

# LAND TRUST LIFE



MARC FRIGON



JERRY MONKMAN/ECOPHOTOGRAPHY





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Learn more about Greenbelt's full staff  
[ecga.org/staff](http://ecga.org/staff)

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JERRY MONKMAN/ECOPHOTOGRAPHY

Dear Friends,

## Community drives our mission.

One of the most encouraging takeaways from last spring's community engagement survey — which you'll learn more about in this publication — is that people deeply value our local conservation mission and seek more opportunities to engage, learn, and contribute.

This is especially meaningful because our mission is rooted in, and strengthened by, the community. Without the support of individual donors, landowners, local businesses, volunteers, government agencies, environmental organizations, trail associations, and partner organizations, our work simply wouldn't be possible. **Land conservation is a collective effort, fueled by the dedication and active involvement of all those who help us protect and care for the irreplaceable landscapes that define Essex County.**

This shared commitment was clearly demonstrated in our successful campaign to protect the Chebacco Woods Gateway property in Hamilton earlier this year, where the community came together in unprecedented fashion to raise the funds needed to secure this cherished natural resource. It was also evident in the acquisition of the historic Streeter/Old Farm property in Wenham, as well as in the dedication of our volunteers and the enthusiasm of all who attend our events.

**Together, we are Greenbelt, making a real and lasting impact.** In celebration of all we've accomplished, this issue of Land Trust Life highlights some of the topics survey respondents were most eager to explore. We hope it inspires all readers to continue helping protect the treasured landscapes around us for future generations to enjoy.

With gratitude,

Chris LaPointe  
President



NEIL UNGERLEIDER

In my role on the Board and as an active member of the Greenbelt community for many years, I've had the privilege of witnessing firsthand the real and lasting impact its work has on the quality of life in Essex County. Seeing this reflected in the recent survey results is truly inspiring.

Betsy Shields  
Board of Directors  
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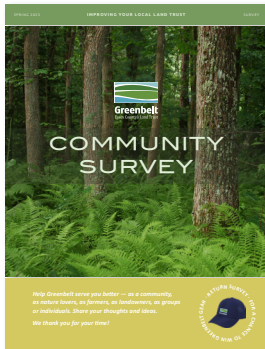
# We Asked. You Answered!

## 2025 COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS



**SURVEY TAKEAWAYS**  
Highlighting the topics that matter most to you

Last spring, Greenbelt invited more than 7,000 community members, from first-time event attendees to long-time supporters, to share feedback on how we are doing as your local land trust. We asked how you like to connect with Greenbelt, what aspects of our work matter most to you, which areas you'd like to learn more about, and more. And what a response!



**“The big takeaway from the survey is that Greenbelt is a trusted and deeply valued organization. Community members feel a strong connection to our local conservation mission, public programs, and welcoming culture.”**

**Rachel Horgan**  
*Director of Development & Community Engagement*

### SURVEY BY THE NUMBERS

**7,847**  
CONSTITUENTS REACHED

**1,074**  
COMPLETED SURVEYS

**58%** | **42%**  
ONLINE | PAPER RESPONSES

**76%**  
REQUESTED MORE  
EDUCATIONAL EVENTS

**55%**  
MENTIONED ART IN THE BARN  
AS A BELOVED EVENT

**55%**  
ASKED FOR MORE GUIDED  
HIKES AND NATURE WALKS

#### OVERWHELMING MESSAGE:

**“You’re doing great — just do more of it!”**

*“I am always happy to see Greenbelt signs in marshes, wooded trails, open farmland, and along rivers. Keep doing it right, Greenbelt!”*

*“We must all work together to protect the places we love, and Greenbelt does an outstanding job.”*



EMMA FRINGUELLI



# TOGETHER WE CONSERVE LAND FOR EVERYONE



You shared that our trails are your favorite way to stay connected

## New Stewardship Corps Cares for Land and Builds Community

### HANDS-ON STEWARDSHIP

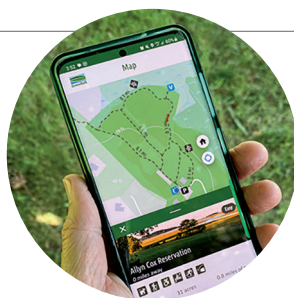
Over the past year, Greenbelt’s new volunteer Stewardship Corps has participated in more than a dozen workday events, tackling a range of projects focused on trail maintenance, invasive species management, and habitat restoration on several properties. More than 100 individuals have participated in these events, ranging in age from 23 to 80 — all eager to roll up their sleeves and contribute to Greenbelt’s mission.

“There’s been growing interest in hands-on stewardship work in recent years, which is what led to the formation of the Stewardship Corps,” says Volunteer Program Coordinator John Turvey, who oversees the group. “People really enjoy exploring our properties and making a tangible difference. They also love the social aspect and connecting with like-minded people, especially at our ‘Shears & Beers’ events.”

Having volunteers take the lead on more day-to-day property and trail maintenance projects, he adds, also frees up the Stewardship team to focus more of their time and energy on larger initiatives and long-term land management efforts.

#### REACH OUT

**John Turvey**  
Volunteer Program Coordinator  
jturvey@ecga.org  
978 768 7241 x128



## Trail Navigation Made Easy

**FREE TRAILS APP  
WITH REAL-TIME LOCATION**

**EXPLORE WITH US**  
[ecga.org/greenbeltgo](https://ecga.org/greenbeltgo)



**DOWNLOAD  
HERE!**



“Every bit of greenspace protected is a gift to everyone.”

“I’m glad all trails are free, allowing anyone to walk the properties and learn about nature and the outdoors.”

“We think Greenbelt properties are amazing and tell everyone we know about them!”

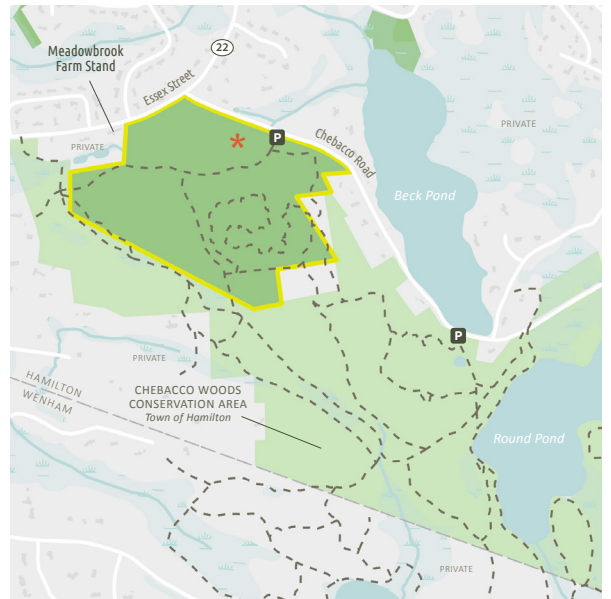


JERRY MONKMAN/ECOPHOTOGRAPHY

## Community Rallies to Protect 66 Acres in Hamilton and Expand Access to Beloved Trail Network

Fueled by incredible community support and a shared commitment to preventing the loss of a beloved trail system, Greenbelt successfully protected the newly named Chebacco Woods Gateway in January of this year.

With its permanent protection, this property increases conserved lands around Chebacco Woods by more than 20 percent, safeguarding clean water, critical wildlife habitat, trails, and climate resilience. In the coming months, Greenbelt will enhance and maintain trails, improve wayfinding, and upgrade signage to ensure a safe, accessible, and welcoming experience for all visitors. Planning is underway for a fall conservation celebration.



*“This conservation project truly captured the community’s interest — with a record-breaking 700-plus donors and partners contributing — generating extraordinary support from across the region.”*

**Chris LaPointe**  
Greenbelt President

# TOGETHER WE PROTECT VITAL HABITAT



You let us know that protecting wildlife habitat is a top priority

“It’s wonderful to have a local land conservancy that shows scientific and thoughtful understanding of protecting ecosystems and the planet.”

“My concern is for our wildlife, making sure they have enough land and space to thrive, be protected, and live in a peaceful, safe environment.”

“Greenbelt does an amazing job with active land management.”



## Osprey are Back!

Watch the action unfold live on Greenbelt’s OspreyCam

[ecga.org/osprey-cam](http://ecga.org/osprey-cam)



PHOTO: GEORGE MCLEAN



## Habitat Restoration Benefits from Extra Volunteer Support

Castle Neck River Reservation | IPSWICH



In November, Greenbelt’s Stewardship team received welcome assistance on a new habitat restoration project at Castle Neck River Reservation. Volunteers from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Mass Audubon helped remove an old split-rail fence long overgrown with vegetation and invasive plants, improving grassland bird habitat and reconnecting the surrounding fields.

The extra hands had a big impact, and the restoration work continues.



To protect grassland bird nesting areas during breeding season, Greenbelt posts signs from May through mid-July requiring that dogs be leashed and visitors stay on trails.



## Grassland Bird Monitoring Locations

Cox Reservation  
ESSEX

John J. Donovan/  
Sagamore Hill  
HAMILTON

Castle Neck River  
Reservation  
IPSWICH

Kamon Farm  
IPSWICH

## Enhancing Habitat Protection Through Citizen Science

Many of the iconic landscapes Greenbelt has protected over the years — such as the open fields at Cox Reservation and Kamon Farm — also serve as primary habitat for vulnerable species, including grassland birds.

While habitat protection was a primary driver in acquiring these now permanently protected lands, Greenbelt is building on that foundation by enhancing its stewardship practices to better support these species.

**Started as a pilot initiative three years ago, the Grassland Bird Monitoring Program was formalized last year and builds on Greenbelt’s longstanding efforts to restore and manage grassland habitat.**

“Grassland birds are not endangered, but they are highly vulnerable, with many species experiencing significant population declines,” says Abby Hardy-Moss, Vice President of Stewardship, Planning, and Technology. She notes that the primary driver of this decline is the loss of grassland habitat due to agricultural expansion, urban development, and changes in land management practices.

Stewardship activities to address these challenges include removing fencing, controlling invasive plants, delaying mowing in select fields from May through mid-July, and posting signs requiring dogs to be leashed — all essential steps in reducing disturbances that can disrupt nesting and breeding behaviors and help ensure these vulnerable species have the best chance to thrive.

As part of the monitoring program, volunteers use a customized app developed by Greenbelt’s GIS team to collect data in real time, following a protocol that designates specific locations on each property for monitoring. On a coordinated schedule, they record detailed observations, including the number of birds, species, sex, and age whenever possible.

**“This program not only engages volunteers in hands-on conservation work but also provides valuable data for science and land management,”** says Abby. “As the program grows, we hope to expand monitoring to new sites and involve more volunteers, which will help us proactively adapt our property management strategies to better support grassland birds in the future.”



Primary Species Focus:  
Bobolinks, Eastern Meadowlarks,  
and Grasshopper Sparrows

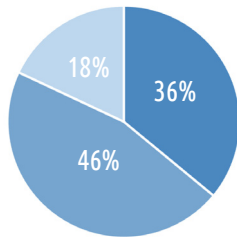
## TOGETHER WE PROTECT LAND FOREVER



### You feel strongly about safeguarding land for future generations

Whether you're new to Greenbelt's conservation work or a long-time supporter, "conserved land" often brings to mind many of our well-known, publicly accessible properties across Essex County. These are important conservation successes. But just as significant — though less visible — are the thousands of acres of land owned by individuals and municipalities that we have protected, and continue to protect, through Conservation and Agricultural Restrictions (CRs and APRs).

Greenbelt currently holds conservation restrictions on 10,000 acres of private and municipal land across 260 locations in Essex County; and we are committed to ensuring the permanent protection of all these acres, for all time.



Protection Type	Acres
Greenbelt-owned	8,200
CRs/APRs	10,300
Assists	4,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>22,500</b>

### Types of Greenbelt-Protected Lands

#### Greenbelt-owned Land

Greenbelt owns and manages land obtained through donations or purchased through public and private funding. Our properties are free and open to all.

#### Conservation & Agricultural Restrictions

Conservation Restrictions (CR) and Agricultural Preservation Restrictions (APR) prevent land from being developed, and in the case of a farm, protect land for agricultural use. Although Greenbelt does not own the land, we monitor and enforce conservation protections forever.

#### Assisted Projects

Greenbelt lends its expertise and technical support to state agencies, towns, and nonprofit organizations to advance initiatives focused on land conservation.

“Nearly half of the land that Greenbelt has protected is conserved through a CR or APR. Monitoring these restrictions is incredibly important to our conservation mission.”

**Mike Carbone**  
Director of Stewardship  
Field Operations



## ON THE FRONT LINES OF LAND PROTECTION

# A Look Inside Greenbelt's Conservation Restriction Program

While the properties may vary widely in size, terrain, and setting — from a modest parcel next to a home in suburban Danvers to an expansive working farm in Topsfield, and even a 2,200-acre municipal park in Lynn — they all share one thing in common: each is permanently protected through Greenbelt's growing Conservation Restriction Program.

**A conservation restriction (CR) is a voluntary legal agreement between a landowner and an organization like Greenbelt, designed to limit certain types of development or land use to preserve the property's natural, scenic, or agricultural value. Each CR is monitored annually or biannually to ensure the land's conservation assets are properly maintained.**

"Every CR, landowner, and property history is different, which is what makes my job so interesting," says Becky Hansen, Greenbelt's Conservation Restriction Coordinator, who spends much of her time in the field visiting nearly 200 properties each year and working closely with landowners.

At each location, she walks as much of the property's perimeter as possible, using advanced GIS and GPS technology to achieve pinpoint accuracy while documenting any activities that could violate a conservation restriction, including unauthorized development, encroachments, and other prohibited uses. On larger properties, she is often joined by other members of the Stewardship team or representatives from partner organizations who share responsibility for monitoring a particular conservation restriction.

Becky also uses these monitoring visits as an opportunity to build relationships with landowners, provide education, and answer questions.

"Some landowners may have taken over a CR when they purchased or inherited a property and know very little about it, while others take great pride in knowing they've played an active role in conserving their land," she says.

**LEARN MORE**  
[ecga.org/conservation](https://ecga.org/conservation)

### Conservation Restriction Monitoring

To ensure a property's conservation assets are properly maintained, Becky walks the land, records existing land use or change, documents CR discrepancies and ongoing compliance, and creates a detailed report that guides future monitoring.



DAVID ALDEN-ST.PIERRE

"Each CR is unique, and I love the opportunity to meet and speak with landowners across the county."

**Becky Hansen**  
*Conservation Restriction  
Coordinator*

## TOGETHER WE ARE A CONSERVATION COMMUNITY



You told us you're proud to support a local, mission-driven team

"Greenbelt hits the sweet spot of balancing mission and member engagement."

"Art in the Barn is a real community event and always enjoyable. I also love being so close to the marsh!"

"I love the friendly, inclusive vibe at each and every event!"



NEIL UNGERLEIDER



**SAVE THE DATE!**  
**Art in the Barn**  
June 12 & 13  
[ecga.org/artinthebarn](https://ecga.org/artinthebarn)

### Family Nature Series — Vernal Pools

Crystal Gorge Conservation Area | HAVERHILL

Families and friends discovered the weird and wonderful creatures that live in and around vernal pools with the help of the City of Haverhill and North Shore Nature Programs this spring.

**UPCOMING EVENTS**  
[ecga.org/events](https://ecga.org/events)

# Film & Lecture Series — Misunderstood Animals

## 2026 SERIES ENRICHED BY REGIONAL NATURALISTS

Naturalists shared their expertise on local critters that are mysterious, misunderstood, or both. Audiences learned about coyotes, crows, and scavengers from around the world, and participated in interactive Abenaki storytelling about our animal friends.



2026  
**FILM+**  
**LECTURE**  
**SERIES**

# 2026 Business Sponsors

## PARTNERS IN CONSERVATION

As a growing community, local business sponsors believe in the power of land conservation to strengthen the region where we live and work. Their partnership reflects a shared commitment to community and to preserving the natural places that make Essex County special.

### CORPORATE CONSERVATIONISTS



#### PARTNER

Glovsky & Glovsky  
Richardson's Farm

#### PROTECTOR

Bird Watcher's Supply  
and Gift  
Cape Ann Tree Service, Inc.  
Citizens Private Bank

#### ALLY

Benjamin Nutter Architects  
Slow River Studio  
Wild Birds Unlimited,  
Danvers

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Donohoe Survey, Inc.  
Galanis Consulting  
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#### SUPPORTER

Advanced Building  
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Brad Aham, Financial  
Planner, Highland  
Financial Group  
PG Trionic, Inc.

#### CONTRIBUTOR

Essex River Cruises  
& Charters  
Maritime Gloucester  
Munroe Velo  
Stephen Kozowyk,  
Photographer



Pssst —  
Something is  
Brewing at Greenbelt!

### A NEXTGEN INITIATIVE

In collaboration with True North Ales, get a taste of Essex County with a crisp Greenbelt Pilsner.  
*Limited edition coming soon!*

Turn the page to learn more about **NEXTGEN**

# Invasive Species Beware!

EBSCO Volunteers, Cox Reservation | ESSEX

Our friends at EBSCO Industries teamed up with us for Earth Week to battle invasive garlic mustard on the grounds of Greenbelt's headquarters.

### GET INVOLVED

[ecga.org/business-sponsorship](http://ecga.org/business-sponsorship)





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for you, our communities,  
and the future



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**INTRODUCING GREENBELT'S**

# NextGen Community!

## Securing the Future of Local Land Conservation

Join us as we engage people in Greenbelt's conservation mission, introduce them to our protected lands, and reach new audiences — all while having fun together. Keep an eye out for NextGen's Greenbelt Pilsner coming soon!

**STAY CONNECTED**  
For upcoming events, how  
to get involved, and more!

[ecga.org/nextgen](https://ecga.org/nextgen)

