

BROAD BROOK COALITION

*Dedicated to the stewardship of the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area,
the preservation of open space, and the promotion of affordable housing*

Volume 22, No. 1 Spring 2010

Wildlife Corridor Extended with New Land Acquisition

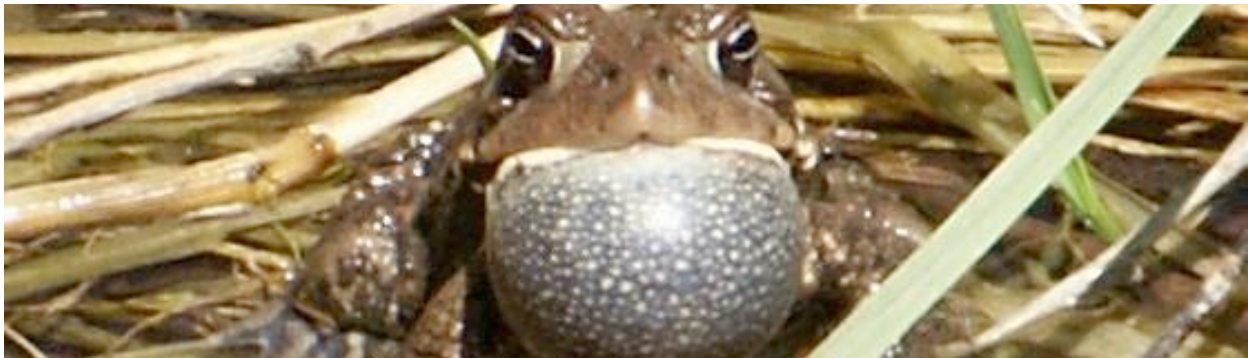
Broad Brook Coalition is pleased to have supported the preservation of the Beaver Brook parcel, a 102 acre gem located between Route 9 (Haydenville Rd.) and North Farms Road, not far from the Williamsburg line. This addition to the City's conservation land preserves parts of the upland watersheds of both Beaver Brook and Broad Brook. Preservation helps to connect the wildlife corridor extending around the western parts of the City from the Mt. Tom preserve through Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary, Mineral Hills /Turkey Hill, and Robert's Hill conservations areas, eventually reaching Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area and then heading north into Hatfield, Williamsburg, Conway and beyond. This new conservation land holds very interesting fauna and flora,

including rich wetland areas and old groves of impressive Red Oaks.

The BBC Stewardship Committee is working with the City's Conservation Commission to determine what role BBC will play in the management of this property. Plans for use of the property are in the very early stages.

Broad Brook Coalition contributed \$10,000 from our Land Acquisition Fund toward the purchase. We could not have made this donation without the generous support of our members. Northampton's Community Preservation Committee and City Council agreed to contribute essential CPA funds, with additional funds coming from a Massachusetts LAND grant. Special thanks go to Wayne Feiden, Northampton's Director of Planning and Development; this land preservation would not have happened without his skillful efforts.

American Toad



From the President's Desk

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for more than ten
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(New Land Acquisition -- continued from p. 1)

Over the past 21 years, BBC has contributed more than \$104,000 toward the preservation of Conservation land, now totaling over 750 acres in the Broad Brook and Fitzgerald Lake watersheds.

--Robert Bissell

From the President's Desk

Broad Brook Coalition was founded by people who saw events occurring in our neighborhood that they did not like. Their response was to talk with neighbors and friends and then to go about working for what they thought should be done; they worked to preserve open land and lobbied the city to change its priorities. The Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area was one result of their collective efforts and for over twenty years BBC has managed this area, creating and improving trails, controlling invasive plants, cutting brush on the dam, and sponsoring numerous free nature education events to further public awareness and appreciation. BBC has grown and prospered on the simple principle of friends and neighbors working together to make their community a better place.

An interesting report on community volunteerism appeared in a recent issue (March 7, 2010) of Parade Magazine, a supplement included in the Daily Hampshire Gazette. Patrick Corvington, CEO of the federal Corporation for National and Community Service, was quoted in an article by Michael Berland, as saying:

"...today there's a 'compassion boom' of people helping others...growing understanding that service is an essential tool to achieve community and national goals." A poll conducted by Parade found that 94 % of people polled believed that it is "important to be personally



Volunteers work on the bird blind

involved in supporting a cause we believe in" in our communities and 98 % have participated in at least one activity to make a difference. Parade's poll also revealed that, "Despite the fact that most of the people surveyed said they've made cutbacks due to the economic crisis, 87 % supported a cause financially --- generosity continues to be the American way."

Northampton has recently been successful in preserving two new parcels of land for conservation-- a small parcel near the River Valley Market and another large parcel near the Williamsburg town line on Route 9. Given these new acquisitions, BBC, in partnership with the Northampton Conservation Commission, will need to increase its efforts to oversee and manage a larger area. I am confident that the same farsightedness and spirit of cooperation that are hallmarks of Broad Brook Coalition will continue towards that goal. From the earliest acquisitions at FLCA through increasingly larger areas of preserved conservation land, BBC has always met new challenges with the steady commitment and vigor of our community volunteers.

--Frank Olbris,

President, BBC Board of Directors



Rare Butterfly Observed at FLCA

This past July, 2009, a visitor to Northampton from Pennsylvania, Karl Gardner, was searching for somewhere to go hiking and looking for butterflies. He decided on Fitzgerald Lake, and while there, he saw and photographed several individuals of a rare Massachusetts butterfly, the Dion Skipper, *Euphyes dion*. In so doing, he established the first record of a breeding colony of this butterfly outside of Berkshire County. He also helped underscore the importance of Fitzgerald Lake to the preservation of biodiversity in western Massachusetts.

One of only eight butterfly species recognized by the state as a protected species, the Dion Skipper is currently listed as threatened. The Dion Skipper is a sedge specialist, feeding on *Carex* sedges as a caterpillar, and generally found in this northern part of its range in calcareous fens or other non-acidic wetlands. It is single-brooded,

meaning that the adults have just one flight period during the year, usually early through mid-July. The large orange adult Skippers are identifiable by a pale ray extending through the center of the hindwing. They will nectar on a variety of lakeside flowers such as Swamp Milkweed, *Asclepias incarnata*, and Blue Flag Iris, *Iris versicolor*, and can also be found perched on lakeside grass stems and leaves.

On Sunday, July 11, 2010, I will be leading a butterfly walk to Fitzgerald Lake as well as to Graves Farm in Williamsburg, and we will be looking for the Dion Skipper along with an assortment of other butterflies-- hairstreaks, fritillaries, checkerspots, and others. You can read more about this trip, as well as other information about Massachusetts butterflies and butterfly field trips, at www.massbutterflies.org. I hope to see you then.

--Bill Benner
President, Massachusetts Butterfly Club



Notes from the Stewardship Committee

The Stewardship Committee once again has a full program of activities planned for the coming spring and summer. We'll start out with our annual maintenance of the shrub islands in Cooke's Pasture with a Volunteer Day in early May to check the health of the existing plants and to replace those that didn't make it through the winter. Other routine jobs include repairs to the bird houses in Cooke's and South Pastures and making sure that the beavers don't block the outflow drain at the east end of Fitzgerald Lake. We will also continue to test the water quality at various points within the FLCA and hope to track down the source of the undesirable levels of nitrate that are getting into the Broad Brook in the vicinity of North Farms Road. Finally, we are revising the Nature Trail brochures (unavailable for several years) and will distribute them at the kiosk near the canoe launch so that visitors will once again be able to better understand the numerous sites of interest along the Fishing Place-Lake Trail loop that are marked by the numbered posts.



Water chestnut

As in the past, much of our effort will be directed to the control of invasive plants that have taken hold throughout the FLCA. We invite you to join us for Volunteer Days in May and June aimed at reducing the abundant growth of garlic mustard at the North Farms Road entrance and tackling the infestations of multiflora rose and other undesirable plants on the dam and in the pastures. We are also seeking volunteers to help us locate and remove water

chestnut plants from Fitzgerald Lake in July and August. Please see the "Volunteer Days" schedule in this issue for details. Although the work is at times strenuous, the sense of contributing to the health of the environment is very rewarding.

While several species of invasive plants, such as garlic mustard, Japanese knotweed, autumn olive, multiflora rose and water chestnut, can be effectively removed by hand, targeted herbicide application is required to successfully combat a number of invasive plant species. Last year, with funds from the Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition, we initiated a three-year project to curtail the growth of several stands of the common reed, *Phragmites*, in the marsh below the dam and to eliminate a small patch of black swallow-wort on land adjacent to the FLCA. A generous grant from Northampton's Community Preservation Committee will enable us to continue these projects and to begin two others aimed at spotted knapweed and glossy buckthorn. In recent years, we have noticed the rapid spread of these two exotics in Cooke's Pasture and on the dam. Both of them have the potential to establish monocultures, where they are the sole survivors of the battle against native grasses and shrubs. Our control efforts will start with highly targeted applications of appropriate herbicides at specific times throughout the spring and summer when these plants are at the most vulnerable stages of their reproductive cycle. All of these projects will be monitored regularly for their effectiveness. The control efforts to be used are widely employed by leading conservation organizations nationwide.

Several new undertakings are also in the works for this summer. As the health of Fitzgerald Lake is a continuing concern, we intend to survey the aquatic plants growing in the lake to make sure no unwanted species in addition to water chestnut are present. This effort will kick off with a workshop on the identification of native and non-native aquatic plants to be presented by the Lakes and Ponds Program of the Massachusetts Division of Conservation and Recreation which is tentatively scheduled for July 14. In addition, the Stewardship Committee has been considering the limited removal of trees and shrubs from specific portions of Cooke's Pasture to enhance the ecological benefit of the early successional habitat for birds and other wildlife. We hope to have a proposal drawn up for consideration by the Northampton Conservation Commission in the coming months. Finally, the BBC Board has agreed to enter into a one-year joint endeavor with the City to plan for the management of the newly acquired Beaver Brook/Broad Brook Conservation Area to the east of Route 9, near the Haydenville boundary.

-- Bob Zimmermann

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 BBC are tax deductible.)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ e-mail _____

I've included an additional **tax deductible** contribution to the Land Acquisition Fund

Please do **not** include my name in any listing of contributors to Broad Brook Coalition

Broad Brook Coalition needs your help, too!

We appreciate your membership dues, but want you to know that you can contribute in other ways, too. 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"/> Newsletter editor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Invasive species removal | <input type="checkbox"/> Stewardship 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"/> Writer/reporter for newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> Educational/recreational program planning or leadership |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising campaigns | <input type="checkbox"/> Walks and Talks |

- - - - - *Already a member? Consider passing this page on to a friend!* - - - - -

About Us

Broad Brook Coalition (BBC) is a nonprofit, all-volunteer community organization dedicated to the preservation of open space and the promotion of affordable housing. BBC co-manages the 646-acre Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area (FLCA) in cooperation with the Northampton Conservation Commission. It organizes volunteer days for trail improvement and maintenance and invasive species removal, runs educational Walks and Talks at FLCA, raises funds for the expansion of FLCA, and monitors land conservation and affordable housing issues.

Broad Brook Coalition Board of Directors: 2009 - 2010

Frank Olbris, president
Robert A. Zimmermann, vice-president
Alan Marvelli, treasurer
Robert Bissell
Bruce Hart
Dave Herships
Pat McDonagh
James Reis
Bill Williams

Walks and Talks: Spring and Summer 2010

Greet the American Woodcock

Dr. Josh Rose

Friday, March 26 / 6:00-9:00 p.m.

(Rain date, Saturday April 3, 6-9 p.m).

Every spring the American Woodcock, a.k.a. Timberdoodle, puts on a show that must be seen (or at least heard) to be believed. Come to Cooke's Pasture, our early successional habitat to experience it for yourself! Dr. Josh Rose, until recently a naturalist at the World Birding Center in south Texas, will lead the way. Be prepared for a substantial walk, about 1.25 miles each way, the return trip in the dark, in potentially muddy conditions. A flashlight or spotlight with a red filter can help you find your way without spoiling your night vision.

Meet at the former Moose Lodge, at the top of Cooke Ave. off Hatfield St. (Or feel free to enter elsewhere and meet us at Cooke's Pasture).

Vernal Pools

Dr. Steve Tilley

Saturday April 17 / 1:00-3:00 p.m.

Steve Tilley, Professor of Biological Sciences at Smith College, studies the evolutionary biology of salamanders. Vernal pools are unique environments that are critical to the reproductive cycles of several species of animals. By filling with water over the winter and drying up over the summer they provide aquatic environments that are free of fish predators. Wood Frogs, three species of mole salamanders, and a number of invertebrate animals use vernal pools as breeding sites. We'll look for evidence of these animals in vernal pools near the lake.

Meet at the North Farms Rd. entrance.

Mid-spring Nature Hike

Connie Parks, botanist

Saturday, May 8 / 1:00-3:00 p.m.

The month of May brings great changes in the appearance of the forests, fields, and wetlands of Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area. Join us for a nature hike to find ephemeral spring wildflowers

and signs of vegetative explosions to come. Sturdy footwear is recommended.

Connie Parks lives in Florence and studies and teaches about plants and nature, edits science textbooks, and works toward building a conservation community in the valley.

Meet at the North Farms Road entrance

Birding

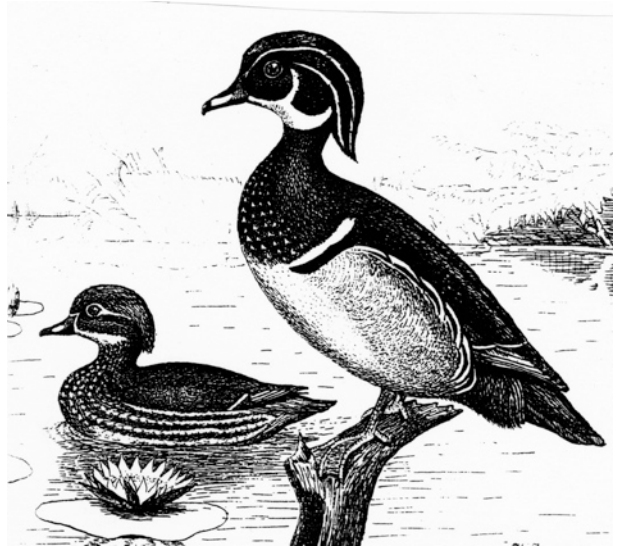
David Peake-Jones

Sunday, May 9 / 7:30-10:30 a.m.

(Mother's Day)

A nice way to start your Mother's Day. David is the Editor of the Hampshire Bird Club newsletter and a long time group leader for trips throughout the region. This is our annual walk at a busy time of the year for birds.. These walks are a great way to expand our knowledge of birds -- and the plants and habitats that are necessary for their survival. All ages and skill levels are welcome and of course, bring binoculars and field guides.

Meet at the North Farms Road entrance



Breeding Birds

Bob Zimmermann,
Professor of Molecular Biology,
University of Massachusetts,
BBC Board member

Sunday, June 6/ 9:00 a.m.- noon

By early June, most of the birds that breed in our area will be back, building their nests, defending their territories and even raising their young. We will see who's "at home" in the woods, pastures and marshes of the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area and look for signs of their breeding activities. Bring binoculars. There might be as much as 2 ½ miles of walking.

Meet at the North Farms Road entrance

Non-native Invasive Species-- What's the Big Deal?

Janet Bissell

Sunday, June 13 / 1:00 .p.m.

Join Janet Bissell on a walk around Fitzgerald Lake and explore the non-native invasive plants that have become unwelcome guests in the lake and the surrounding woods and fields. Learn why some non-native plants become invasive and why they are a threat to our native habitats. We will talk about the identification of invasive species as well as their natural histories and some strategies for coping with them.

Meet at the North Farms Road Entrance

Butterfly Club Walk at FLCA

and Graves Farm, Williamsburg

Sunday, July 11 / 9:30 a.m.

Bill Benner,

President, Massachusetts Butterfly Club

Graves Farm Sanctuary is a mix of wet and dry upland fields, where we can look for hairstreaks, Meadow Fritillaries and a variety of other species. We will also visit nearby Fitzgerald Lake to look for the recently discovered and state listed Dion Skipper. No bathroom facilities are available. Bring lunch. Call Bill for directions and to confirm.

Bill Benner

(413) 320-4422

billb55@aol.com

Non-native Aquatic Species

Tom Flannery,
Mass Dept. of Conservation and Recreation,
MA Weed Watchers

Wednesday, July 14/ 7-9 p.m.

A key goal of the DCR's Lakes and Ponds Program is to prevent further infestation of Massachusetts's lakes and ponds by exotic invasive aquatic plants, and to work towards controlling and removing existing populations of exotic invasive plants. To meet this goal they have developed a program to train local lake groups to monitor their ponds for the presence of exotic invasive species and to develop a removal plan if an infestation is found. The 2 hour class begins with an introduction to the invasive non-native species issue, how exotic species are introduced into our waterways, methods of dispersal, basic terminology, and guidance on performing biweekly monitoring and completing plant surveys. In the remaining time, volunteers will engage in hands-on identification. A variety of non-native and native plant species are provided, and people are encouraged to bring in their own samples. Volunteers will become familiar with using a dichotomous key and, although the emphasis is on exotic species, the goal is to teach volunteers to understand how to use the key so that they will be able to identify the majority of common aquatic plants in their lake or pond (native or otherwise).

*A limited opportunity to examine the lake **might** be available prior to the program. Contact Bruce Hart at: bhart2000@aol.com (phone: 584-4176)*

Meet at the Forbes Library Community Room

Mushrooms

Pat McDonagh

Saturday, September 25/ 9:30-11:30

Mushrooms and other fungi are an essential part of the forest ecosystem. Learn more about these fascinating organisms during a walk at Fitzgerald Lake. The walk will focus on identification features, edible (and toxic) species, responsible harvesting, and the role mushrooms play in the forest.

Meet at the North Farms Road entrance

For further information on BBC Walks and Talks contact Bruce Hart at: bhart2000@aol.com (phone: 584-4176)

VOLUNTEER DAYS AT THE FLCA : SPRING AND SUMMER 2010

Shrubland Habitat and Native Plants: Saturday, May 1

We will continue to maintain the three "shrub islands" in Cooke's Pasture which have been planted with a variety of wildlife-friendly native shrubs over the past few years. We will spend the morning pruning the shrubs we have planted in previous years, cutting back the competing undergrowth, replacing plants that have not survived the winter, and attaching permanent identification labels kindly provided by Dick Wynne, a member of the Stewardship Committee. Although some tools will be provided, additional clippers and shears are always welcome. Wear long pants and bring along your favorite insect repellent. Please join us at the former Moose Lodge parking lot at 8:30 a.m. or at the Fitzgerald Lake dam at 9:00 a.m. We should be finished by noon. For further information, call Bob Zimmermann at 585-0405.

Pulling Garlic Mustard and Trail Maintenance at the North Farms Road Entrance: Saturday, May 22

In the past few years, we have been plagued by an abundance of garlic mustard, a rapidly spreading invasive plant, in the North Farms Road parking lot and along the path to the canoe launch. Garlic mustard is easy to identify in its early flowering stage and, owing to its shallow root, can be pulled by hand with very little effort. Last year we removed many, many bags of this invasive pest but because it is a biennial and because it sheds copious amounts of seed if left unchecked, we expect that we will once again have a heavy infestation. Please stop by on Saturday, May 22 and help us stem the tide; even a half hour of dedicated hand pulling will make a difference! We will also clear moss from the paved trail; a small amount of attention to this now will greatly extend the life of the trail. We will begin at 9:00 a.m. and plan to work till noon. For further information, call Bruce Hart at 584-4176.

Invasive Plant Control in Cooke's and South Pastures: Saturday, June 12

A number of invasive plant species that grow in the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area can be effectively controlled by cutting, pulling or digging. Multiflora rose, Japanese knotweed and autumn olive all fit this category. We will decide on where to concentrate our efforts later this spring, but Cooke's Pasture, South Pasture and the Fitzgerald Lake dam are all prime targets. As usual, we will provide most of the tools, but some extra shovels would be welcome. It's probably a good idea to wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts--and bring gloves--as multiflora rose, in particular, can put up some pretty tough resistance. Duration: 3 hours. Meet at 9:00 a.m. in the former Moose Lodge parking lot, whence we will drive to the dam. For further information, call Bob Zimmermann at 585-0405

Removal of Water Chestnut from Fitzgerald Lake: Sunday, July 18 & Saturday, August 8

Our efforts to curtail the proliferation of water chestnut in Fitzgerald Lake, now in its fifth year, have met with considerable success. Nonetheless, continuing surveillance is needed to prevent the resurgence of this harmful invasive species in portions of the lake where it has been previously identified and to ensure that any new growth is located and eliminated. As in the past, we will survey the entire lake and remove any water chestnut plants we find by hand. We will need canoes and kayaks to get us onto the lake, as well as large plastic buckets to collect the plants. Wear long pants and sneakers (no sandals) and bring water, sunscreen and gloves. PFDs (personal flotation devices) are required, and if you can contribute a boat, let us know. Please join us for a pleasant summer outing on Fitzgerald Lake! Meet at the North Farms Road parking lot at 1:00 p.m. on Sunday, July 18 and at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, August 8 (duration ~3 hours each day). For further information, call Bruce Hart at 584-4176.

Check our web site for trail maps and for information about upcoming walks, volunteer opportunities, and much more

broadbrookcoalition.org

BBC AT THE LILLY LIBRARY

The BBC archive at the Lilly Library in Florence is now completely catalogued and is available for your perusal in the Local History Room on the second floor. Among the highlights are notebooks chronicling animal and bird sightings at the wildlife blind since its construction in 2000. To view the holdings online, go to the library home page at <http://lillylibrary.org>, click on "catalog" in the upper left corner, then choose "number searches" in the "Other Searches" box on the catalog page. On the next screen, click on the "Dewey Call #" button, enter "LH BBC", hit the "Submit" button and you are there!

YOUR PHOTO

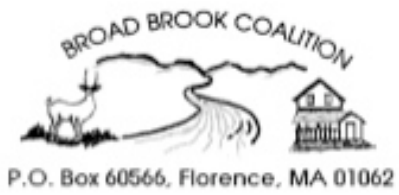
**(or poem
or essay
or sketch)**

HERE

We welcome contributions from BBC members and other visitors to Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area. Send us a photo, poem, or short essay and we'll include it in the newsletter if we have room.

Send to:

news@broadbrookcoalition.org



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