



# **Plein Air & Beyond: Connecting Art and Land Conservation**

Jane Rumrill, Greenbelt  
Jessica Yurwitz, Slow River  
Studio  
Jenn Houle, Artist



### Age

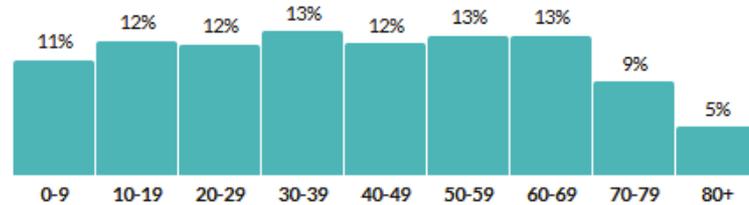
**40.9**

Median age

about the same as the figure in Massachusetts: 40.1

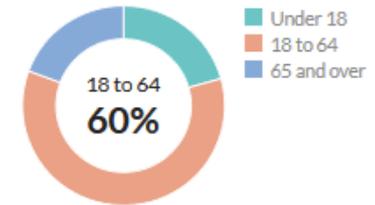
a little higher than the figure in United States: 39.2

Population by age range



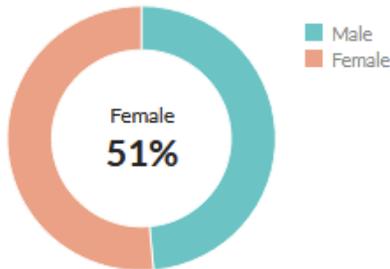
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Population by age category



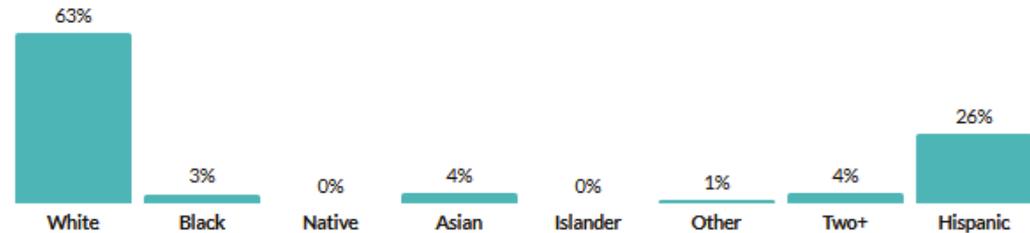
[Show data / Embed](#)

### Sex



[Show data / Embed](#)

### Race & Ethnicity



[Show data / Embed](#)

\* Hispanic includes respondents of any race. Other categories are non-Hispanic.

[Show data / Embed](#)

# Essex County, 2024

Greenbelt Headquarters  
Allyn Cox Reservation  
Essex, MA  
Donated 1974





GREENBELT'S

**ART**

IN THE BARN

### **Art Focused Fund and Fundraiser**

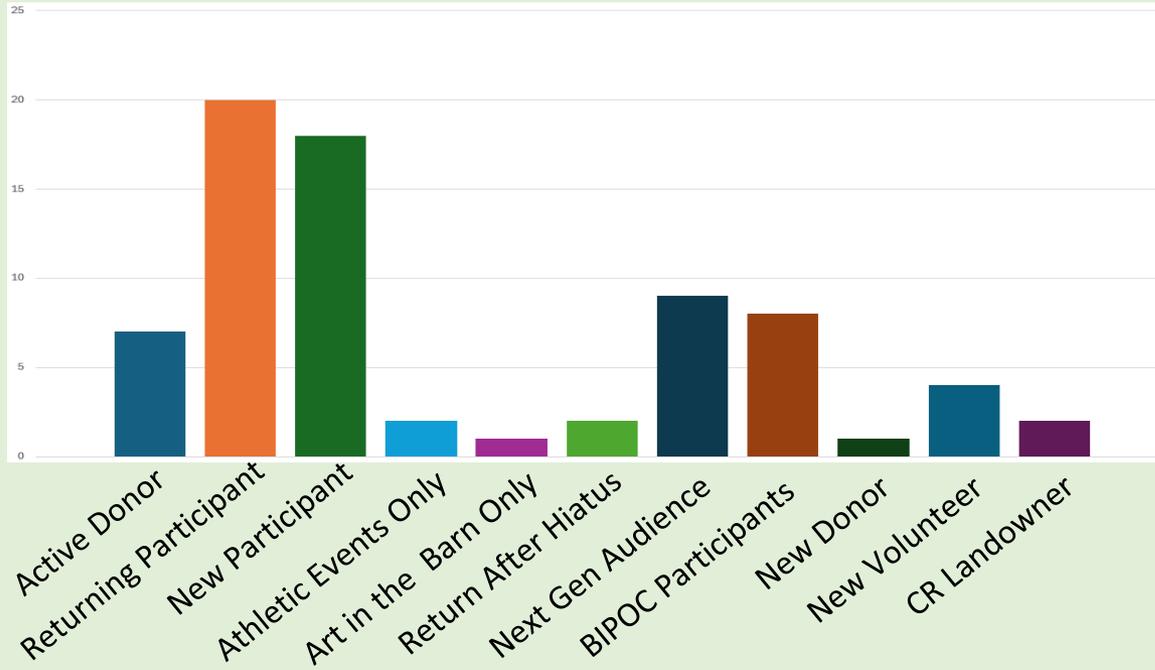
- 37 years
- 125+ juried artists each year
- 1,200 estimated visitors over 2.5 days
- Food & Beer vendors
- Demonstrations
- Artist Meet & Greet
- Live Music



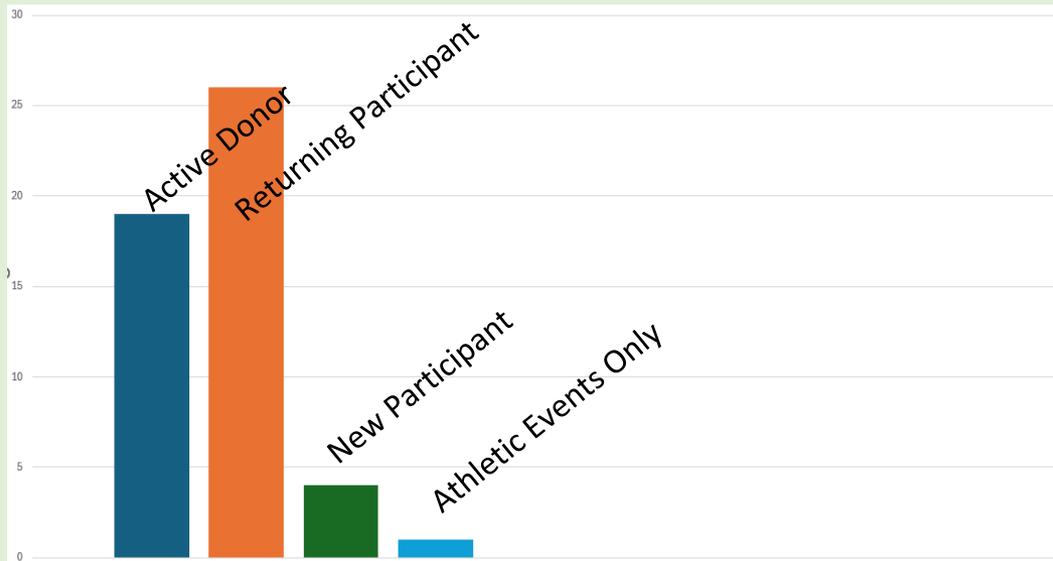
# Special events



# Example 1: Sketching Mushrooms: An Art & Science Foray



# Example 2: Natural History Walk





# Art Partnerships



# Jess Yurwitz

[www.SlowRiverStudio.com](http://www.SlowRiverStudio.com)

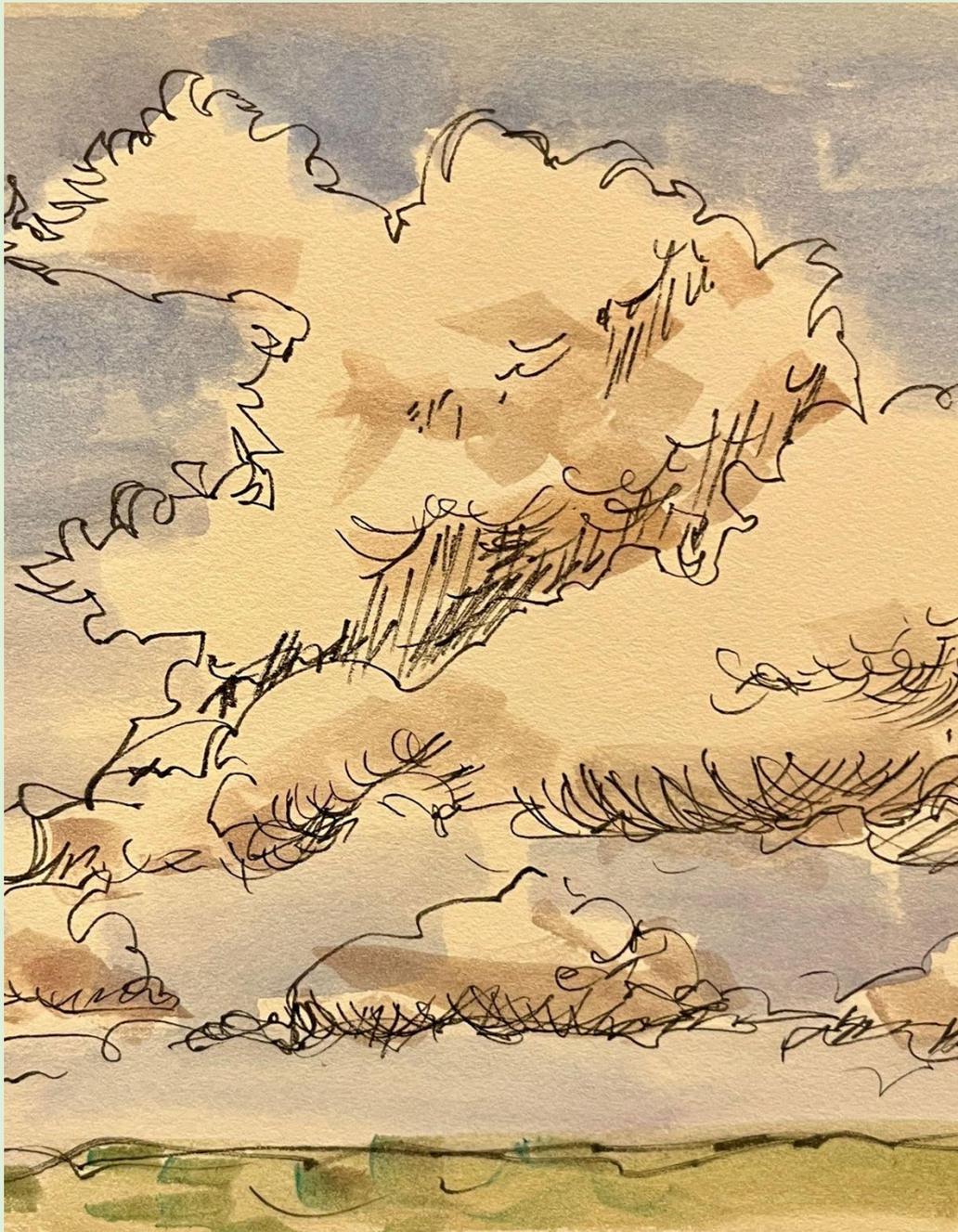
Artist  
Teacher  
Educational Entrepreneur  
Charter School Principal

School Coach  
Art School Owner

BA. Hampshire College  
MAT. Brown University  
Post Grad. Northeastern

**Owner**  
**Slow River Studio**  
**in Topsfield, MA**





What is one of  
your favorite  
ways to be  
creative?



How could you integrate that creative act into your open space?

# BRAINSTORM for ART ACTIVATIONS

Inspired by Slow River Studio - January Joy Squad

Wondering what the post-its are for?

We are going to share a bunch of ideas for art integrations with you. We hope our ideas will spark ideas in you. **Write them down: ONE IDEA per POST-IT.**

No idea is too silly or outlandish. If you find the right partners, anything can be possible. **Dream up SMALL, MEDIUM and LARGE scale Projects!**

Later, we will sort these ideas into three categories:

## Small Project Ideas

Cost \$0-\$100

Involve less than 10 people

Take less than ten hours

## Medium Project Ideas

Cost \$100 - \$1000

Involve up to 100 people

Take 10-100 Hours

## Large Project Ideas

Cost over \$1000

Involve 100+ people

Take 100+ Hours



# Beginner Sketching Lessons

Greenbelt + Jess Yurwitz of Slow River Studio  
Art Activation and Education  
Second Sundays from 2019-Present





# Plein Air Painting Classes

Greenbelt + Jess Yurwitz of Slow River Studio  
Small Business Collaboration  
2019-Present

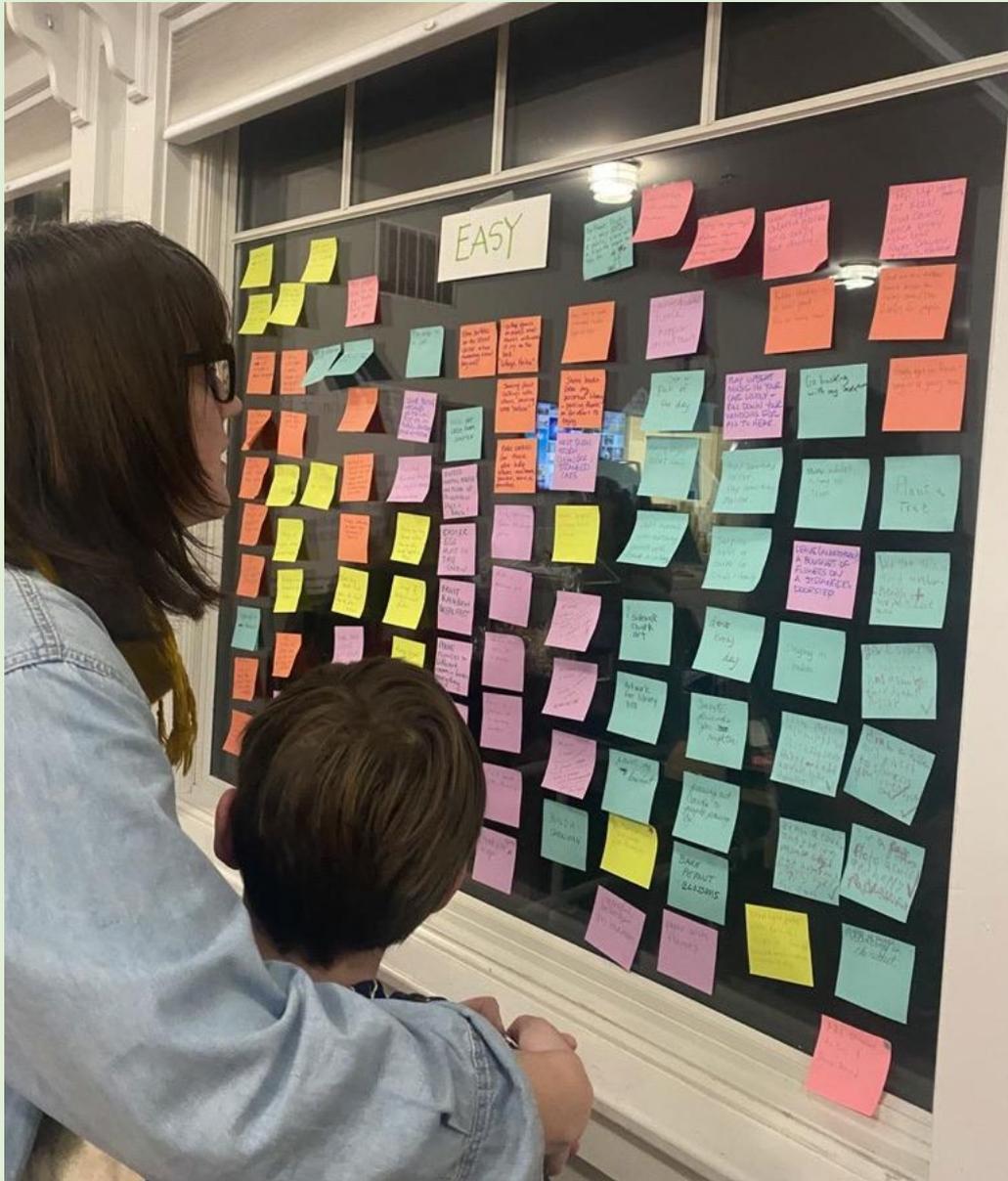




# Nature Journaling Events

Greenbelt + Jess Yurwitz at Slow River Studio  
Natural Science and Education Project  
2019-Present





How many  
post-its do you  
have so far?

Remember:  
ONE idea per  
post-it

**Jenn Houle**

@jennhoulestudio

[www.jennhoule.com](http://www.jennhoule.com)



Public artist

Mother

Native plant gardener

Educator

BFA Mass Art

MFA Cornell University

Gratitude

**Native plants & pollinators mural**

at Sweetsir Elementary School in Merrimac *funded by Pentucket Arts Foundation*



## Why Art & conservation?

- Images speak louder than words
- Reach broader audience
- Neutral open space for conversation
- **Creative placemaking**

“integrates arts, culture, and design activities into efforts that **strengthen communities**. [Involves] partnership[s] across sectors, deeply **engages the community**, involves artists, designers and culture bearers, and helps to advance local economic, physical, and/or social change, ultimately laying the groundwork for systems change.”

-National Endowment for the Arts

‘Blue marble’ 1972 Apollo 17

Poster child of environmental movement

# Creative Placemaking

## Art Activation

## Education

## Call to Action



**Plant Paint Cross-Pollinate** displayed in 8 communities

Winter seed sowing + painting workshop. Community created butterfly signs displayed in public green spaces. Seed Stories printed on Native Seed Packets.

Grant Funding: Local Cultural Council, ECCF Special Projects + Collective Futures Fund

# Creative Placemaking

Art Activation

Education

Call to Action



## Plant Paint Cross-Pollinate

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# Creative Placemaking

## Art Activation

## Education

## Call to Action



## **Plant Paint Cross-Pollinate** \*Art as a third space for convo

Winter seed sowing + painting workshop. Community created butterfly signs displayed in public green spaces. Seed Stories printed on Native Seed Packets.

Grant Funding: Local Cultural Council, ECCF Special Projects + Collective Futures Fund



## **Plant Paint Cross-Pollinate 2025 160 people painted**

Winter seed sowing + painting workshop. Community created butterfly signs displayed in public green spaces. Seed Stories printed on Native Seed Packets.

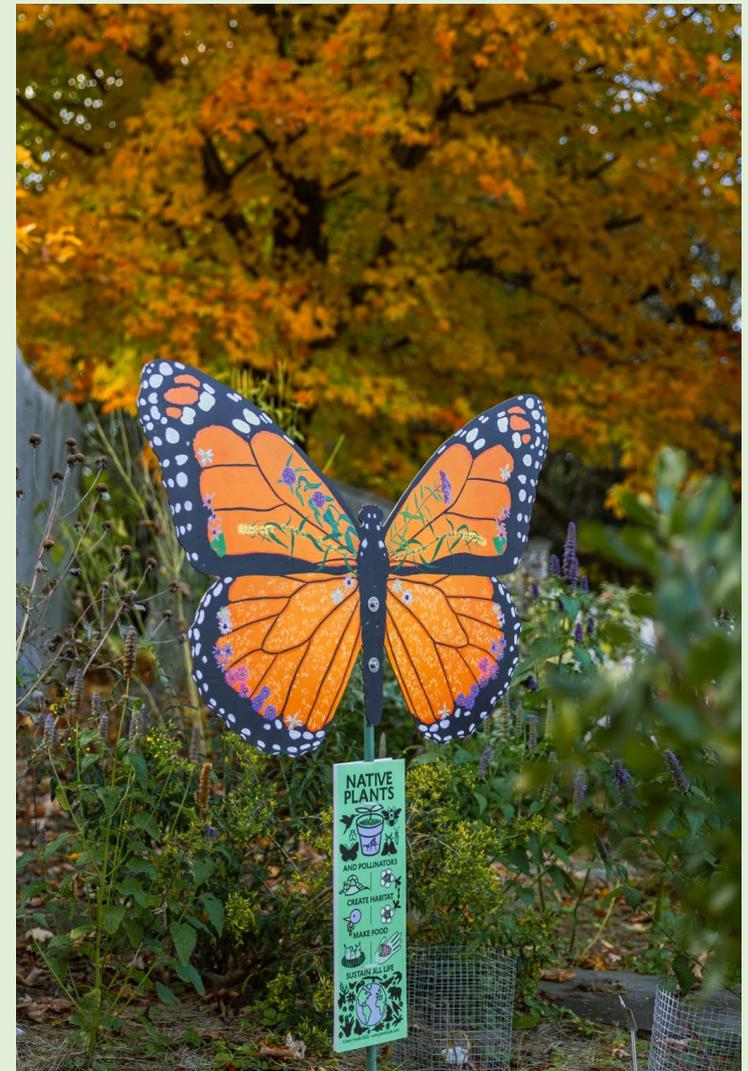
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# Creative Placemaking

## Art Activation

## Education

## Call to Action



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## Art Activation

## Education

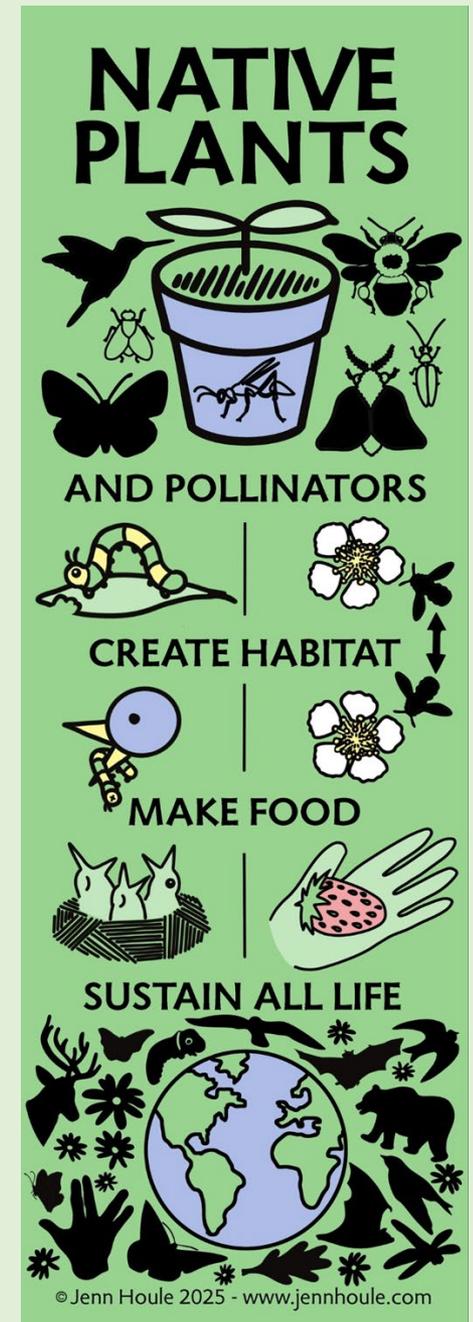
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# Creative Placemaking

Art Activation

Education

Call to Action

DIY

Yard Signs

Rustoleum

Acrylic paint



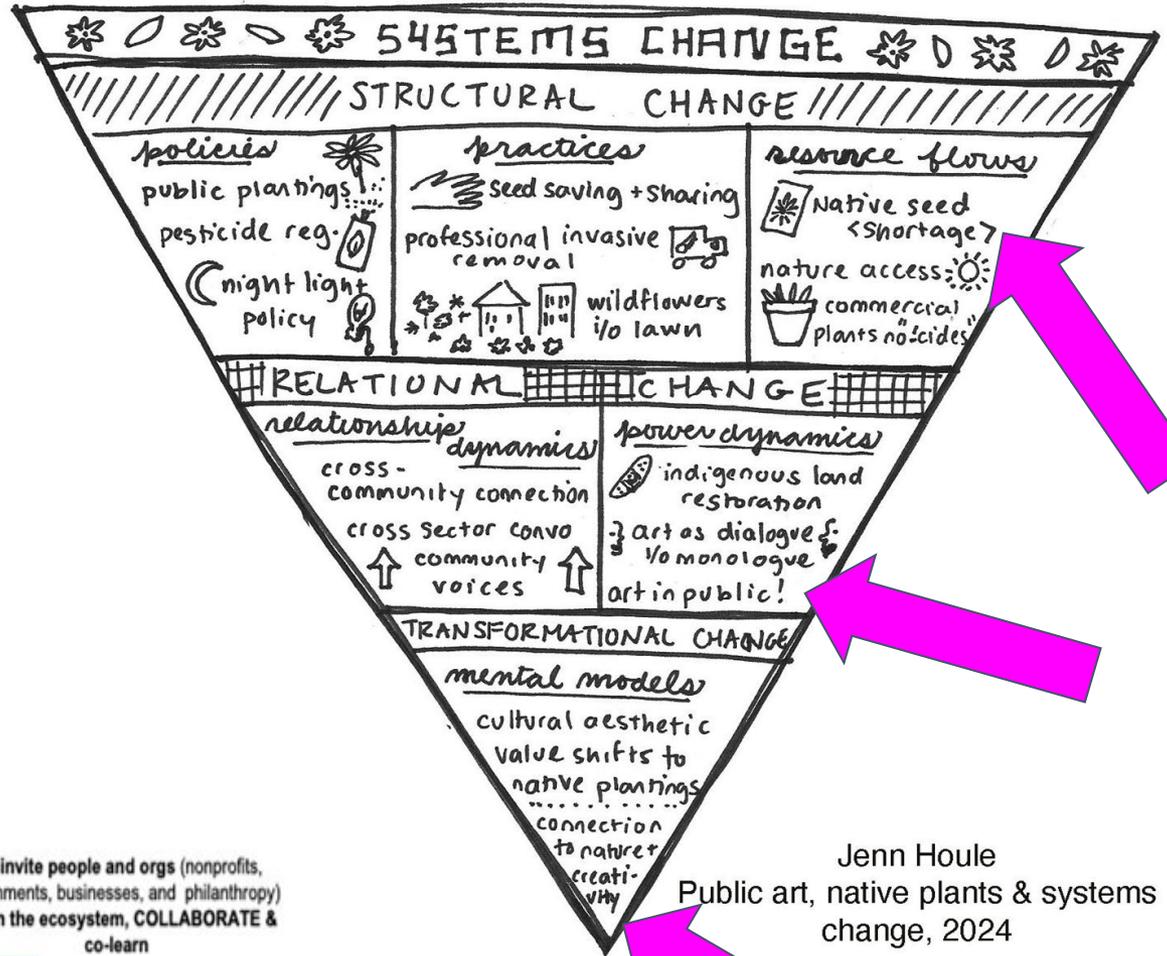
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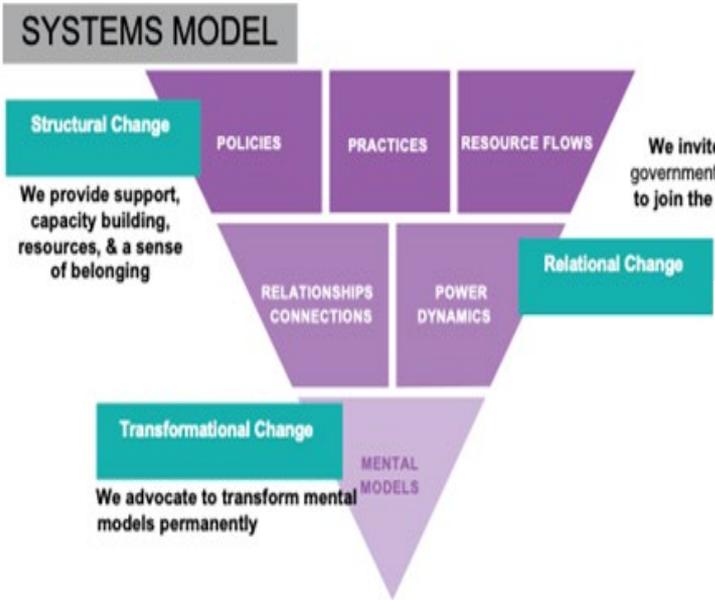
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# Systems Change

- Structural change
- Relational change
- Transformational change



Jenn Houle  
Public art, native plants & systems change, 2024



We invite people and orgs (nonprofits, governments, businesses, and philanthropy) to join the ecosystem, COLLABORATE & co-learn



## Connection to nature

# Creative Placemaking

## Art Activation

## Education

## Call to Action

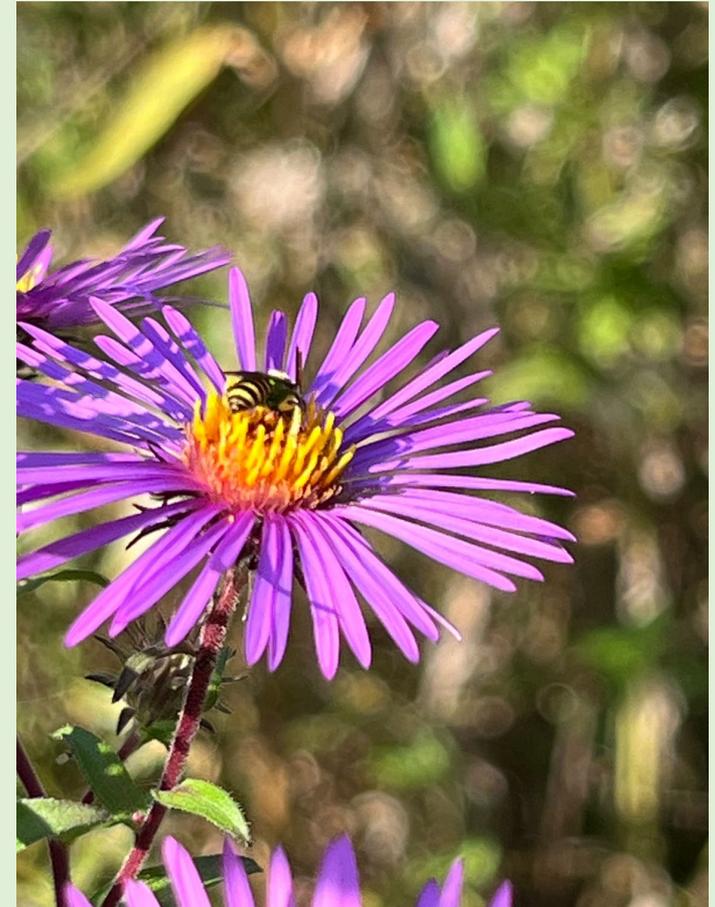


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## **Cultural aesthetic value shift**

Dark skies instead of lit up houses

Native or ecotypic plants instead of lawn & ornamentals



# Glow Mural Project

Partnership: Greenbelt + Jenn Houle  
2025 Community Science Project

This initiative was made possible through a Creative County Initiative grant from the Essex County Community Foundation





# Four Greenbelt Sites August - November 2025

Seine Field (Gloucester), Ordway Reservation (West Newbury)

Donovan Reservation (Hamilton) Vineyard Hill Reservation (Hamilton/Topsfield)



## Glow Murals

Community Science Project  
Greenbelt + Jenn Houle 2025

This initiative was made possible through a Creative County Initiative grant from the Essex County Community Foundation.

Image credit Main Paige Media.



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## Four Stepping Stones per Site

Four sets of four stones: keystone tree leaf, moth/butterfly, migratory bird, moon phase filled with nocturnal animals



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# Gauge for light pollution

Stones glow best under dark skies.



## Glow Murals

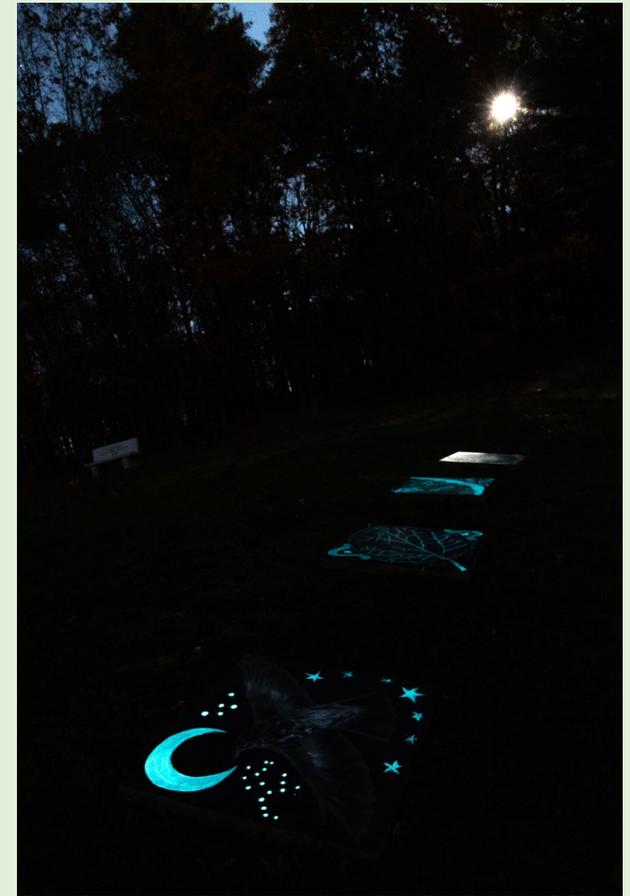
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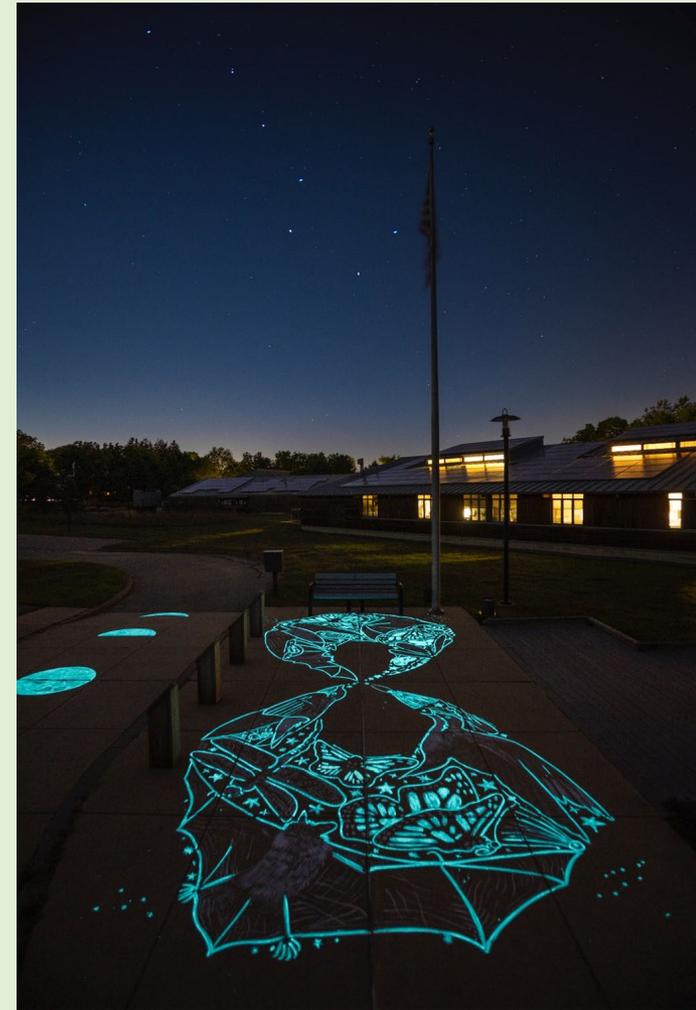
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# Gauge for light pollution

Glow best under dark skies.



**Dark Skies** in collaboration with Parker River National Wildlife Refuge, as part of Great Marsh Artist in Residence through Manship Artist Residency

Photo credit: Lance Hidy & Greg Nikas

# Gauge for light pollution

Mural glows best under dark skies.



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Image credit Main Paige Media.

# Dark Skies Talk

With Greenbelt, Carol Decker (West Newbury Wild & Native), Jenn Houle Giveaways! Native Seeds with poems, zines and stickers.



**PROTECTING NIGHTTIME POLLINATORS**

TALK @ ORWAY RESERVATION  
10/29 6-8PM

WEST NEWBURY Wild & Native

Greenbelt

FREE STICKERS + SEEDS! SIGN UP!

**GLOW MURALS!**



# Glow Murals

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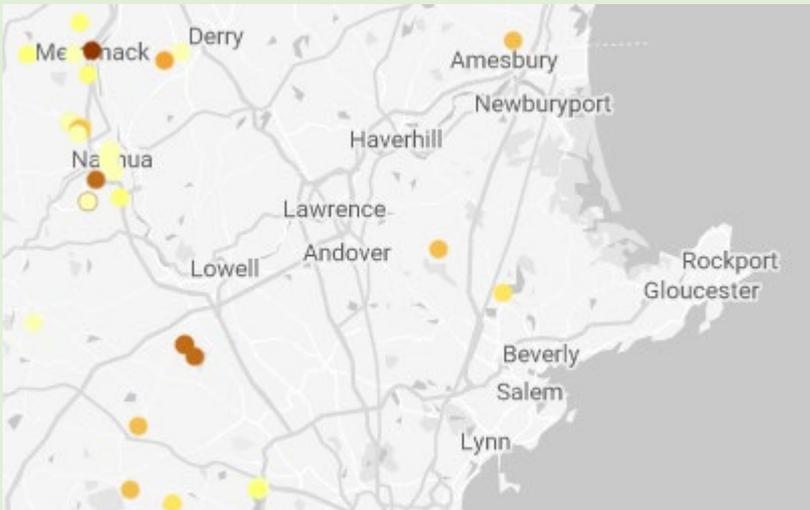
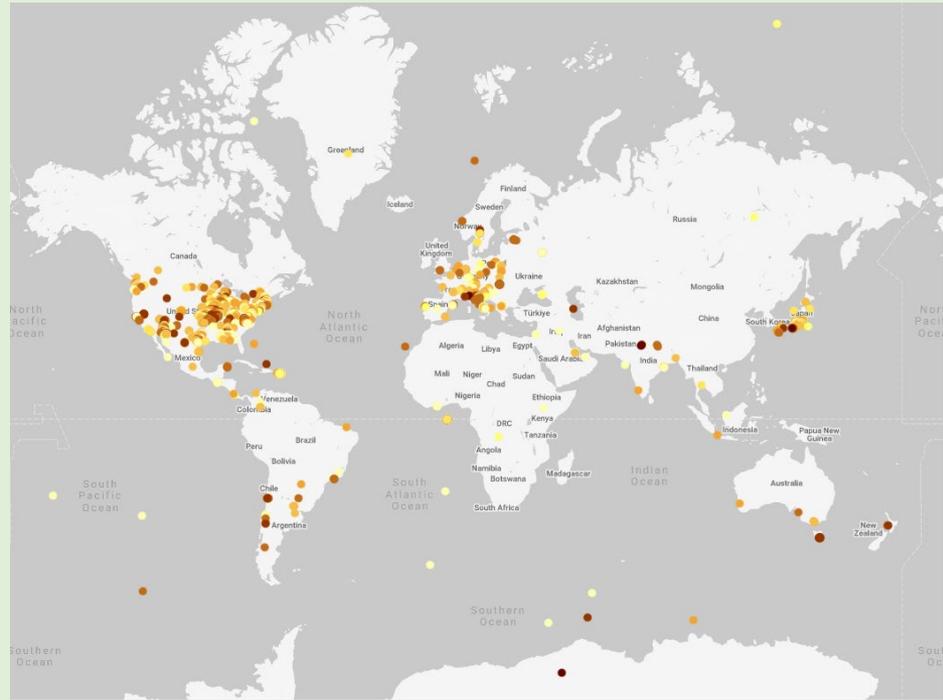
# Globe at Night

## Community Science Project

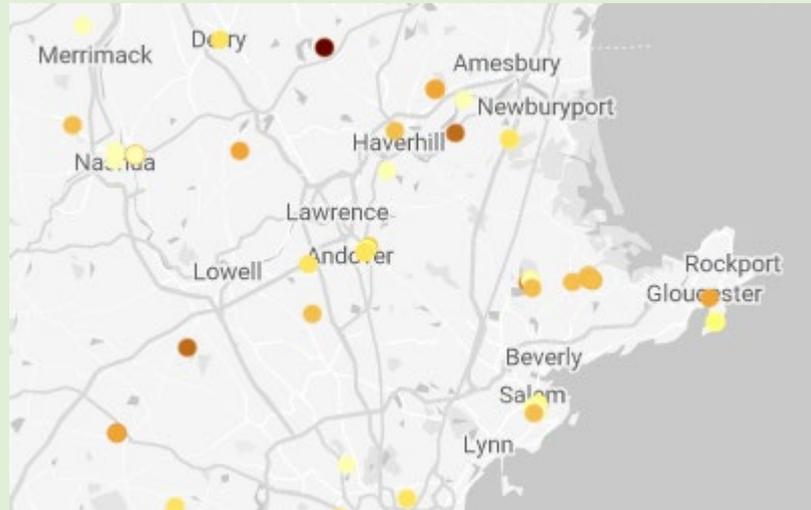
### Greenbelt + Jenn Houle

#### 2025

This initiative was made possible through a Creative County Initiative grant from the Essex County Community Foundation.



**2024 Submissions in Essex County: 3**  
**Towns: 3**



**2025 Submissions in Essex County: 35**  
**Towns: 10**

# Plant in 2025 sites, repeat annually!

## Stepping stones to build habitat



# Glow Murals

Community Science Project  
**Greenbelt + Jenn Houle 2025**

This initiative was made possible through a Creative County Initiative grant from the Essex County Community Foundation.

# Share/Collect Art Activation Ideas

Inspired by the Slow River Studio - January Joy Squad

**Let's share what we came up with! Place your post-its on the appropriate board.**

Consider doing this activity with your stakeholders, board members and staff.  
When we add creativity into the planning process, we also add energy, commitment and joy.  
This is the fuel for bigger projects, more engagement and conservation!





Questions  
and  
Answers



# Project Resources:

- MA Database of Arts and Culture [www.creativeground.org](http://www.creativeground.org)
- MA Council for Art Education  
<https://councilforarteducation.org/massachusetts/>
- Fiber Arts Guilds  
<https://mafafiber.org/fiber-map/>
- MA Art Gallery Listing [https://www.art-collecting.com/galleries\\_ma.htm](https://www.art-collecting.com/galleries_ma.htm)
- Collaborate with local art businesses. Consider what can you can offer them? It's a lot!
- Post invitations in Artsake or Hireculture
- Art Associations & Local Cultural Councils
- Systems Change ECCF diagram explanation
- Contact local high schools/colleges for intern opportunities and teacher collaborations
- [Glow Sand distributor](#) : Ambient Glow Technology

# Creative Ground - MA Arts Database



Search

About

Dig In | Resources

Blog

Log in

Get Listed

## Welcome!

Connect with Creative New England

The region's artists, creatives, culture bearers, arts and culture organizations and creative businesses create and maintain their own profiles here.

**We invite you to explore and make contact!**

When creative communities are supported, all communities thrive. [Learn More](#)

## In the Spotlight



The Arts Bus



🔍 Search the creative people and places of New England

Add a Profile Type

Artist / Creative (Inc) ▼

Add an Activity

Public Art Projects ▼

Add a State

Massachusetts ▼

Search

# Conclusions for Greenbelt:

- Art activations expand your audience
- Create new accessibility options
- Increase capacity of both partners
- More meaningful takeaways
- Connect to the mission



# Contact:

Jennifer Houle

[jenn@jennhoule.com](mailto:jenn@jennhoule.com)

Jane Rumrill

[jane@ecga.org](mailto:jane@ecga.org)

Jess Yurwitz

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