

# Beyond DEI Statements

## A Case Study for Delivering a Land Trust Mission in a Gateway City





## **Our Mission:**

Wildlands Trust works throughout Southeastern Massachusetts to permanently protect native habitats, farmland, and lands of high ecologic and scenic value that serve to keep our communities healthy and our residents connected to the natural world.








## **Our Vision:**

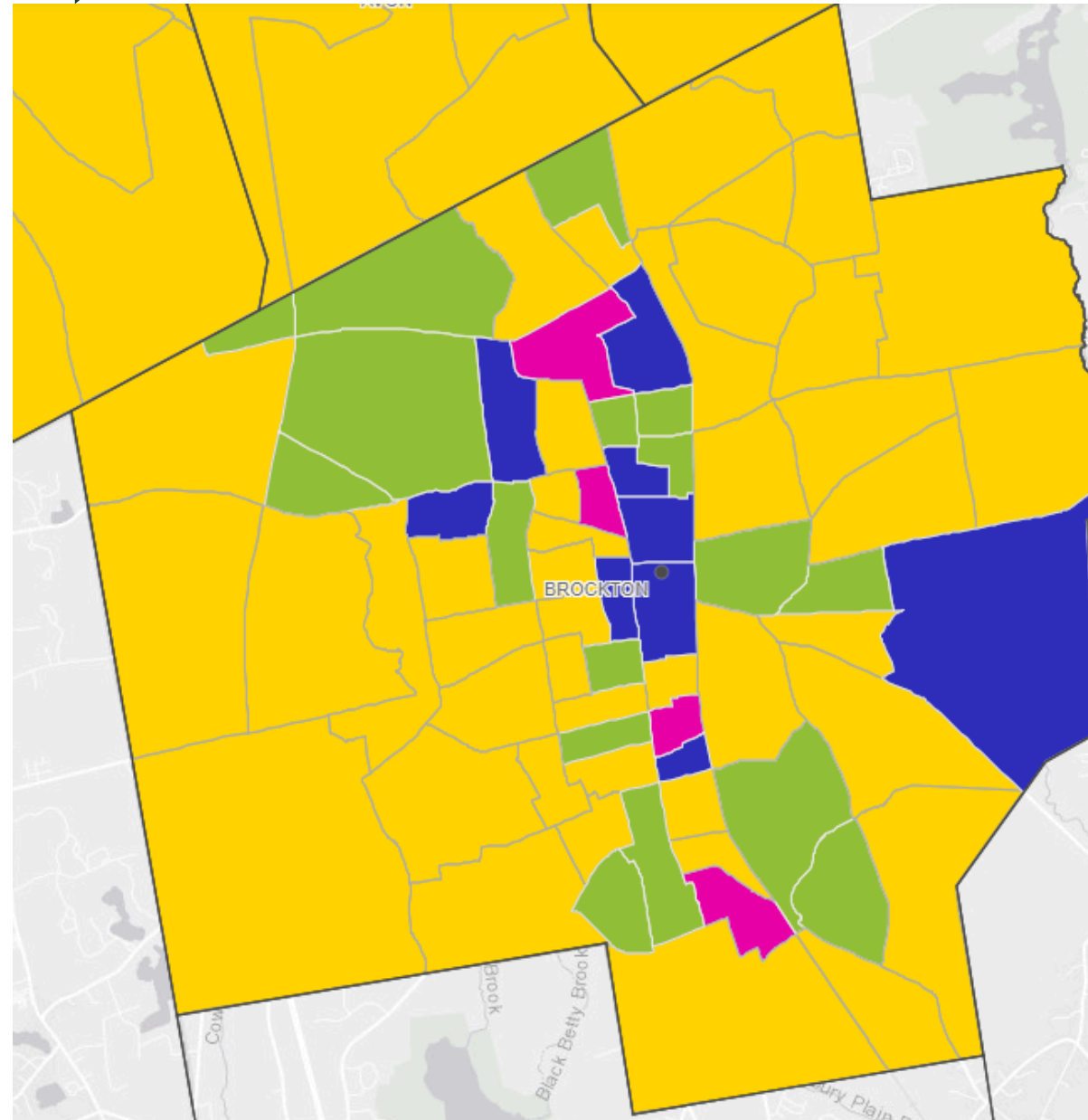
We envision a future where our region's water and air are pure and open lands are abundant, with forests, farms, wetlands, fields, ponds and coastal areas commonplace sightings on our landscape.

## **Our Commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion :**

Wildlands Trust is committed to protecting land and providing access to nature for the people of our region, regardless of income, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or gender identity. We will approach our work with complete respect for the cultures and perspectives of the communities we serve as we endeavor to connect and inspire all people to care about the natural world and the future of our planet.

# Going Beyond DEI Statements

- ➔  Minority: the block group minority population is  $\geq$  40%, or the block group minority population is  $\geq$  25% and the median household income of the municipality the block group is in is  $<$  150% of the Massachusetts median household income
-  Income: at least 25% of households have a median household income 65% or less than the state median household income
-  Language isolation: 25% or more of households do not include anyone older than 14 who speaks English very well
- ➔  Minority and Income
- ➔  Minority and English isolation
-  Income and English isolation
- ➔  Minority, Income and English isolation



## How do we deliver on our DEI commitment in Brockton?

### Diversity:

Making the choice to serve the diverse Brockton Community, a city with 98% EJ due to race, income, and language.

### Equity:

Ensuring that this community has access to the same benefits of nature as other, non EJ communities in our service area.

### Inclusion:

Making the deliberate effort to develop fair and meaningful ways for people to participate in our programming.

# Wildlands Trust in Brockton Timeline



**2010**  
Brockton Audubon Preserve

**2016**  
Stone Farm Conservation Area

**2022**  
D. W. Field Park Initiative

**2024**  
Climate Crew

**2025**  
DWFP 100th Celebration

Green Team

Brockton Kids Lead the Way

**2017**  
Greening the Gateway Cities

**2015**  
BHS Envirothon Team



# Land Protection & Stewardship



## Overview

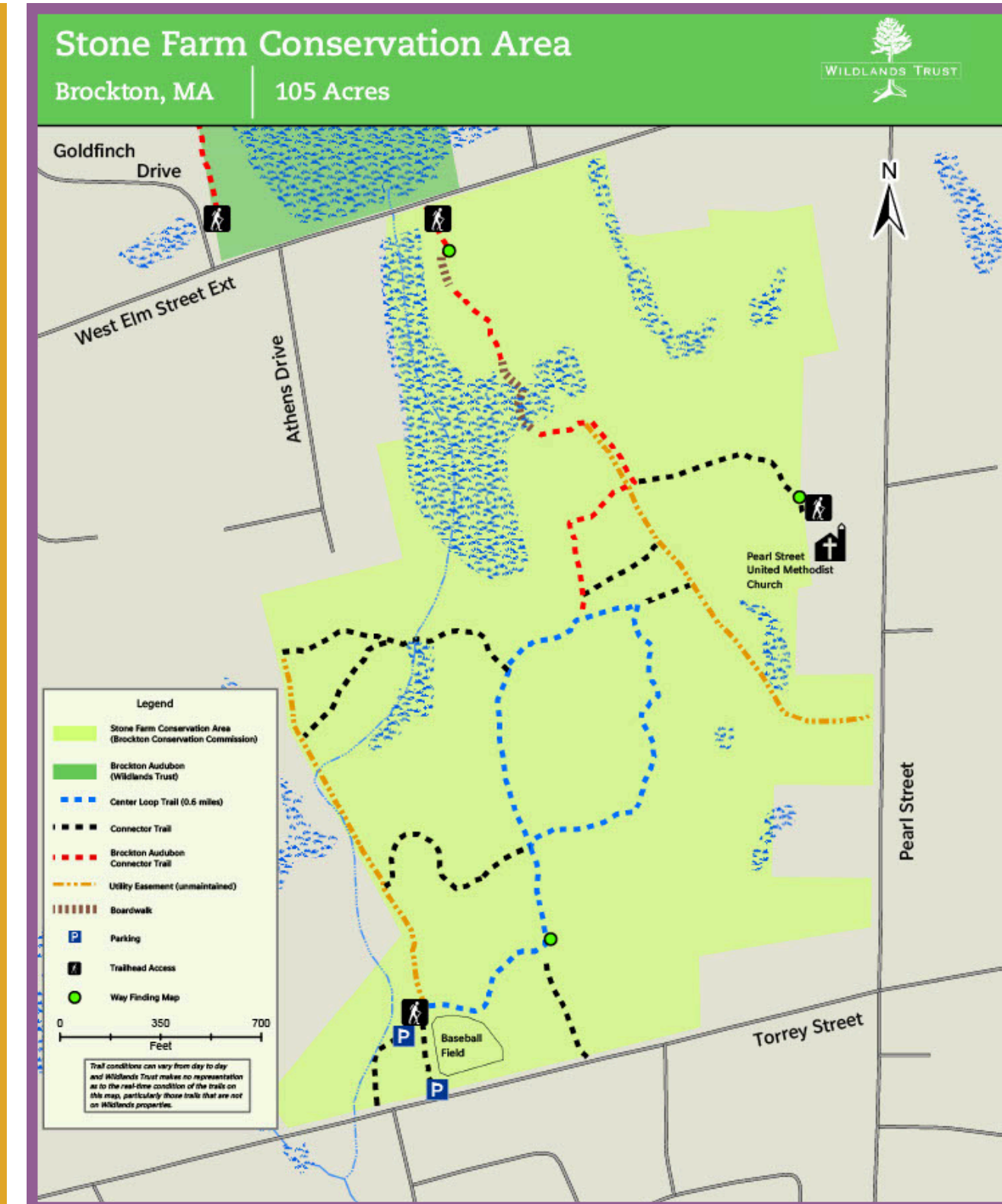
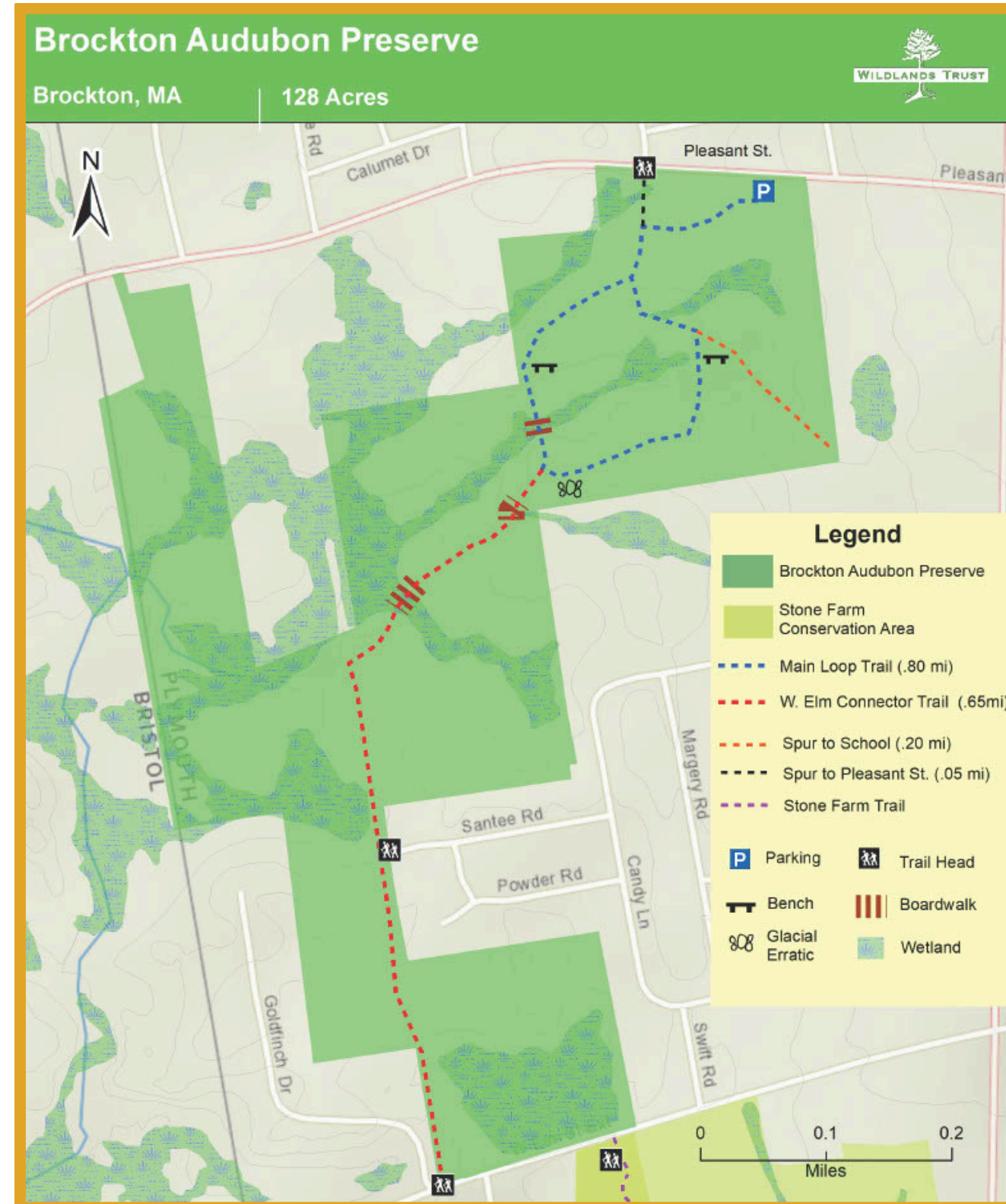
Two major land projects in Brockton launched Wildlands involvement in the city.

### Brockton Audubon Preserve:

- Acquired in 2010
- 128 acres, ~2 miles of trails
- Fee property, showcase preserve

### Stone Farm Conservation Area:

- Owned by city
- 105 acres, trails connect to BAP
- City maintains ownership, Wildlands stewards property



# Land Protection & Stewardship



## How did it start?

**Brockton Audubon Preserve:**  
Brockton Audubon Society dissolving, 2010

**Stone Farm Conservation Area:**  
Wildlands Trust's new Community  
Stewardship Program, 2016

## Funding

Restoration work from Mass Trails grants  
(\$25K BAP, \$20K SFCA)

- Mapping & clearing trails
- Parking
- Kiosks, interpretive signage, & amenities
- Boardwalks - repairs and new

## Partners

City of Brockton:

- Department of Planning and Economic Development
- Conservation Commission

## Lessons Learned

- Mass Trails grants - yes, please!
- "If you build it, they will come" - not so much.
- Providing services and building community - Brockton High School, Hancock School, scout troops, volunteers, church groups

# Land Protection & Stewardship



## Community Highlights

- BioBlitz at Brockton Audubon in 2014 with Stonehill College and Brockton High School.
- Brockton Nature Festival at Stone Farm, 2019. 200+ people attended to explore trails and community vendors.
- Birding with the granddaughter of Brockton Audubon Society founder
- Currently 6 Adopt-a-Preserve volunteers and 1 volunteer hike leader for these properties.

*“I love and know how hard the management and work can be. Thank you for a pleasant experience.”*  
– Brockton Audubon Preserve Visitor, Rate My Hike



## Unique Delivery of our Mission to Meet DEI Commitment

- Stewardship of Stone Farm at no cost to the city (Community Stewardship Program - talk this afternoon with Karen Grey)
- Keeping programs fees under \$10 - usually free
- Offering to guide existing groups on trail hikes
- Volunteer engagement with individuals and groups
- Anticipating and removing barriers to access, and continuing to adapt and improve as we learn



# Brockton High School Envirothon



## Overview

The Envirothon is an environmental education program for high school students that prepares them for environmental careers and active citizenship.

Students prepare throughout the school year to compete at state-wide competition. Students compete to show their proficiency across four Ecostations, Soil, Water, Forestry, and Wildlife, by answering written questions and applying hands-on knowledge demonstration.



# Brockton High School Envirothon



## How did this start?

Started with our interest in forming a team. In 2015, we found the right teacher connection. Wildlands met Joyce Voorhis and her students at a mini BioBlitz we hosted at Brockton Audubon Preserve to celebrate its opening.

## Partners

- Brockton High School
- Manomet Conservation Sciences
- Massachusetts Envirothon
  - & their many partners!
- Local topic experts

## Funding

- 2015 & 2016 – Barr Foundation & Rockland Trust grants
- Self funded by Wildlands and Manomet
- Small grants through Mass. Envirothon
- Giving Tuesday campaign
  - request of \$3,000
  - exceeded goal by \$2,000!

## Lessons Learned

- Teacher pairing was key
- Students are curious about nature
- Stay flexible to meet students interests
- Mass. Envirothon is very supportive

# Brockton High School Envirothon



# Brockton High School Envirothon

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## Unique Delivery of our Mission to Meet DEI Commitment

- In-school approach – meeting the students where they are
- Providing funding for registration fees, transportation, gear, food, and materials
- Dedicating staff time
- Welcoming all students with varying motivations, background knowledge, and interests

# Greening the Gateway Cities (GGCP): Brockton & Taunton



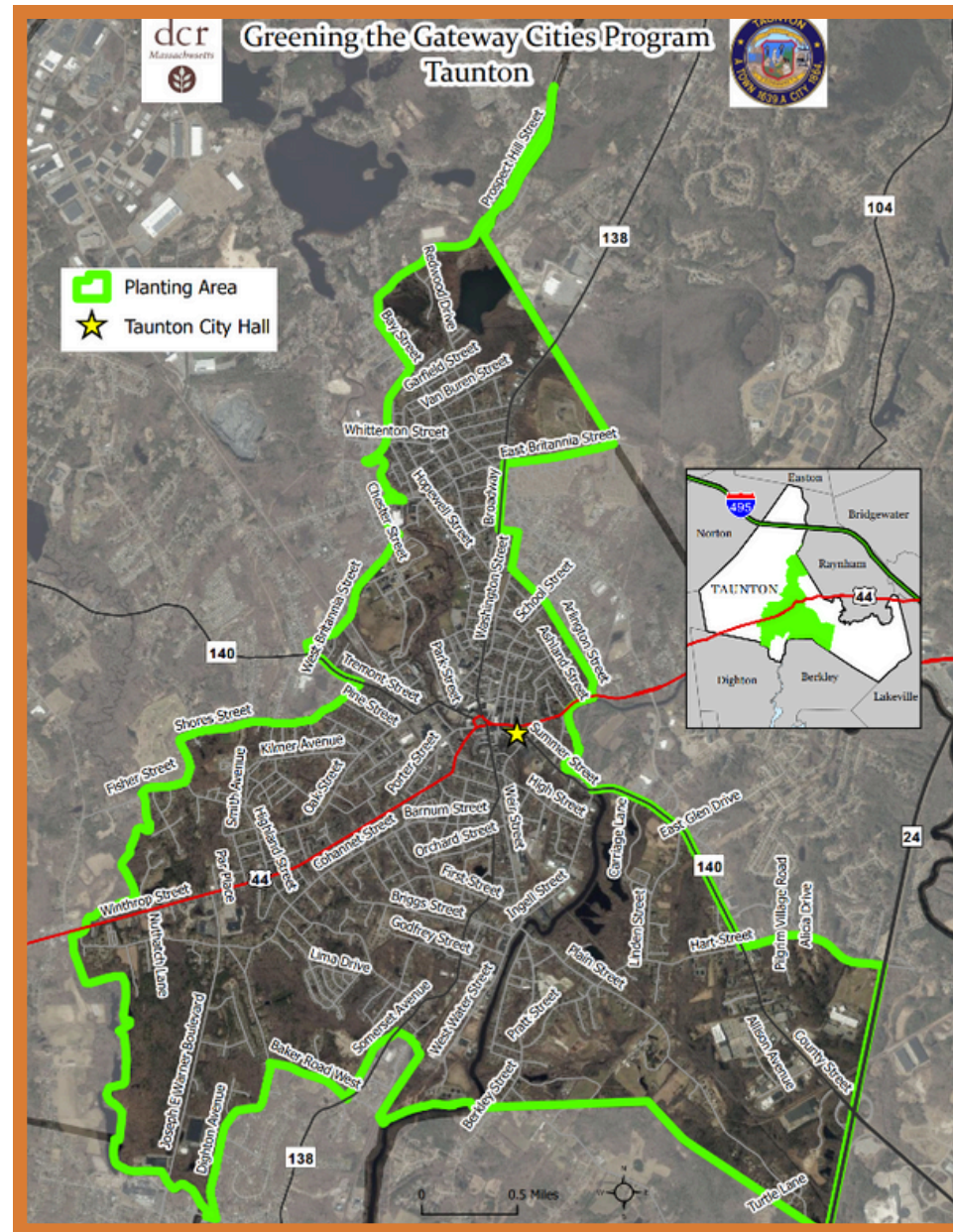
## Overview

State-funded program providing free trees to increase tree canopy cover in urban residential areas and reduce household heating and cooling energy use.

This program is concentrated in EJ neighborhoods. GGCP is active across 23 gateway cities that have:

- low tree canopy
- old housing stock
- high wind speeds
- large renter population

A grant program is available for non-profits to support outreach.



# Greening the Gateway Cities (GGCP): Brockton & Taunton



## How did this start?

- Supported Brockton from 2017 -2021
- Brockton reached its planting goal in 2021
- Rejoined in 2024 with expanded area
  - Taunton and Brockton.

## Partners

- The City of Brockton
- The City of Taunton
- DCR Urban and Community Forestry
- Powder Horn Press
- G & G Custom Silk Screen and Embroidery

## Funding

- Reimbursable grant (includes staff time!)
- Non-profit 501(c)3 organizations
- State-funded
- Annual bid period
- Maximum Award: \$35,000



## Lessons Learned

- Effective outreach takes grit and creativity!
- Be proactive to reach objectives

# Greening the Gateway Cities (GGCP): Brockton & Taunton



## Bus Advertisement

**BROCKTON,**  
get your **FREE** trees!




**GREENING**  
THE GATEWAY CITIES  
MA Urban Canopy Project



617-626-1503  
MAUrbanCanopy.org

## Postcards to Residents

THE STEPS  
ARE SIMPLE

- 1 Schedule a site visit
- 2 Pick your trees
- 3 We plant them
- 4 You water them

### FREE TREES!

Your neighborhood qualifies for free trees through the Greening the Gateway Cities program! As part of this program funded by the state, an experienced Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR) Forester will visit Taunton homes and businesses to recommend the best tree for each property. There are more than 50 species of trees available, each installed by a trained forestry crew and 6-10+ ft. tall at the time of planting. Call 617-939-1559 or visit MAUrbanCanopy.org to set up a site visit!

Endorsed by the Taunton Mayor's Office

*Shaunna*



Taunton Mayor Shaunna O'Connell



**TAUNTON**



617-939-1559  
MAURBANCANOPY.ORG

# **Greening the Gateway Cities (GGCP): Brockton & Taunton**

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## **Unique Delivery of our Mission to Meet DEI Commitment**

- Outreach outside of our properties and bringing benefits of nature to highly developed areas of the city
- Focus on our organization taking a back seat in marketing



# D.W. Field Park Initiative



## Overview

D.W. Field Park is a vibrant city park that serves the community and the environment. We envision a revitalization that will promote and improve recreational opportunities, accessibility, environmental health, and climate resiliency.

### D.W. Field Park:

- 700 acres
- 6 miles of multiuse trails and roadways
- Seven bodies of water
- Access to nature for over 200,000 residents
- 100 years old with significant wear and tear from time and heavy use



*“A place where everyone feels welcome and enjoys the outdoors.”*  
- Maureen Kelly, Supporter

# D.W. Field Park Initiative



## How did it start?

Wildlands was seeking next open space project in Brockton. We reached out to the city and a private funder to discuss the city's largest open space asset, D.W. Field Park. For such a large project, planning would be essential.

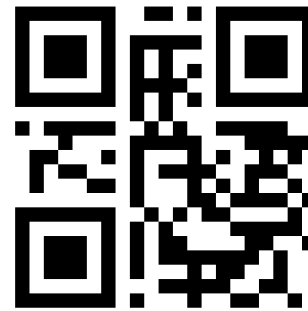
## Funding: 2022 - 2024

### Direct:

- \$305,000 - private foundation
- \$75,000 - MA DCR via ARPA
- \$5,000 - Subaru Share the Love

### Additional:

- \$1.5 million MVP to Town of Avon
- \$12,500 Narragansett Bay Estuary Program to OCPC



## Partners

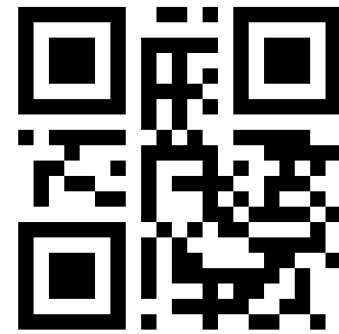
- City of Brockton (multiple depts., esp. Department of Parks and Recreation)
- Environmental Partners
- Old Colony Planning Council
- Town of Avon
- D.W. Field Park Association
- Manomet Conservation Sciences



## Outcomes

- Master Plan - Phase 1
- Community survey - 1,424 responses
- Concept designs - Conway School
- Proposed projects - 13
- 30 adjacent acres conserved in Avon
- Give a Hoot About the Park event

# D.W. Field Park Initiative



## Next Steps

- Funding for proposed projects:
  - 7 site-specific, 6 park-wide projects proposed
  - 75% designs needed
  - Parkway design and build is priority
- Planning for phases 2 & 3
  - Conway designs for north complete

## Lessons Learned

- Collaborating and coauthoring – a lot of work, a better outcome
- Community engagement and enthusiasm
- Funding challenges for design
- The work is messy, but motivating



# D.W. Field Park Initiative

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## Unique Delivery of our Mission to Meet DEI Commitment

- Within framework of Community Stewardship, but broadens to include a park - very different infrastructure
- Expands reach for connecting with community around environmental benefits and concerns
- Using community (public, friends group, focus groups) and professional (planners, engineers, municipal employees, educators) input to guide the project

# Brockton Kids Lead the Way



## Overview

NOAA funded 4-year grant awarded to Manomet Conservation Sciences to increase environmental literacy in Brockton.

2022-23: Manthala George Jr. Elementary School

2023-24: Hancock Elementary School

2024-25: Raymond Elementary School

Wildlands subcontracted by Manomet to plan and build outdoor learning spaces at each school.



# Brockton Kids Lead the Way



## How did it start?

Manomet received funding in 2022 from NOAA's Environmental Literacy program to foster city students' connection to nature.

## Partners

- Manomet Conservation Sciences
- The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Environmental Literacy Program
- Brockton Public Schools

## Funding

NOAA funding 4 years 2022 - 2025, 3 summers of builds.

## Lessons Learned

- Builds are great opportunities for youth and adult volunteers
- Vastly different needs and interests at different schools
- Reducing maintenance needs during design/build based on school capacity

# Brockton Kids Lead the Way



# Brockton Kids Lead the Way

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## Unique Delivery of our Mission to Meet DEI Commitment

- Bringing community stewardship concepts to school grounds
- Working closely with the community – teachers, staff, students  
– to design and develop areas that suit their needs and interests
- Connecting with elementary age group
- Engaging community volunteers and Green Team/Climate Crew in the building of the learning areas



# Brockton Summer Programs



## Overview

Brockton summer programs provide paid service-learning that engages teens in environmental stewardship in Brockton and the surrounding area.

**Goal 1:** Empower Brockton teens as leaders in environmental stewardship through hands-on projects that benefit the community

**Goal 2:** Increase youth knowledge and understanding of the city's natural resources and ecology through environmental monitoring and exposure to local habitats.

**Goal 3:** Develop college and workforce readiness through practical stewardship skills, career exposure, and community engagement.



# Brockton Summer Programs



## How did this start?

Green Team originated in 2015 based in Plymouth and moved to Brockton in 2022 with DWFPI. We added Climate Crew in summer of 2024 and is now blended into the 2025 Green Team plans.

## Partners

- The City of Brockton
  - Department of Parks and Recreation
  - Department of Public Works
- Manomet Conservation Sciences

## Funding

- 2022-2024 \$10K/yr from private foundation
- 2024 CC LSPA funding \$3,500
- Self funded for staff time
- City support for supplies
- In-kind donations
- Applied for \$46K grant for summer 2025

## Lessons Learned

- Stipends are important – gives real value
- Projects that serve goal of the program
- Market apps. where it reaches the audience
- Assume good intent!
- Sets a foundation for their career

# Brockton Summer Programs



# Brockton Summer Programs

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## **Unique Delivery of our Mission to Meet DEI Commitment**

- Meets youth where they are in the community
- Provides an entry into the environmental field
- Values youth by paying for their time/contributions to the team
- Assists with transportation challenges when needed



# Going Beyond DEI Statements



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## Diversity:

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## Equity:

Ensuring that this community has access to the same benefits of nature as other, non EJ communities in our service area.

## Inclusion:

Making the deliberate effort to develop fair and meaningful ways for people to participate in our programming.





**WILDLANDS**  
T R U S T

**THANK YOU!**



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