

LAND TRUST LIFE



DAVID ALDEN-ST.PIERRE

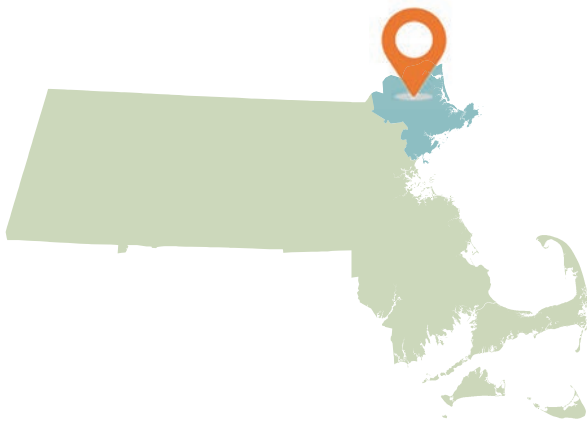


DOUG BURGESS



DAVID ALDEN-ST.PIERRE

LOCAL IMPACT



“When we moved to Ipswich in 2004, our home came with the conservation restriction that Greenbelt holds. Shortly after, I joined Greenbelt’s Land Protection Committee and a year later, the Board. While I feel it is important to support national environmental organizations, donating to a smaller, more local organization such as Greenbelt can make a bigger impact!

Betsy Shields
Chair, Board of Directors

PHOTO: ADRIAN SCHOLES

This issue of Greenbelt’s Land Trust Life brims with voices: partners, volunteers, supporters, farmers, staff, and Board members. When we asked people to tell us why conserving local land is important to them, they responded with enthusiasm!

Greenbelt’s work to protect and care for land, and to help people get outside to enjoy it, happens at a scale that feels just right. Our conservation work across Essex County has a meaningful regional impact. At the same time, we get to work with individuals and communities in a personal way, on local land that people care deeply about, because they know it and love it.

We’re proud to be your local land trust, helping to protect and connect you to places you love. Thanks for being part of this—we couldn’t do it without your support!

Kate Bowditch
President

CONSERVING LAND PROTECTING WATER

2023 Annual Fund

Healthy land means healthy water. Your gift to Greenbelt conserves land that protects local water resources, helping to keep Essex County resilient, healthy, and beautiful.

ecga.org/annualfund



Receive Greenbelt Note Cards!
with your Annual Fund gift of \$150 or more
Set of four cards with envelopes

“Greenbelt plays an important role in protecting some of the local scenes I love to paint. Nothing pleases me more than painting in a beautiful marsh, farmstead or seascape, unless it’s knowing that it will still be there tomorrow, thanks to Greenbelt.”

Ann Jones
*Art in the Barn Artist,
 Office Volunteer*



LOCAL VOICES

“I have a profound admiration for the natural beauty, farmland, and landscapes that grace the region, and much of this is attributable to Greenbelt’s visionary commitment to safeguarding these natural assets for the benefit of both current and future generations. As advocates of increasing BIPOC representation in natural spaces, Outside Mind is enthusiastic about working with Greenbelt towards enhancing access to properties and ensuring the authentic inclusion of BIPOC communities.”

Jireh Ishaazi
*Founder, Outside Mind
 Greenbelt Committee Member*



THOMAS TOWNSEND

Jane Rumrill, Greenbelt Events & Outreach Manager (far left) and Jireh Ishaazi, Outside Mind Founder (second from right) co-led a hike at Vineyard Hill



“As a volunteer photographer for Greenbelt, I often tour properties in the early stages of Greenbelt’s conservation effort. It makes me appreciate just how much is at stake in protecting them from development. Supporting this work is very fulfilling.”

Neil Ungerleider
*Volunteer Photographer,
 Writer, Website Support*

“Greenbelt affords me the opportunity to make a difference in this ever-changing world. We are all stewards of the land, and our responsibility goes beyond our own backyards. When I meet people on the trails, our conversations often inspire them to get more involved and make a difference as well. That’s by far my greatest satisfaction.”

Beth Cooper
*Volunteer
 for 20+ years,
 Legacy Donor,
 Art in the Barn
 Floral Designer*



LOCAL FARMS



“If we want food to be more affordable, but still high quality and nourishing, there should be a way to help farmers—land conservation is an important part of that.”

Alex Cecchinelli
Iron Ox Farm

IRON OX FARM



Newhall Fields Community Farm
at Tillie’s Farm | PEABODY

ADRIAN SCHOLDES

“Local farming is important to Greenbelt because it ties so directly to our mission of protecting important land for natural resources, scenic beauty, open access, and community wellness. We want to do work that supports the economy, provides healthy food, and protects this land for generations to come.”

Alison Falk
Vice Chair, Board of Directors

The thriving, local farms that we love here in Essex County are being lost at one of the highest rates in the nation. Greenbelt has helped conserve more than 50 farm properties in Essex County, protecting over 1,000 acres of working farmland.

The goal of Greenbelt’s farmland conservation program is to help sustain our remaining local farms in the face of real obstacles such as the prohibitive cost of land and enormous development pressures, as well as aging farmers who have no succession plans.

Iron Ox Farm in Hamilton/Topsfield is an example of Greenbelt’s farmland conservation program in action. In 2019, Greenbelt purchased the land on which Iron Ox now farms through a 99-year ground lease. “As farmers, we can’t afford to buy land around here. It’s exorbitantly expensive,” says Stacey Apple of Iron Ox Farm.

Not only do local farms supply an abundance of fresh food, but they also provide an important sense of community through farm stands and local restaurants that point with pride to menu items sourced from nearby farms.

“The importance of a farm and a farm stand is to bring people to the farm, to show them where the food comes from, and to meet the people who grow it,” says Apple.

According to Molly Friedman, owner of Sandpiper Bakery in Ipswich, “We are close to all of the farms in the area. We feel lucky to be able to use the great produce from Iron Ox Farm.”

In addition to farms that are actively operating on Greenbelt-owned land, Greenbelt also protects farmland through Conservation Restrictions (CRs) and Agricultural Preservation Restrictions (APRs). A few of our local conserved farms include:

Corliss Hill Road Farmland
HAVERHILL

Newhall Fields Community Farm
PEABODY

Russell Orchards
IPSWICH

FIND A FARM/SUPPORT LOCAL
ecga.org/farmland

Alex Cecchinelli
Iron Ox Farm



LOCAL WATER



Bull Brook Watershed
IPSWICH

Healthy water and healthy land go hand in hand. Protecting land to safeguard local water resources is a critical part of Greenbelt’s mission.

Water supplies are threatened in Essex County, none more so than in the Ipswich River watershed which has suffered record-low levels in recent decades. Despite those water flow challenges, Wayne Castonguay, Executive Director of Ipswich River Watershed Association, explains, “Local land conservation is the number one way to protect the river. Almost 50% of the watershed is conservation land, making the Ipswich River one of the cleanest in all of Massachusetts. Greenbelt was involved in almost all of those essential conservation efforts,” including Kamon Farm in Ipswich.

“Greenbelt and the Ipswich River are synonymous, and without Greenbelt we wouldn’t have the Ipswich River today.”

Wayne Castonguay
*Executive Director,
Ipswich River Watershed*



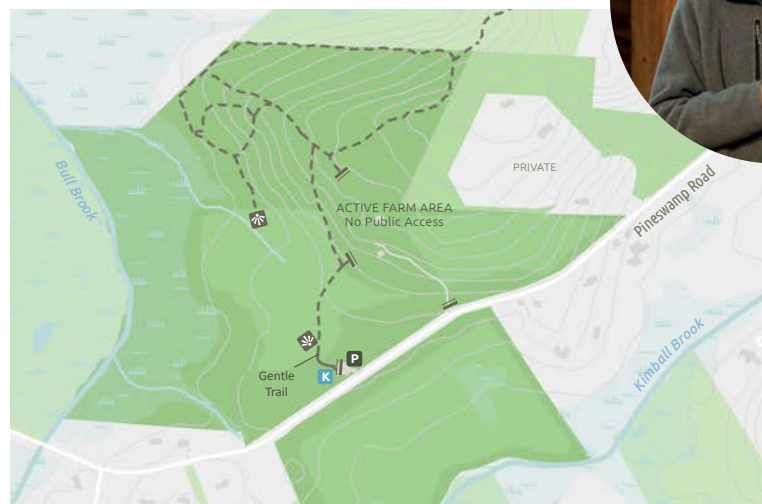
Developed land generates contaminants such as sewage, lawn care chemicals, and wastewater. Left in its natural state, conserved land replenishes groundwater and surface water reserves, and acts as a natural contaminant filter. “It’s nature’s way of cleaning the water before being used for public water supply,” says Castonguay.

Some of Greenbelt’s recent conservation projects that help safeguard local drinking water include:

Artichoke River Woods
WEST NEWBURY

Crystal Lake Watershed
HAVERHILL

Kamon Farm
IPSWICH



Kamon Farm
Ipswich

The preservation of Kamon Farm protects the headwaters of Ipswich’s drinking water supply

PATH TO PROTECTION

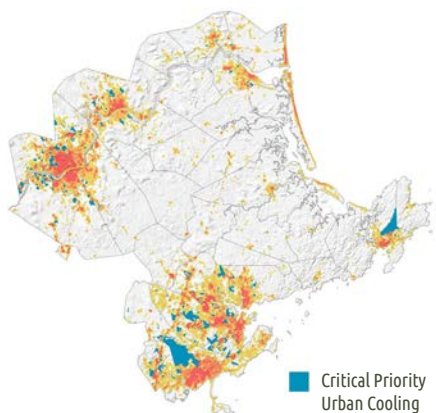


*Greenbelt’s Kamon Farm
Conservation Chronicle*

LOCAL CLIMATE RESILIENCE

How does protecting land help mitigate the impacts of climate change?

- > Marshland absorbs storm surge and floodwater
- > Intact forests have a cooling effect
- > Drinking water is naturally filtered
- > Natural habitats support biodiversity



Local land conservation is key to local climate resilience. Research by Dr. Stephen Young of Salem State University shows that New England is warming faster than the global average, with 27 fewer winter days of snow cover in Massachusetts than two decades ago.

And after the extreme drought we saw in 2022, we have just experienced the second wettest summer on record in our region. “The swing between extreme precipitation and drought is part of our new climate,” says Dr. Young. These extremes are explained by the physics of a warming planet.

As part of Greenbelt’s land conservation climate strategy, we incorporate the latest climate data to identify and prioritize land parcels for conservation throughout Essex County. We analyze the ability for land to absorb floodwater, protect drinking water, cool urban areas, and support biodiversity in a warming climate, as well as protect habitat and agriculture. Most recently, important data on coastal flood risk, marsh migration, and environmental justice has been integrated into the prioritization program.

DR. STEPHEN YOUNG



“We have to change our mindset. We don’t live in a stable climate anymore. Land conservation helps us deal with what the future looks like.”

Dr. Stephen Young
Professor, Salem State University



“Greenbelt can now target land conservation projects best suited to be a line of defense against the impacts of climate change in our region.”

Chris LaPointe
*Greenbelt Vice President,
Conservation Operations*

MORE ON OUR STRATEGY
ecga.org/climate-prioritization

Along our coastline, a climate-driven rising ocean threatens the Great Marsh: 20,000 acres from Cape Ann to southern New Hampshire that hosts some of the richest habitats in the region. “The Great Marsh is ground zero for sea level rise,” says Young. “Sea level is rising faster than the buildup of silt in the marsh.”

Marshlands absorb flooding storm waters and dangerous surges. Conserving land adjacent to the marsh is additionally important to allow room for the marsh to move, and its natural ecosystems to migrate as sea level rises. Protection of areas such as the Salisbury Marshlands, conserved by Greenbelt in 2022, help mitigate the effects of a changing climate.

Conserving land with intact forest is another example of prioritizing potential for climate resilience. “Where you have vegetation, you have a cooler environment,” says Young. “As an example, Lynn Woods is so important to protect because it

has such a cooling effect on the City of Lynn.” At 2,200 acres, Lynn Woods is the number one urban cooling property in the county—and one that Greenbelt is currently working to protect.

With evidence of climate change all around us, prioritizing land conservation with a focus on climate resilience for all communities in Essex County is essential; several recent examples include:

- Camp Creighton** | MIDDLETON
- Corliss Hill** | HAVERHILL
- Crystal Lake Watershed** | HAVERHILL
- Elmlea Woods** | BOXFORD
- G W Hoyt Family Trust** | MERRIMAC
- Lynnfield Woodlot** | LYNNFIELD
- Salisbury Marshlands** | SALISBURY

LOCAL HABITAT

“We look at habitat in virtually every Greenbelt acquisition.”

Tim Simmons
*Greenbelt Land Protection
Committee Member,
Retired State Ecologist*



SUZANNE D WILLIAMS/UNSPLASH

Habitat conservation seeks to protect and restore local habitats, and prevent species extinction.

Protecting land helps safeguard habitats for the 259 plant and 173 animal species protected under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act.

According to Tim Simmons, retired state ecologist in the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, “There is really no downside to land conservation. Even if you don’t know with certainty what purpose it will serve in the future, conserved land sometimes becomes more important to habitat than you knew it would be.”

Greenbelt’s Tompson Street Reservation in Gloucester is cited by Simmons as a “great example of resiliency and biodiversity conservation.” As an area that experiences fires, drought, beaver activity, and insect defoliation, Tompson Street’s wetlands, rocky summits, and forests of oak, pitch pine, hemlock, and beech support a wide diversity of local flora and fauna that include threatened and endangered species.

Other habitats that Greenbelt conserves protect important ecosystems. Hayfields at Castle Neck River in Ipswich and Cox Reservation in Essex are home to nesting grassland birds. John J. Donovan Reservation/Sagamore Hill in Hamilton hosts native plant species critical to the survival of essential pollinators. The wetlands and vernal pools at Bald Hill in Boxford and Jennie Lagoulis in Newbury ensure the protection of fragile ecosystems that are home to species of special concern.

Simmons is also a member of Greenbelt’s Land Protection Committee which prioritizes conservation projects based on a variety of factors. “When I look at what Greenbelt is doing—adding to existing conservation land and taking on new conservation projects—it’s critical. It’s an investment in the future,” explains Simmons.



**Tompson Street Reservation
GLOUCESTER**

NEIL UNGERLEIDER



DOUG BURGESS



DAVID ALDEN-ST.PIERRE

LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

“Exploring current topics in conservation, then finding the right guide, speaker or leader to share their expertise with the public, is such a rewarding part of my job. Greenbelt depends on people with local knowledge and a passion for nature to lead many of our programs.”

Jane Rumrill
*Greenbelt
Events & Outreach
Manager*



Mushroom Identification Warren Weld Reservation ESSEX

Mycologist Maria Pinto shared her expertise in finding and identifying mushrooms during a Greenbelt monthly walk.



INTRIGUED? JOIN US
ecga.org/events

Greenbelt's FREE events are offered throughout Essex County, registration required

Climate Science: Salt Marsh Restoration Castle Neck River Reservation IPSWICH

Geoff Wilson, Wetland Restoration Specialist, explained the science behind the collaborative salt marsh restoration project with Greenbelt, the Trustees of Reservations, and the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game, funded in part by a Coastal Resilience Grant from the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management.



Systems and Ecosystems: Reconnecting to Culture and History

**Greenbelt's 2023 Film & Lecture Series
HC Media Studios
HAVERHILL**

Claudia Fox Tree, Educator and Social Justice Activist, explained decolonizing what we have learned about Native American achievements—especially when it comes to the environment.

Keep an eye out for Greenbelt's 2024 Film & Lecture Series: Wildlife Wonders, kicking off in January.

LOCAL WITH THE ONES YOU LOVE

From introducing the wonder of nature to the tiniest of explorers, to a stroll with senior loved ones, people of all ages can explore and enjoy nearby natural lands.

Greenbelt’s Family Nature Series offers the opportunity for families to explore conservation land and learn about ecology throughout Essex County—and in their own backyards! Environmental Educator and founder of North Shore Nature Programs Andrew Prazar leads many of Greenbelt’s Family Nature Series events.

Prazar explains how fostering a love and appreciation of the natural world from an early age helps connect things children observe on a daily basis to larger issues in our communities, and even globally.

“When a child is learning about water resources, they can make the connection to the salamanders they love in their own backyard, and how if we and our neighbors are watering our lawns, how we affect the watershed and habitat of animals like that salamander.”

When families learn about local pollinators, for example, they learn that simply planting their favorite native flowers can make a difference to our local ecology.

Prazar adds, “Many climate problems are so large and systemic, but there are certain local issues where people of all ages can have significant impact now and in the future.”

LEARN & EXPLORE WITH US!
ecga.org/familyseries



FAMILY NATURE SERIES

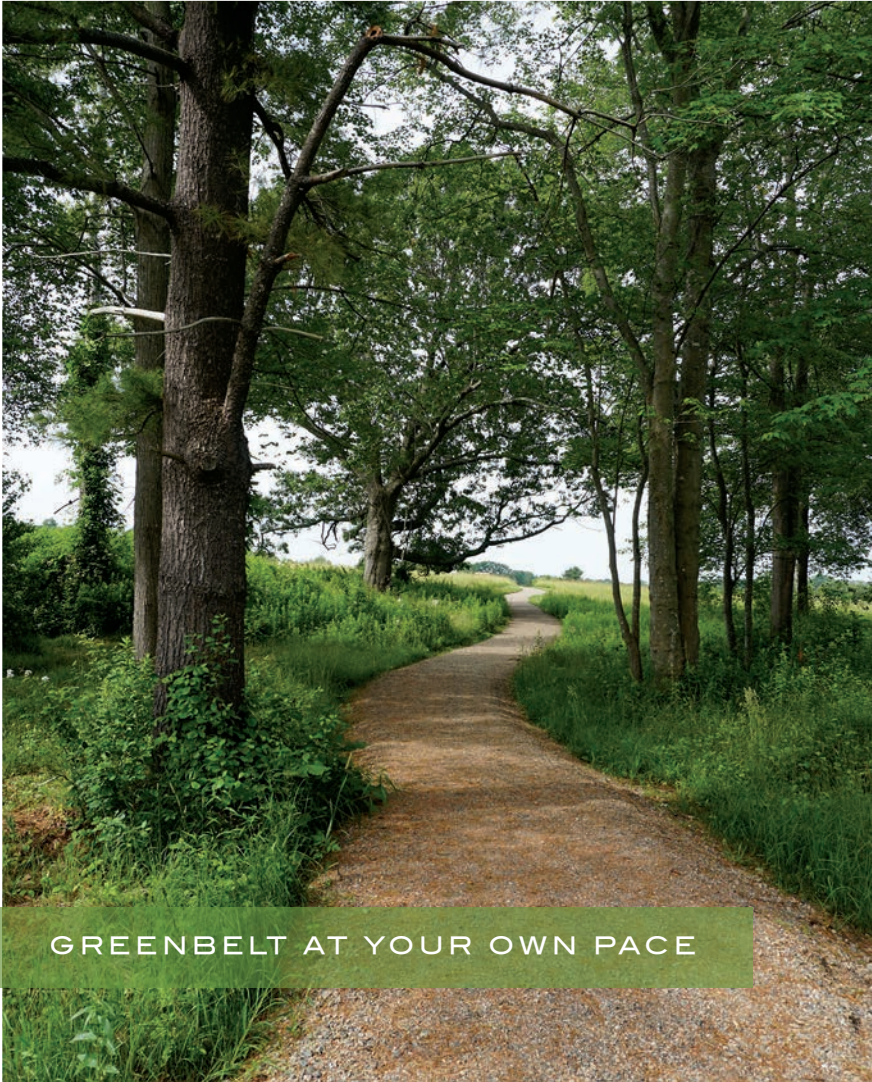


Seeds, Nuts & Berries
Birds, Bees & Butterflies
 Cox Reservation | ESSEX
Pond Habitats
 Bailey Reservation
 HAVERHILL

“Having conserved spaces that are free for the public to access is invaluable, and makes Greenbelt stand out as a conservation organization. Through Greenbelt’s free educational programs, people become even more interested in protecting the living spaces around them.”

Andrew Prazar
 Founder, North Shore Nature Programs





GREENBELT AT YOUR OWN PACE

“From the creation of graded trails, to the placement of benches near scenic places to rest, Greenbelt is committed to welcoming visitors of various ages and abilities.”

Dave McKinnon
Land Manager & Trails Coordinator

Select Greenbelt properties offer short, gently-graded trails and peaceful viewing platforms to get outside and experience nature, across the county and across all ages.

Looking for a gentle excursion? Consider these local spots the next time you head out:

- Allyn Cox Reservation** | ESSEX
- Arthur Ewell Reservation** | ROWLEY
- Castle Neck River Reservation** | IPSWICH
- Kamon Farm** | IPSWICH
- Newman Farm Meadow** | NEWBURY
- Rough Meadows Wildlife Sanctuary** | ROWLEY
- Sally Weatherall Viewing Platform** | IPSWICH
- Seine Field** | GLOUCESTER

AT YOUR OWN PACE
ecga.org/gentletrails



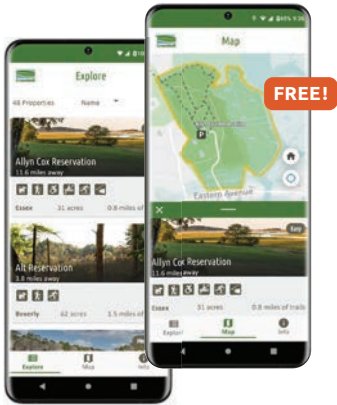
DAVID ALDEN-ST.PIERRE



NEIL UNGERLEIDER



LOCAL TRAILS: RECREATION CLOSE TO HOME



Did you know that there's a Greenbelt property in nearly every town in Essex County?

Whether you're a trail runner, bird-watcher, kayaker, mountain biker, or simply like to stroll through nature enjoying the health benefits of outdoor recreation, there are more than 50 Greenbelt properties that are free to explore ... and they may be closer than you think!



Our free GreenbeltGo Trails App makes it easier than ever to enjoy the trails and natural spaces in your community.

SEARCH BY **Property Name**
Distance

FILTER BY **Town**
Activity
Difficulty

FREE TRAILS APP
ecga.org/GreenbeltGo



Clockwise:
Cox Reservation | ESSEX
Elmlea Woods | BOXFORD
Donibristle | TOPSFIELD
Cox Reservation | ESSEX



NEIL UNGERLEIDER



JERRY MONKMAN/ECOPHOTOGRAPHY.COM



TRAILS CHALLENGE!

We're enjoying the enthusiastic participation in our Greenbelt-Go-Getter Trails Challenge, a fun way for everyone to explore Greenbelt trails—all right here in Essex County!

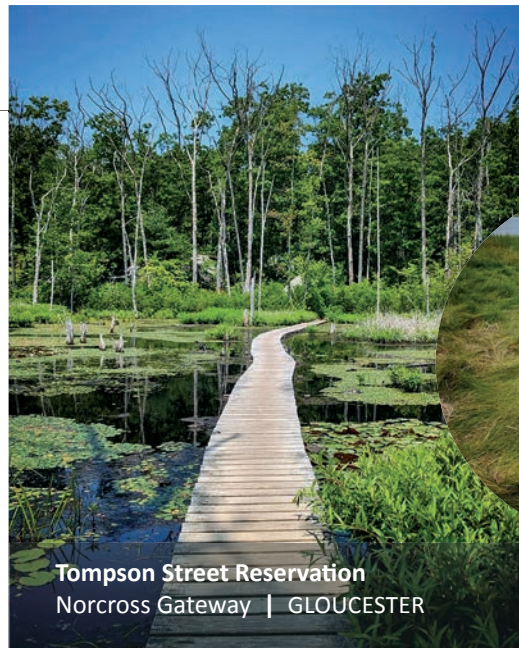
Visit as many Greenbelt trails as you can between now and May 1, 2024. Hike, bike, run, or meander—our trails and the Challenge are FREE and open to all.

You're a "GreenbeltGo-Getter" whether you visit 10, 25 or all 50 listed properties, so join the challenge and Get Outside with Greenbelt!

"I've been loving the trails challenge – it's such a blast to have a reason to get out and explore properties that I've never visited before."

Some of them have been in places I've driven past countless times, never even realizing there was an absolute treasure of a natural resource literally right there just waiting to be discovered!"

Marc Frigon
Challenge participant



Tompson Street Reservation
Norcross Gateway | GLOUCESTER



MARC FRIGON (3)

Thanks for the terrific photos, and experience write-ups, Marc! #thatfrighiker

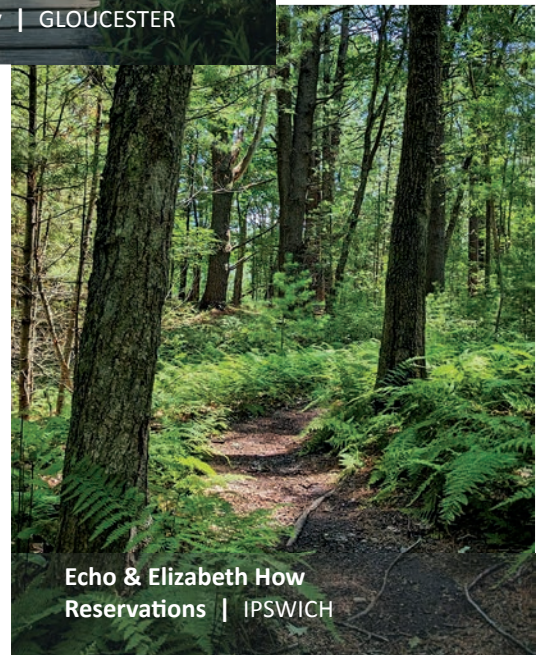


Castle Neck River Reservation
IPSWICH

SIGN UP TODAY!
ecga.org/trailschallenge



STAY CONNECTED
#GreenbeltGoGetter
#trailschallenge
#ecgreenbelt



Echo & Elizabeth How Reservations | IPSWICH

LOCAL SUPPORT : LOCAL IMPACT

While there are statewide, national and global conservation groups deserving of your support, a gift to Greenbelt, Essex County's local land trust, is a gift to your own community. The difference you make supporting Greenbelt is evident right here at home—hiking a trail just minutes from home, shopping at a nearby farm stand, hearing Osprey above the marsh, or taking in your favorite view. Your impact is here, and it will still be here for future generations to enjoy.

Conserve your community with Greenbelt.



“We see the benefits of our donation at work immediately in our neighborhood and beyond.”

Betsy Shields
Chair, Board of Directors

On an incredibly short timeline, enthusiastic neighbors and supporters came together to successfully protect 17+ acres in West Gloucester.

“We are delighted that more than 120 residents contributed to the Crystal Lake Watershed conservation project, exceeding our community goal. Together, we did it!”

Rachel Horgan
Director, Development & Community Engagement



Community Goal:
100 local donors



“Crystal Gorge is one of my favorite hikes and your efforts to preserve and expand this area are needed as development continues to threaten the City’s natural resources. I am happy and honored to donate to this effort.”

Cindy
Donor, Crystal Lake Watershed



EMJA MONAHAN-SKOFF (2)

CORPORATE CONSERVATIONISTS

Greenbelt’s Corporate Conservationists demonstrate—to their employees and the community—their commitment to local environmental and social justice through their dedication to protecting open space, climate resiliency, working farms, and access to nature for all.

By generously providing more than \$20,000 in annual support to Greenbelt, Corporate Conservationists strengthen the community where their employees work, live, and play.

We extend our gratitude to Institution for Savings, Cell Signaling Technology, Affiliated Managers Group, and EBSCO who have committed to Greenbelt’s Corporate Conservationist giving program. Beyond the charitable financial commitment, employees contribute hundreds of hands-on volunteer hours to bolster Greenbelt’s mission for local land conservation.

“Volunteers show up ready to work, with great attitudes and a strong desire to give back to the community. Their enthusiasm is contagious!”

Mary Ellen Kelly
Greenbelt
Volunteer Coordinator

“We believe in corporate social responsibility, and investing in organizations that specifically target the environment, and are good for the communities they serve. We have strong ties with Greenbelt and we contribute in many different ways, both in terms of volunteering, and also in supporting and nurturing the organization.”

Darcy Birse
Chief Commercial Officer,
Cell Signaling Technology

“It’s important in today’s culture that businesses are not only aware of their employees’ environmental and social justice values, but also commit to making a difference.”

Spencer Purinton
Greenbelt Board of Directors
Owner, RPI-Apex, Inc.



LEARN MORE
rachel@ecga.org



Greenbelt
Essex County's Land Trust

PO Box 1026
Essex, MA 01929

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



Printed on FSC-certified paper
containing 30% post-consumer waste,
using vegetable-based inks.



Beaver Pond Reservation
MERRIMAC

ADRIAN SCHOLES