

BROAD BROOK COALITION



www.broadbrookcoalition.com

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About Us

Broad Brook Coalition (BBC) is a nonprofit, all-volunteer organization incorporated in 1988 with the mission of preserving open space and promoting affordable housing. Under a memorandum of understanding with the Northampton Conservation Commission, BBC is responsible for the day-to-day management of the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area. BBC's goals are to maintain and enhance the diversity and integrity of wildlife species and habitat at FLCA, promote outreach and education and provide public access for passive recreation that is compatible with habitat protection.

Our work in trail maintenance, stewardship, education and land preservation to expand FLCA is funded by the generous support of our members and occasional grants.

Norcross Foundation Grant Supports Maintenance Work

In 2013, the Broad Brook Coalition applied for a grant from the Norcross Wildlife Foundation and in November was notified that we were awarded \$2,500. Unlike most foundations that make grants to environmental not-for-profits to purchase land, the Norcross Foundation only makes grants for what it considers useful tools: the equipment and materials—kiosks, trail signs, chain saws, hedge trimmers, and the like—that are needed to maintain conservation land.

The new tools were needed because BBC's stewardship responsibilities have increased significantly in the last several years. A key reason has been the City's purchase of five parcels totaling some 160 acres, which not only increased the size of FLCA to more than 800 acres but also increased BBC's responsibility for trail with invasive species maintenance, dealing and overall stewardship the new parcels—in particular, the 84-acre Broad Brook Gap—already had trails that needed to be cleared, they still require bog bridges, trail signs and blazing, and trailhead kiosks to bring the trail network up to the same standards as the rest of the FLCA. Since BBC's revenues from annual dues and donations have been outstripped by the increasing maintenance requirements of the FLCA, we had to find another funding source, and that turned out to be the Norcross Wildlife Foundation.

Additional 160 Acres
Increase BBC's
Stewardship
Responsibilities,
Needs

BBC intends to use the grant funds for several purposes. These include constructing an event sign for the North Farms Road entrance, building bog bridges on several new parcels, repairing existing bog bridges, fixing a split-rail fence on the Halfway Brook Trail at the Coles Meadow Road entrance, putting up new trail signs, and purchasing various small tools. In addition, the grant funds will be used to refurbish the kiosks at the North Farms Road parking area and at the Cooke Avenue entrance. BBC had received a grant from the Norcross Foundation in 1996 for construction of the two kiosks and establishing the nature trail near North Farms Road.

BBC is looking forward to the spring when warmer weather will allow these long-delayed tasks to begin, thanks to the generosity of the Norcross Wildlife Foundation.

Dave Hershops

From the President

Citizen Science

Citizen Science is everywhere these days. We are being enlisted to observe and report on all manner of things: changes in migratory bird populations, the number of Monarch butterflies that make it to New England, the inexorable spread of invasive plants, the fate of hapless amphibians and the creeping effects of climate change. This is the age of data, where the collection of millions, even billions, of bits of information about what is taking place in the natural world is helping our more analytical colleagues to chronicle really big trends that we cannot perceive with our own unaided eyes. Some of these activities can be carried out casually as you look out the window from your perch in an easy chair, or with vigor as you hike the local terrain seeking out plants, animals, and signs of change. Here are some projects that might spark your interest.

Would you like to help stop the spread of harmful, non-native plants and insects in our neck of the woods? The *Outsmart Invasive Species Project* may be just the ticket. This innovative program of the Department of Environmental Conservation at the University of Massachusetts aims to provide the citizen naturalist with the tools for identifying, monitoring and reporting the location of invasive plants such as Japanese knotweed, glossy buckthorn and garlic mustard, and invasive insects including Asian longhorned beetle and hemlock woolly adelgid. Video tutorials to assist in invasive species identification are available on the *Outsmart* web site, along with instructions for submitting data. All you have to do is download the free *Outsmart* app for your smartphone from iTunes (iPhone) or Google Play (Android) and you can start collecting and sending data to the project managers anytime you're out and about. For more information, visit <http://masswoods.net/outsmart>.

Have you ever considered yourself a phenologist? You may be one without knowing it. Phenology is the study of seasonal changes in plants and animals and how their timing is affected by weather and climate. Birds often schedule their breeding to coincide with insect emergence so that they will have an abundance of food for their young, while the northward migration of the Monarch butterfly in the summer is dependent on the timing of milkweed flowering. Climate change can get these—and many other—seasonal processes out of sync, with

damaging ecological consequences. Through *Nature's Notebook*, a project of the USA National Phenology Network, your records of the dates that deciduous trees leaf out, lilacs bloom, and orioles return to your backyard can help document the impacts of climate change on these processes. You can participate while you're gardening, walking your dog or hiking in the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area! Sign up at https://www.usanpn.org/natures_notebook, watch helpful videos about a host of plants and animals, and start observing!

Hummingbirds at Home, a new program of the National Audubon Society, takes phenology by the horns as it is aimed at documenting the increasing mismatch between the arrival of hummingbirds in their summer habitats and the bloom times of the nectar-producing flowers on which they feed (and often help to pollinate). A recent article reports that the ruby-throated hummingbird—the Northeast's only hummingbird—is arriving one to two weeks earlier than it did 50 years ago. Is this a direct effect of climate change? How does early arrival impact feeding behavior? Can we help by putting out feeders? You can help to answer these questions by reporting hummingbird arrival dates and flowering times for target plants as well as hummingbird feeding choices throughout the summer. Data can be entered via either web site or free mobile app (available on iTunes). Although the *Hummingbirds at Home* site is currently being tested, you can still sign up now, pick your observation patch, and watch an informative "how-to" video at <http://birds.audubon.org/hummingbirds-home> in anticipation of its full functionality this summer.

For birders, there are many Citizen Science programs you can take part in throughout the year, including those aimed at assessing winter bird populations such as the Christmas bird count (<http://birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count>), Great Backyard Bird Count (<http://birds.audubon.org/great-backyard-bird-count>) and Focus on Feeders (<http://www.massaudubon.org/get-involved/citizen-science/focus-on-feeders>), as well as a basket of summer observation projects from Mass Audubon featuring orioles, barn and cliff swallows, whip-poor-wills and kestrels (<http://www.massaudubon.org/get-involved/citizen-science/report-a-bird-sighting/birds-to-watch>).

Get involved! Have fun! Your efforts might just help to preserve and restore habitat Earth in the face of unprecedented challenges.

Bob Zimmermann



Red-winged Blackbird (Bill Williams)

Tracks Reveal Extensive Bobcat Activity on Eastern Side of FLCA

A wildlife intern has found plenty of evidence of bobcat in the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area off Coles Meadow Road. Julie Eden Erickson has been following bobcat tracks there since last December. She first came across a trail after a light snowfall and followed it for several hours. Since then, Ms. Erickson has returned several times a week. "I'm pleasantly surprised I'm seeing tracks on a regular basis," she said last month.

A Northampton resident, Ms. Erickson is an assistant teacher at the Hilltown Cooperative Charter School. Because she wants to expand her skills in environmental education, she signed up for an intensive wildlife tracking apprenticeship offered by the nonprofit White Pines Programs in the Mount Agamenticus region of southern Maine. As part of her field study, she had to choose an animal to track for as long as possible throughout the nine-month program.

A frequent visitor to FLCA, which she calls a hidden gem, Ms. Erickson said articles about bobcat sightings that appeared in The Hampshire Daily Gazette last year piqued her curiosity. Through BBC, she contacted members on Cole Meadows Road who have seen bobcat in the last year. So instead of her usual walks from the Cooke Avenue entrance, she's been hiking regularly from the new access trail off Coles Meadow Road. The constant snow cover of the past winter was a benefit; it was easy to identify the animal's prints. Bobcat tracks are larger than a housecat's, with four asymmetrical toes. The claws don't show up in the track.

Ms. Erickson is still a novice and doesn't know if the numerous tracks she has followed are those of a single bobcat or not, or whether it's a male or female. But she's learned about the animal's behavior. She knows the bobcat's core zone and its hunting routes, and she's discovered that it uses different habitats over a short time. The tracks lead through the woods, rocky slopes and the marsh, with numerous scent markings; the scent markings are used to mark well-used trails and den sites, according to the state Division of Fisheries & Wildlife. Ms. Erickson also came across a kill site in a thicket of brambles. The rabbit carcass was still there, and she could see where the bobcat had waited for its prey.

Before the snow froze in February, Ms. Erickson found an area of "crazy behavior," with mixed tracks that may have belonged to more than one animal. She wonders if what she saw was evidence of mating.

With the apprenticeship ending in June, she'll continue tracking this spring, hoping to get a glimpse of the bobcat. "I wonder if it has seen me," she said.



Routine Visitor to Coles Meadow Road

Bobcats are said to be shy, solitary animals, yet the bobcat that has made several appearances on Coles Meadow Road doesn't appear shy at all. Jim Reis, who lives there, has seen the bobcat numerous times, both from his window and while he was out running. Bears run away when they see humans, but not the bobcat. It seems "nonchalant, as though it's used to people," Mr. Reis said.

The first time he spotted the bobcat, he knew immediately what it was.

The animal was about twice the size of a house cat, with the short, bobbed tail. He went out of the house with his camera and managed to take several shots of the bobcat about 15 yards away. He has since watched the bobcat waiting at a bird feeder for squirrels -- the hunt was successful -- and heading toward a house with a chicken coop. (That hunt wasn't successful.)

The conservation land is one of the reasons Mr. Reis moved to Coles Meadow Road. In addition to the bobcat, he's seen fisher and bear, including a mother with four cubs last fall, and moose in Cooke's Pasture. "We can walk out of the house into the conservation area" he said, "we're so lucky."



Julie Eden Erickson studied bobcat tracks at Fitzgerald Lake for her field study in a nine-month wildlife tracking apprenticeship.

Margaret Russell

A Year's Maintenance Covers Wide Range of Projects

The work to maintain nearly 800 acres of conservation land covers a wide range of projects throughout the year. Some of the efforts are intended to improve habitat for wildlife; others are designed to keep the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area accessible to the public. While most of the work is done by volunteers, professionals are also needed for the specialized work of controlling invasive plants, mowing fields and – in the past year – installing a new beaver fence around the drain by the lake dam.

BBC's accomplishments are described in an annual report submitted to the Conservation Commission. In the latest report, President Bob Zimmermann, who is also chairman of the Stewardship Committee, provided a list of projects undertaken by the stewardship and trails committees. The long list, excerpted below, is illustrative of the work that goes into managing FLCA.

- New trail into the Broad Brook Gap parcel from Coles Meadow Road flagged;
- Meeting with a consultant to discuss options for diverting the flow of water away from the boardwalk;
- About a dozen black locust saplings dug out of the lake side of the dam;
- Spring volunteer work day to sweep clean the macadam path at the North Farms Road entrance and pull out garlic mustard and other invasive plants;
- Another work day to clear out and add several shrubs to the island of native plants in Cooke's Pasture, to provide food and cover for wildlife;
- New trail cleared from Coles Meadow Road to the wood road inside the Broad Brook Gap parcel;



A sign marks the new trail entrance off Coles Meadow Road and reminds visitors that FLCA is part of the Broad Brook Greenway. (Bill Williams)



BBC President Bob Zimmermann takes water samples from the edge of the dam. (Bill Williams)

- Water quality testing: water samples drawn from six sites to monitor quality of Fitzgerald Lake;
- Two summer volunteer work days, by boat, to pull invasive water chestnuts from the lake;
- Invasive plant control by Polatin Ecological Services: Glossy Buckthorn and Spotted and Brown Knapweed sprayed on the dam and in Cooke's Pasture;
- Beaver barrier at dam: Hastie Fence installed a new heavy wire fence around the dam outflow drain; debris collected around the drain was hauled out by the Department of Public Works;
- More invasive plant control: Polatin crews returned to treat small patches of Phragmites near Broad Brook, a stand of Japanese Knotweed near Marian Street, and Glossy Buckthorn on the edges of Cooke's Pasture;
- Fitzgerald Lake dam mowed by Richard Jaescke in preparation of the state's decennial inspection of the dam;
- Central area (lobe) of Cooke's Pasture mowed by Mr. Jaescke;
- Second on-site meeting with a consultant to consider options for re-establishing the stream under the boardwalk;
- Series of five to six small beaver dams removed from Broad Brook to improve downstream flow;
- Water samples taken at five stations for another round of water quality testing (test results show normal water quality);
- More debris trapped between the new beaver fence and dam drain removed to restore flow into the drain and lower the lake water to normal level (modification made to the fence to prevent beavers from bringing more debris).

Another 18 Acres

Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area continues to grow! The city added two parcels totaling 18 acres to FLCA in March. Owned by the Gleason family, one is a five-acre forested parcel to the northwest of Fitzgerald Lake, off North Farms Road. The other Gleason parcel is nearly 13 acres, also forested, northeast of the lake, off Coles Meadow Road. BBC contributed \$4,000 to the \$24,000 acquisition cost, with the bulk of the funding coming from the Community Preservation Act.

This purchase follows a very successful year of expansion for FLCA in 2013, when 111 acres were acquired.

Once again, BBC is grateful to Wayne Feiden, director of the Department of Planning and Sustainability, for his steadfast work to expand the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area, and to our members, whose support enables BBC to contribute to these open space acquisitions.



Marsh Marigold (Bob Zimmermann)



*Wood Anemone
(Bob Zimmermann)*

Work Days at the FLCA: Spring and Summer 2014

Shrubland Habitat and Native Plants Saturday, May 3, 9:00-12:00 a.m.

We will spend the morning in Cooke's Pasture pruning the native shrubs we have planted over the past few years, cutting back the competing undergrowth and replacing plants that have not survived the winter. Although tools will be provided, additional clippers are always welcome. Wear long pants and bring along your favorite insect repellent. Meet at the former Moose Lodge parking lot at the end of Cooke Avenue at 8:30 a.m. or at the Fitzgerald Lake dam at 9:00 a.m. Contact: Bob Zimmermann at 585-0405.

Annual Cleanup at the North Farms Road Entrance Saturday, May 31, 9:00-11:00 a.m.

Please join us for our annual cleanup at the North Farms Road entrance to the FLCA. We'll be pulling garlic mustard, digging lesser celandine and removing multiflora rose along the path to the Canoe Launch. No previous experience needed! We also plan to tidy up some of the branches that have fallen alongside the path and sweep up debris from the path itself. Contact: Dick Wynne at 584-7930.

Removal of Water Chestnut from Fitzgerald Lake Sunday, July 20, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. and Saturday, August 9, 1-4 p.m.

Although we've managed to keep water chestnut in the lake under control, we have to keep at it every year to prevent the resurgence of this aggressive invasive. As in the past, we will survey the entire lake and remove water chestnut plants by hand. We will need canoes and kayaks, as well as large plastic buckets/bags to collect the plants. Wear long pants and sneakers (no sandals) and bring water, sunscreen and gloves. PFDs (personal flotation devices) are required. If you can contribute a boat, let us know. Meet at the North Farms Road parking lot at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday, July 20, and at 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, August 9. Contact: Bruce Hart at 584-4176.

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

Wenn du nicht zu fuss gekommen bist, dann warst du gar nicht.

If you haven't walked there, you haven't been there!

In the mid-70s, when the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area became available for hiking, two main trails were cut to make a pleasant round trip: one close to the shore of the lake – the Lake Trail – and the other to the north and up a rise of land – the Hillside Trail – that reconnects to the Lake Trail near the dam. A third short offshoot from the Lake Trail – the Narrows – leads to the shore of the lake. The Fishing Place was formalized later because the trail was widely used though unnamed, and it was a logical extension of the trail system. But there was little or no maintenance of these new trails, and repairing and upgrading were needed.

When the Broad Brook Coalition became active, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the city. BBC assumed stewardship of the area. This work began in 1995 and it took about five years to complete. All of the work was done by volunteers, with tools and materials provided by BBC. We generally followed the *AMC Complete Guide to Trail Building and Maintenance* and continue to do so now.

Trail work falls generally into two parts: routine tasks and extra-ordinary. The routine ones are usually planned for the spring and carried out as volunteers are available and organized by the BBC Trails Committee. If you checked the line regarding trail work on your membership renewal form, you will probably get a call to help sometime. These tasks are the ones that keep the trails walkable, without large impediments or patches that are wet or muddy, and ensure that trouble spots do not get worse. Walkers do not like to get their feet muddy or wet; a lot of trail work aims to avoid just that. If trouble spots do not get fixed, they only get worse. Trail crews also see to it that brush does not intrude into the trail from the side or from above, make sure that bog bridges are steady, replace or add rocks to form stepping stone paths, and check that trail signs are still there.

To get a sense of how much time volunteers contribute, the next time you walk out to the dam on the Lake Trail, count how many boards you walk on. All of those boards, plus the cross pieces underneath, were carried in on volunteer shoulders. For a complete count, include the bog bridges on the Hillside, Narrows and Fishing Place trails. We once had a local service club volunteer to work on bog bridges with us. They saw no way to get lumber to the work site without a helicopter. They didn't work out! We figured each trip used up 800 calories a carry.



The most common extra-ordinary job is the removal of blow-downs and widow makers. Blowdowns usually require a chainsaw to remove, but the trees or limbs lying across a trail are sometimes cut with handsaws. Getting rid of widow makers, which hang from a tree limb above the line of sight and could fall on someone, can be more complicated

Some of the extra-ordinary tasks fall in the category of “what were they thinking?” A bog bridge once appeared as a bridge from the dam to the overflow drain, which is now surrounded by a chain-link fence. Was the bog bridge moved there for fishing, or possible sun bathing? It took a certain amount of effort, surely. Did they take the bridge back to its original spot? No. BBC did. Another time, a yellow VW was parked on the dam. It was quite a sight to come upon on a Sunday walk. I don't know how it was removed.

BBC has been involved with other projects. The most extensive was reorganizing the North Farms Road entrance and parking lot, installing a walkway, constructing a handicapped-accessible boardwalk and canoe launch and a bridge across a feeder brook. The brook had been damaged by trucks crossing to get to the shore of the lake to fish. The bridge eliminated the problem of truck traffic and provided dry, easy access to the walking trails. It was a summer-long project involving many, many volunteers.

The bird blind was another summer-long job. BBC paid for the materials, a local engineering firm donated the plans, and AmeriCorps and BBC volunteers built the blind under the supervision of a BBC member. He later said his faith in youth was restored because of the young volunteers' character and work ethic. A licensed pilot, he rewarded them with a plane ride over the area to review their work.

BBC's partnership with the city and the community has been satisfying and productive. Volunteers probably leave a work site sweaty, dirty and full of bug bites, but I've never known one who didn't enjoy the work or the companionship. This stewardship of FLCA radiates like a stone dropped in water. BBC's other efforts in beaver control, invasive species management and land acquisition have protected and expanded a jewel in an urban area for quiet recreation.

Wenn du nicht zu fuss gekommon bist, dann warst du gar nicht!

Carmen Ahearn

Storybook Project Invites Children To Learn About Forest Animals

A children's librarian has come up with a way to draw families with young children into Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area, both to explore the natural world and to learn about the wildlife that inhabits it. Joan Robb, a BBC member, created the storybook project that will be installed in June along the entrance path at North Farms Road. A series of posters will tell the story of woodland animals and their habitats as depicted in *Over the Forest, Come and Take a Peek*, by Marianne Berkes.

Ms. Robb received a grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council to fund the project, which is also supported by its co-sponsors, Broad Brook Coalition and the Kestrel Trust. Ms. Robb is a librarian at the Hubbard Memorial Library in Ludlow.

The outdoor storybook will open with a family celebration on Sunday, June 1, starting at 2 PM. The rain date is Sunday, June 8. Following a welcome by Kestrel and BBC, families can take the story walk at their own pace. From 2:45 to 3 PM, storyteller Rona Leventhal will be on hand to tell more stories about the environment. Ms. Leventhal, of Florence, performs and leads workshops on storytelling throughout New England. Ilene Goldstein will do face painting with a nature theme. Light refreshments will be available.



Marbled Salamander

The North Farms Road entrance is well suited for the project because it has several features that will interest children: a winding path through the woods, meandering stream, and a boardwalk that leads to the lake. Deer, opossum, skunks, beavers and other animals that appear in *Over the Forest* also inhabit FLCA.

The book earned numerous awards in 2012, including Book of the Year (elementary level), Purple Dragon Book Award, and finalist for the Next Generation Indie Book Award.

Margaret Russell

Thank You, River Valley Market

Those of a certain age remember the supermarket green stamps of old: several booklets' worth of stamps earned a family a blender, toaster or other home appliance. River Valley Market's twist on the green stamp program benefits non-profits in the area. Late last year, BBC received a \$670 donation from the cooperative on King Street.

Customers at River Valley Market receive a green stamp for every shopping bag they bring themselves or when they ride their bike to the store. Ten stamps are worth \$1; they can be redeemed for cash or merchandise or donated to an organization of the month, chosen by vote of the cooperative's membership.

BBC board member Dave Ruderman nominated BBC for organization of the month, and the River Valley Market membership approved the nomination. We are grateful to be a recipient of the Co-op's Green Stamp Program.

River Valley Market is a stone's throw from FLCA. The 12-acre North King Street parcel added to the conservation area in 2009 looks out over the cliff behind the market.



Porcupine tracks lead through the snow. Dogs off leash at Fitzgerald Lake, which is in violation of the city's bylaws, run the risk of meeting a porcupine head on. (Bill Williams)



A chickadee perches on a winter stem. (Bill Williams)

Join Our Walks and Talks to Learn More About FLCA

A Visit to the Swamp Forest

Laurie Sanders, naturalist

**May 10, Saturday, 10 a.m. – noon,
Coles Meadow Rd. entrance**

When Laurie explored the Broad Brook Gap parcel at the time of its purchase by the city two years ago, she was intrigued to find an unusual park-like wetland. This swamp forest, as it is known, consists of an understory rich in sedges, skunk cabbage and wildflowers, a sparse array of native shrubs, and a canopy of yellow birch, red maple and hemlock. She also found evidence that the area is used extensively by wildlife. Laurie will lead us in a further exploration of this fascinating habitat. Long sleeves, long pants and insect repellent advised.

Owing to the sensitivity of the swamp forest habitat, this walk will be limited to 10 participants. To register, please call Bob Zimmermann at 585-0405 by May 7.

Butterflies

Tom Gagnon, vice president of the Western Mass. Butterfly Club, member of Mass. Butterfly Club, Hampshire Bird Club

**July 4, Friday, 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.,
North Farms Rd. entrance**

Help search for the rare Dijon Skipper and other butterflies with an extraordinary naturalist, birder and butterfly enthusiast. Rain cancels. No nets. Close focus binoculars help.

Walk & Write

Cheryl Anne Latuner

**July 12, Saturday, 10 a.m. – noon,
North Farms Rd. entrance**

Spend a morning in the time-honored tradition of writers who find inspiration in nature. With journal and pen we'll walk the Fitzgerald Lake trails, stopping to record impressions, insights, and feelings stirred by the natural world that might be the beginnings of poetry, memoir, or fiction. Walk and writing exercises led by Cheryl, author of *Soon They Will Fly – a Meditation at Fitzgerald Lake*.

Preregistration preferred but optional: clatuner@comcast.net



Black-Eyed Susan

Night Sounds

Molly Hale, naturalist

**July 19, Saturday, 8:30-10 p.m.,
North Farms Rd. entrance
Rain date: July 20**

Take a walk to explore the sounds of the woods and shoreline at night. We'll be on trails using flashlights (bring your own, plus extra batteries). We'll talk about the sounds we hear and also spend several minutes experiencing the dark in silence. To hone our hearing to the sounds of the wild, we'll request people to refrain from much talking while we walk. Be prepared for mosquitos and ticks. Adults and children welcome.

Molly has been an active participant with the BBC for many years, leading walks, advising us on habitat and wildlife issues, and serving on the Board of Directors. She teaches natural history at Greenfield Community College, works for Conservation Works, LLC, and does project work for state Division of Fisheries and Wildlife.

Exploring Plant Diversity

Ted Watt, naturalist,
Hitchcock Center for the Environment

**August 16, Saturday,
9 a.m. – noon,
North Farms Rd. entrance**

Fitzgerald Lake has a diversity of upland and wetland habitats. We'll explore some of these, identifying the plants we find and considering their adaptations, ecology and pollination strategies. Our pace will be leisurely with lots of time for observation and discussion. Bring a notebook, hand lens if you have one and any field guides you want. There will be at least one fun opportunity to explore the wooded wetlands for a couple of species of wood ferns., so wear footwear that you can get wet.



Fall Goldenrod

Stargazing

Ed Faits, president, Arunah Hill Natural Science Center,
Cummington

October 3, Friday, 7 - 9 p.m., North Farms Rd. entrance
In case of rain or solid overcast sky, the event will be postponed to October 4.

Take a close-up look at craters on the moon, the beautiful rings of Saturn and the red planet Mars, and get a tour of the constellations of autumn. Ed will set up telescopes and use a green laser pointer to show off the beauty of the night sky.

Bruce Hart, bhart2000@aol.com

New Names, New Signs for FLCA Trails

With several new parcel additions to the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area in the last few years, some new trails have been or will be cleared, and new signs posted this spring. Working with the Broad Brook Coalition Board of Directors, the Trails Committee, comprised of Dave Hershops, Jim Reis, Carmen Ahearn, Bill Rosen, Rufus Chafee, and David Fradkin, will be completing this work with the help of other BBC volunteers. This work includes trails in the Broad Brook Gap parcel – the 84 acres acquired last year in the northeast section of FLCA off of Coles Meadow Road – a new trail off of Boggy Meadow Road to Middle Path, and signs on some existing trails, such as Middle Path and the Old Telephone Line Trail. These signs should be in place by late spring.

Naturalist Laurie Sanders, who completed an ecological study of the Broad Brook Gap parcel for the city, provided a fitting name for the trail created last year off the new trailhead on

Coles Meadow Road: Swamp Forest Trail. She described this area as “one of the most unusual swamp forests in Northampton and surrounding towns, and some of the best bear habitat in the Commonwealth.” Near the end of this trail is a loop trail, named Rocky Knoll Trail because of the huge rocky outcrop on this path. The new trail off of Boggy Meadow Road is named Pines Edge Trail after the housing development nearby.

The BBC Trails Committee has also recently created a “Trails Stewards” plan, and recruited BBC members to volunteer. The new stewards are Harley Erdman, Jon Steinberg, David Pritchard, Carmen Ahearn, Rufus Chaffee, and Bill Rosen. The stewards “adopt” a specific trail for a one-year period to walk every three to four weeks to trim branches, pick up trash, identify blocked trails (i.e., fallen large tree) or missing signs, vandalism, identify needed major trail improvements (i.e., bog bridges, trail erosion, etc.), and report their findings to the Trails Committee.

Jim Reis



Reflections



This winterberry was planted in Cooke's Pasture five years ago. The shrub is a food source for many birds, including flickers, mockingbirds, thrushes and cedar wax-wings. (Bob Zimmermann)

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

www.broadbrookcoalition.org

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\$25 for Individual membership \$35 for Family membership. *All contributions are tax deductible.*

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Please sign me up for a paperless newsletter (email address required).

I prefer to receive a printed newsletter by mail.

I've included an additional tax-deductible contribution to the Land Preservation/Stewardship Fund.

Please do not include my name on any listing of contributors to BBC.

Broad Brook Coalition needs your help, too!

We appreciate membership dues, but want you know that you can contribute in other ways.

Members and friends are needed to help carry out our goals.

Please consider one or more of the following volunteer opportunities:

Trail Committee or Trail Steward Stewardship Committee Occasional Work Days

Clerical Help Newsletter Writer Walks and Talks Fundraising Campaigns