



500 Square Miles • 810,000 Residents • 34 Communities

# Report on 2024 Programs & Initiatives

Connecting the People and Places of Essex County, MA



## RESOURCE CONSERVATION

We made significant improvements at historic **Bakers Island Lighthouse**, including restoring the lantern room. We coordinated and assisted trail advocates, community leaders, and state transportation planners for the **Border to Boston Rail Trail** and maintained the interpretive materials for the **Essex Coastal Scenic Byway**. Our annual **Partnership Grants** were awarded to non-profit organizations and municipalities for historic preservation, interpretation, education, and accessibility projects.

*"We appreciate Essex Heritage's support in completing this truly transformative project that allows our organization to be accessible to all visitors." Partnership Grant Recipient*

## EDUCATION INITIATIVES

We continued to create opportunities for supporting our youth and educators. **Park For Every Classroom's** (PEC) teacher professional development program inspired a new cohort of teachers with models for place-based learning and student civic engagement. **Teaching Hidden Histories** highlighted the lesser-told stories of the Area through workshops, events, and new resources. **Future Leaders** provided paid internships and training for youth in historic preservation, visitor services, maintenance, and more.



*"The lasting impression ... is the change in mindset it brought in my teaching. I learned how enthusiasm could blossom, and expectation levels can soar when students are faced with a real audience and a real life purpose." PEC Teacher*



## INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS

Our largest public impact program continued to be **Trails & Sails**. Expanded to 16 days, it included 200+ free events across Essex County, giving residents the opportunity to experience the region's rich heritage. This year, more than 24,000 people attended. **Interpretive programs** also grew as we presented public talks about broader regional history including Indigenous and Black Americans, also programs focusing on the commemoration of **America 250**. Visitor information about the Area and special tours increased as well.

*"Your own 'Voyage of Discovery' can be done each year in Essex County during Trails & Sails. Learn something new and have fun while you find unknown gems in each town." Trails & Sails Attendee*



## Efficient • Effective • Essential

National Heritage Areas (NHAs) leverage public-private partnerships to make the most of every federal dollar appropriated by Congress. NHAs unite individual citizens, community organizations, and businesses to revitalize economies and achieve locally determined conservation goals.

*Alliance of National Heritage Areas "Connecting the Heart & Soul of American Communities"*

### Measuring our Impact

Summarized from the annual report to the National Park Service, covering July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024 (FY24).

#### Community Investment

Capacity building grants – **93**  
 Grant amount dispersed – **\$278,306**  
 Participating organizations – **282**

#### Community Engagement

Formal partnerships – **116**  
 Informal partnerships – **1,101**

#### Education

Number of educators who participated – **109**  
 Number of students impacted – **over 800**

#### Volunteers

Individual volunteers – **722**  
 Hours of volunteer time – **11,911**

#### Public Programs

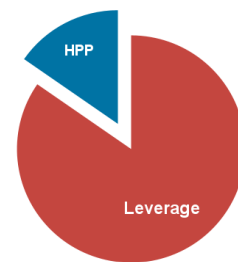
Number of unique events offered – **153**  
 Number of participating organizations – **147**  
 Participants in programs and events – **26,345**

#### Future Leaders

Youths hired – **73**  
 Historic sites assisted – **14**

#### Economic Impact

Direct expenditures by Essex Heritage in the NHA – **\$1,317,000**  
 Funds leveraged by Essex Heritage – **\$3,223,691**  
 Value of volunteer time – **\$466,792**



### Leveraging

The National Park Service's Heritage Partnership Program (HPP) requires at least a 1:1 non-federal match. Essex Heritage leveraged a 5:1 match in our Fiscal Year 2024.

### Essex Heritage Programs and Initiatives

#### Resource Conservation

Bakers Island Light Station  
 Border to Boston Rail Trail  
 Partnership Grants  
 Essex Coastal Scenic Byway

#### Interpretive Programs

Trails & Sails  
 America 250  
 Lectures and Tours  
 Visitor Center Network

#### Education Initiatives

Park for Every Classroom  
 Teaching Hidden Histories  
 Future Leaders  
 Education Forums

Learn more at [essexheritage.org](https://essexheritage.org) | @essexheritage



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 Area System**