

The Trustees Partner with the Regional Environmental Council in Worcester to Promote Urban Land Conservation Efforts

WORCESTER, Mass. – The Trustees of Reservations' Urban Outdoors comes to Worcester on Thursday, July 30, as part of a new initiative to connect with established community organizations working to conserve green space. In Worcester, the Urban Outdoors team will connect with the Regional Environmental Council (REC) and its YouthGROW summer program.

Events begin at 9:30 with Urban Outdoors doing work with YouthGROW on their urban farm, which will be followed by a conversation at 11 a.m. about urban land conservation, stewardship, and the role of community organizations like REC and land trusts in protecting and caring for urban green spaces. REC staff and YouthGROW members will share the history and impact of their programs. The Trustees' Urban Outdoors team will present a native aronia shrub as a symbol of the new partnership and the growing Urban Outdoors network.

The Trustees' Urban Outdoors program recently celebrated new partnerships in Holyoke and Springfield and has an ongoing established presence in New Bedford. The program marks The Trustees' first sustained investment in urban environmental justice communities across the state as part of a new five-year strategic plan to welcome and connect more people to nature.

"Urban Outdoors seeks to support and learn from trusted community organizations about their work in protecting green space in communities and how we can partner with them rather than create parallel programs," said Lee Matsueda, Urban Outdoors program manager for The Trustees. "We are excited about visiting our peers in Worcester to learn more about REC and their YouthGROW urban agriculture program, which is doing incredible work to connect young people to the land while teaching them valuable life skills like financial literacy, consensus decision-making, public speaking, and how to create a resume, along with how to grow healthy food."

"Worcester has a rich tapestry of urban garden spaces, many of which are connected to the REC through the UGROW Community and School Gardens Network," said Grace Sliwoski, Associate Executive Director of REC. "This network of gardens includes over 80 spaces where Worcester residents of all ages are growing together, ranging from pocket gardens in road medians to raised bed gardens in Worcester Public Schools to large scale community gardens and urban farms. We are excited to work with the Trustees and partner

organizations to share the history of urban gardening here in Worcester and to learn from organizations across the state and strategize how these spaces can be expanded, improved, and preserved in the future.”

For more on Urban Outdoors, go to www.thetrustees.org/urban-outdoors.

About the Regional Environmental Council

The Regional Environmental Council brings people together to create a just food system and to build healthy, sustainable, and equitable communities in Worcester, MA and beyond. Through programs like UGROW, YouthGROW, and the Community & Mobile Farmers Markets, REC connects residents, especially youth, to food, land, and opportunity. With more than 50 years of experience and a network of over 80 community and school gardens, REC continues to lead community-driven solutions that expand access to green space, strengthen the local food system, and promote environmental equity in Worcester.

About The Trustees

The Trustees is Massachusetts’ largest—and the nation’s first—land conservation and preservation nonprofit. Today, through the support of Members, donors, and partners, The Trustees helps conserve nearly 52,000 acres and welcomes the public to more than 120 inspiring locations across the state to experience landscapes where nature, wildlife, and people all thrive.