

LAND TRUST LIFE



FARMS



PAUL CARY GOLDBERG (3)

PRESIDENT'S CORNER & BOARD CHAIR



“Creating natural spaces for people to enjoy, nature to flourish, and local farming to occur is more important than ever, and I am incredibly excited about the work ahead of us. Greenbelt is an amazing organization with a very special community of supporters. Together we can ensure that generations to come will enjoy this truly beautiful landscape.”

Alison Falk
Incoming Board Chair



Like all of us in the COVID-19 emergency, here at Greenbelt we’ve had to adjust to a new way of living and working, and we miss each other and all of you. Fortunately, we remain healthy, and in spite of the challenges of working remotely, staff have continued to be productive and focused on our mission of land conservation, stewardship and public engagement.

The focus of this spring newsletter is farmland conservation

and Greenbelt’s commitment to keeping farming viable in Essex County. As you read about our work, and think of your plans for gardens and visits to farm stands this growing season, I hope you feel encouraged about our future.

While none of us can predict what changes this current crisis will bring, we do know that land conservation is a patient endeavor, and works best when it is based on relationships built over time on trust and experience. That is Greenbelt’s strength. For nearly sixty years, the Greenbelt community has worked together to conserve land, and to knit together interconnected landscapes, trails and ecosystems patiently, piece by piece. Just as our current successes are built on the efforts of many who came before us, the work we do today is building a better future. It feels good to know that we’re part of something long-lasting and important.

I’d like to take this time to say a heartfelt thank you to Greenbelt’s outgoing Chair of the Board of Directors, Philip Lake. Philip’s leadership over the past four years has helped Greenbelt expand its impact in many important ways. On a personal note, Philip played a key role in welcoming me to Greenbelt and supporting me as I learned my way. While we will miss Philip’s leadership, we’re delighted to welcome our new Board Chair, Alison Falk.

Kate Bowditch
President

No words can fully express my thanks to the Board and staff for their support during my term at Greenbelt. I’m thrilled that Alison Falk will be the next Chair, bringing great strategic thinking, energy and problem-solving to the Board.

During this uncertain time, I feel grateful for my family, the ability to roam in nature, my community, and of course Greenbelt.

This pandemic has only increased our awareness of how important Greenbelt and its properties are to what it means to live in Essex County.

Philip Lake
Chair, Board of Directors
2016-2020

- 1 BUY
- 2 PROTECT
- 3 SELL

AT GREENBELT, WE REMAIN COMMITTED TO KEEPING FARMING AN IMPORTANT PART OF ESSEX COUNTY'S LIFE & LANDSCAPE.



PAUL CARY GOLDBERG (2)

Chris Grant is putting a new face on Brown Spring Farm in West Newbury, beloved for its roadside stand where families have found fresh produce for generations. In 2019, in partnership with the Town and generous supporters, Greenbelt permanently protected this irreplaceable piece of West Newbury's local landscape and agricultural heritage.

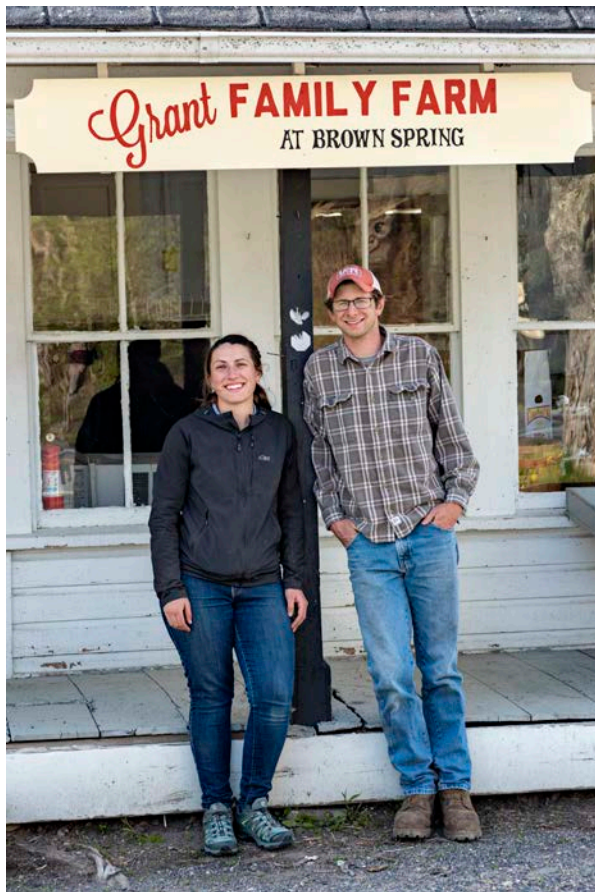
Chris had been running a successful egg and poultry operation for years without secure access to his own land. Like many of the next generation of farmers in our region, Chris faced expensive land costs created by intense development pressures, including those at Brown Spring Farm when it came on the market. That's when Greenbelt, the Town and Chris came together to conserve this farmland with a method known as **BUY - PROTECT - SELL**.* This model protects the land from residential development while providing farmers the opportunity to buy land they could not otherwise afford.

Now that Chris owns Grant Family Farm at Brown Spring, his aspirations for growing his business are taking off. "We're busy breaking ground and preparing the fields for our first season of planting. After farming on borrowed or rented land for so long, it feels good to be able to set up simple things like a greenhouse, irrigation,

and deer fencing that will be permanent and not worry that we might have to remove them after a season or two because of shifting land," say Chris and his partner Alice Tonry.

"There's been so much interest from people driving by, stopping in, honking, and sending emails that we're really excited to meet everyone from the community who values this piece of land as much as we do. The house is well under way to being brought back to her original glory."

It will take more than Brown Spring Farm to feed Essex County, but at Greenbelt, we remain committed to doing what we can to keep farmers and working farmland a part of Essex County's life and landscape.



"We're cleaning up the farm, and will start selling eggs and vegetables at the end of May."

Chris Grant

* Learn more about **BUY-PROTECT-SELL** ecga.org/stories-brown-spring-farm

WE'RE HERE
TO HELP
FARMERS



PAUL CARY GOLDBERG

OUR FARMS, OUR FUTURE



From our earliest days, Greenbelt has worked to protect the farmland of Essex County. One of our first, signature projects was the protection of Goodale Orchard (better known today as Russell Orchards) in Ipswich in 1979. We hold what may be the first privately held Agricultural Preservation Restriction on that beautiful and productive land. Steward Field in Topsfield and Hiller Field in Newbury are just two more examples of working farmland that has been forever protected by Greenbelt.

Land conservation is a necessary, but not always sufficient, component of the effort to ensure farm viability throughout the county. Protecting farmland without farmers, markets, sustainable practices, and plans for long-term affordability is both a missed opportunity and an incomplete job.

In recent years, we have extended our reach through programming such as our Farmland Succession, Farmland Leasing, and Legal Essentials trainings for farmers in our area. But we know we can, and should, do more.

To that end, Greenbelt has listened to and learned from farmers in our community – young and old – and from our partner land trusts and other organizations in Massachusetts, throughout New England, and across the country. We have studied best practices and tested ideas. We are proud to have developed a farm conservation program that we call “Our Farms, Our Future.”

We will continue to develop and implement this program. Greenbelt is grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the conservation of working land.

GREENBELT INTENDS TO ENSURE THAT OUR WORKING FARMLAND REMAINS AVAILABLE FOR FOOD AND FIBER PRODUCTION FOR LOCAL SALE AND CONSUMPTION.

OUR GOALS:

Farmland Affordability

To seek opportunities to provide secure and affordable land tenure to farmers who don't otherwise have access to farmland in Essex County due to the high cost of housing and land.

Farmland Viability

To lower barriers to farm viability by coupling affordable land access with creative approaches to infrastructure and farmer housing, within a structure that is flexible and that survives farm evolution and farmer transition.

Farmer-to-Farmer Transfer

To support the transfer of farms to farmers by connecting farmers to resources to support their decision-making around farm transition.

Build Strategic Partnerships

To strengthen relationships with farmland owners and farmland seekers so that when farmland becomes available, Greenbelt has ready partners to facilitate farmland transfer to new farmers. Greenbelt also partners with farm conservation organizations across the country at the forefront of providing affordable farmland access, so that we can continue to learn and grow from this breadth of farmland conservation experience.

Ecosystem Health

To seek opportunities to demonstrate how farming can go hand-in-hand with managing for resilient ecosystems, preserving water quality and enhancing soil health.

Education & Outreach

To increase public awareness of the issues facing farms in our region and what people can do to support local farms; to support farmers at all stages of their careers by, among other activities, hosting free educational programming with organizations that support local farms and farmers.

HELP CONSERVE LAND WITH US FOR FRESH, HEALTHY, LOCAL FOOD.

WHAT WE'RE DOING
ecga.org/farmland

Russell Orchards
Ipswich



PAUL CARY GOLDBERG

SEEKING A FARMER FOR GREEN MEADOWS FARM

HAMILTON
TOPSFIELD



PAUL CARY GOLDBERG

- 60 ACRE PARCEL
- 20 TILLABLE ACRES
- 5 PRIMARY FIELDS

The farm comprises a contiguous, vacant 60-acre parcel with approximately 20 tillable acres across 5 primary fields.

Greenbelt purchased Green Meadows Farm in 2019 with the goal of maintaining it as a working farm. Like other land trusts in regions where property values are high, Greenbelt recognizes that farmland affordability must be a key component of our work for farming to be a viable enterprise in our region.

Greenbelt worked with Equity Trust, which specializes in farmland protection, and a strong Advisory Committee to gather input from experts and explore ideas and options. Our plan is to continue to own Green Meadows Farm, and to identify a farmer who will enter into a long-term ground lease on the farm. The lease will include measures to ensure that:

- **The land is actively farmed and will remain affordable to another farmer in the future**
- **Activities will have minimal impact on the Ipswich River and other natural resources**
- **Trail access will be maintained in perpetuity**

Greenbelt has issued a Request For Proposals, seeking applications from interested farmers. Responses are due September 15th. While it's too soon to know who all the applicants will be, we're excited about the variety of possibilities and the future of Green Meadows Farm.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
ecga.org/GreenMeadowsFarmRFP

“We were CSA members at Green Meadows Farm for years, and the community that it built was remarkable. Thank you for preserving the farm so it can become a thriving community again.”

Agosti Family
Greenbelt members for more than 30 years

SAVING THE MERRIMACK VALLEY'S DISAPPEARING FARMS

5,000
UNPROTECTED
FARMLAND
ACRES



More than one-third of Essex County's unprotected farmland – nearly 5,000 acres – lies in the Merrimack Valley, including some of the country's oldest continuously-operated family farms. High land values, intense development pressure, and the fact that a majority of farmland owners are over 65 without identified successors means the future of these unprotected farms is far from certain.

Conserving Merrimack Valley farmland is a priority for Greenbelt. In 2018, Greenbelt was accepted into the USDA's Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), which provides access to nearly \$1 million to purchase conservation restrictions (CRs) on Merrimack Valley farms. The grant stipulates that RCPP money must be matched at least 2:1, so both public and private funding partners will be critical to successfully preserving these farms.

Thanks to generous landowners and partners, Greenbelt already holds CRs on these active farms:

Merrimack Valley Farms

Leonhard-Eldred Farm | North Andover & Boxford
116 acres of hay fields and forest

Anton Farm | Haverhill
25 acres leased for hay and rhubarb

Heron Pond Farm | South Hampton, NH & Amesbury, MA
17 acres in Amesbury for organic vegetable farming

Grant Family Farm at Brown Spring | West Newbury
10 acres of sustainable vegetable farming

Beyond the benefits of local food, conserving farmland helps protect the Merrimack River, one of the 10 most threatened rivers in the country. Urban stormwater runoff and development are the greatest sources of pollution to the Merrimack. Keeping our farmland intact and undeveloped is a key component to cleaning the Merrimack's waters.

Merrimack Valley farms are important to our scenic landscapes, our clean waters, and our region's food resilience.



Byron & George Leonhard
Leonhard-Eldred Farm



LEARN MORE
ecga.org/farmland

Dave Rimer
*Land Stewardship
 Director*

“Greenbelt holds Conservation Restrictions (CRs) on many privately-owned farms in Essex County, each engaged in a wide range of farming. While we don’t have a role in these day to day farming activities, our Stewardship Department monitors each of these farm CRs every one to two years, and works closely with the landowners on compliance and approvals.”

STEWARDING AGRICULTURAL LAND

Farms present unique challenges for CR oversight because there is typically a broad range of active land use that needs to be monitored. In addition, in some cases farms are leased by the landowner to a tenant farmer, which adds an additional layer of communication.

Farm CRs are drafted with flexibility in mind, however older CRs from decades ago can have language that is hard to interpret now. At Greenbelt, the Land Conservation and Stewardship staff work very closely together as each CR is drafted, making every effort to anticipate future activities with clearly articulated landowner rights. Advanced, careful planning leads to the best long-term results with CRs on farms.



MEGUMI NACHEV

ACTIVE AGRICULTURAL ACRES

Greenbelt Owned	207
Greenbelt Restricted	513
Greenbelt Assisted*	327

Total Active Acres 1047

AGRICULTURAL PROPERTIES

Greenbelt Owned	17
Greenbelt Restricted	28
Greenbelt Assisted*	7

Total Active Properties 52

** Land on which Greenbelt does not hold a CR or own, but played a role in the effort to conserve.*

We Monitor a Range of Land Uses

- Hay Production
- Livestock Grazing
- Forest Management
- Crop Cultivation



KELLY CHADWICK



Since 1974, Greenbelt has worked on more than 50 conservation projects across 18 communities to protect land for agricultural use.

As a result, in a given year over 1,000 acres of land that we've helped to conserve is in active agricultural production.

52 Farmland Conservation Projects across 18 Communities

FARMING IN THE FACE OF COVID-19

The federal government designated farm workers as “essential” to the U.S. food supply chain at the earliest onset of the COVID-19 crisis. Since then, the pandemic has presented both unexpected opportunities and onerous challenges for local farmers.

Some are seeing remarkable growth in business despite disruptions to sales outlets like schools and restaurants, as people look for locally grown food they can access safely without a trip to the grocery store.

For farms that can adapt to the situation, like Heron Pond Farm in Southampton, NH and Amesbury, MA online orders, home delivery and curbside pickup offer reassurance for their business and customers.

Three River Farmers Alliance, which sells produce, meat and cheese from 40 local farms, including Heron Pond Farm, has seen a fivefold growth in business, even though sales to restaurants have plunged. “This spring we grew from about 200 to 900-1,200 orders per week,” said Andre Cantelmo, co-owner of Heron Pond. “We’re already showing numbers that are better than previous summers.”

Grant Family Farm in Essex, offering seasonal home egg delivery for the past two years, has seen an increase from an average of 60 dozen per week to 125 dozen twice a week, selling out in less than 20 minutes online. “People have been reaching out, excited to try farm fresh eggs and surprised that there were farms like ours left in the area,” says Chris Grant.

But continued interruptions to traditional supply chains and outlets will exact a heavy toll on many local farmers. For those who rely heavily on seasonal farmers’ markets, if permitted at all they will require social distancing and sanitizing protocols that will make them more expensive to manage for farmers. One farmer told the National Young Farmers Coalition,



“During this time, folks want more access to local foods. We’ve created protocols for no-touch deliveries and pickups.”

Andre Cantelmo
Heron Pond Farm



“We’re estimating it will cost \$8,000 to protect our workers and customers.”

NEIL UNGERLEIDER (2)

How you can help

Support your local farmers by joining CSAs, or shopping at Farm Stands and Farmers' Markets. You can find fresh food grown on farmland conserved by Greenbelt, below are some examples.

PLACES TO CHECK OUT

CSAs

Community Supported Agriculture

- Alprilla Farm** | Essex
- First Light Farm** | Hamilton
- Iron Ox Farm** | Topsfield
- Three Sisters Garden Project** | Ipswich

FARM STANDS/STORES

- Grant Family Farm at Brown Spring**
West Newbury
- Heron Pond Farm**
Amesbury, MA / Southampton, NH
- Lilloet Sheep & Cheesery** | Boxford
- Marini Farm** | Ipswich
- Russell Orchards** | Ipswich

OTHER FARMS SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITY

- Anton Farm** | Haverhill
Rhubarb production for
Willow Spring Vineyards
- Brick Ends Farm** | Hamilton
Organic garden compost

For a more complete list go to:

FIND A LOCAL FARMER
ecga.org/farmland



NEIL UNGERLEIDER



JERRY MONKMAN/ECOPHOTOGRAPHY.COM

And don't forget the Community Gardens for the DIY growers out there.

COMMUNITY GARDENS

Young Farm | Gloucester

Greenbelt's Young Farm has been a popular community garden since 1995. Today, there are 36 gardeners and 42 plots where all kinds of vegetables and flowers are grown. Says Mike Carbone, Assistant Director of Stewardship who manages Young Farm,

"Most gardeners here say they love seeing the creativity and variety of each other's gardening methods."

We do, too!

Mike Carbone
*Land Stewardship
Assistant Director*

LET'S WORK TOGETHER TO CONSERVE MORE LAND

Artichoke River Woods

West Newbury

Greenbelt, West Newbury, Newburyport and the MA Department of Conservation and Recreation are partnering to protect 38 pristine acres of woodland adjacent to the Artichoke Reservoir in West Newbury. Conserving this land will protect drinking water, wildlife habit and woodlands that will enhance the region's climate resiliency. Once protected, it will provide another important link in creating a trail connection from Withers Conservation Area to Maudslay State Park.

Bergstrom Conservation Area

Boxford

Greenbelt is working with the Town of Boxford and BTA/BOLT to protect the Bergstrom property, a 14.5-acre parcel on Hovey's Pond. A conservation priority for Boxford for years, this parcel is rich in conservation resources including trails linked to a broader public network and rare species habitat. Boxford residents are encouraged to vote for CPA funding to support the project at Town Meeting, slated for September.



Kamon Farm

Ipswich

Greenbelt is working with the Town of Ipswich to protect Kamon Farm on Pineswamp Road, a 93-acre portion of Turkey Hill. Conserving this land:

- Protects more than 90 acres on the last remaining undeveloped hilltop in Ipswich
- Safeguards Bull Brook Reservoir and the Mile Lane wells
- Allows for continued low intensity farming
- Provides public access to existing trail connections
- Protects important habitat for birds and other wildlife

LEARN MORE/DONATE

ecga.org/artichokeriverwoods
ecga.org/bergstrom
ecga.org/kamonfarm

NEIL UNGERLEIDER

PROTECTED & PRODUCTIVE

“Sending socially distanced love from the farmers and sheep at Lillooet Farm.”

Nathaniel Higley
Lillooet Farm Owner

In 2015, Gillian Marino and Nathaniel Higley launched Lillooet Sheep and Cheesery. Located in Boxford, it lies on over 100 acres protected by the Coolidge family more than thirty years ago with two Conservation Restrictions: one of 22 acres granted to Greenbelt and another of more than 90 acres granted to the Boxford Trails Association/Boxford Open Land Trust. Committed to regenerative farming, Lillooet produces delicious, sustainably crafted sheep’s cheese and meat sold at the farm and to regional restaurants.



NATHANIEL HIGLEY

“This spring, we’ve birthed over 50 lambs and slept little. After winter stress, lambing challenges and triumphs, first days on pasture are refreshing and feel like what I imagine the birds are singing about. Fields are looking better and better, showing us deep greens where bale grazing over the last winters has paid off,” shared Nathaniel.



DAVID MURRAY

LIKE GREENBELT’S WORK?
SUPPORT US IF YOU CAN

ecga.org/donate

OSPREY PROGRAM

2019 Season

49 Nesting Pairs

59 Fledglings

22 Banded Chicks



2020 Nesting Season in Full Swing! Many sites are occupied, with Osprey busily building nests and laying eggs. Citizen scientist monitors are making field observations and submitting online reports of nesting activity. Last year was very successful, with 49 pairs observed on nests from East Boston to Salisbury to Boxford producing 59 confirmed fledglings. We hope to build on those numbers this year!

Grab a front row seat!

Greenbelt's OspreyCam is back and located in Gloucester, MA on Greenbelt salt marsh near LobstaLand Restaurant.

Osprey pair, Annie and Squam, returned to the nest this spring and are already tending to three eggs. Now we watch and wait for new arrivals, coming soon!

WATCH LIVE
ecga.org/Osprey

A NEW FACE



Seasonal Stewardship Technician

We're excited to welcome Mike Galli to the stewardship team this spring and summer. No stranger to Greenbelt, Mike is a Manchester-Essex Regional High School grad who completed his Eagle Scout badge building and installing two Osprey platforms. Now a rising senior at UMaine, Orono, Mike is studying wildlife conservation. Welcome aboard, Mike!

IN MEMORY

Our community is saddened by the passing of Ruth Magnier, a long-time Greenbelt office volunteer and one of the earliest members of our "Mail Crew." Ruth was also an active volunteer in her Gloucester community, and an adventurous traveler. We're thankful for her many years of service, and we will miss her.



ONLINE EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

While we can't get together now, there are still great ways to stay connected to Greenbelt and nature. Be safe out there!

<p>Annual Meeting</p>	<p>Stay Involved with Us - Online Event April 21st, 7 pm. Link to watch recording is here</p>	<p>ecga.org</p>
<p>Art in the Barn</p>	<p>Support Greenbelt & Treat Yourself - Online Event June 8-17, Silent Auction June 12-14</p>	<p>ecga.org/artinthebarn</p>
<p>Learn & Explore</p>	<p>ASK Greenbelt Nature Series Facebook, Wednesdays at 12:30pm</p> <p>Birds, Bees & Butterflies Pollinator Program - videos, fun facts & resources</p> <p>Family Nature Resources Videos, Nature Apps and activities to explore</p> <p>Osprey Program - OspreyCam is Live! Watch & learn about these incredible birds of prey</p>	<p>facebook.com</p> <p>ecga.org/pollinators</p> <p>ecga.org/familyresources</p> <p>ecga.org/osprey-program</p>
<p>Get Outside!</p>	<p>Greenbelt's Properties are Open! Please enjoy them responsibly, follow our COVID-19 safety guidelines.</p>	<p>ecga.org/properties</p>





Greenbelt
Essex County's Land Trust

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Vice Chair	Holly Langer	Boxford
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Design Manager	Sharon Pacione

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ecga.org



YOUR LEGACY, OUR FUTURE

Each year, Greenbelt relies on the generosity of donors like you to conserve land – including farmland – in Essex County.

An important source of our support is our Legacy Giving Society, members who have included Greenbelt in their financial or estate planning.

Thoughtful gift planning can be as straightforward as designating Greenbelt as a beneficiary of your life insurance policy or IRA distribution, or including Greenbelt in your will.

Peter continues, “I support Greenbelt because it’s a local land trust that is doing great work and has beautiful properties, wonderful events and excellent people. And it’s fun!”

Please consider joining Greenbelt’s Legacy Giving Society today.

LEAVE A LEGACY
ecga.org/planned-giving

Contact Cathy ccl@ecga.org
978 768 7241 x13

As always, we strongly recommend that you consult with your financial advisor about any planned giving decisions.

“Greenbelt is one of a dozen non-profits to which I donate the required withdrawal from my retirement account each year. This is a simple and flexible way to direct my charitable contributions to the organizations that are important to me.”

Peter Van Demark
Rockport

