



P.O. Box 60566, Florence, MA 01062

www.broadbrookcoalition.org

*Dedicated to the preservation of open space **and** the promotion of affordable housing*

Volume 19, No. 2

Fall 2007

From the President's Desk

Twenty years ago I read a small notice on page three of the Daily Hampshire Gazette. It reported the formation of Broad Brook Coalition, a new land conservation group dedicated to preserving land around Fitzgerald Lake. I've always thought that land conservation is one of the most important things we can do. I wrote a check and joined the new group but I remember feeling sad that I couldn't also contribute time and energy to such a worthy cause. I'm pleased now to be a more active participant in this wonderful organization.

Broad Brook Coalition is celebrating its twentieth anniversary in 2008. We have had many positive accomplishments in the past two decades, but I think the preservation of nearly one square mile of land surrounding Fitzgerald Lake is our most important achievement. With more development in Northampton, land preservation becomes more important than ever. Preserved land improves air and water quality, provides natural places in which to hike, ski, canoe, and relax, decreases the likelihood of flooding, provides wildlife habitat, and encourages the study of nature. We all benefit from preserved natural areas, but one other consideration is even more important: we need to think of future generations. They will need natural areas as much as we do. Once land is developed, it is nearly impossible to revert that land to its natural state.

Of course we are also very proud of many other achievements: our collaboration with the City of Northampton and the Conservation Commission in the management of the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area; our Walks and Talks program offering interesting insight into the natural world; the participation of many volunteers in maintaining trails, combating invasive plants, and serving on our board and committees; our advocacy for important environmental initiatives such as the Community Preservation Act and the Wetlands Ordinance; our periodic workshops offering information on land

preservation using tools such as conservation restrictions and land donations; and our support of affordable housing. An organization dedicated to land preservation and to affordable housing may seem unusual but our founders recognized that land preservation increases land value thus making affordable housing scarcer and making it more important to provide less expensive housing options.

During our 20th anniversary we will have a number of special events which are still in the planning stage as we go to print. We would like to attract new members and we hope to increase contributions to our land fund so as to be ready when there is an opportunity for further land preservation. Special events might include programs discussing the history of the Fitzgerald Lake area, and a picnic or other get-together for members. Mostly we want to thank our loyal members who provide financial support, maintain trails and fight invasive plants, and serve on our board and committees. THANK YOU!

Robert Bissell, President

Broad Brook Coalition Annual Meeting

The City Council of Northampton is currently considering stronger protections for vernal pools; come and see what all the fuss is about!

Historically overlooked as mere puddles, vernal pools have only recently been recognized as possessing characteristics and animal communities that set them apart from other wetlands. Interest in amphibians, and in particular the spectacular springtime breeding assemblages of spotted salamanders, raised people's awareness of vernal pools to a point where they were finally acknowledged and explicitly protected by wetland regulations. However, the conservation of vernal pool communities requires protection of both the pool itself as well as a substantial amount of adjacent upland habitat. Long-term survival of amphibian populations will likely require the conservation of multiple pools and populations linked together within an intact, interconnected landscape.

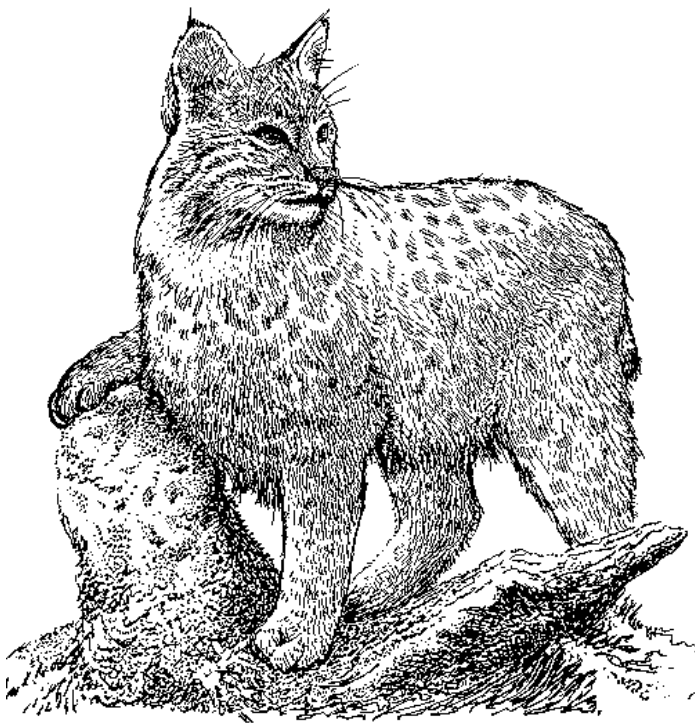
BBC Annual Meeting Agenda

6:30 p.m. - Conversation and Refreshments

6:45 p.m. - Business Meeting, Elections to Board of Directors, Presentation of Annual Award for Outstanding Volunteer Service

7:30 p.m. - Special Presentation: Scott Jackson of the Department of Natural Resource Conservation at UMass Amherst speaks on the Natural History and Conservation of Vernal Pools.

Bobcat (*Lynx rufus*)



This past June while walking on the Marian Street trail to the bird blind, I heard a twig break and looked over to see a bobcat only 10 yards away. If it hadn't made a noise I wouldn't have seen it, with its mottled grayish coat blending perfectly into the woods. It crouched down, and for several minutes we just stared at each other in amazement. I've seen them before in Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area, as have others, but never this close.

Bobcats are about twice the size of a house cat, and weigh an average of around 22 pounds (females less). They have a short "bobbed" tail about 4 to 7 inches that is black on the tip, and slightly tufted ears. Their fur is spotted when they are babies, but the spots fade as they grow up. They breed from February to March,

usually have 2 to 3 kittens that stay with the mothers until fall.

Bobcats hunt rabbits, mice, squirrels, birds, possum, and other small animals. Their home range is from 2 to 20 square miles. Occasionally they'll hunt larger prey such as deer (ambushing them from a tree branch) but this is usually only when other food is scarce, and only sick, young or old animals are taken. To hunt at night they have highly specialized eyes which have expanded irises and reflectors to catch any light the retina didn't absorb the first time. Their activity peaks 3 hours before sunset until midnight, and again around sunrise. In the wild, bobcats live around 12 years.

They are such a beautiful animal. I hope you are lucky enough to see one while walking the trails in FLCA.

Jim Reis

Broad Brook Coalition at the Lilly Library

The Lilly Library in Florence has recently accepted a donation of materials from the Broad Brook Coalition that includes our Management Plans dating back to 1996 and numerous books and pamphlets pertaining to conservation areas in Northampton, the management of wildlife reserves, and the remediation of environmental problems. The jewel in the crown is a complete set of notebooks detailing wildlife observations at the wildlife blind on the marsh since its construction in 2000. These notebooks contain a lively and spontaneous record of sightings and commentary about moose, bears, otters, beavers and many species of birds by neighbors and friends of the FLCA. We will also add a collection of photos from the FLCA that document the reconstruction of Boggy Meadow Road and the dam in the late '90's. Special thanks go to Frank Gessing and the members of the Moose Lodge who have maintained the notebooks and provided photos over the years. These materials are currently being catalogued by the library and will soon be available as a non-circulating collection in the Archives Room on the second floor.

Bob Zimmermann

Affordable Housing Forum Examines Broad Brook Coalition's Role

When you see this newsletter, you see BBC's motto, "*Dedicated to the preservation of open space and the promotion of affordable housing.*" But you haven't seen much about affordable housing in the newsletter itself. What's going on?

That was a question raised by some BBC members at the 2005 Annual Meeting. In response to their concerns, the BBC Board sponsored a forum for its members on May 17, organized by Jim Reis, to discuss this issue. Four BBC members and six Board members attended.

Frank Olbris reviewed the history of BBC's commitment to affordable housing. When BBC was founded nearly 20 years ago, its founders realized that preserving land as open space would make land scarcer and could thus make housing less affordable. To compensate, they included the promotion of affordable housing in the new organization's goals. They were convinced that those two goals were not, as many people thought then, incompatible. Rather than advocating a strategy of large lot sizes as a means of preserving open space (which only adds to habitat fragmentation and doesn't provide affordable homes), they looked toward alternatives such as clustering (placing homes closer together on a parcel and keeping the rest of the land as open space) that would advance both goals. They also understood that everybody benefits from open space preservation — especially people who can't afford big yards of their own.

What has BBC done over the years? It supported a City ordinance that allowed accessory ("in-law") apartments. It supported the building of Pines' Edge, a clustered condominium development with some affordable units. It wrote a letter in support of the City's taking the Meadowbrook complex by eminent domain should that be necessary to keep it affordable. It has sponsored Habitat for Humanity work days and a Cot Shelter dinner team. It expressed concerns about the form of, but did not oppose, a condominium development planned for North King Street. It makes an annual donation of 5% of each year's membership dues to the Northampton Housing Partnership.

But as some members have pointed out, affordable housing hasn't been a big focus for BBC lately. No one whose primary interest is housing has served on the Board since 1998, and little activity has taken place recently.

What are the needs today? Affordable housing advocate and former BBC Board member Yvonne Freccero believed that the greatest need is housing for the very poor, such as single-room occupancy units. Private developers are creating some "upper- and middle-affordable" housing, but not "lower-

affordable" housing. CPA funds may be some help, but there will be stiff competition for those funds. She believed that BBC does a service even by standing ready to advocate for affordable housing when an issue comes up.

Most of those at the meeting believed that BBC should keep its commitment to affordable housing, even if that means only standing ready to jump in when advocacy is needed. One member, however, argued that housing advocacy should be split off into a separate organization. All agreed that BBC needs to do a better job keeping track of what's going on in the world of affordable housing, and the Board agreed to find a volunteer who would receive and read the minutes of the Northampton Housing Partnership's meetings and report on them to the Board. Most would like to see more energy put into affordable housing issues, yet realized that Board and volunteer time, as always, is limited. The Board would be glad to sponsor activities like Habitat and the Cot Shelter again if someone were willing to coordinate them. The group talked about the idea of someday finding a parcel with road frontage suitable for housing and back land suitable for preservation, then working with a partner housing organization to accomplish both goals.

Norma Roche

Volunteers Needed: Help with BBC's Affordable Housing Mission

Liaison with Northampton Housing Partnership

Receive and read the minutes of the Northampton Housing Partnership's monthly meetings and report on them to the BBC Board. Pass on recommendations regarding what BBC can do to promote affordable housing in Northampton. Serve as a communication link between the two organizations. Access to e-mail would be very helpful.

Cot Shelter Coordinator

Coordinate BBC Cot Shelter dinner team monthly during the winter. Attend orientation for team leaders, then find volunteers from existing list for each month and assign cooking duties. Help volunteers serve meal and chat with guests. About 3 hours per month at the shelter plus prep time at home.

Habitat for Humanity Volunteer

BBC has not had its own Habitat building team recently, but you can get in touch with Pioneer

Valley Habitat for Humanity directly to volunteer. Their Web site: <http://www.pioneervalleyhabitat.org/> has more information on what work site volunteers (and others) do. Call 413-586-5430 or e-mail volunteer@pioneervalleyhabitat.org.

Walks and Talks Fall and Winter 2007-2008

Fall Foliage Walk

David McLain

Sunday, October 14, 2007, 10 am - Noon

North Farms Road Entrance

Wildlife Biologist David McLain is the Conservation Coordinator at the Massachusetts Audubon Society's Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary. David will guide us in taking a closer look at one aspect of what makes New England such a special and beautiful place. Trees and shrubs in their fall splendor will be the focus, though David has expertise in other areas, all of which will be open to discussion.

Wetlands and Vernal Pools

Scott Jackson and Heather Ruel

Saturday, November 17, 2007, 1pm - 3 pm

North Farms Road Entrance

Wildlife biologist Scott Jackson, UMass Department of Natural Resource Conservation and Heather Ruel, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Realty Specialist will lead this walk to find out what wetlands are and why they are so important. We'll also look at vernal pools and see what there is to discover during this dry period. We'll consider how to use environmental assessment to set conservation priorities and how wetlands function to protect water resources and wildlife.

Animal Tracking and Signs of Life in Winter

Molly Hale

Saturday, January 12, 2008, 10 am - Noon

North Farms Road Entrance

Molly is a consultant on wildlife habitat and teaches Ecology and Natural History at Greenfield Community College. We'll be exploring the winter environment, looking for tracks and other signs of Fitzgerald Lakes' inhabitants, and learn about animal behavior through what we observe.

Water Quality at FLCA

Roughly a year ago, we resumed periodic monitoring of the water quality in the FLCA. At three-month intervals, we have taken samples from the Broad Brook at North Farms Road, from Fitzgerald Lake at the canoe launch and the dam, and from two locations in the marsh adjoining Cooke's Pasture to the east of the dam. We then analyzed the samples for pH, dissolved oxygen, alkalinity, and for concentrations of phosphate and nitrate, using relatively simple chemical test kits manufactured by the Hach company. The results will be posted on a continuing basis on the Broad Brook Coalition web site: www.broadbrookcoalition.org.

While most parameters have been within normal limits over the past year, we have consistently observed an abnormally high level of nitrate, between 1.3 and 3.6 parts per million (ppm), in the Broad Brook at North Farms Road, just before it flows into Fitzgerald Lake. Elevated nitrate levels, 0.6 to 1.0 ppm, were also noted in a small stream that enters Fitzgerald Lake near the canoe launch. To be sure our nitrate measurements were accurate, we calibrated them against a sample that was analyzed with high precision by the Environmental Analysis Laboratory at the University of Massachusetts and found that our figures were in satisfactory agreement. Why are high nitrate levels of concern? If too high, they stimulate the growth of algae and other plants that eventually settle to the lake floor and are decomposed by bacteria, which proliferate as a result. The heightened bacterial activity consumes oxygen, reducing the dissolved oxygen available to fish and benthic invertebrates and causing their population to decrease. So far, the concentration of dissolved oxygen in the lake remains at normal levels, but continued monitoring will be necessary to make sure that it does not decline.

The presence of nitrate in the Broad Brook likely stems from a storm drain system that serves a large portion of Florence, extending well into the neighborhoods along Bridge Road and North Maple Street. Although not at all apparent to the passerby, the drains empty into the Broad Brook beneath North Farms Road, and any pollutants that are present run directly into Fitzgerald Lake. According to Doug McDonald, environmental planner and stormwater coordinator at the Northampton DPW, the most likely sources of high nitrate levels are runoff from lawn fertilizer and leaky septic systems. To raise

awareness that pollutants entering the storm water system ultimately flow into Fitzgerald Lake, McDonald has proposed a collaborative project with the BBC encompassing the installation of storm drain labels and other kinds of educational outreach to residents in the watershed. If you would like to participate in these activities, please contact Bob Zimmermann at 585-0405.

Bob Zimmermann

BBC Trail Spotlight: Marian Street Trail

Length: ~ ¾ mile one-way

Time to walk: leisurely 20 minutes from Marian Street trailhead to junction with Lake Trail and Boggy Meadow Road

Trail Description: I walked the Marian Street Trail recently, on a cool and drizzly September afternoon. The trail starts off on the right side of the parking area at the end of Marian Street. About 40 steps in you'll pass a BBC kiosk on your right.

The trail winds its way up and over a small hill marked by mossy stone and boulders underfoot and on each side of the trail. The forest is populated primarily by maple and oaks. After passing the top of the hill, the trail bears left. On your left is a large grey stone, home to a mossy covering and a small grey birch growing on top.

The path levels off and houses are visible beyond the woods on both sides. Small American Chestnut trees are scattered throughout with their characteristic toothy leaf.

The path widens and grass is growing at this time of year. The forest is a mix of hardwoods and some evergreen. Mountain laurel also line parts of the trail. There is a slight descent before the path bears right at a double blaze.

The trail continues its descent, passing through where a large oak tree fell and has been cut up and left by the side of the trail. The forest shifts and more hemlocks appear as the trail continues its gradual descent. As the trail curves, wooden planks take you over a dry stream bed.

There is a steep descent that is shaded by an understory of hemlock and birch, maple and oak above. At the bottom of the hill, thirty stepping stones have been placed in the to protect the trail during wet periods. Beyond that, you'll see diagonal

and parallel cuts called water bars. These divert water that would run straight down the trail and cause rapid erosion. After crossing two plank bridges, look for a sign on your right for the bird blind.

A side trip to the bird blind adds only a few minutes and is really the most interesting part of the walk because of the expansive view of the marsh formed by beavers damming the Broad Brook. Now the path is covered by a thick carpet of pine needles along with many tree roots that are growing near the surface. You can see the cattail marsh through the trees. On the day of my walk, fog and misty rain created a soft mysterious feeling. An old crabapple tree had dropped many ripe yellow apples on the trail. From the bird blind, I could hear a chorus of low rhythmic grunts from nearby frogs. There is a notebook in the blind for visitors to record their experiences.

Retracing your steps back to the main trail, you'll take a right and go about 80 steps along a boardwalk. The trail at this point is packed dirt with ferns on both sides. As you near the intersection of Marian Street Trail and Moose Lodge Trail/Boggy Meadow Road, you'll see a large two-trunked oak tree with a huge canopy in a clearing on your right. The trail ends with a group of boulders crossing the path.

Lou Peugh

Thanks to Volunteers for Water Chestnut Removal Days

Water Chestnut, as highlighted in BBC's Fall 2006 newsletter, was once again the focus of our FLCA work days.

Approximately 110 person-hours were devoted to this effort on four different days. We believe almost all water chestnut was removed. After the removal, one BBC member did find two plants growing in the lake. With an eye to future control efforts, we would like anyone finding water chestnut at the lake to let us know where, when and how many plants were seen. Contact Bruce Hart (bhart2000@aol.com, 584-4176) with this information. Eradication efforts will continue for many years in the future as seeds produced in the past will continue to produce plants.

Thanks once again to: Heather Ruel (Volunteer leader and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), Beth Goettel (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), Bob Zimmerman, Keith Davis, Frank Heston, Andrew Grimaldi, Peter Rowe, Jim Reis, Stan-the-Fixit-Man

Pollack, Lianna Hart, Sam Parsons, Michaela Twarog, Chris Osopowicz, Ilene Goldstein, Dave Herships, Bill Williams, Downey Meyer, Brian Adams, Pat Mahoney, Lola, and Helen.

Thanks Again to WALK AND TALK Leaders!

Walk and Talk leaders volunteer their time, energy and expertise and as a result we are more educated and better equipped to sustain and protect the natural world. Thanks go to:

Heather Ruel, Vernal pool walk and water chestnut removal program

Andrew McGee, Birding program

Anne Lombard and Shirley Hammersmith, Accessible birding program

Ginnie Traub, Beaver program

Janet Bissell, Wildflowers program

Jay Girard, Tree physiology and identification program

Looking for a way to get involved? We have volunteer opportunities!

Clerical Assistant for Member/Donor Acknowledgments: Assist the BBC Treasurer by sending thank you cards to new and renewing members and donors. An easy job that you can do at home. Busiest in October-November. E-mail is helpful but not essential. Contact Alan Marvelli (amarvell@smith.edu, 586-3756).

Volunteer Coordinator: This position involves periodically calling members of BBC who have expressed an interest in volunteering for trail maintenance days, invasive species removal days, or other kinds of work days. If you're interested, please contact Lou Peugh (lpeugh@verizon.net, 584-3122).

Trail Mapper: Volunteers are needed to walk the trails in and around FLCA with a GPS device. The data you collect will help make sure the City's maps are complete and accurate, and will help us make future acquisition decisions. We'll show you how to use the GPS. If you're interested, please get in touch with Downey Meyer (downeymeyer@hotmail.com, 584-0051).

Northampton Wetlands Ordinance Update

I am very pleased to report that the Northampton City Council gave preliminary approval to an amended Wetlands Ordinance on September 20. The ordinance includes provisions protecting vernal pools. The measure will have a second reading and vote at the next Council meeting in on October 4.

The Board of Broad Brook Coalition has long supported versions of the ordinance which contain strong vernal pool protections. The measure given preliminary approval is very close to what we have worked towards for so long.

This measure would not have passed without significant collaborative effort from both sides. The Conservation Commission and the Ordinance Committee worked tirelessly over several years to craft a measure good for the city. When it looked as though the vernal pool provisions might be deleted, Councilor Michael Bardsley and the Ordinance Committee suggested the formation of a Working Group to make one last attempt to clarify the ordinance. I was skeptical that the working group would achieve consensus in a short period of time but I am glad to report I was wrong. The working group, composed of representatives from the Conservation Commission, the Chamber of Commerce, the building industry and the conservation community, showed us how people working together from both sides of an issue can use scientific data, consultants' reports, and good sense to form a consensus and improve a complex ordinance. Mayor Clare Higgins and the city's economic development team participated in the dialog from the beginning; in fact, it was Mayor Higgins who originally introduced the idea that the city needed a new wetlands ordinance.

Conservation groups, including Mass Audubon, Valley Land Fund, and The Coalition to Save Northampton Wetlands made significant contributions to the dialog. Our conservation groups did not always agree on every detail of wording and strategy, but I know we are all committed to working together to continue to protect the city's land and wetlands.

In the end many diverse interests represented by the Chamber of Commerce, the Office of Economic Development, the Conservation Commission, and Broad Brook Coalition supported the ordinance. The City Council acted wisely in giving preliminary approval to this measure and I applaud them for it.

Robert Bissell, President

Please Join Us!

If you're not already a member, please complete this form and return it with \$25.00 to
BROAD BROOK COALITION, P.O. Box 60566, Florence, MA 01062
(All contributions to Broad Brook Coalition are **tax deductible**.)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Additional contribution to the Land Acquisition Fund: \$ _____

Broad Brook Coalition Needs Your Help, Too!

We appreciate your membership dues, but we can also use your volunteer time. Members and friends are needed to help carry out our goals. Please consider one (or more) of the following volunteer opportunities:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trail maintenance and repair | <input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising campaigns |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Invasive species removal | <input type="checkbox"/> Management Committee (manages conservation area) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clerical help/Mailings | <input type="checkbox"/> Land Preservation/Acquisition Committee |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Computer help | <input type="checkbox"/> BBC Board of Directors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer at Interfaith Cot Shelter | <input type="checkbox"/> Educational/recreational program planning or leadership, |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Writer/reporter for newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> Walks and Talks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter editor | <input type="checkbox"/> Monitor housing issues in the City |

To receive occasional email alerts regarding BBC programs and local conservation issues, go to www.broadbrookcoalition.org and look for "Join the Listserv" under the "Events" tab at the top of the page.

Directions to North Farms Rd. Entrance to FLCA

From the center of Florence (Route 9) traveling west, turn right onto North Maple Street at the traffic light. Proceed north 1.1 miles (North Maple Street will turn into North Farms Rd.). The FLCA parking lot and entrance kiosk will be on your right.

Directions to Moose Lodge Entrance to FLCA 196 Cooke Avenue, Northampton

From Routes 5 and 10 (King Street) traveling north, turn left onto Bridge Road at a set of traffic lights. At the next set of lights, take a right onto Cooke Avenue. Take Cooke Avenue to its end and you will be in the Moose Lodge parking area. Please park on the right as this is actually a private lot generously shared with Northampton citizens by the Moose Lodge.

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Broad Brook Coalition Events Calendar – Fall and Winter 2007-8

- October 14, Sunday** **Walk and Talk:** “Fall Foliage” with David McLain
10 am at North Farms Road Entrance to FLCA
- November 4, Sunday** **Broad Brook Coalition Annual Meeting**
6:30 pm at Hubbard Chapel, Hubbard Hall, Clarke School for the Deaf
Round Hill Road, Northampton
- November 17, Saturday** **Walk and Talk:** “Wetlands and Vernal Pools” with Scott Jackson and Heather Ruel
1 pm at North Farms Road Entrance to FLCA
- January 12, Saturday** **Walk and Talk:** “Animal Tracking and Signs of Life in Winter” with Molly Hale
10 am at North Farms Road Entrance to FLCA

Broad Brook Coalition Candidate Survey – November 2007 Elections

The following question was posed to the four candidates competing for the two open seats on the Community Preservation Committee:

The City will have soon have substantial Community Preservation Act funds available to spend on affordable housing, historic preservation, open space preservation, and recreation. How would you balance those priorities? In particular, how would you balance spending on open space preservation and on recreation?

Pamela Copeland's Response: There is a level of balance within the current CPC itself, with expertise and experience from appointed individuals and representatives of various city departments and offices, including Planning, Housing, Conservation, Recreation, and Historic Commissions. As one of two new members-at-large, I would represent the concerned citizen/taxpayer. I want the CPA funds spent responsibly with measurable, lasting results. All four areas under the CPA umbrella are important to our community. Because it's impossible to predict the number, mix, and scope of future proposals, I can't say what specific balance or calculus would drive my decision-making. I would be guided by the CPC evaluation criteria now being finalized (available at www.northamptonma.gov). Those projects which add value, by, say, drawing matching grants, or by addressing more than one CPA area, would certainly be compelling. Having seen the CPC in action these past months, I am confident that the Committee (with or without me) will conduct its business fairly and openly. They will support projects that protect our landscape, honor our architectural heritage, and serve the people who live or work, grow up or grow old here.

Elizabeth Lombard's Response: Balancing the three interests of the Community Preservation Act requires, I believe, a Community Preservation Committee with a healthy balance of advocates for each of the eligible funding areas.

I decided to be a candidate for election to the Community Preservation Committee so I can serve Northampton as a dedicated advocate for open space.

As co-chair of the successful CPA campaign in 2005, I met and spoke with hundreds of citizens about the CPA. I firmly believe that our targeted campaign to "Save Open Space" not only resonated powerfully within our community but that it was pivotal to the passage of the Community Preservation Act in Northampton.

I have an effective working relationship with board members of, among others, the Broad Brook Coalition, the Nonotuck Land Fund, and the Valley Land Trust; and with the director of Arcadia/Mass Audubon. I also assisted Northampton's Office of Planning & Development in 2006 in its successful fundraising drive for land acquisition at Turkey Hill.

I commit myself to be a strong voice for open space acquisition. As an elected member of the Community Preservation Committee, I look forward to working collaboratively with advocates of historic preservation, community housing, and recreation to bring forth projects to enhance our community. But most importantly, I look forward to serving the citizens of Northampton as their representative and advocate for open space. With these goals in mind, I ask for your support on election day.

Alan Verson's Response: I anticipate that balancing the competing, and sometimes overlapping, four areas addressed by the CPA will be very difficult. I have always been a strong supporter of environmental and land conservation efforts, but I cannot honestly say that I would start out with a predisposition toward one area or another. I would weigh the merits of each proposal in light of the cost of that proposal, the guidelines adopted by the CPA board and the merits of each other proposal.

Frances Volkmann's Response: The Community Preservation Act (CPA) is expected to bring about \$1.4 million per year to Northampton during the next several years. These funds will provide a unique opportunity to save our natural environment, expand our stock of much-needed affordable housing, and preserve our historical legacy.

I hope to be elected to one of the two city-wide positions on the Community Preservation Committee (CPC), which will oversee the use of the CPA funds. Lilly Lombard, another candidate, and I worked hard, along with some other Broadbrook members, to bring the CPA to Northampton. I was particularly strongly involved in developing educational materials to help community members understand what an important opportunity the CPA would be, and how we could structure it so that it would not levy an undue burden on less affluent homeowners.

Lilly and I have also attended most of the meetings of the CPC since its formation. The committee has been admirably receptive to public participation, even holding an open workshop as part of its process to develop criteria for CPA funding (a model of good practice that we should see more of in our city). So I have already been able to contribute to the CPC's funding strategies.

The CPC's criteria for funding have not yet been finalized, but some of the proposed criteria that I find particularly important are these (note that not every proposal is expected to meet every criterion):

- Projects that support more than one of the CPA's major areas, such as both affordable housing and open space or historical preservation.
- Projects that use CPA funds to leverage funds from other sources.
- Projects that contribute in some way to sustainability.
- Projects that provide a one-time opportunity to save a critical resource that would otherwise be lost, such as natural habitats, agricultural land, and some historical sites and records.
- Projects that have widespread support in the community from people and organizations dedicated to making Northampton an ever more beautiful, sustainable, humane place to live.

These criteria and others can help the CPC balance priorities across the three CPA areas. Though I will support excellent projects in any of the areas, I feel personally a particular urgency in the areas of open space preservation and affordable housing. With respect to recreation, I would favor projects that bring people into nature while minimizing disturbance of the natural world, and projects that encourage walking or biking.

Another kind of contribution I hope to make is to work with other CPC members to keep the community fully informed about the committee's work at each step of its process, and to listen seriously to public priorities and concerns.

I am grateful to the Broadbrook Coalition for the opportunity to express these views, and for its long-term commitment to many of the core values that the CPA will now be able to support.

The following questions were posed to the all candidates for seats on the City Council and to the two mayoral candidates:

- 1) The City will have soon have substantial Community Preservation Act funds available to spend on affordable housing, historic preservation, open space preservation, and recreation. How would you balance those priorities? In particular, how would you balance spending on open space preservation and on recreation?**
- 2) If an ordinance instituting strong protections for vernal pools comes before you, would you vote for it? What would such an ordinance have to contain to win your vote?**
- 3) Northampton is in great need of all kinds of affordable housing, but at a recent BBC forum, it was stated that our greatest need is "low-end" affordable housing, such as single-room occupancy units, for the very poor. Do you agree? What could the City Council do to encourage the creation of that kind of housing?**

Responses of Michael Bardsley (Candidate for City Council, At-Large Seat):

- 1) Without the Community Preservation Act our community would have few funds to spend on historic preservation, affordable housing, open space preservation and recreation. I was one of the councilors who sponsored the CPA before two different councils, and I actively campaigned for its passage. The CPA provides us with opportunities that we would otherwise not have. I do not see that priorities as competing. For instance, there are ways to overlap historic preservation and affordable housing needs. Likewise, I can imagine ways where the preservation of open space enhances recreational opportunities. I believe that one has to look at the value the CPA will add to Northampton over a long period of time, and I trust that the Committee will make progress in each of the four areas. One of the strengths of the CPA is that the spending priorities are generated from the community via the Community Preservation Committee. We have a talented group comprising the Committee, and I will follow closely the process whereby they make their recommendations.
- 2) There is a proposed ordinance for enhanced vernal pool protection making its way through the democratic process. I have consistently supported the proposed protections. I have had two concerns. One is process related; as Chair of the Ordinance Committee I have insisted on educational forums so that the public understands the importance of vernal pools. I strongly believe that because of these forums as well as the discussion at the ordinance committee, the public support for vernal pools has increase substantially. I also insisted that the owners of the land where the vernal pools exist be notified of the proposed changes. Though there was some resistance to this, I was not surprised when several of these owners

turned out in support of the proposal. My second concern is that we have clear language that can be easily understood. A proposed ordinance such as this should always contain a definition of terms. Residents are more likely to trust a proposal that is straightforward and clear.

3) I am certain that Northampton is in need of a wide range of affordable housing, but I hear a great deal about the need for housing for those with low to moderate incomes. It is extremely difficult for young working people, especially those with families, to be able to stay in this city. I am also aware of the longstanding need for housing for artists. The number of artists working and living in this city has decreased greatly over the past decade or so. I would say that Northampton has several pressing housing needs.

Responses of James Dostal (Candidate for City Council, At-Large Seat):

- 1) The law itself sets up the % spending. You will not be able to spend more than the percentage allocated under the law. I have consistently voted in favor of land acquisition for open space and recreation
- 2) If the ordinance on vernal pools comes before the council as it is written now I will vote against it. I believe that if the City wants an additional 100ft protection for vernal pools. State Law is 100ft. If the City wants the additional 100ft it should buy it. This should be done only from a willing seller. I believe taking land from a private person is wrong.
- 3) I agree. I believe the city is addressing part of this problem with the development at the Hospital Hill.

Responses of Bob Reckman (Candidate for City Council, Ward 3 Seat):

- 1) I think the City has done a good job setting up a committee for the use of CPA funds. The committee has worked hard to prepare a series of very clear guidelines about the types of projects that they can fund and what their criteria will be. I have read them all. I would leave the balance between open space preservation and recreation to their more informed discretion. They will have many demands on the funds from the CPA.
- 2) I do not know enough about vernal pools to have an informed opinion. I would try to learn more about this issue.
- 3) I agree that we need more affordable housing, particularly SRO's. I do not know what steps the City Council could take to encourage this, but look forward to learning more about it. I would certainly talk to the staff of OPD and to groups that work for affordable housing about their thoughts.

Responses of Kathleen Silva (Candidate for City Council, Ward 5 Seat):

- 1) I believe placing ten percent of the overall CPA Revenue into each of these accounts begins to balance them. Some projects will require more of a percentage of the accumulated CPA revenue than the other projects, but all of the projects should be ranked by a specific set of priority standards and funded according to that priority. There should be some small allowance for emergency projects, but all should be equal in priority. Each of these criteria is as important to the overall function and continuance of Northampton that all have come to care about over the years.

I feel recreation should be viewed prior to open space preservation for a couple of reasons. Recently the city has acquired quite a large amount of open space for our residents to utilize, and is working very hard to connect Northampton to all outlying bike paths. Outside of the skate park not much funding has been targeted recently toward recreation for our youth. I would like to see more lit basketball courts, tennis courts, soccer fields and possibly bocce courts which can be utilized by our youth, their families and our senior population, without charging a fee to use these amenities. I would also like to join recreation with open space preservation by developing hiking and mountain bike trails.

- 2) For the city to acquire large numbers of open space, yet institute a very narrowing wetlands ordinance seems contradictory. With our weakening storm water infrastructure compiled with the past conversations of "storm drain fees" its mind-boggling why we would move towards vanishing our very limited natural flood protection resource, especially in already densely populated areas. With this being said for me being a City Councilor means voting to represent the Ward 5 constituents by listening to their opinions regardless of my own. Given that, I am unable to accurately respond to this question if I am to win the election, as I have not solicited a large number of the Ward 5 constituents to learn how they feel in this situation and how they would want me to vote on their behalf. The representation of their opinions is the job. With approximately 1200 constituents in Ward 5, I would have to hold several meetings and discuss with them what language would win the vote if in fact they were not particularly pleased with the ordinance that was before them.

- 3) Although more single-room occupancy units are needed through the entire Commonwealth, I would like to see more "low-end" affordable housing for women and children, families who are struggling financially, housing for the disabled (i.e., wheelchair accessible), and our senior population who can no longer afford to keep their property, so that they may stay within our city limits. People have a desire to enjoy our community, especially those who have made it as it is today. Affordable housing is a need the community as a whole will continue to balance. As a community I would like to see us find a balance between those who are already here and need a home and those who want to live here. There are some areas within our community already that seem to have been forgotten. With input and help from residents I would like to

work on some type of program that combines these forgotten areas with our community, while creating evenness for all who live here present and future.

The City Council and the Planning Board are already working very hard on both past and present projects with developers to create this particular type of housing by utilizing tax incentives, development criteria and funding. The Sustainability work that is continuing has helped to combine the City Councilors and the Planning Board members on a joint venture. Working together is a way for information to be passed pertaining to the needs and concerns of residents. This process should not stop after the Sustainability Plan is finalized. Working together helps city officials and residents understand what direction and needs the city should move towards.

Responses of Marianne LaBarge (Candidate for City Council, Ward 6 Seat):

- 1) If I am elected as Ward 6 City Councilor I would seriously look at the recommendations put forward by the Community Preservation Committee before forming an opinion on how and where CPA funds should be spent.
- 2) In order for an Ordinance to win my vote I need to know that it has gone through the proper committees and that there has been a lengthy debate, including public comment. Good Ordinances are made when the process is followed.
- 3) I agree that Northampton is in need of all kinds of affordable housing. It has become very difficult for young people to afford to buy a home in Northampton and I think that the City Council can encourage the Community Preservation Committee to look at the affordable housing issue very carefully.

Responses of George J. Russell, Jr. (Candidate for City Council, Ward 7 Seat):

- 1) On the subject of Community Preservation funds, I feel that the availability of money to spend on recreation and open space preservation could be one in the same as both would be sharing city owned land that would be preserved.
- 2) In regard to vernal pools, the land owner would have to be considered first and a fair city ordinance be agreed upon by residents and the city council.
- 3) Historic preservation and affordable housing would require great input by the public and would have to be in line with city ordinances to insure good planning for many years to come.