



# ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT 2025



## MEET OUR BOARD:



**KEN MICHIEZI**  
CO-EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR



**BRAD  
BUITENHUIS**  
CO-EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR



**AMI HUGHES**  
DIRECTOR OF  
FINANCE



**ADAM ROSCOE**  
EVENTS &  
ANALYTICS  
COORDINATOR



**NICHOLAS  
CAMPBELL**  
BOARD MEMBER



**SOPHIA YEM**  
BOARD MEMBER

## MESSAGE FROM OUR NEW CO-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### KEN MICHIEZI:

“I’m incredibly excited to be part of the Lowell Litter Krewe.



When I started The Merrimack Company, I always knew I wanted to work closely with (or eventually help build) a nonprofit focused on cleaning and stewarding the Merrimack River and surrounding communities.

My core values are community, nature and adventure, and Lowell Litter Krewe puts those values into practice every day. I’m especially excited to help expand LLK’s impact across the city, deepen our connection to local waterways, and support efforts around water quality metrics and environmental education within the community.”

-Ken Michienzi

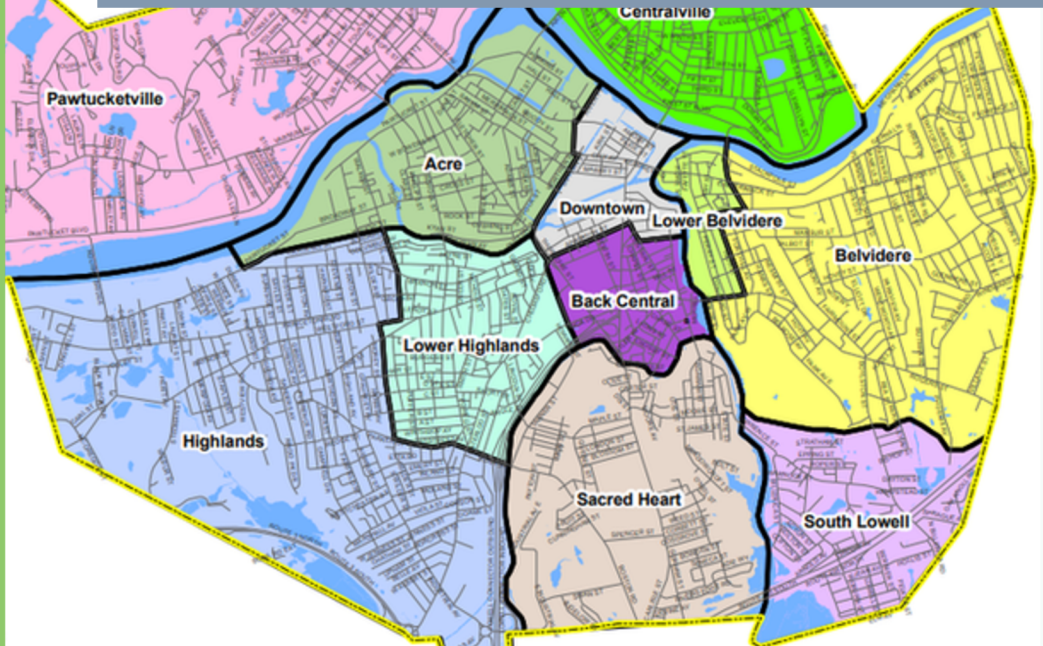
# 2025 BY THE TOTALS

43,500 pounds  
of litter removed  
from our city



= 1 ton

This season we were able to put on **30 events** with our volunteers across the city.



Public Lowell GIS City Neighborhood Map

We saw **197 unique volunteers** come to our events this year. We had a total of 511 volunteers checking in at our events.

A total of **1,971 Hours volunteered** for our city this season



# CLEANING UP OUR CITY

Every year the Lowell Litter Krewe takes to the streets and beautifies many neighborhoods in the city. Litter is not a unique problem to any of our neighborhoods or the city of Lowell as a whole, but we have been able to come together and tackle the issue as a group of concerned citizens. Every Saturday we host a clean up in one of the neighborhoods, targeting areas that have been called out to us as trouble points by the people who live there. We bring all of the supplies needed for a clean up including trash pickers, buckets, rakes, ropes & magnets, and of course protective equipment. With our years of expertise in volunteer coordination we split the group into teams and make the most of our volunteer's time. Some volunteers come wanting to work as a team, while volunteers are looking for quiet alone time but also want to impact their community. Either way, all are welcome.

Clean ups come in all shapes and sizes but can always be counted on happening Saturday mornings throughout the season. Make sure to check our website for the 2026 monthly event calendars



# DIRTIEST BEACH DAY OF THE YEAR

In 2025 we started a new partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation & Recreation team on Salisbury Beach. We all came together on July 5<sup>th</sup>, also known as the **dirtyest beach day of the year**-the day after Independence Day.



After the Krewe spent a few hours cleaning the the shorelines at the mouth of our Merrimack River, we all gathered for a cookout in the newly de-trashed picnic area.

**We look forward to having this event again for July 5<sup>th</sup> 2026.**



# DRAGONFLY MERCURY PROJECT

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THIS PROJECT [WWW.NPS.GOV/ARTICLES/ABOUT-THE-DM](http://WWW.NPS.GOV/ARTICLES/ABOUT-THE-DM)



This year we were again able to partner with the National Park Service to assist with their yearly inventory of local dragonfly larvae for mercury testing. Dragonfly larvae are a fantastic indicator of the levels of mercury in our waters because they live in the same water system for 5 years before maturing. Combine the long life stage with their ability to eat most things in their ecosystem, and you get a great sample of the overall health of the water system with just one species sampled.

Our volunteers fearlessly jump in to the wetlands in their tall boots, nets in hand, and start hunting for the larvae. Once a volunteer successfully captures larvae, they are brought back to the field base to be measured and recorded for the project. They will then be shipped off to the project headquarters for testing. The DMP creates reports and shares their datasets online.

# REWILDING THE CITY OF LOWELL

While keeping with our core priority of beautifying the city, we took an additional step to add native flora to the community. Not only does this beautify the city spaces but it allows the native ecosystem to flourish.

We are working with a Native Flower Specialist who creates the plans for what flowers will do best in the locations we scope out. After we have cleaned the space, we'll get to work planting and caring for the new garden in the hopes of attracting more natural elements to the city.

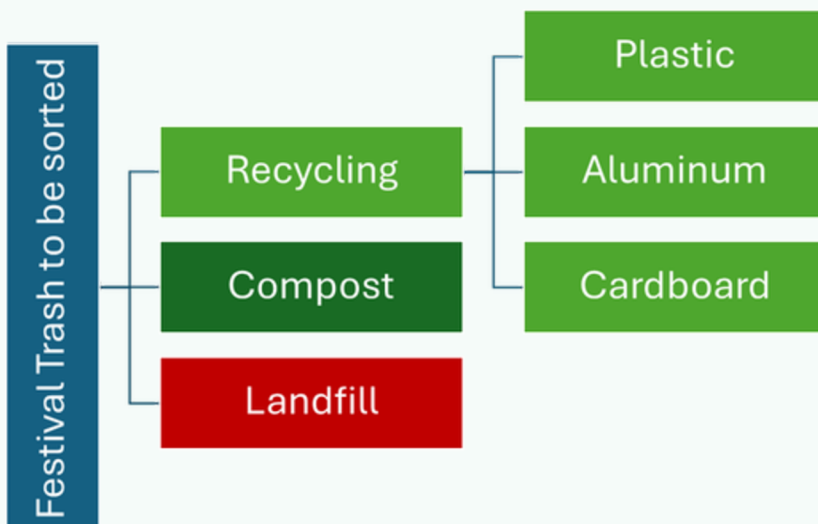
Key areas targeted this year were the McDermott Reservoir, Gold Star Park, and Rogers Fort Hill Park, among others.



# LOWELL FOLK FEST: COMPOST & RECYCLING TEAM



For the third year in a row, the Lowell Litter Krewe has taken lead on the compost and recycling program that takes place during the Lowell Folk Festival. This free festival is the longest-running in the United States and the 2025 lineup featured 20 performers on four stages throughout the city, more than a dozen food vendors featuring diverse food from across the city, numerous exhibits, dance tents, and a variety of distinct cultural experiences. With all that entertainment comes a lot of trash that needs to be sorted into recycling, compost, and landfill. That's where the Litter Krewe and its volunteers come in. During the 2025 event the team was able to and sort the trash into three major groups:



The sorting line starts with a volunteer dumping out the bags of trash straight from the barrels scattered throughout the event. On all sides of the sorting table you will see volunteers hand plucking out any trash and recyclables before pushing the compost down the line. **325 pounds of aluminum and 1,475 pounds of plastic** were dumped on the table and sorted out. At the end of our sorting table, a dump truck awaits to compress all of the **13,000 pounds of compost** before it is taken to become compost.

Next year the farm will return that compost to Lowell for us to bag and hand out to festival attendees at our table. The rest will be put to good use by the National Park Service.



# CATCH BASIN SEDIMENT LEVEL TRACKING



The Lowell Litter Krewe and the Lowell Regional Wastewater Utility continued our catch basin work into the 2025 Season. We are working together to help better track the sediment levels inside of catch basins to help keep debris from reaching the river.

LRWWU has created a GIS Map for our volunteers to be able to submit up-to-date information on the status of the city's **7,000+ catch basins**. As time passes, more and more debris fill the bottom few feet of the catch basin, eventually needing to be removed by LRWWU as routine maintenance.



# UNITED WAY HOLIDAY TURKEY DROP

The Lowell Litter Krewe was able to help United Ways, The Greater Boston Food Bank, and the Dwelling House of Hope to distribute over **3000 food boxes, 1500 bags of Thanksgiving essentials, \$20 gift cards, and over 1000 turkeys** to residents of the Greater Lowell area. What seems like a simple task of moving a line of cars becomes compounded when families start lining up the night before and the line spans across 5 blocks winding throughout the neighborhood.



The team helped many diverse families load their cars with holiday essentials while maintaining a turnaround time of 30 seconds, enabling us to assist hundreds of families by the end of the event.



# OPERATION ROSEBUD

Working with the Mayor's Office and the Senior Center, the Lowell Litter Krewe was able to work with **20 seniors** (with a wait list of double that) around the city. Our volunteers show up within 24 hours of a snow storm to make sure the seniors' homes have safe access to the street for their safety. This season we saw more snowfall than any past season and need more and more volunteers to keep up with the requests. Please consider volunteering next winter!

A total of **54.4 inches of snow** fell on Lowell in 2026. On January 26<sup>th</sup> we saw more than 15 inches in one storm.



Photo courtesy of Marte Media

## OUR VOLUNTEERS

We call our volunteers our **Trash Family** because of how close we all become with the common belief that it's partially on us to care about our city. In our trash family, we love to call out the volunteers who show up weekend after weekend, rain or shine. We call this group our **All Stars** and this year we reached out to get some ideas of what their favorite parts of the season were and why they started with the Lowell Litter Krewe.

### Favorite clean up?

"I like the plantings and cleanup in Centralville and Rogers Fort Hill park"

"I think everyone was special in it's own right. The satisfaction is always leaving a site better than you found it."

"Salisbury State Park"

"No all clean ups have been great unless the weather is bad"

### What got you to start volunteering with LLK?

"I wanted to do something useful where I felt the contributions had a positive impact."

"I wanted to help keep the City I've lived in for 46 years a cleaner place"

"I noticed a group of people wearing orange vests cleaning up trash a few weeks later a clean up was posted on Facebook and the location was close to my house so I decided to check it out and I am glad I did because I get to work with the most amazing most dedicated volunteers i have ever worked with"

## LOWELL LITTER KREWE'S MVP 2025

Vanna Howard took the time to come out to 17 of our Saturday clean ups. She has been working with the Litter Krewe since our first season and hosts an event every Friday to help keep the downtown neighborhood clean.

### Why does Vanna volunteer?

"To strengthen our community, support organizations, improve mental and physical wellbeing, social connection, and sense of purpose"

### What made Vanna want to volunteer with the Litter Krewe?

"To help protect our ecosystems like the Concord and Merrimack Rivers, prevent harmful debris from polluting the environment while fostering community pride and boosting public health, and having fun with friends old and new"



# THE FUTURE OF LOWELL

## LITTER KREWE

Every year we set out to clean up the major dump sites around the city. It may be a spot that is plagued by illegal dumping, a location that collects the litter from a wide area via the wind collecting it all in one location, or even an encampment that the residents have since left. After **268** events, every year we still seek out these sites and set our targets for cleanups but the list is getting smaller and smaller. Between a combination of more residential awareness of the city wide effort to fight litter, better enforcement of the fines for illegal dumping, and a push to supply other resources to the unhoused population in Lowell, we are seeing less massive piles. We won't ever be able to completely move our focus away from litter- in a world that prioritizes convenience over sustainability there will always be waste- but we can start to share our volunteer base to work on other city-wide priorities.

2026 will have continued focus on some of the projects that we have seen the impact of in this report:

- Rewild more locations throughout city by continuing our investments in native plants as well as keeping our Native Flower Specialist on staff.
- Expand Operation Rosebud 2026 to bring on more volunteers ready to help shovel out our neighbors.
- The Catch Basin Project in 2026 will have us working closely with the LRWWU stormwater engineers who have seen the effort in this project and know the value.

As well as some new projects:

- Further clean the Concord River banks as well as the river itself. Keep an eye out for some floating volunteer opportunities at future events.
- Working with the city to create a netting system to help capture litter early in the canalways before it spreads throughout the city.
- Partner with more local businesses for days of giving to spotlight their efforts to give back to the community.

We looking forward to seeing you in the 2026 season, and thank you for reading our 2025 Impact Report.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP US ACHIEVE MORE

Please consider donating to Litter Krewe Corp 501(c)(3) through PayPal directly



Follow us on our social media platforms



**TOMORROW THERE'LL BE MORE OF US**



[www.lowelllitterkrewe.org](http://www.lowelllitterkrewe.org)

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