



# Hands-On, Minds-On, and Boots-On Learning

Spotting scope. Check. Field guides. Check. Teens and adults committed to urban environmental stewardship. Check. To develop dedicated environmentalists in urban areas where we do not own land or buildings, Mass Audubon has partnered with Groundwork Lawrence, a nonprofit organization working to promote the environmental, economic, and social well-being of that city.

“Mass Audubon’s success in Boston and Worcester, along with educational outreach in other urban communities such as Pittsfield, Lowell, and New Bedford inspired us to develop this new model for our organization,” says Gloria Villegas-Cardoza, Mass Audubon’s director of education and diversity. “We are committed to building sustained alliances and capacity of community organizations with a similar mission. Their success will be our success in engaging *all* residents—in particular, underserved and recent immigrant populations—in our important work.”

Flash back to September 2009. With training from Mass Audubon scientist Lou Wagner and naturalist Chris Leahy, the Groundwork Lawrence Green Team of ten energetic high school students began conducting Rapid Ecological Assessments (ecological surveys of plants and animals) at sites along the Spicket River. Over this past winter, the teens learned the nuts and bolts of creating trail maps and visitor guides from Mass Audubon Visitor Education Coordinator

Lucy Gertz, and they took a field trip to the Boston Nature Center (BNC). There, they learned about ecological restoration and the features of the green building, and also studied animal tracks while snowshoeing with Mass Audubon naturalist Peter Duran and the six teens who work with Mass Audubon staff at the BNC.

If additional funding is received, Mass Audubon staff will teach the Green Team to use technology, such as GIS/GPS equipment, to complete maps of additional vacant lots for inclusion in a natural resource management plan for the Spicket River. The end goal? To create a three-mile “emerald bracelet” along the waterway, comprising multiple green sites, linked by a walking trail and interpretive signage.

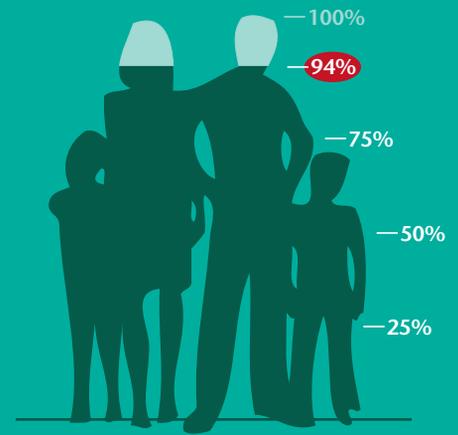
“Our partnership with Mass Audubon has helped build Groundwork Lawrence staff capacity to do more with environmental education,” says Groundwork Lawrence Education Program Manager Rose Gonzalez. “We want the youth to be good environmental stewards and give back to their community but also to broaden their skills and experiences. Fortunately, this program meets both goals and we hope it continues.”

*This project is part of Mass Audubon’s Connecting People and Nature Campaign (see sidebar) and is funded by a TogetherGreen fellowship and the U.S. EPA.*

▲ Jan Kruse

## BUILDING CONSERVATION COMMUNITIES

Goal: \$34,376,000



More than 750,000 children and adults interact with Mass Audubon each year, through our statewide network of wildlife sanctuaries. This project of Mass Audubon’s *Connecting People and Nature Campaign* supports initiatives that strengthen our sanctuaries and programs.

### Recent Successes

**Opened** five new sanctuaries (Burncoat Pond, Lynes, Conway Hills, Lime Kiln, and Eagle Lake); reopened Laughing Brook

**Updated** and built new facilities to better serve our visitors and care for our animals at Drumlin Farm

**Added** a new, green classroom to increase our programming for children and families at Joppa Flats Education Center in Newburyport

**Launched** initiatives at Boston Nature Center, Broadmoor, Wellfleet Bay, and Ipswich River wildlife sanctuaries to expand and diversify our reach, better engage our visitors, and enhance our facilities

**Reduced** our carbon footprint by 42 percent over six years through increased energy efficiency and use of renewable energy at our nature centers, which also serve as teaching tools for sustainable living.

Find out how you can get involved at [www.massaudubon.org/bcc](http://www.massaudubon.org/bcc)

