity, equity and inclusion to enrich our organization and our work**

- Implement a robust 3-year plan for increased diversity, equity and inclusion across the organization and actively work to address environmental justice
- Increase our engagement with communities of color and those historically less served by Greenbelt
- Work to better understand community needs and roles for Greenbelt

### **Demonstrate expertise and leadership in land conservation throughout Essex County**

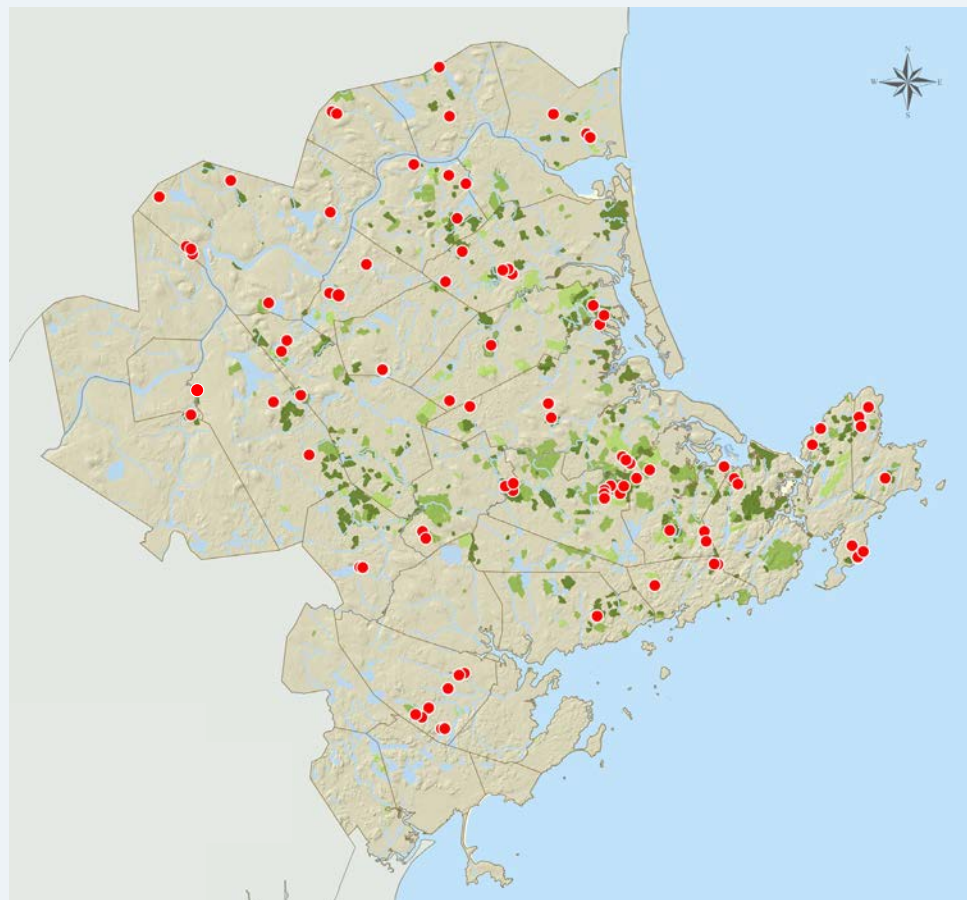
- Use Greenbelt's expertise, technical capacity and innovative tools to support land conservation and its advocates across the county
- Model land stewardship on Greenbelt-protected land and share knowledge with other public and private landowners
- Position our work as central to the vibrant economies of our communities
- Share our successful farmland conservation and farm affordability experience with other land trusts to promote growth of farmland conservation across the region and beyond

"Greenbelt is working in more communities than ever before."

**30  
COMMUNITIES**  
in which Greenbelt supports  
open space protection and municipal  
vulnerability preparedness planning

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Greenbelt stewards 10,900+ acres  
of land



●  
**84 CONSERVATION PROJECTS**  
completed within our 2017-2021  
strategic plan period

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■ ■ ■ ■ ■  
**18,400+**  
**ACRES OF LAND CONSERVED**  
since our founding 60 years ago





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## Grow Greenbelt's capacity and reach in areas of strategic importance and impact

### **Ensure Greenbelt is prepared to embrace opportunities and meet the challenges ahead**

- Support top-notch staff whose expertise drives Greenbelt's success
- Regularly evaluate staff capacity, new opportunities and related financial resources
- Pursue new partnerships with municipalities, community groups, land trusts and other conservation and environmental organizations to increase conservation capacity and programming across Essex County
- Assess the impact of our conservation, stewardship and engagement work; be open to change and adapt as needed

### **Increase and deploy the needed financial resources to expand impact across the organization**

- Use financial resources to respond to near-term, urgent, and important conservation opportunities
- Seek new and diverse sources of financial support and grow our donor base, including members and friends from across Essex County and beyond
- Ensure long-term financial sustainability for stewardship given the increasing number of properties and our commitment to keeping our properties free
- Undertake 5- to 10-year financial planning for future conservation, stewardship, and organizational sustainability



**STRATEGIC PLAN  
2022-2027**

Charting the course for increasing Greenbelt's reach and impact



Protecting land and nature for you,  
our communities and the future

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