

BROAD BROOK COALITION

Volume 24, Issue Number 2, FALL 2012



Help Us Fill the Gap!

In the Spring BBC Newsletter we passed along the exciting news that the City had acquired an option to purchase an 84-acre property between the Broad Brook and Coles Meadow Road that fills in a substantial gap on the eastern side of the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area. It has in fact become known as the Broad Brook Gap Parcel (see map). This undertaking has now come closer to fruition with the award of a \$296,000 grant from Northampton's Community Preservation Committee toward the total cost of \$535,000 for this property. Further major grant support is being sought to cover most of the remaining funds. Broad Brook Coalition, together with Kestrel Land Trust and the City of Northampton, will soon announce a campaign for an additional \$25,000 for costs associated with the acquisition. Local support is critical to leverage significant sources of public and private funding.



Why is the acquisition of the Broad Brook Gap parcel important? Most significantly, addition of this parcel to the FLCA will permanently protect the diverse wetland and woodland habitats on the eastern flank of the Broad Brook from development. The Broad Brook and its associated marshes harbor a rich assortment of native plant and animal life, including an endangered fresh-water mussel, while the surrounding woodlands encompass mature stands of hemlock, oak and hickory that surround a "swamp forest," an unusual wetland habitat particularly favored by bears and other small mammals that is rare in our region. Moreover, opportunities to enjoy the parcel and its numerous vistas will be assured by a network of existing paths and trails.



Please join us in our efforts to preserve the Broad Brook Gap parcel by contributing generously to this campaign. A check-off on your membership renewal form can be used to indicate your willingness to make a gift the Broad Brook Gap fund.



Broad Brook Coalition

Annual Meeting

Wednesday, November 14, 2012

Florence Civic Center

Corner of Park and Meadow Streets,
Florence

(Adjacent to the Lilly Library)

7:00 PM: Conversation and Dessert

**7:30 PM: Business Meeting, Elections to
Board of Directors**

8:00 PM: Keynote Presentation:



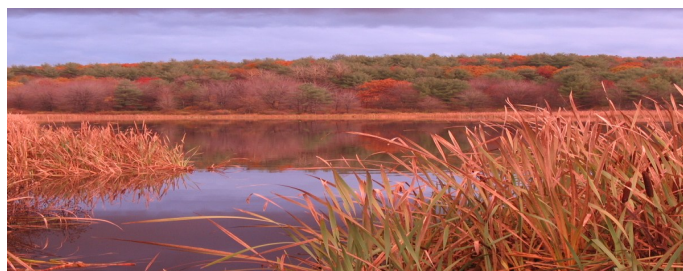
*“New Opportunities for Land
Preservation with the Kestrel Trust”*

Kristin DeBoer, Executive Director

Kristin DeBoer, Executive Director of the Kestrel Trust, will talk about the expanded role of the land trust after its merger with the Valley Land Fund last year. Kestrel now works to preserve land in 19 communities in the region, including Northampton. Kestrel and BBC are partnering to raise funds for the city’s purchase of the **Broad Brook Gap** land parcel to expand Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area.

Ms. DeBoer has served as Kestrel’s executive director since 2006. She has been committed to working in the environmental movement for the last 20 years, and has been an educator, advocate, and organizer with non-profit environmental groups throughout New England and in California. Kristin has a BA in Economics and Environmental Studies from Bucknell University, and a Masters of Science in Environmental Education from Antioch University New England. Kristin lives in Pelham with her two children and husband.

*It’s time to renew your BBC
membership for 2013!*



The annual Broad Brook Coalition (BBC) membership drive begins in October. We hope you’ll join us again for the year 2013. Your tax-deductible dues (\$25.00 for an individual, \$35.00 for a family) support BBC’s stewardship efforts in the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area and our work on behalf of open space preservation and affordable housing. As a member, you’ll receive our twice-yearly newsletter (online or by USPS) and the opportunity to participate in the activities sponsored by BBC. Please return the form below with your check, made payable to **Broad Brook Coalition**, to P.O. Box 60566, Florence, MA, 01062. Many thanks!

Yes, please renew my/our membership for the year 2013.
My check is enclosed.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Zip _____

Phone _____ email _____

___ \$25-Individual

___ \$35-Family

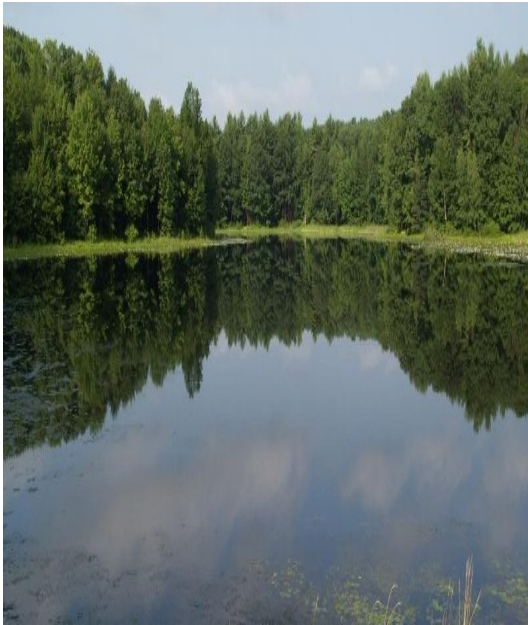
___ Please do *not* include my name in any listing of contributors to Broad Brook Coalition.

___ Please save costs and resources by sending future BBC Newsletters to the email address above.*

___ Additional contribution to the **Broad Brook Gap**

Acquisition Fund: \$ _____

(All contributions to Broad Brook Coalition are tax deductible.)



We need your help in other ways, too!

Please consider one (or more) of the following volunteer opportunities:

- Trail maintenance and repair
- Invasive species removal
- Clerical help/Mailings
- Computer help
- Volunteer at Interfaith Cot Shelter
- Writer/reporter for newsletter
- Fundraising campaigns
- Stewardship Committee (manages conservation area)
- Land Preservation/Acquisition Committee
- BBC Board of Directors
- Educational/recreational program planning or leadership,
- Walks and Talks
- Monitor housing issues in the City
- Other: _____

TRACKING OUR WINTER RESIDENTS

Charley Eiseman -Northern Naturalists

Saturday, February 2, 2013, 1 PM to 3-4 PM
North Farms Road entrance, Florence

Excerpted and edited from the Northern Naturalists website:

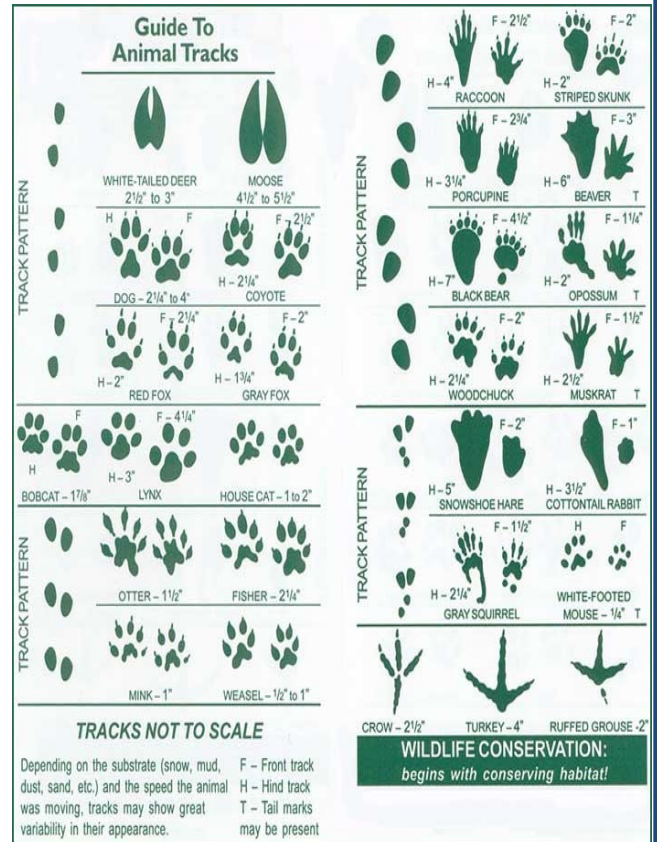
By looking at the footprints and other traces that animals leave behind, we will investigate the interactions taking place across the landscape. This will be an excellent opportunity to learn from each other about mammals, winter plant identification, and other natural history tidbits.

How do animals interact with their biotic and abiotic community? What are the key resources animals need to survive a New England winter? What different strategies do mammals use to acquire these resources? We will explore a few of the habitat types at FLCA. In each habitat, we will discuss the interactions among the animal, plant, and abiotic components occurring there.

This brief experience will be a sample of the type of course that Northern Naturalists offers to the public.

<http://www.northernnaturalists.com/>

Charley Eiseman conducts plant and wildlife surveys for various nonprofits, state agencies, and universities throughout his native Massachusetts and in neighboring states. He holds an MS from the University of Vermont's Field Naturalist Program and a BS in wildlife and fisheries conservation and management from the University of Massachusetts. He is an extreme generalist with a passion for learning about all living things and their interconnections.



Notes from the Stewardship Committee

Removal of invasive water chestnut from Fitzgerald Lake has been a top priority for the past five years. Every summer, a flotilla of canoes and kayaks sets forth into the lake in July and August to hand-pull these plants, which root in the lake bottom, leaf out on the surface, and produce numerous thorny seed pods the size of a large marble. In our sorties on the lake, we frequently see many other aquatic plants, especially in late summer, and wonder if there are other invasive plants lurking among them. On a warm, sunny day in July, botanist Matt Hickler accompanied the Stewardship Committee on a voyage of discovery to identify and catalog the lake flora. Aside from the usual pondweed and water lilies, Matt introduced us to water meal, whose tiny, sand-like grains are among the smallest of flowering plants, and common arrowhead, whose graceful spiked leaves and stalks bearing white blossoms, adorn the lake shore. Although the diversity of true aquatic plants was found to be relatively low, several of the species observed appear not to have been documented previously in Hampshire County. And perhaps the best news of all was that Fitzgerald Lake does not harbor any additional invasive plants besides the persistent water chestnut!



As ever, the battle to control land-based invasive plants continued apace. We are particularly pleased to report that several thick stands of *Phragmites australis*, common reed, have been virtually eliminated from the Broad Brook Marsh. Amazingly, these sites have already been almost entirely filled in by native plants, with cattails in the unequivocal lead. (see photo) It's hard to imagine that all of this has taken place within only three years since the *Phragmites* control project began. Glossy and Common Buckthorn, Brown and Spotted Knapweed, Multiflora Rose, and other invasives in Cooke's Pasture and on the Fitzgerald Lake dam have been harder nuts to crack, but significant progress has been made in reducing their foothold in these are-

as and we expect to achieve over 95% eradication in the coming years. This effort has clearly been aided by the removal of numerous mature Glossy Buckthorn "trees" from the edges of Cooke's Pasture last winter which has eliminated an abundant source of buckthorn seeds.

Cleanups also featured prominently in our activities this year. In April, a number of BBC members, accompanied by colleagues from the Leeds Civic Association and the Williamsburg Woodland Trails Committee, spent a morning collecting old tires, wire fencing, hoses, glass, odd chunks of metal and other debris from the portion of the new Beaver Brook/Broad Brook Conservation Area that fronts on Rte 9 near the Williamsburg border. Of course there were treasures as well, including the discovery of horse collars, bits, reins and other items of tack that apparently marked the location of an old stable on the property. Other sites, including the North Farm Roads entrance to the FLCA and the shrub islands in Cooke's Pasture were also spruced up, and a Pond Leveler pipe was installed in the beaver dam at the west end of Fitzgerald Lake to control the flooding of native plants next to the boardwalk--as well as the boardwalk itself.

Bob Zimmermann

FCLA Stewardship: Get Involved!

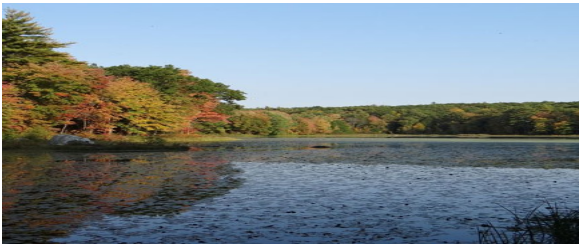
BBC has a dedicated group of volunteers who take on the various tasks of stewardship of the nearly 700 acres of the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area. The work ranges from keeping trails open, rebuilding bog bridges, periodic projects to keep eradicate invasive plans, maintaining the dock, boardwalk and bird blind, and scheduling guided walks to raise awareness of the value of this special conservation area.

We want to expand our pool of volunteers. We are looking for volunteers to join our weekend work days in the spring and summer. No expertise is needed, just a willingness to work for a few hours sprucing up the entrance at North Farms Road, cutting back growth around a restoration project in Cooke's Pasture, and pulling up invasive water chestnuts in the lake. Those with stronger backs can help the trails committee rebuild bog bridges and remove tree limbs that fall across a trail throughout the year.

If you enjoy outreach, help us recruit more volunteers with some special projects, such as a guided walk for newcomers or a meet-and-greet at North Farms Road.

Can you help? Please let us know.

RESEARCH SHOWS PUBLIC BENEFITS FROM CONSERVATION AREAS



Efforts that create conservation areas, such as BBC's work over many decades for our Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area, have always had multiple goals. Research shows real physical benefits to people using conservation areas.

Japanese "Forest Bathing-

"...a concept called forest bathing--shinrin-yoku, translated from the Japanese...Forest bathing is a natural therapy for reducing stress....there is a growing mound of medical research supporting the ancient and traditional understanding that spending quiet time in the deep woods has healing power. Take it in and soak it up, and, over time, forest bathing will produce positive and quantifiable physiological changes..."

"...another study showing that forest walkers have: lower concentrations of the stress hormone cortisol; lower blood pressure and heart rate; a reduced level of two more stress-related hormones, adrenaline and noradrenalin; and...an increase in natural killer (NK) cells, helpful in your body's fight against cancer..."

"...The best theory so far, according to scientists at Japan's Nippon Medical School and Chiba University, is this: Trees and plants produce organic compounds called phytochemicals to help protect them from disease, insects and fungus. These compounds escape into the air you breathe when you move through a forest--slowly, quietly, with an open heart and working lungs. And phytochemicals, it turns out, also help human's turn on their own disease-fighting NK - natural-born killer - cells..."

"There is now considerable research and policy attention on the potential for contact with natural environments to protect or enhance human mental health... Experimental studies have demonstrated effects of contact with natural environments on both biomarkers and self-reports of stress, on mood and reported levels of fatigue...The restorative effects appear to operate partly through psycho-neuro-endocrine mechanisms; the perception of a natural environment by the brain triggers positive psychological and physiological reactions...Physical activity in a natural environment might produce greater mental health benefits than physical activity elsewhere..."

From an article by Marilyn Preston entitled "Forest Bathing is Healing, Soak It Up" in the Springfield Republican (June 17, 2012) based on research from The Journal of Biological Regulators and Homeostatic Agents.

...The analysis showed an independent association between regular use of natural environments for physical activity and a lower risk of poor mental health. Regular users of Woods/forest for physical activity were at about half the risk of poor mental health of non-users. Each additional use of any natural environment per week was associated with about a 6% lower risk of poor mental health..."

From a short report (full references excluded) in the journal "Social Science and Medicine" (2012, 1-5): "Is Physical Activity In Natural Environments Better For Mental Health Than Physical Activity In Other Environments?" by Richard Mitchell (Institute of Health and Wellbeing, University of Glasgow, Scotland).

Submitted by BBC board member Frank Olbris



BOARD MEMBER JIM REIS STEPS DOWN

A long-time member of the BBC trails committee, Jim Reis, is retiring after serving six years on the Broad Brook Coalition's Board of Directors. Increased demands of his job with HAP Housing, a nonprofit that provides affordable housing and services for the homeless, have made it difficult for him to give enough time to BBC, he said. Jim's involvement with the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area started when "he began showing up" for trail work. He became an official member of the trails committee when he was elected to the board.

We are grateful to Jim for his many years of service to BBC and grateful that he will continue to support FCLA as a member of the campaign committee working with the Kestrel Land Trust to raise funds for the purchase of the 84 acre Broad Brook Gap Parcel.

THANK YOU, JIM!

Broad Brook Coalition

P. O. Box 60566
Florence, MA 01062

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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.

BROAD BROOK COALITION

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

2011-2012

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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 680-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.

Note from the Editor

Due to the importance of the Broad Brook Gap Appeal, the BBC Board decided to postpone the switch to an e-newsletter for this edition. To those members who indicated their preference of receiving a paperless copy, you may look forward to that option for our Spring edition!