

MASS GREEN NETWORK

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR
GREENING MASSACHUSETTS

OUR MISSION

THE MASS GREEN NETWORK SEEKS TO PROTECT THE EARTH, ITS RESOURCES, AND ITS INHABITANTS BY CONNECTING COMMUNITY GROUPS, FOSTERING GRASSROOTS CIVIC CAPACITY, CATALYZING VOLUNTEER ACTIVISM, AND BRIDGING DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDES.

FOUR PROBLEMS

PROBLEM #1

We face a new regime that is hostile or indifferent to ecological issues



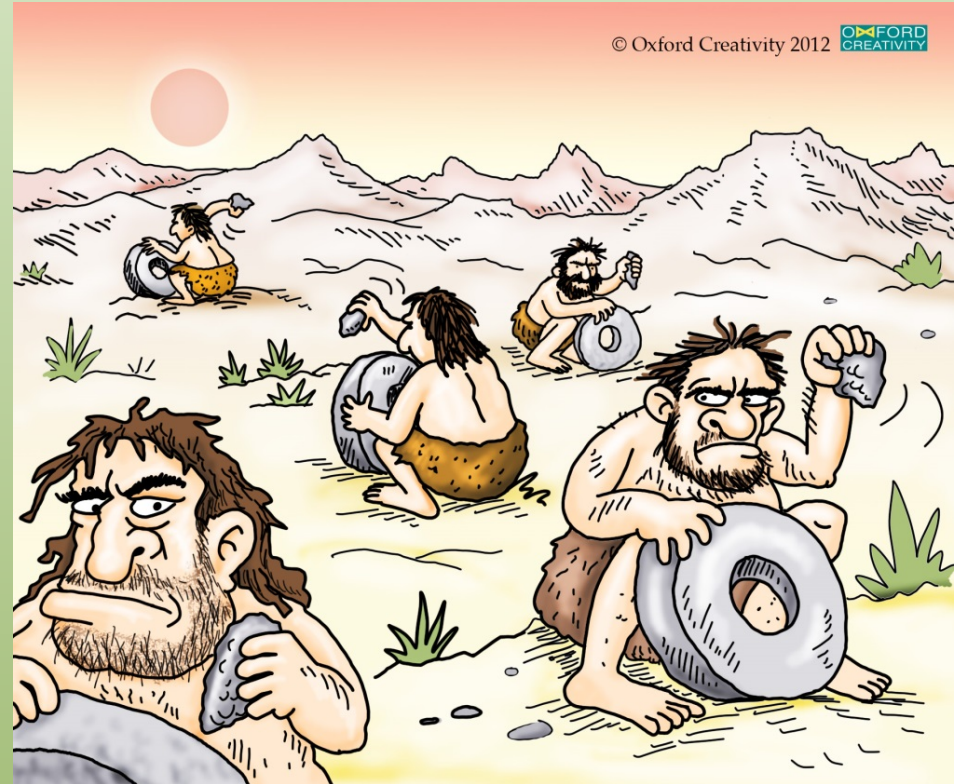
For the next four years at least, the locus of environmental remediation will be at the local or state level.

PROBLEM #2

There are many local environmental groups.

But they tend to work independently.

As a result, folks are continuously reinventing the wheel.



Local groups are both *atomized* (there over 30 groups in Wellesley, MA) and *isolated* (folks working on pesticides regulation in Wellesley do not communicate with people working on pesticides in Provincetown).

PROBLEM #3



Learning curves are steep.

To pass a local law, you need to master the basic science, draft appropriate legislation, prepare educational materials, map out the political process, address questions of implementation, assemble a coalition, attract media attention, and get out the vote. That's a lot to master on your own.

PROBLEM #4

Racial and economic disparities have divided the environmental movement

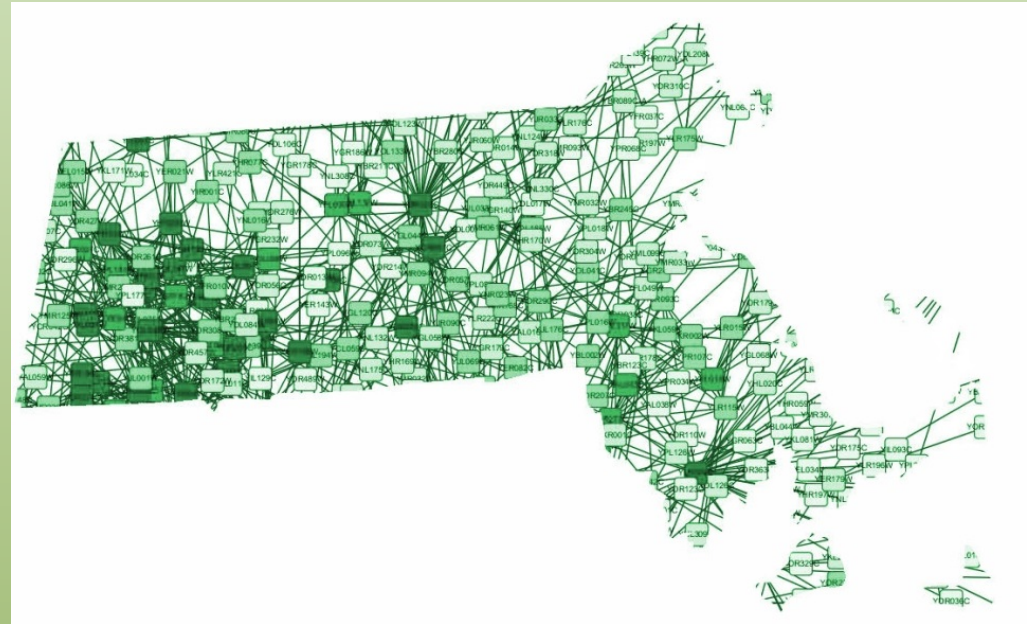


The environmental movement's diversity problem is not merely ethical. Underrepresentation also impacts the distribution of human and financial resources. And it contributes to an affective divide. Activist apartheid has led many conservationists to think that people of color are just not interested in environmental issues, and many minorities to consider environmentalism a diversion from the more pressing economic and social problems that confront struggling communities.

THE SOLUTION: THE MASS GREEN NETWORK

THE MASS GREEN NETWORK

- Founded October, 2015
- A peer-to-peer collective linking grassroots activists and local groups across Massachusetts
- 380 active members to date, with over 1200 affiliates, from every corner of the state
- Extraordinary record of achievement



A DIVERSE MEMBERSHIP



Mass Green Network members meeting with Boston City Councilors, July 2016

Pollution and other issues with local impact bridge traditional divides, bringing conservationists, environmental justice advocates, and students to the same table.

A RECORD OF SUCCESS

IN OUR **FIRST YEAR** WE FOCUSED ON
PASSING **LOCAL LAWS** TO REDUCE
PLASTIC BAGS AND POLYSTYRENE
(INCLUDING **STYROFOAM**), AND...

WE PASSED ALMOST 40 PIECES OF LEGISLATION!

In October, 2015, there were 23 laws on bags and polystyrene in Massachusetts.
By December 2016, there were 62. Today there are 68.

In 2016 members built tremendous momentum:

- Mar 7: **Westfield** (polystyrene)
- April 2: **Westford** (polystyrene)
- April 4: **Concord** (polystyrene)
- April 12: **Wellesley** (plastic bags)
- April 12: **Tisbury** (plastic bags)
- April 12: **West Tisbury** (plastic bags)
- April 12: **Edgartown** (plastic bags)
- April 25: **Chilmark** (plastic bags)
- May 10: **Aquinnah** (plastic bags)
- May 10: **Ipswich** (polystyrene & plastic bags)
- May 12: **Framingham** (plastic bags)
- May 12: **Lee** (polystyrene & plastic bags)
- May 16: **Shrewsbury** (plastic bags)
- May 25: **Amherst** (plastic bags)
- June 7: **Watertown** (plastic bags)
- June 9: **Lenox** (polystyrene & plastic bags)
- June 20: **Adams** (plastic bags)
- July 26: **Winthrop** (polystyrene)
- Oct 15: **Plymouth** (plastic bags)
- Oct 18: **Bourne** (plastic bags)
- Oct 18: **Mashpee** (plastic bags)
- Oct 19: **Dennis** (polystyrene & plastic bags)
- Nov 15: **Brookline** (plastic bags -- revised)
- Nov 17: **Salem** (plastic bags)
- Nov 28: **Sandwich** (plastic bags)

In the works: **Boston, Springfield, Gloucester, Yarmouth**, and others

NATIONAL RECOGNITION

A nationwide recycling journal wrote on our progress in June, 2016, after we had raised the number of bag laws in Massachusetts from 15 to 35 in six months.

By November, there were 42 bag laws on the books.



The image is a screenshot of a news article from Waste Dive. At the top, the Waste Dive logo is on the left, and 'TOPICS' and 'FEATURES' are on the right. The article title is 'With 35 varying rules, Massachusetts next battle in the plastic bag war'. Below the title, it says 'By Cole Rosengren | June 14, 2016' and has a 'print' icon. There are four social media share buttons: 'share' (Facebook), 'tweet' (Twitter), 'post' (LinkedIn), and 'email'. Below the buttons is a photograph showing several people's legs and hands holding red plastic shopping bags. The article text begins with a large red letter 'A' followed by 's the plastic bag debate rages from California to New York, Massachusetts has quietly become a national leader in the fight. The state now has bag laws in 35 municipalities and counting — second only to California — and nearly all have been passed in the last few years. Many groups have helped make this possible, but the recently founded Mass Green Network has helped take the campaign's organizational efforts to a different level. Bolstered by their success, the group has now set their sights on Boston

WHAT WE DO

- AN ONLINE HUB
- A LIVELY LISTSERV
- ISSUE SUMMITS
- PARTNERSHIPS

AN ONLINE HUB

MassGreen.Org compiles essential resources for local action, including fact sheets, legislative templates, and powerpoints.



The screenshot shows the homepage of MassGreen.Org. At the top left is the logo "MASSGREEN.ORG" in green, with the tagline "COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR GREENING MASSACHUSETTS" below it. To the right is a green button that says "Join the Mass Green Network". Below the logo is a horizontal navigation bar with five green buttons: "PLASTIC BAG RESOURCES", "POLYSTYRENE RESOURCES", "THE MASS GREEN NETWORK MODEL", "JOIN THE MASS GREEN NETWORK!", and "SUMMIT 2017". The main content area features three paragraphs of text on the left and a green map of Massachusetts on the right. The first paragraph states, "We can make Massachusetts polystyrene-free." The second paragraph states, "We can reduce litter from plastic bags." The third paragraph states, "This website compiles resources and best practices drawn from the experience of municipalities in Massachusetts and elsewhere." The map of Massachusetts is a solid green silhouette.

MASSGREEN.ORG
COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR GREENING MASSACHUSETTS

Join the Mass Green Network

PLASTIC BAG RESOURCES POLYSTYRENE RESOURCES THE MASS GREEN NETWORK MODEL JOIN THE MASS GREEN NETWORK! SUMMIT 2017

We can make Massachusetts polystyrene-free.

We can reduce litter from plastic bags.

This website compiles resources and best practices drawn from the experience of municipalities in Massachusetts and elsewhere.

Included here are fact sheets, Powerpoint presentations, legislative language, citizen's guides, and other resources to help you reduce waste in your community.



A LIVELY LISTSERV

The screenshot shows a Google Groups interface for the "Mass Green Network" group. The group is shared privately and has 30 of 342 topics (99+ unread). The main content area displays a welcome message and a list of recent posts:

- Bag Ban Westfield (3)** - By sbacon8140 - 3 posts - 1 view - 1:39 PM
- Re: [mass-green-network] Digest for mass-green-network@googlegroups.com - 1 update in 1 topic (2)** - By lamyt - 2 posts - 0 views - Nov 29
- Proposed Boston Bag Ordinance (1)** - By Brad Verter - 1 post - 0 views - Nov 29
- Latest article on Boston's possible bag ordinance (1)** - By Peter Hofman - 1 post - 0 views - Nov 29
- Calling Norfolk County residents! (1)** - By me - 1 post - 0 views - Nov 29
- bag ban impacts to small local grocery stores (4)** - By slook - 4 posts - 1 view - Nov 29

The left sidebar includes navigation options like "My groups", "Home", "Starred", "Favorites", "Recently viewed", "Recent searches", and "Recently posted to".

Members share best practices, solicit advice, and develop strategies through a highly active statewide listserv.

ISSUE SUMMITS



**Members receive issue briefings and tactical training
at statewide gatherings.**

PARTNERSHIPS

Membership organizations support the Mass Green Network by endorsing local bylaws and helping to **get out the vote.**



Other groups offer expertise and **sponsorship.**



New England
Grassroots
Environment Fund



A partnership with the Grassroots Fund streamlines the process for Mass Green Network members to apply for small grants for local campaigns.

WHY WE SUCCEEDED

- CIVIC PARTICIPATION, NOT CLICKTIVISM
- WINNING FORMULAS FOR LOCAL VICTORY
- COMMUNITY, NOT COMBAT
- A NETWORK OF EQUALS
- COOPERATIVE INNOVATION

CIVIC PARTICIPATION, NOT CLICKTIVISM

Over the past 30 or 40 years, the environmental movement has shifted from **direct democracy** to political surrogation as the nonprofit sphere has become increasingly professionalized.

The proliferation of local groups demonstrates that **many people want to be directly involved**. For them, signing a petition and writing a check is not enough.

Our focus on **developing capacity** distinguishes the Mass Green Network from environmental groups focused on advocacy and education.



WINNING FORMULAS FOR LOCAL VICTORY



Ipswich High School students under the guidance of Mass Green Network member Lori LaFrance receive the President's Environmental Youth Award, May 2016

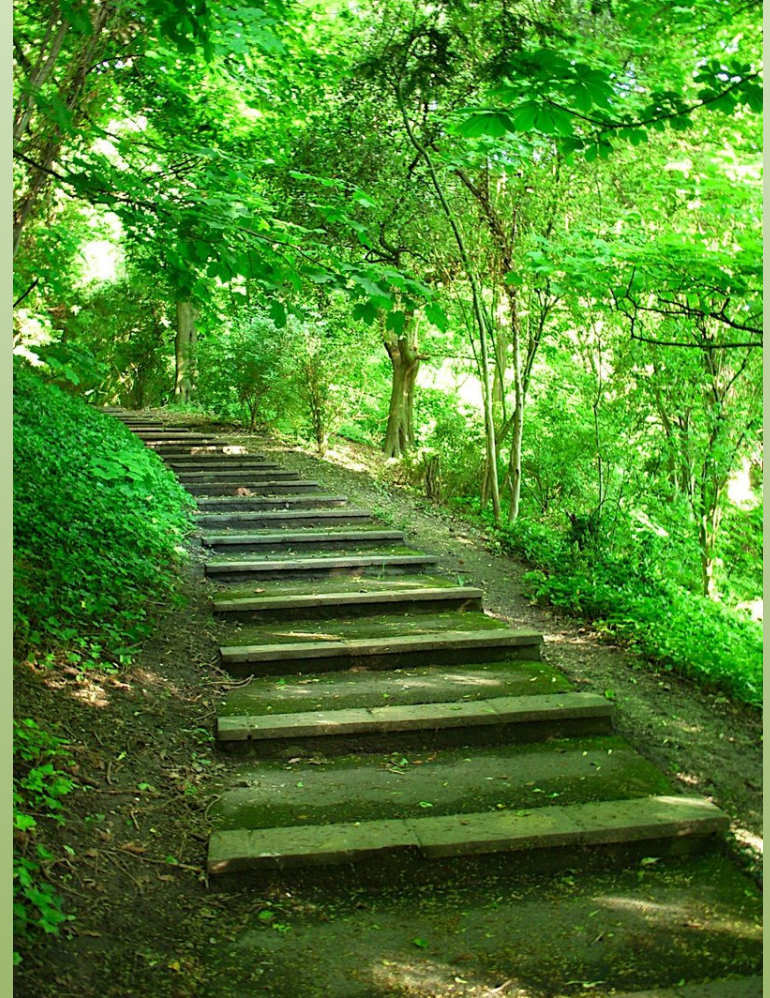
It's hard to gauge success if your target is global warming. So we focus on **smaller scale problems**, like plastic bags. Here, **success is visible, tangible, invigorating, and infectious**. Once we establish a **toolkit for passing local legislation** on an issue, we repeat it from town to town, **scaling the impact of local victories**.

Although our focus is nominally local, the ultimate effect is much larger. By passing similar legislation in many municipalities, **we build the critical mass** that drives legislators to pass statewide laws.

COMMUNITY, NOT COMBAT

Our focus is on **positive vectors of change**. There are other environmental organizations focused on fighting toxic facilities. Our approach is centered not on protest and dissent but on the local adoption of **standards for environmentally and economically sustainable living**.

Passing a bylaw to reduce plastic bags represents not an attack on a corporate enemy, but an embrace of **a vision for a more verdant future**.



A NETWORK OF EQUALS

There are a handful of other groups that are focused on **fostering local capacity**. But they generally are centered around a cadre of nonprofit professionals who offer training and expert assistance, and then move on.



In contrast, the Mass Green Network is conceived as a **peer-to-peer** service. The listserv allows veterans of local campaigns to help new recruits in different parts of the state. People in the Berkshires help their counterparts in Cape Cod, who go on to advise their neighbors on the South Shore. The Network cultivates **an ethos of sharing and mutual aid**.

The result is a **growing, enthusiastic population of grassroots activists** excited not only to better their own communities but also **to help others** do the same.

COOPERATIVE INNOVATION

Finally, the Mass Green Network allows for the **efficient emergence and distribution of innovative ideas**.

Rather than repeating from a canon of proprietary practices, Mass Green Network **members continuously build on each other's success**. They come up with better legislative language or develop new materials.



Examples: In May, activists in Framingham solicited data from the Network to design a compelling Powerpoint presentation that has used as a template for almost every bag campaign since. In November the citizens of Brookline, whose 2012 bag law inspired so many other communities, revised their bylaw to match the higher standards set by their successors. This **collective feedback and collaborative innovation** is what the Mass Green Network is all about.

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