



EDWARD BECKER

— 2015 ESSEX HERITAGE HERO —



Edward Becker, who as a boy developed a passion for the outdoors while roaming a cousin's farm in Connecticut, is an internationally recognized leader and advocate for land conservation. His life's work protecting the environment and preserving living landscapes began in 1978 following his graduation from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.

Ed joined a national consulting firm providing energy and environmental analysis to the public and private sectors. While there, he assessed livestock grazing practices on federal lands in the American West and helped draft the country's first energy performance standards for buildings. Ed next served in regional and national directorship positions at the CEIP Fund, an environmental internship program that has helped thousands of students launch their environmental careers.

In 1987, Ed Becker joined Essex County Greenbelt Association as Executive Director. During his tenure, Greenbelt has grown from a small organization with a staff of three to one of the most effective and respected land trusts in the nation. A visionary leader, Ed has a direct role in the protection of over 16,000 acres across the county, with many equating his name with open space conservation. Through his efforts, Greenbelt is responsible for the majority of the new land conservation activity in Essex County.

In its first 40 years, Greenbelt saved 10,000 acres; 5,000 more were saved in the last 10 years. Progress continues toward a goal of doubling this pace once again, by saving 10,000 acres over the next 10 years. This success is a direct result of the organization's experience, reputation, and proactive outreach to landowners.

Through participation on state and national boards, Ed has worked to advance land conservation practice and advocacy. Among his recognitions, he is the recipient of the prestigious Massachusetts Governor's Award for Open Space Protection.

Ed resides in Rockport with his wife Sheila and loves spending time with sons Matt and Tim, and their families, including grandson Eli. He remains an avid outdoor enthusiast who enjoys cycling, hiking, and kayaking.