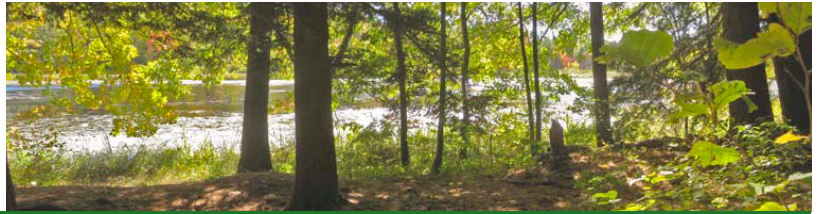


BROAD BROOK COALITION



www.broadbrookcoalition.org

Volume 28, Issue #1, Spring 2016

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2015-2016

Bob Zimmermann, *President*

Dave Hershops, *Vice President*

Alan Marvelli, *Treasurer*

Margaret Russell, *Secretary*

Bridget Glackin

David Pritchard

Dave Ruderman

Bill Williams

Dick Wynne

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 850-acre 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.

eBirding at Fitzgerald Lake

(This is Part 1 of a series by David Pritchard on birds sighted at the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area. Part 2 will appear in the fall newsletter.)

A pair of hooded mergansers diving along the ice margins as the lake melts in March. The trill of a pine warbler as you walk in from North Farms Road in early spring. The flash of a nesting Baltimore oriole on a summer morning in Cooke's Pasture. A flock of ring-necked ducks seen from the Narrows as the last leaves fall in November.



A snow goose with Canada geese on Fitzgerald Lake. (Dave Pritchard)

It's no secret that the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area offers some of the best birding in the Pioneer Valley. But just how good is it? Thanks to eBird, the online database maintained by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, we can actually answer that question with more than just anecdotal data.

The eBird website (eBird.org) was launched in 1992, and quickly became the largest citizen science database anywhere in the world. Membership is free, and by keeping your bird lists on the site you are contributing to a rapidly growing database available not just to other amateur birders but to educators, land managers, and ornithologists from around the world.

continued on page 2

Wildlife Blind Re-Opened

The wildlife-viewing blind on the Broad Brook marsh, built in 2000, has provided visitors to the FLCA with a wide panorama over a fresh water marsh for 15 years. Owing to its site on the border of wetlands, some its concrete piers have slowly moved out of position and two of the support posts are listing badly. To be on the safe side, the blind was closed in January. With the ground now thawed, we were able to make the necessary repairs on March 22. Dick O'Brien and Pete Westover of Conservation Works LLC, together with a team of BBC volunteers, placed two additional support posts on the west end of the blind. The new supports were mounted on Diamond Piers, which are expected to be more stable in the wet soil on the edge of the marsh. The blind is once again open to visitors.

Bob Zimmermann



Song sparrow on the dam. (Bob Zimmermann)

But back to Fitzgerald Lake. A review of checklists submitted by various birders from locations throughout FLCA (the lake, the blind, the pastures, etc.) shows that a total of 167 species have been recorded since eBird was inaugurated. This represents more than half the species reported from all locations throughout Hampshire County—an impressive number, considering how small FLCA is compared to the county as a whole. Obviously, FLCA doesn't have a deepwater reservoir, a river, or extensive agricultural fields, as some other parts of the county have, and there are certain species that are unlikely to ever turn up there. But it does have a rich mix of pine and hardwood forests, old-field pastures, and a wide spectrum of wetlands, making for excellent birding in a variety of habitats within easy walking distance from any of its entrances.



Red-wing blackbird perches near the marsh. (Bill Williams)

Part 2 of this article will give an overview of the birds that have been reported on eBird from the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area—common and uncommon, residents and migrants, including several species that have only been sighted once since 1992. Meanwhile, if you've seen fewer than 167 species at FLCA, you've got some more birding to do!

President's Message: Floral Mysteries

Last summer, I started looking at flowers. It's not that I haven't enjoyed seeing the colorful and diverse array of flowers that adorn our fields and woodlands, but last summer I actually started *looking* at them. And with that came a flood of questions for which, as a neophyte in the botanical world, I had no answers. Why, for instance, are the berries that many flowers and plants produce so often red? What triggers the appearance of one set of flowers in the spring, while others wait till summer to bloom? Can we understand the diverse characteristics and selective advantages that evolution has conferred upon each species? We're getting there in some cases, though much remains to be explained.

Red Berries.

The FLCA harbors many plants and flowers that produce red seeds, berries or fruits: partridge berry, baneberry, jack-in-the-pulpit, raspberry,



Winterberry in the fall. (Bob Zimmermann)

winterberry, and spicebush, to name a few. While they are pleasing to human eyes, they appear to be even more appealing to birds' eyes, which are particularly sensitive to red (and black). Although red may mean "food" to a bird, there's something in it for the plant as well. Birds pick the fruit—essentially packaged seed—digest the nourishing pulp, then disperse the undigested seeds in their droppings, sometimes at a considerable distance from their source. In this way, they spread the species throughout the surrounding habitat. Other possible reasons for the desirability of red fruits have been proposed as well: red is more conspicuous in a forested landscape than other colors and the anthocyanin pigments that confer the red color are effective antioxidants.

Annuals vs. Perennials. Every gardener knows about annuals and perennials. Annuals germinate, grow, flower and produce seeds all in one year, after which they die. Perennials, by contrast, grow and flower year after year. The distinction between annuals and perennials boils down to a difference in survival strategies, energy use and, ultimately, genetics. Annuals typically have long blooming seasons and devote much of their energy to seed production, often

Floral Mysteries, continued

quite copiously, while perennials generally bloom for shorter periods, produce fewer seeds, and dedicate significant energy to manufacturing bulbs, tubers, rhizomes, roots and buds to see them through the winter and enable re-initiation of growth in the spring or summer.

Although one might think annuals and perennials parted ways deep in evolutionary history, many plant families have both annual and perennial members. In fact, it was discovered a few years ago that turning off only two flowering-time



New England Aster, a late bloomer.
(Bob Zimmermann)

genes in at least one annual plant can convert it to a perennial, so perhaps the divide isn't so deep after all. Interestingly, annuals are remarkably scarce among native New England wildflowers. It seems that they have

decided that the perennial lifestyle is more advantageous, perhaps due to the alternation of hot summers with very cold winters.

Flowering Season. Flowering of most perennial plants is season-specific, dependent on sunlight, temperature, the availability of water, day length, soil conditions and presence of the pollinators that guarantee plant reproduction. For instance, spring ephemerals such as trout lily, wood anemone, foamflower, starflower and trilliums are woodland flowers that bloom and produce seed early in the spring to take advantage of the rich, moist forest soils and the sunlight that penetrates to the forest floor before trees leaf-out. In many cases, flowering is timed to coincide with the availability of a specific insect or avian pollinator that is necessary for fertilization and seed production. In fact, it has been found that speciation of some flowers is driven largely by the co-evolution of plants and their pollinators. Floral traits that can affect pollinator specificity include size, shape, color, fragrance and anatomy. In certain species within the morning glory family, for example, a mutation which results in a change from blue flowers to red also results in a change of



Wood anemone, a typical spring ephemeral. (Bob Zimmermann)

"Although we have insights into at least some of the diversity that underlies the botanical world, questions still abound."

pollinator specificity from bees to hummingbirds! And with their ability to see ultraviolet light, honeybees can often detect patterns in flowers invisible to the human eye which have evolved to lead the bees directly to the source of nectar and pollen.

Vines. Vines are found almost everywhere on the globe and although they are most abundant and diverse in the tropics, we have a number of them in the temperate Northeast. Most produce flowers, whether showy or inconspicuous; some have narrow, pliable stems (herbaceous), while others are woody (lianas). They can be useful or attractive, like grape and wisteria, or obnoxious and invasive, like exotic bittersweet.

Though they use trees, fences, trellises and other structures for support, many start life as self-supporting seedlings, like our favorite woodland friend, poison ivy, and only later find a substrate to climb. The most evident advantages of being a vine or liana are that they enable



Poison ivy has inconspicuous flowers.

the plant to reach sunlight, even in a dense forest, while minimizing the investment of energy in rigid supportive tissue and hefty roots. Shared characteristics include long, narrow, flexible stems with considerable resistance to pulling and twisting, abundant soft tissue with wide conduits for the transport of water and nutrients, and high growth rates, along with a variety of biomechanical climbing adaptations like touch-sensitivity. Climbers have arisen in many plant families and exemplify convergent evolution where selective pressures have repeatedly and independently led to the same basic design.

Although we have insights into at least some of the diversity that underlies the botanical world, questions still abound. Why, for instance, do members of the vast mint family have square stems as opposed to the usual round ones, and why is the alternate arrangement of leaves on a stem in most plants replaced by opposite leaves in some? If you have any clues, please let me know (info@broadbrookcoalition.org). No matter where you wander in the forests and fields, there's always something more to learn!

Many thanks to Janet Bissell, Karen Searcy and Laurie Sanders for information, advice and helpful comments.

Bob Zimmermann

Tall Trees and the Broad Brook: Forests of the FLCA Neighborhood

Last fall, an enthusiastic group was treated to a walk and talk on trees and tree ecology led by Bob Leverett. Bob and his wife, Monica Jakuc Leverett, are longtime supporters of FLCA and Monica is a former board chairman of BBC. They live near the southwestern border of FLCA. Bob is a retired engineer who helped found the Native Tree Society (www.nativetreesociety.org) around 2006. This group is partially a detective club, currently searching for stands of tall trees, primarily along the mountain ranges and the river valleys east of the Mississippi River. They are also archivists dedicated to the evolving science of tree measurement. The society has documented various systems, including low- and high-tech methods of tree measurement. With laser in hand on the talk day, Bob reviewed the geometric method of tree height measurement and demonstrated how lasers have powered the accuracy and reproducibility of these data.

Bob has studied and written about the trees of the Broad Brook at FLCA, on his own land, and in the forest west of North Farms Road along the course of the Broad Brook. This forest includes the southern extent of the VA hospital land and the state land that is managed by the forestry program of the Smith Vocational High School.

The Broad Brook is the source of Fitzgerald Lake. The brook rises in the Beaver Brook/Broad Brook Conservation Area about a mile north of the North Farms entrance to FLCA and runs downhill through the Smith Vocational forest land where there is a path. Along this path and the ravine around the brook are stands of tall trees typical of upland forest.

At Country Way, the Broad Brook passes through a culvert and reaches the Fitzgerald Lake dam about one and a half miles from its origin. The Brook is about five miles in length, and joins Hatfield's Running Gutter near Linseed Road.

The forest of the upper Broad Brook corridor consists of stands of mature trees that reach from 85 to 140 feet in height. The tallest and most common of these species is the white pine (*Pinus Strobus*). Its very dark bark becomes more corrugated as the tree grows taller and ages. The other tall species of this forest is the tulip tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*). These have been called "yellow poplar" by lumberjacks. They

are actually a member of the magnolia family. These are most common in the southern Appalachians and rare along the Broad Brook, but they rival the white pine in their height. Other common and tall species in the upland forest include eastern hemlock, northern red oak, and pignut hickory. The pignut hickory reaches heights of 100 feet with a [slender] trunk 5 to 8 feet in girth, in contrast to the pines and hemlocks that have trunks of 8 to 13 feet in girth.

Downstream along the Broad Brook the forest changes. Here the riparian species are found, including silver maple, swamp white oak, pin oak, and hackberry approaching the wetlands and the area where Broad Brook joins Running Gutter. The line where the upland forest changes to these other species is irregular. The species that predominate are determined by the level of the ground water, the frequency of flooding, and depth and composition of the soils.

FLCA, then, offers a sampling of upland tall trees that are more than 100 feet, especially along the northern shore of the lake, that are found in greater abundance and variety on undeveloped land in the upland forest to the west and north. Downstream, different riparian species predominate. In all, Bob Leverett has studied a total of 40 species in the Broad Brook forest corridor, including 5 to 10 non-native species. He considers this to be relatively good diversity, especially recognizing that FLCA itself has been heavily cut in the past. Some notable,

infrequent species in FLCA seen on Bob's study tour include the beautiful yellow birch, an American hornbeam, and a hop hornbeam growing in close proximity.

BBC is fortunate to be able to offer residents the opportunity to walk among and learn about these precious, beautiful tall trees and tree ecology. The fall walk drew many amateur naturalists and budding citizen scientists, but also scholars from as far away as the Harvard forest.

This article summarizes information from Bob's talk and his monograph on "The Mature Forests and Exceptional Trees of the Upper Broad Brook." The website <http://www.nativetreesociety.org> offers more information and an opportunity to join a listserve.

Brigid Glackin



Tree expert Bob Leverett led a walk through FLCA last fall. (Dave Pritchard)

Living On The Edge (Of FLCA)

For 35 years it has been my good fortune to own a house that sits at the eastern edge of Northampton's natural jewel, the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area. There was an FLCA at the time my wife and I bought our house, but it was a fraction of what it was to become, limited then to the 40-acre lake and 115 acres surrounding it.

At that time, from my perch on Coles Meadow Road the woods to the west and north of my backyard were in private hands. It was glorious! One could walk and walk in forest and meadow and not once see a house, or come upon another human. I rarely gave a thought to "whose woods these were," nor to the possibility that absentee landowners I'd never met might one day decide to develop them. Isn't that always the case with change? We think that what we see today will always be.

Not long after, large tracts of the land did in fact change hands; the new owners planned to build numerous upscale houses where I was hiking, and groundbreaking seemed mere months away. At this point, BBC was born, and our seedling group put up what resistance it could; a recessionary building climate, however, was ultimately responsible for the project's failure. Some 20 years later a few houses were built, but our city planners had the foresight to preserve large chunks of the land in conservation, and continues to do so. Meanwhile BBC, with members' help, continues its good work as stewards of the land. As for me, I've savored the privilege of walking these woods. What a treat to get out and see the remarkable species of plants and animals we encounter in the FLCA, now grown to 850 acres. I go out to the woods regularly, but just as often the woods (or its furry representatives) come to me.

We moved into the house in late May. On the third night there, we were upstairs sleeping when I heard a noise downstairs. With stealth and a baseball bat I crept toward the kitchen, from where the noise persisted — only to find, in the window bird feeder we'd filled that day with sunflower seeds, an incredibly noisy possum. Indeed, an uninvited possum, gorging himself at the cornucopia, making more racket than a water buffalo. Possums, I submit, lack personality. They are slow-witted, plodding. The best I ever got out of this one was a defiant hiss whenever I attempted to redirect his motion or his intentions. It's unlikely he could have become a good late night talk show host. Our next visitor from the woods, though, brought personality in spades.

In June we learned that a red fox lived close by; we heard its distinct bark almost nightly. We began to leave table scraps

out at the tree line each evening. Okay, we were innocent. Okay, dumb. (Wildlife officials constantly preach against this). We watched as one fox, sometimes two, came by for the handouts. One splendid day at dusk the male and the vixen appeared, but with them were their two young kits! No, it's not on a par with the work of Jane Goodall, but to see the young of any species is an indelible memory.

"I've savored the privilege of walking these woods. What a treat to get out and see the remarkable species of plants and animals we encounter."

Though the only food I put out nowadays is beef suet for my family of crows, nevertheless I can count on a new fox, with its own personality, arriving almost every year. One travelled a distinct, unvarying route; he was not as neurotic as the Jack Nicholson character in "As Good As It Gets," but he was cut from the same cloth. He appeared each day between 2 and 3 in the afternoon, heading east between my house and the Kipps'. At the Rockridge curve he turned up Coles Meadow and proceeded north...in the middle of the road. When I lost sight of him I could track his progress from the howls and barks coming from the houses he passed. At the first Laurel Park turn-in he would invariably take a right, no doubt invited to lecture at their Chautauqua.

Another year, another fox. I pulled into my driveway and heard it barking from behind my house in the backyard.

As I sat watching, he came into view and sprinted across my backyard towards Halfway Brook Trail, chased by my tenant's cat! Just at my apple tree he wheeled and reversed the chase, now after the cat. Back and forth they repeated their dance, and then the cat seemed to lose interest. More than once after that, the fox appeared in the backyard and barked at the window where the cat generally lay, inviting her to come out for a friendly game of tag. But you know cats. Ho- hum.

There is, of course, bigger game in the FLCA. A rare visitor turned up in my driveway one autumn six years ago.

As I walked out to fetch the morning Gazette, I saw what I took to be a horse in front of me, wondered if it had bolted from the fifth race of the Tri County Fair. But no, it was not a horse. No, it was... a moose! A moose in my driveway. A moose on the loose! He was far less excited than I was. He ambled to the road, crossed it and continued towards Rockridge and Laurel Park. I hope he found himself a mate.

As excited as I was to see the moose, it was tame compared to my first black bear sighting. Of course that was then, before Northampton became to black bears what Alaska is

Living On The Edge, continued

to grizzlies. After 20 years or so of their visits, I've become more jaded. Still, a bear encounter remains a fine way to see if one's adrenal gland is functioning. I once had one (a bear, not an adrenal gland) pop out of my shed just as I drove my motorcycle in to put it away. One year as I cut brush in my backyard I glanced toward my house and noticed that my garbage can, holding a full trash bag, had somehow just disappeared. I suspected who the culprits might be, and sure enough, a few seconds later saw a bear on the woods trail behind my shed, just beginning to tear into the trash bag. I yelled and waved as I approached, hoping to chase her off before she scattered trash everywhere, but one step closer and I saw there were two cubs with her...and she was in no mood for my pathetic show. She countered with a weird noise, half grunt, half gargle, then lurched in my direction; I did not stick around to discuss matters further.

Other species have appeared in my backyard or just beyond as if on a Lazy Susan, a welcome substitute for Netflix or the evening news: turkeys and coyotes, deer and pileated woodpeckers, porcupines and gray squirrels. Red squirrels and voles, chipmunks and garter snakes. Wood frogs and spotted salamanders. Grouse and woodcock and broad-winged hawks. Great horned owls and skunks. What a feast for the senses! I've yet to see the otters of FLCA, or the fishers. Maybe this year is the year I will. My neighbors Jim and Linda Reis have had a bobcat make guest appearances in their backyard, but so far I haven't been as lucky. Get the word to Mr. Bobcat, please, if you should see him: my welcome mat is out.

Dick Wynne

Fourth Graders Contribute to BBC

Fourth Graders at the RK Finn Ryan Road Elementary School visited the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area this past winter, and they had such a good time hiking there that they decided to raise money to support FLCA. Teacher Sara Simmons recently sent BBC a check for \$54.25 raised by her students.

We appreciate Ms. Simmons' taking her students outdoors to learn about nature, and we are very grateful to the class for responding by making a donation. Thank you!

Bridge, Boardwalk and Dock Construction at the FLCA

With funding in hand from the Recreational Trails Program of the Massachusetts Department of Recreation and Conservation and from the Northampton Community Preservation Committee, we plan to replace the bridge over the brook and to rehabilitate and extend the boardwalk and dock near the North Farms Road entrance this coming summer (see Fall BBC Newsletter at www.broadbrookcoalition.org/ for details). The project will be supervised by Conservation Works, LLC, a local company based in North Hatfield, and the City's Office of Planning and Sustainability has graciously offered to act as fiscal agent. We are also fortunate in having been chosen by the Student Conservation Association Massachusetts AmeriCorps to host a five-person crew that will carry out much of the work during a 10-day hitch. Construction is scheduled to start on Monday, July 18, and to be completed within 2-3 weeks. It may be necessary to close the North Farms Road entrance for at least part of this period, but we'll keep you posted via email and signs at the conservation area entrances.

Bob Zimmermann

We Appreciate You!

Whether clearing paths, maintaining trails, pulling water chestnuts, corresponding with members, building bridges or planning improvements, we are most grateful for the efforts of our volunteers throughout 2015. They include:

Carmen Ahearn, Tamara Barbasch, Blaise Bisailon, Mike Callahan, Meghan Carberry, Rufus Chaffee, Scott Chasantaber, Doris Cohen, Len Cohen, Sara Crawley, Keith Davis, David Fradkin, Peter Flinker, Yvonne Freccero, Alex Ghiselin, Brigid Glackin, Steve Harding, Bruce Hart, Ken Howard, Diego Irizarry-Gerould, Yamila Irizarry-Gerould, Deb Jacobs, Jason Johnson, George Kohout, Lacy Lomax, Peter Maleady, Jill Mendez, Mary Moriarty, Michael Murphy, Hana Nower, Lynn Parda, Amy-Louise Pfeffer, Lewis Popper, Pat Rae, Jim Reis, Norma Roche, Bill Rosen, Bob Rundquist, Laurie Sanders, Jon Sass, Chris Schmidt, Al Shane, John Sheirer, Virginia Sowers, Jon Steinberg, Lani Stutz, Rachel Tremaine and Matt Verson.

Many, many thanks!

Workdays at the FLCA: Spring and Summer 2016

Shrubland Habitat and Native Plants

Saturday, May 7, 9:00-12:00 a.m.

Several years ago, we established three clusters of native shrubs in Cooke's Pasture to provide food and habitat for shrubland birds and small mammals. Each year we return to prune the shrubs, cut back competing undergrowth, and replace plants that have not survived the winter. Tools will be provided, though 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, June 4, 9:00-11:00 a.m.

Our yearly cleanup of the the North Farms Road entrance to the FLCA includes clearing winter debris from the path to the boardwalk, picking up trash in the parking lot, and hand removal of invasive plants such as garlic mustard, Japanese knotweed and multiflora rose in the adjoining woods. Please help us to spruce up this heavily used route to the conservation area. Contact: Dick Wynne at 584-7930.

Removal of Invasives on Boggy Meadow Road

Saturday, June 25, 9:00-12:00 a.m.

The margins of roads provide excellent habitat for the growth of invasive plants. We have surveyed and located many patches of invasives along Boggy Meadow Road, which connects the former Moose Lodge parking lot at the end of Cooke Avenue with the Fitzgerald Lake dam. We will remove invasives from the road and the adjacent wooded areas by hand: pulling, cutting and digging. Tools will be provided, but if you care to bring shovels, mattocks and lopping shears, it would be a help. And don't forget gloves, sunscreen and insect repellent. Meet at the former Moose Lodge parking lot. Contact Len Cohen at 584-3843 or Bruce Hart at 584-4176.

Removal of Water Chestnut from Fitzgerald Lake

Saturday, July 16, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. and

Saturday, August 20, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

Once again we will sally forth on Fitzgerald Lake in our continuing effort to control the proliferation of water chestnut, a persistent and aggressive invasive plant. We will survey the entire lake and remove water chestnut by hand. Canoes and kayaks are needed, 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. For July 16, contact Bill Williams at 585-9696 or Dick Wynne at 584-7930; for August 20, contact Dick Wynne at 584-7930 or Bruce Hart at 584-4176.

Hunting No Longer Allowed at FCLA

After a series of meetings held by city government this past winter, hunting will no longer be permitted on any portion of Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area.

Hunting had been permitted at the so-called Abuza section of FCLA. This 78-acre section was added to the FCLA in 1993 when the city acquired two parcels owned by the Abuza family. Allowing hunting as a condition of the purchase was imposed by the City Council. The area is well marked on the map in the BBC's brochure. It lies west of the Broad Brook and north of the Hillside Trail and Cooke's Pasture.

The Abuza parcel is in close proximity to both the Hillside and Telephone Line Trails. Due to subsequent land acquisitions after 1993, the Abuza parcels are now surrounded by conservation land where hunting is not permitted. These circumstances led the Conservation Commission to prohibit hunting there as a matter of safety. This change required the City Council to return the authority to regulate hunting to the ConsCom. These changes were finalized at the ConsCom meeting on February 25.

The Trails Committee has installed new signs at the kiosks and at various locations on the trails to let visitors to FCLA know about this change in policy. The map and brochure will be revised as well.

Many BBC members will welcome this change that makes all of the acreage of FLCA a wildlife sanctuary.

Brigid Glackin

Please Support BBC Through Valley Gives Campaign

BBC will participate in the next Valley Gives online giving campaign, which will take place this year on Tuesday, May 3. We hope members and new members will support us again, either by making an additional gift or donating a membership for a friend or family member.

The day of charitable giving is organized by the Community Foundation of Western Mass. As he did in the last campaign, BBC board member David Ruderman will coordinate BBC's promotion for Valley Gives.

2016 Spring Walks and Talks

All walks are free; no registration is required.

Greet the American Woodcock

Nora E. Hanke

Sunday, April 3: 6:30–8:30 pm

Cooke Ave. entrance

(at the former Moose Lodge; park to the right)

The American Woodcock is one of our earliest migrants, famous for the “sky dance” the males perform on cool spring evenings. We’ll go looking, and listening, for this reclusive bird in the early successional habitat at Cooke’s Pasture. Be prepared for a substantial walk, about 1.25 miles each way, the return trip in the dark, in potentially wet, muddy conditions. A flashlight with a red filter can help you find your way without spoiling your night vision. Children able to remain quiet for our observation are welcome. Contact David Pritchard (413-268-3668, SunkenScow@aol.com) with any questions.

Spring Birding at FLCA

Mike Locher, Hampshire Bird Club

Saturday, April 30: 7:00–10:00 am (rain date: May 1)

North Farms Rd. entrance

Spring is the ideal time to go out birding, as residents and returning migrants alike busy themselves with the urgent task of finding mates and building nests. Join Hampshire Bird Club’s Mike Locher as we walk through a variety of forest and lakeside habitats and continue on to the more open spaces of the dam and Cooke’s Pasture. Probable sightings include swallows, thrushes, vireos, and early warblers as well as herons, ducks, and geese. All ages and skill levels are welcome. Bring binoculars and field guides if you have them. Contact Mike at 413-585-5864, or fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org, with any questions or for information about rain cancellation.

Children’s Bird Walk

Bruce Hart, David Pritchard, and others

Saturday, May 14: 9:00–11:00 am.

Cooke Ave. entrance

(at the former Moose Lodge; park to the right)

Co-sponsored by the Hampshire Bird Club Education Committee

Encourage a love of the natural world in children by joining us on this short walk along Boggy Meadow Rd. to look for spring birds. We’ll complement the program with photos of

some of the birds we see, in order to help children focus on what is being observed, and will point out fun facts of bird behavior. Bring binoculars and field guides if you have them, but we’ll have some extras on hand to share. The road could be muddy in spots, so water-resistant footwear is advised, as is your favorite bug repellent. Contact Bruce Hart (413-584-4176, bhart2000@aol.com) with any questions.

Beavers at Nightfall

Gini Traub, Regional Educator for Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation

Friday, June 17: 7:00-8:30 pm

Cooke Ave. entrance

(at the former Moose Lodge; park to the right)

Enjoy the sights and sounds of early evening on gentle terrain. We’ll take a guided walk, with a short off-trail segment, to a place where beavers recently set up housekeeping, and see the dynamic process of a woodland transforming into a wetland. Suitable for adults and families. Binoculars, insect repellent, and shoes for possibly wet, muddy conditions are recommended. Heavy rain or thunder cancels. Please call Gini at 413-584-6788 if you have questions.

Butterfly Walk

Tom Gagnon, Vice president West for the Massachusetts Butterfly Club

Wednesday, July 6: 10:00 am to noon (rain date: July 7)

North Farms Rd. entrance

Join naturalist, birder, and butterfly enthusiast Tom Gagnon in search of the rare DION SKIPPER and other butterflies around Fitzgerald Lake. The plan will be to hike as far as the dam area and back to the parking lot. The Dion Skipper is on the list of rare or uncommon resident Massachusetts butterflies. Close-focus binoculars will be a help, if you have them. Please, no nets. Contact Bruce Hart (413-584-4176, bhart2000@aol.com) with questions.

Summer Hike to the Dam

Connie Parks, botanist

Sunday, July 17: 10:00 am to noon

Cooke Ave. entrance

(at the former Moose Lodge; park to the right)

Hike through cool forest to Fitzgerald Lake, and explore the meadows at the dam and in Cooke’s Pasture. Identification and interpretation of summer flora will be provided.

Bring a hand lens and field guide if you have them, but we

2016 Spring Walks and Talks, continued

will have others to share. We will be walking Boggy Meadow Road, which may have wet, muddy patches, so water-resistant footwear is advised. Connie is a freelance editor and educator who lives in Florence. She uses her expertise in plant and soil science in volunteering at Mass Audubon's Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary and the Botanic Garden of Smith College. Contact David Pritchard (413-268-3668, SunkenScow@aol.com) with questions.

Commitment to Affordable Housing Continues

As a resident of North Farms Road, Yvonne Freccero said "it was a natural" for her to support the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area by becoming a member of the Broad Brook Coalition more than 10 years ago. She didn't know at the time that part of BBC's mission is to support affordable housing. "That was a surprise," Yvonne said recently, an added benefit for someone who served on the Northampton Housing Partnership and was a founder of the Friends of Hampshire County Homeless Individuals, which was incorporated in 2000.

The founders of BBC in 1988 firmly believed that land preservation and affordable housing were not incompatible goals, and they made a commitment to include advocacy for affordable housing in the organization's mission. How that commitment is carried out has varied over the years. Early on, board members urged developers of projects in the Broad Brook watershed to take into account open space and housing affordability, and to that end, BBC supported the Pines Edge development on Cooke Avenue and the Lathrop Community on Bridge Road.

A more active role came with new board members, including Yvonne, who were directly involved in housing efforts. For nearly 10 years, BBC members volunteered to serve dinner once a month at the Interfaith Cot Shelter on Center Street and monitored housing issues in the city. Annual donations were made to the Housing Partnership.

As those housing proponents left the board, and the demands of managing an expanding conservation area continued to grow, BBC shifted away from volunteer work at the cot shelter. However, the board hasn't shifted from its support of affordable housing. The question arises periodically on what is the best role for BBC? When this discussion came up in 2007, the late Frank Olbris said he and other founding members "focused more on supporting policies to make permanent affordable housing available."

At its monthly meeting in February, the BBC board agreed that its volunteer efforts need to be concentrated on FLCA, which is now up to 850 acres. Each year, BBC contributes 5% of its membership fees to a housing organization, most recently to the Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity.

Yvonne still supports BBC by keeping the kiosk on North Farms Road supplied with brochures, and she is still active with the Friends of the Homeless. (Her efforts were recognized by the Gazette, which recently selected Yvonne for newspaper's Person of the Year award.) BBC members may want to support the Friends' new campaign: to establish a house for homeless young adults. Information about the project is available at www.hamphomeless.org.

Margaret Russell

Long-Time Member Joins BBC Board



Brigid Glackin

Brigid Glackin said she "wanted to be outside and to study the natural world" when she retired two years ago. She is fulfilling her goals. An early member of the Broad Brook Coalition, Brigid was elected to the board of directors at the annual meeting last fall. She is a volunteer land monitor for the Kestrel Land Trust, assigned to the Mineral Hills

Conservation Area. She is also a volunteer river steward for the Housatonic Valley Association in the Berkshires, a natural fit as Brigid and her husband, Mike Murphy, own a cabin in Hinsdale at the headwaters of the Housatonic River.

The couple has lived in Northampton since 1978 and became neighbors of Fitzgerald Lake a year later when they moved to Howes Street, off Bridge Road. Brigid worked or 30 years in private practice as a general surgeon in Springfield and Holyoke.

BBC's newest board member hopes to work with area teachers to encourage them to use FLCA as a classroom for their students.

Margaret Russell

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

www.broadbrookcoalition.org

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
NORTHAMPTON, MA
PERMIT NO. 13

Current Resident or:

Volume 28, Issue Number 1, Spring 2016

Visit Us Online at:

www.broadbrookcoalition.org

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

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 are tax deductible.*

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

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 (maintenance and repair) Stewardship Committee (includes invasive species removal)

Occasional Work Days Education Outreach Newsletter writer Other (please specify) _____