



BROAD BROOK COALITION

Volume 25, Issue Number 2, FALL 2013

BBC ANNUAL MEETING

NOVEMBER 17, 2013 AT 5 P.M.

FLORENCE COMMUNITY CENTER

The Prospect for Birds in the Eastern Deciduous Forest

Dr. Robert Askins Professor of Biology

Connecticut College, New London, CT.

Friends, members and neighbors are all welcome to join the Broad Brook Coalition, Stewards of the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area in Northampton/Florence MA, at their Annual Meeting. Dr Askins will entertain questions following his talk. A short business meeting will follow with refreshments and a chance to socialize topping off the evening.

Migratory forest birds are threatened by fragmentation of their breeding habitats in the north and destruction of their winter habitats in the tropics. Many species are also threatened by the increased homogeneity of forests. Most forests in the Northeast are dominated by medium-aged forest, and there is relatively little habitat for species that require open habitats, young forest, or old-growth forest. The future of deciduous forests and forest birds also will depend on climate change and the introduction of insects and pathogens that decimate particular species of trees. Understanding the history and ecology of deciduous forests is critical for sustaining their biological diversity, including the large array of birds that are restricted to forests. This talk is based on a book that Professor Askins is completing on the ecology and conservation of deciduous forests.

Robert A. Askins is the Katharine Blunt Professor of Biology at Connecticut College. His specializations include ecology, ornithology, impact of forest fragmentation on natural communities, ecology of early successional birds and conservation biology. He is nationally recognized for his research of the ecology of migratory birds and the impact of forest fragmentation on their populations. In both his teaching and research, Dr. Askins is engaged in synthesizing ideas from ecology, animal behavior and evolution to understand how natural ecosystems work. One of his books is on the conservation of birds in North America, "*Restoring North America's Birds; Lessons from Landscape Ecology*" (Yale Press, 2000) and a new book is on the ecology and conservation of deciduous forests of the world (Yale Press, forthcoming.)

The Florence Community Center is at 140 Pine Street
(Rt. 9 W > Park Street > Pine Street)

From the President

WHY CONSERVATION AREAS?

We are fortunate to live in a city that values and cares deeply about preserving some of its once abundant fields, forests, ponds and streams, and the creatures that inhabit them. Among the creatures are, of course, us; we use these lands for hiking, running, birding, skiing, boating, snowshoeing -- all manner of activities that have become known collectively as "passive recreation." Frank Olbris, our late friend and colleague, called our attention to a column in the Springfield Republican that cited the salubrious effects of simply spending quiet time in the deep woods. The rewards of visiting these lands in the cool, clear weather of the past few weeks, with the leaves turning all shades of yellow, orange and red, have been hard to beat.

Northampton's conservation lands are also of immeasurable value for wildlife. The animals that use them are able to breed, forage, hunt and raise their offspring in relative tranquility. From east to west to south, the Fitzgerald Lake, Beaver Brook, Roberts Hills, Saw Mill Hills and Mineral Hills Conservation Areas encircle the center of the city, sustaining a healthy mix of wildlife while giving us the opportunity to encounter them safely and, if we are lucky, at close hand. These refuges also provide a corridor, as yet incomplete, for animals to circulate through different habitats at different times of year. Living on a road that intersects this corridor, I am well aware of its use, though regrettably, in a negative sense: over the past few years, I've witnessed the killing of bear, bobcat, deer, a host of possums, porcupines and raccoons, and countless frogs, turtles and salamanders -- all prey to fast-moving trucks and automobiles.

Wild animals need not only undisturbed tracts of land, but a diversity of habitats as well. Bobcats prefer forests with ample brushy cover, mink inhabit streams and marshes to satisfy their aquatic diets, porcupines seek out rocky outcrops for their dens, and deer flourish on the edges of field and forest. Perhaps the best example of eclectic habitat use is that of the black bear, who spends the spring in wetlands consuming plant sprouts, leaf buds and skunk cabbage, the summer further upland in search of fruit and berries, and the fall at even higher elevations scouting for beechnuts, acorns and hazelnuts as they prepare to settle down in their winter dens. All of these habitat types—and more -- can be found within the city's conservation lands.

cont'd pg. 2

WHY CONSERVATION (CONT.)

Our native fauna are also surprisingly wide-ranging in their food choices¹. Who would have thought that fishers eat fruit, that porcupines dine on hemlock needles or that 'possums prey on other rodents? Gray foxes even climb trees in pursuit of prey. They all have food preferences and in some cases will travel dozens of miles to satisfy their needs. This is especially so in lean years when forest productivity is low and food scarce, driving wild animals to forage more widely than usual, and leading bears to our yards, fishers to our henhouses, and rabbits to our gardens. These are precisely the times when conflicts with humans are most likely to arise.

Yes, wildlife can be a pain in the neck at times: deer nibble our shrubbery, bears destroy bird feeders, and coyotes send chills up and down our spines when they cry out in the middle of the night. Yet many of these incursions can be effectively managed. Deer can be kept out of gardens by simple fences. If a bear visits your bird feeder after she emerges from her den in late March or early April, take the feeder down right away. Birds have plentiful sources of food available in spring and there are few things more damaging to wild bears than habituating them to human-provided food. And coyotes? Oh well, just enjoy those spine-tingling nighttime howls, cries and barks—they're just the call of the wild!

1. DeGraaf, R.M. and Yamasaki, M. (2001), *New England Wildlife: Habitat, Natural History and Distribution*. University Press of New England, Hanover & London.

Bob Zimmermann



MINK



COYOTE



BOBCAT



PORCUPINE

WITH APPRECIATION!

The BBC Board is deeply appreciative of all of our wonderful volunteers whose generosity and hard work helped make our 25th anniversary year a successful and memorable one. We want to take this opportunity to thank:

Carmen Ahearn, Linda Babcock, Tamara Barbasch, Frank Bowrys, Rain Bowrys, Hilary Caws-Elwitt, Nancy Chamberlin, Narva Chevan, Doris Cohen, Len Cohen, Phil and Wendy Cooper with Cub Scout Pack 103, Keith Davis, Ilene Goldstein, Jonathan Gottsche, Stephen Harding, Paul Jahnige, Patricia Jung, Adria Poulson, Austin Poulson, David Pritchard, Ann Pufall, Jim Reis, Norma Roche, Peter Rowe, Jay Russell, Mary Jo Stanley and Rich Winnick

for their help with pulling and digging invasive plants, legal advice, cleaning up the FLCA entrances, bird house maintenance, tool sharpening, newsletter production, trail planning and maintenance, kiosk renovation, membership campaign, shrub island maintenance, 25th anniversary planning, and service on the Trails, Land Preservation and Stewardship committees.

Celebrating 25 Years of Stewardship

Friends and members of the Broad Brook Coalition have much to celebrate: 25 years of volunteer stewardship of the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area as it expanded from 154 acres to 800 acres today. In the last year alone, more than 100 acres have been added to FLCA.

Our celebration started with a “grande promenade” from the FLCA entrance on North Farms Road to a new trailhead on Coles Meadow Road, led by BBC President Bob Zimmermann. On a warm, sunny Saturday morning in September, 30 hardy souls made the 3-mile hike which featured a visit to the new Broad Brook Gap parcel, among other high points.



Ben Kilham and Friend

A week later, close to 80 people attended the 25th anniversary reception held at the Florence Civic Center, catered by the Black Sheep Deli and featuring a talk and slide show by black bear behaviorist Ben Kilham of Lyme, New Hampshire. Ben has studied black bears up close for many years and raised more than 100 orphaned cubs, all returned to the wild. His novel approach has been to place the cubs in a natural setting, yet maintain

close contact with them during their first year to ensure that they learn to forage, respond to danger, interact with other bears, and accommodate to a winter den, much as would a mother bear.

In Memoriam The Vision and Legacy of Frank Olbris

Frank Olbris, 69, a founding board member of the Broad Brook Coalition, died of cancer on September 15. Norma Simms Roche gave this tribute to Frank at his funeral at the Unitarian Society of Northampton and Florence.

I served on the Board of Directors of Broad Brook Coalition with Frank. That’s not surprising, because anyone who ever served on our Board served with Frank—he was on it for the whole 25 years of our history.

For those of you who don’t know us, we’re a local group that works with the Northampton Conservation Commission to maintain and enlarge the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area. BBC started out as a group of eight neighbors who were concerned about a high-end housing development proposed for a beautiful forest and field where they liked to walk. Frank was one of those neighbors. But he was also a bigger thinker than that. He understood that rather than simply being against something, the group needed to be for something. They knew that conservation efforts could sometimes be a backhanded means of snob zoning, so they committed themselves to supporting affordable housing.

They dreamed that the land they loved could someday become a conser-

vation area, so they committed themselves to maintaining a small conservation area nearby. And Frank, in particular, saw that the issue of protecting open space and wildlife habitat that brought a neighborhood together could bind it together to do other things.

Through his work, he has found that black bears are manifestly social, communicating through a wide range of vocalization, scent marking and body language, and even acting altruistically by sharing food resources with other bears in lean years. To encompass the full gamut of Ben’s insights into black bear behavior, we urge you to check out Ben’s website at <http://www.benkilham.com/> or consult his forthcoming book, *Out on a Limb: What Black Bears Have Taught Me about Intelligence and Intuition*.

While BBC has conducted fundraising to support the city’s purchases of land abutting FLCA, those acquisitions occur primarily because of the dedicated work of Wayne Feiden, Northampton’s Director of Planning and Sustainability. On behalf of BBC, former board member Norma Sims Roche recognized Wayne for his “25 years of steadfast support.” BBC’s efforts “have always been solidly supported by the hours put in by Wayne and his staff in meeting with us, making presentations at City meetings, finding and writing grants, negotiating with landowners, and coordinating the development of the Master Plan that includes us and guides all of our efforts.” His work is all the more remarkable, she pointed out, because Wayne’s job is to balance the planning needs of the whole city and all of its interests.

Norma presented Wayne with a certificate and a framed photograph of a Hummingbird Clearwing, a colorful moth photographed at Fitzgerald Lake by BBC board member Bill Williams. Wayne later emailed his thanks to the board: “I was so touched as to the gesture, the picture, and Norma’s kind words. Working with BBC has been one of the highlights of my 25 years here.”

Frank was one of the people who gave his efforts not just to the fun outdoor parts of our work, but also to the hard parts that nobody wanted to do, like sitting in meetings. Starting with the difficult work of setting up a viable organizational structure from scratch, through all our natural growing pains and decisions about what path to take, Frank was there. It could be hard to schedule a meeting sometimes, given all of his other volunteer commitments, but he was willing to plant himself in a chair for however long it took to hash out the details of whatever problem we were facing. He knew our founding principles, since he’d helped shape them, and if we strayed from them, he let us know it. And he knew our history, so he could always fill us in on what had been done in the past and save us from reinventing the wheel. And it seemed that he knew every parcel and every landowner in the area, which was invaluable as we added land, including that original parcel where the development would have been, to grow the conservation area to well over a square mile today.

BBC is, in large measure, Frank’s vision and his legacy, and we’ll proudly do our best to carry his legacy on.

A Bit of History

Peter Rowe former BBC board member and a member of the planning committee for the 25th anniversary, presented this history of BBC at the reception in September.

The history of our conservation area is that of struggle among users with different values. Broad Brook itself figured importantly for the mid 17th century settlers when it was the dividing line between an “inner commons” – land nearest town to be used for crops and pasture – and the “uplands pine lands” to be used on an “as needed” basis, mostly as woodlots.

The farm that became the basis for our conservation area was put together by Col. Timothy Dwight by 1728. Dwellings were on Bridge Road (#340 today) and there was a sawmill on Broad Brook behind Fortification Hill. Various owners followed, and Harold Fitzgerald acquired the 350-acre farm in 1935. On land near our North Farms parking area a recreation hall was built where dances were held in the 1950s for the workers at the Corticelli Silk Mill.

In 1965, Mr. Fitzgerald began a 12-year effort to develop his land for recreation and housing. Recreation meant the construction of the dam of Broad Brook. Permission was granted by the County Conservation Commission and specifications were provided by the Soil Conservation Service. The dam was completed in 1965. Recreation was said to be skating in winter and swimming in summer. Housing, however, meant the construction of single-family units in condominium clusters situated around the lake. Initial surveys by a Springfield builder showed great obstacles to construction, mostly provided by Mother Nature: the soil is extremely shallow and much that is over bedrock, thus there could be no septic tanks and a special sewage pumping station would be required. And there are, of course, extensive wetlands.

With this report, in December 1972, Mr. Fitzgerald made to the City his first offer of a 140-acre parcel for \$175,000. The Conservation Commission tabled the offer, asking for more time to study it. No action was taken. By now a neighborhood group had formed in opposition to development in the area. The group was led by Frank Olbris, who called the group informally the Broad Brook Coalition.

A second attempt by Mr. Fitzgerald to build housing around the lake began a year later. All the physical obstacles remained, and the Fire Department added a serious construction cost by requiring a two-road access to the lake development. At this point, Mr. Fitzgerald petitioned for a conservation restriction on the land of sufficient value to compensate for owed back taxes. The Commission asked for land between the lake and Rick Drive. The land would be used for passive recreation, with non-motorized

traffic only, and the lake would be accessible to the public for boating if boats were portaged by foot. This was unacceptable to Mr. Fitzgerald and no action was taken. To this day, the City neither owns this land, nor has access from Rick Drive.

In 1977, Mr. Fitzgerald abandoned his project and wrote a letter to the Conservation Commission offering the City the northern portion of his land, 152 acres for \$145,651. This figure included forgiveness of back taxes. The City accepted, and the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area came into being. For the next 10 years, the area was informally managed by citizens in the area, with development of trails and ongoing land purchases.

The Broad Brook Coalition became official in 1988 with the signing of the Articles of Organization designating the BBC a non-profit corporation with the mission of preserving open space and promoting affordable housing. Regarding that, BBC approved Pat Goggins' Pines Edge cluster condominiums off Cooke Avenue.

In the same year, the conservation area was threatened by a proposal for a large housing subdivision just next door in the area known as Cookes' Pasture. That 147-acre parcel was originally put together by a 19th century medical doctor with a water-cure practice who wanted fresh vegetables for his patients. In 1885, this farm was taken over by Francis Cooke and his sons. They farmed it until selling to the Pollard family, who owned a dairy farm on Jackson Street and wanted pasture for beef cattle.

While the proposed Hidden Oaks Estates faced construction obstacles similar to those for the Fitzgerald area, the wetlands law prohibiting any structure closer than 100 feet to a wetlands was being enforced. Most importantly, BBC was now galvanized into a full-scale fight to stop the development. With leadership from Marianna McKim, Monica Jacuc, Norma Roche and others, every means of protest – letters, meetings, petitions – were utilized. The developers capitulated and in 1994 the City purchased the land. BBC then managed a major funding campaign to give the City the shortfall \$31,000, raised from over 200 donors. The acquisition of this beautiful property linked the protected Fitzgerald area with the Marian Street conservation area for a total of nearly 400 acres.

Highlights of BBC work of the 90's include adoption of a formal management plan under the direction of Molly Hale, and the acquisition of a GPS device that enabled the certification of four vernal pools. Removal of invasive plant species began, and the hard work of extensive trail building with rock placement, bog bridges and signage was undertaken, often with the assistance of Carmen Ahearn. In 1996 a Memorandum of Understanding clarifying the management cooperation between the volunteer citizens of BBC and the City of Northampton was signed. The assembly of lands in the Broad Brook watershed into a beautiful and secure conservation area is a triumph to be celebrated. The work and vigilance to maintain FLCA continues.

Book of Poetry Draws on Fitzgerald Lake for Inspiration

Cheryl Anne Latuner of Northampton will give a reading this month of her latest work, *Soon They Will Fly: A Meditation at Fitzgerald Lake*. BBC and the Laurel Park Association will co-sponsor the event on **Thursday, November 14, 7 PM**, at Normal Hall in Laurel Park.

Ms. Latuner teaches English, literature, and French at the Hartsbrook School in Hadley. She was a fellow at the Iowa State University, where she received her Masters degree in literature and creative writing. Her poetry has appeared in *The Comstock Review*, *Blue Unicorn*, *Tar River Poetry* and *The Spoon River Poetry Review*.



LAND UPDATE

Nine Acres Added to FLCA at Northern End

The expansion of the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area continues! The City has closed on a 9-acre woodlot bordering Broad Brook at the northern end of the conservation area. The Rothenberg-Wolpin property parallels the 21-ac. Vollinger property, which the City will also acquire this year. Once that closing takes place, “there will only be one parcel dividing up the continuous greenway from North Farms to the Hatfield line,” said Wayne Feiden, director of the Department of Planning and Sustainability.

BBC contributed \$3,000 to the Rothenberg-Wolpin purchase price of \$10,200 plus the soft costs such as the title search and closing expenses.

The Broad Brook Gap parcel, which the City purchased in February, plus the Vollinger and Rothenberg-Wolpin parcels, add 111 acres to FLCA, making 2013 a significant year for protection of the Broad Brook Greenway.

BBC contributed a total of \$23,300 to these purchases. The private funding from BBC, made possible by our generous supporters, is important for two reasons: the donations help bridge the gap between the purchase price and the City’s funds, and they demonstrate local commitment to land preservation, which is key to obtaining state and CPA grants.

We anticipate – and hope! – that the City will continue its success negotiating land acquisitions to expand FLCA. Having depleted our Land Fund with these recent purchases, we will appeal again to our members and friends so that we can be ready for the next opportunity.

Margaret Russell

CONSERVATION RESTRICTIONS TRANSFERRED

For roughly 10 years, BBC has held conservation restrictions on two parcels along Bridge Street: Sheldon Field and the adjacent Kielic parcel. Recognizing that these two parcels were outside of the Broad Brook watershed, BBC’s primary area of interest, the newly formed Meadow City Conservation Coalition in Ward 3 accepted assignment of the CRs this summer. We thank the MCCC for its willingness to take on these parcels and wish MCCC success in providing stewardship for them in the future.

NOTES FROM THE STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

No BBC newsletter would be complete without a report on our ongoing battle with invasive plants in the FLCA. The annual water chestnut patrol this past summer found fewer plants to pull, but enough to justify our continuing effort to rid Fitzgerald Lake of this nuisance. Persistent herbicide treatments have nearly eliminated spotted knapweed from the dam, and greatly reduced the knapweed and glossy buckthorn infestation in Cooke’s Pasture.

A new initiative this year has been the restoration of a small extension of the FLCA with frontage on Marian Street that has been overrun with Japanese knotweed and become a dumping ground for leaves and other plant debris. Following treatment of the knotweed with herbicide in August, the next steps will be to remove an old tree carcass from the middle of the lot and plant the area with pasture grass to provide an attractive addition to the street landscape.

Bob Zimmermann



New Beaver Fence Helps Maintain Lake Level

Keeping trails open, repairing bog bridges and tackling invasive plants are routine maintenance at FLCA.

Every now and then, a big-

ger project is required, one that is beyond the scope of volunteers. This summer, that project was installation of a new fence around the large drain at the east end of Fitzgerald Lake, close to the dam.

The drain helps regulate the water level of the lake, and the fence is needed to prevent beavers, drawn to the sound of rushing water, from trying to dam it up with branches and saplings.

The previous fence was erected 10 to 12 years ago, and it collapsed in the spring. While the fence may have been vandalized to provide access to the drain for use as a fishing platform, a section of the fence may initially have given way on own. Once that happened, beavers didn't waste any time moving debris to the site. Before too long, the drain was blocked and the level of the lake rose by about 15 inches. That put the dock at the other end of the lake under water.

The Department of Planning and Sustainability took on the task of getting the debris cleared out and a new fence installed. In August, the Department of Public Works hauled in a back hoe to remove the debris: muck, tree branches, bottles and cans and the old fence and fence posts.

Superintendent David Sparks and the Water Division of the DPW were a huge help during the time the inlet was clogged, flushing it several times, and then removing the old fence and accumulated debris" to clear the site for the new fence," said Sarah LaValley, Conservation, Preservation and Land Use Planner for the city. In addition, she said, "the Water Division exercises the gate valve at the dam every fall to keep it in good working order."

Hastie Fence Company in Hadley received the contract to install the new fence. It was pre-assembled in two parts and trucked into the dam from Boggy Meadow Road. "The truck had to back in so that it could back out to the edge of the dam," said BBC board member Dave Herships, who watched the proceedings. A crane then lifted the large fence pieces into place around the drain. A Pond Leveller device was also installed to keep beavers away.

The total cost of the project was \$8,400, which came from the Planning and Sustainability Department's maintenance fund. The new fence is more substantial than the previous fence and should last longer.

"The water level is back to normal," Dave reported soon after the project was complete.

Margaret Russell



Winter trees at Fitzgerald Lake

Michael Wojtech-author of Bark: A Field Guide to Trees of the Northeast

Saturday, December 14, 1 pm -North Farms Rd. entrance

In late fall and winter one might pass by trees along the trail without a thought, or to think ahead to springtime, when we can identify them by their leaves and watch them grow. But trees have plenty to look at and learn about in the leafless season. Bark characteristics can be used to recognize species all year; next years' leaves have already formed and sit protected inside buds, while on warmer days there may even be a bit of photosynthesis occurring within the bark. Join Michael for an exploration of the trees at FLCA. We will identify them by their bark, look at the functional aspects of their form, and discuss environmental cues that have influenced their diverse characteristics.

Michael Wojtech earned his Master's degree in Conservation Biology from Antioch University New England, where he edited the journal Whole Terrain. His thesis at Antioch on tree bark became the basis for his newly released book, Bark: A Field Guide to Trees of the Northeast.

Michael is a freelance writer, teacher, illustrator, and photographer. Signed copies of Michael's book will be available. For more information visit: www.knowyourtrees.com

Tracking, Tree ID and Winter Ecology Snowshoe Trek

Aimee Gelinas -Tamarack Hollow Nature & Cultural Center

Sunday, January 19, 10am-1pm -Boggy Meadow Road entrance

Join Naturalist Aimee Gelinas M.Ed, founder/director of the Tamarack Hollow Nature & Cultural Center in Windsor, on a winter ecology snowshoe/hike at Fitzgerald Lake. Look for signs of wildlife such as tracks and scat, learn how to decipher the various modes of wild animal travel and get to know who lives around the lake. Learn how to identify both evergreen and deciduous trees in winter by needles/leaves, buds and bark and the unique ecology of this conservation area. Participants should wear warm, layered clothing, sturdy, waterproof boots and nylon pants. Discounted snowshoe rentals are available from the Berkshire Eastern Mountain Sports store. Email hike leader Aimee Gelinas to register for the hike and to reserve snowshoes if you need them:

aimee@gaiaroots.com. Visit www.tamarackhollow.com for more info.

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 soon to be 800 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

2013-2014

Bob Zimmermann, President
Dave Herships, Vice President
Margaret Russell, Secretary
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----- *Already a member? Consider passing this page on to a friend!* -----

Please Join Us!

If you're not already a member, please complete this form and return it with a check to:

Broad Brook Coalition, P.O. Box 60566, Florence, MA 01062

\$25 for Individual membership/\$35 for Family membership (all contributions to BBC are tax deductible.)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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Please sign me up for a **Paperless** Newsletter

I prefer to receive a printed Newsletter by mail

I've included an additional **tax deductible** contribution to the Land Preservation 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:

Trail maintenance and repair Invasive species removal Stewardship Committee; manages conservation area
 Clerical help/mailings Land Preservation/Acquisition Committee

Computer help BBC Board of Directors

Writer/reporter for newsletter Educational/recreational program planning or leadership

Fundraising campaigns Walks and Talks

Broad Brook Coalition

P. O. Box 60566
Florence, MA 01062

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BBC ANNUAL MEETING - THIS SUNDAY - NOVEMBER 17, 2013 AT 5 P.M.

Details Inside

VISIT US ONLINE AT:

www.broadbrookcoalition.org

To receive occasional email alerts regarding BBC Walks and Talks and Volunteer Days, go to the website and look for “join the listserv” under the “events” tab at the top of the page.