

Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust



FOUNDED: 1990
CURRENT ORGANIZATION BUDGET: \$649,000
CONTACT: Jane Calvin, Executive Director
PHONE: 978.934.0030
EMAIL: jcalvin@lowelllandtrust.org
WEB: www.LowellLandTrust.org

Investment Opportunity

Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust (LP&CT) is seeking \$1.7M over the next two years. These funds will allow LP&CT to deepen its impact by expanding educational programs and increasing office space to accommodate a growing staff. Additional funding will also support closing gaps in its recreational trail network to enhance public health, and advancing organization’s efforts to protect the last family farm in Lowell and create the Pawtucket Farm Wildlife Sanctuary.

The Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust (LP&CT) is a private, non-profit land trust located in Lowell, MA, founded in 1990. LP&CT provides conservation leadership and programs focusing on four key areas: protecting places, conserving nature, activating stewards, and connecting people. LP&CT addresses several issues, including:

- **Inequitable Access:** Lowell is an **environmental justice community** with a mere 5% of land dedicated as open space and less than 3.4% for recreation.
- **Health Concerns:** Lowell’s rates of diabetes (9.6%), adult obesity (30.4%), and asthma (15.8%) are higher than the state average.
- **Nature Deficit Disorder:** Growing evidence shows that lack of time outdoors contributes to nature-deficit disorder, the diminished use of the senses, attention difficulties, and poor environmental stewardship.
- **Conservation Challenges:** Many natural resources are at risk due to urbanization. For example, the native Blanding’s turtle population is threatened due to encroachment of its habitat.

LP&CT uses innovative and community-based approaches to improve residents’ lives and health, increase economic opportunities, bring communities together, and minimize the impact of climate change.

Two-Year Goals

- Grow staff from 3.5 to 7 FTEs
- Renew Land Trust accreditation
- Update strategic plan
- Acquire Pawtucket Farm Wildlife Sanctuary and open to public
- Build education center

Ways to Invest

FINANCIAL

- \$1.5M assists with purchase of Pawtucket Farm
- \$90k provides Development Coordinator
- \$70k provides education programming at Pawtucket Farm
- \$50k provides an EV cargo van for transportation
- \$10k covers the cost of 1 student in the teen program

IN-KIND

- Pro bono assistance (legal, database, website/IT support, landscape architects)
- Office space
- Gardening tools and supplies
- Volunteer land stewards
- Board members with growth management and development experience

Leadership & Governance

The community of Lowell drives LP&CT. Most of its eleven experienced and committed Board members live and work in Lowell, allowing them to have a grassroots approach to addressing community needs. Collectively, their Board of Directors has expertise in conservation, sustainability, energy and environmental affairs, environmental law, nonprofit and volunteer work, program management, education, and youth and community engagement. LP&CT's Executive Director, Jane Calvin, has nearly three decades of experience working in urban conservation.

“

Investing in urban kids and schools – and using conservation as a tool to teach leadership, self-esteem, and educational success – is something that ... other conservation groups should emulate.

”

JUDY ANDERSON
Community Consultant



LP&CT's MODEL

Creating Community Through Conservation



Protecting Places

Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust is one of the few urban land trusts in the United States. A key focus of the organization is establishing and safeguarding special places, parks, and open spaces. LP&CT has **protected over 30 acres of land in Lowell**, including: Hawk Valley Farm, Donahue Park, Jollene Dubner Park, and West Meadow. In addition, LP&CT is in the process of protecting another 20 acres, which is the last family farm in Lowell and will serve as a vital connection between the state forest and the Merrimack River.

Conserving Nature

LP&CT's conservation efforts advance beyond land, including engaging community scientists as volunteers to monitor Lowell's unique plants and animals.

The **Blanding's Turtle Conservation** project protects an endangered New England turtle species. LP&CT hosts a **turtle headstarting program**, in partnership with Zoo New England, local volunteers, and schools, which allows turtle hatchlings to be raised in captivity (short-term) to increase their chances of survival into adulthood.

The **Fish Monitoring Program** ensures that the local river herring population continues to thrive. Volunteers monitor the passage of herring and other species in Lowell, enabling LP&CT to get a better understanding of what kind of modifications are needed to allow for upstream fish passage at the Talbot Mills Dam in Billerica. Opening up fish passage at the Talbot Mills Dam will allow fish to access the entire Sudbury, Assabet, and Concord (SuAsCo) Watershed – the largest untapped acreage of fish habitat in all of New England.

LP&CT's impact is not limited to protected acreage, but also the tree canopy. The Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust, the City of Lowell, and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation have partnered to plant trees where they are most needed in the city. In 2022, 268 "equity" trees that provide much-needed shade and other benefits in vulnerable neighborhoods were planted.

“

LP&CT [...] enables everyone, no matter who they are, no matter where they live, no matter what their income level is [...] to have the opportunity to experience nature right in their own backyard.

”

KAY DOYLE
Past President, Greater Lowell Community Foundation

Key Investors

- CUMMINGS FOUNDATION
- GREATER LOWELL COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
- RICHARD K. & NANCY L. DONAHUE CHARITABLE FOUNDATION
- THEODORE EDSON PARKER FOUNDATION

Partners

- CITY OF LOWELL/LOWELL PUBLIC SCHOOLS
- MASS AUDUBON
- MILL CITY GROWS
- LOWELL NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK
- MASSACHUSETTS RIVERS ALLIANCE
- MERRIMACK RIVER WATERSHED COUNCIL
- SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION
- UMASS LOWELL

Connecting People

LP&CT makes room for community members to reconnect with one another and nature by creating, connecting, and conserving places for them to explore and protect. Their work with the **Concord River Greenway** illustrates their capacity to be a **catalyst** in improving the quality of life in Lowell.

The Concord River is a scenic, natural, cultural, and historical resource of national importance. By completing the Concord River Greenway, LP&CT will reconnect Lowell’s largest open spaces, preserve the historic corridor that once divided neighborhoods, and create a multi-use recreational asset and vital transportation alternative to get downtown. The Greenway will also provide a missing link in the 200-mile Bay Circuit Trail and connect to the 25-mile Bruce Freeman Rail Trail.

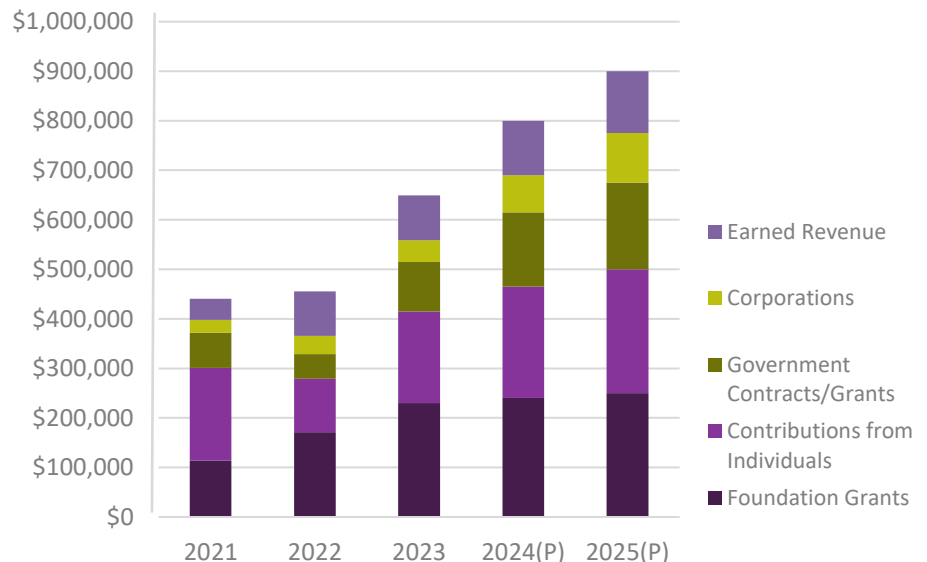
Activating Stewards

LP&CT connects kids, young adults, and older adults to nature, community, and each other. For example, the afterschool program, **Lowell Leaders in Stewardship (LLIS)**, is a STEM-based environmental education program offered in partnership with Mass Audubon and the Lowell Public School system. LLIS engages future generations in the stewardship of Lowell’s natural resources. In 2022, LP&CT supported 1,080 students in its afterschool programs. In addition, they offered 66 programs and had 419 volunteers.

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

LP&CT is funded largely through foundations; contributions from corporate and individual donors; and federal, state, and municipal contracts. In order for LP&CT to expand its programs and continue to protect Lowell’s special places, the organization seeks to increase and diversify its revenue streams in the coming years.

Revenue by Source



*Note: This excludes a \$1.25M anonymous donation for Pawtucket Farm in 2023.

Success Story: Lily & Amina

Lily and Amina joined LP&CT’s after-school program, “Lowell Leaders in Stewardship,” as incoming 9th graders. They showed an early sense of justice and were good students, but they faced personal problems that held them back.

After learning about rain gardens and how they reduce stormflow, they noticed that the alley next to the school needed attention. Lily and Amina asked to speak to their Congresswoman, Niki Tsongas, who welcomed their visit. They were brave enough to request funding for the rain garden project. Since Amina and Lily had the tools and knowledge from their afterschool program, and community support, they successfully advocated for funding and planted the rain garden. These young women are still passionate about sustainability and conservation as they pursue their college degrees.



PROGRAM PERFORMANCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH

Below is a summary of the key measures that the Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust will track to demonstrate progress, create internal accountability, incorporate lessons learned, and adjust strategy as necessary.

	FY 2023	FY 2024 (P)	FY 2025 (P)
PROGRAM PERFORMANCE			
Land conservation for the community (acres)	8	28	33
Teens served (youths to college/STEM)	7	14	21
Closing gaps in recreational trail network (miles)	1.75	4	6
ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH/CAPACITY-BUILDING			
Number of staff members	3.5	5	7
Square footage for programmatic activities	2,000	3,000	4,000
Number of board directors representing diverse stakeholders	3 of 11	5 of 11	7 of 12
Strategic plan	Update	Implement	Measure
Total Revenue	\$649,000	\$800,000	\$900,000

SOCIAL IMPACT

It is clear that LP&CT is improving the quality of life in Lowell, and you can see how residents are driving the change on the ground. With the help of its committed staff, members, volunteers, and citizens, LP&CT has protected and opened land that is publicly accessible to the community. LP&CT provides a safe, inclusive, and healthy space for people to learn about the environment, care for the land and wildlife, and connect to one another. The community of Lowell is eager to access green spaces, and LP&CT is honored to partner with them to ensure that **nature truly is for everyone**. Below is the summary of the social impact that the Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust aspires to have on Lowell in the next two years.

INDICATOR	2023	2025
Number of programs and events offered	66	88
Number of stewards/volunteers engaged	419	500
Number of different types of educational partnerships	3	7
Number of program participants	2,120	3,300
Number of trees planted	268	400