

# BROAD BROOK COALITION

Volume 23, Issue Number 1, Spring 2011

**Greetings** from your new Newsletter editor. You will probably see changes happening in the next couple of issues as I acquaint myself with the many creative options of my publishing software. I would appreciate feedback during this process.

Articles and photographs are always welcome. FLCA is a dynamic place. We all have experiences that vary with each visit, every change of season, and from our individual perceptions. You may contact me:

Ilene Goldstein

igoldstein@williston.com

## **NORMA SIMS ROCHE: VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR**

The 2010 BBC Volunteer of the Year Award was presented to Norma Sims Roche. Norma has been an indefatigable contributor to the work of the Broad Brook Coalition since its inception over two decades ago. In fact, we can't imagine how we would have made as much as progress as we have without her broad perspective on the BBC's objectives and her close at-



tention to its detailed operations. To mention just a few of her accomplishments: she served for many years as secretary of the Board of Directors, maintaining a meticulous account of the Board's activities; she single-handedly edited our semiannual

Newsletter for several years and often wrote much of it herself when others demurred at the last minute; she was an active member of the Land Acquisition Committee during a period in which the FLCA underwent significant growth; she was often out on Fitzgerald Lake filling her canoe with water chestnuts on volunteer days; she ably represented our organization at numerous City Council meetings and hearings; she kept us informed about state-level political and conservation issues; and, perhaps most importantly, she served as our collective memory by virtue of her intimate knowledge of BBC history. The award was presented with deep appreciation. Norma made all of our jobs both easier and more pleasant, and in so doing has enriched our lives. *Thank You, Norma!*

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## From the President's Desk

Imagine a continuous ribbon of forest, streams and open fields encircling Northampton from the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area in the north to Arcadia and the Meadows in the south, providing abundant opportunities for recreation and a corridor for the circulation of wildlife. This vision has come closer to realization in the past year by the City's strategic land purchases. One of these new acquisitions, assisted by funding from the BBC, encompasses not only a significant segment of the Beaver Brook but spans the headwaters of the Broad Brook as well. The 100-acre parcel, provisionally dubbed the Beaver Brook/Broad Brook Conservation Area, extends eastward from Rte. 9 near the Williamsburg border and consists of a strip of wooded flood plain between the highway and Beaver Brook and a much larger tract of mature hardwoods and softwoods on gently sloping terrain beyond Beaver Brook. BBC also contributed to the acquisition of a small parcel of land further to the east that will protect one more piece of a wildlife corridor along the Broad Brook that extends to the FLCA. [See also Bob Leverett's commentary on the unexpected discovery of a stand of Tulip trees along this section of Broad Brook.]

On behalf of the Conservation Commission, the BBC undertook a one-year review of management options for the Beaver Brook/Broad Brook parcel, in line with its mandate to protect "the Broad Brook watershed for the long-term benefit of the residents of Northampton and the general public." As there is presently no access to the land beyond the Beaver Brook, we focused our attention on the six-acre portion of the parcel that fronts on Rte. 9. As a condition of purchase, the previous owners demolished and removed the ruins of two old houses from this area, though their foundations and several old farm implements remain behind as reminders of the site's history. Unfortunately, a heavy infestation of invasive plant species remains as well. The first task will be to remediate this area so that visitors can enjoy an expansive view of Beaver Brook and the wildlife that make use of the surrounding marshes. Invasive plants pose an ecological problem on the east side of the Beaver Brook, too, but remediation of this area must await the opening of an access route for people and equipment which presently does not exist. Whether the BBC or another organization will manage the Beaver Brook/Broad Brook area in the future has yet to be decided.

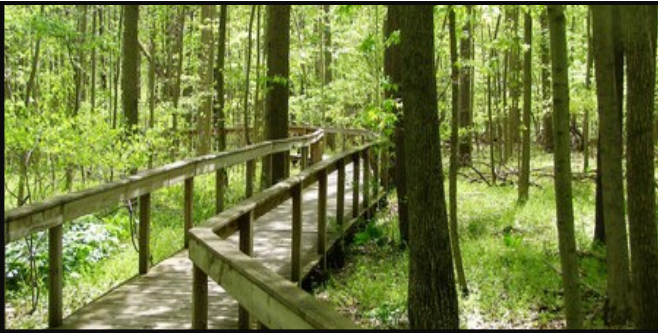
Our interest in the health and protection of the greater Broad Brook watershed in no way diminishes our dedication to the maintenance of the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area. As you have undoubtedly noticed, we put up 40 handsome new trail signs last year. Special attention was given to providing visitors with clear instructions--and distances--to the Boggy Meadow Road and North Farms Road entrances. In the coming year, we plan to construct a number of new bog bridges over perennially wet, swampy portions of the trail system and we will offer a full program of Walks and Talks in the spring, summer and fall months. These educational programs, led by local naturalists, continue to attract members of the community who wish to learn more about the rich diversity of flora and fauna in the FLCA. Our never-ending battle with invasive plant species will also be a priority this year, with several workdays scheduled for the removal of garlic mustard around the North Farms Road entrance and water chestnut from Fitzgerald Lake. At the same time, our professional partners will continue their efforts to suppress spotted knapweed, glossy buckthorn, Multiflora rose and *Phragmites* in Cooke's Pasture, in the marsh and on the dam. In addition, we are always on the lookout for the availability of land abutting the FLCA for possible addition to the conservation lands. We cordially invite your participation in any or all of these activities. More information about them can be found elsewhere in this Newsletter or by visiting our recently--and expertly--redesigned web site.

Bob Zimmermann

### A Note on the Water Level in Fitzgerald Lake

As you may have noticed, the level of Fitzgerald Lake sometimes rises after a heavy rainfall, especially when it's combined with melting snow and ice as occurred in March. Under these circumstances, the canoe launch may flood for a day or two, but the water soon subsides and the lake level returns to normal. Though some have thought that beavers might be implicated in the occasional floods, they aren't the culprits this time. The high water level in the lake results from limitations in the drainage system at the dam. The level of the lake is normally maintained by the height of a vertical, 66-inch diameter riser pipe. Water flows over the lip of this pipe and then drops down to a 42-inch diameter horizontal outlet pipe that empties the water to the stream below. When the volume of water reaching the drain is very high, the flow is restricted by the capacity of the horizontal outlet pipe, which is only 40% that of the riser, leading to a temporary increase in the level of the lake.

RAZ



**Have you thought about becoming more involved in a community organization that promotes your interests or philosophy?**

**Why not join the Board of BBC?**

**There is an opening for 2011-2012 and beyond.**

**Please contact: Bruce Hart- (413) 584-4176**

### PORCUPETTES by Jim Reis

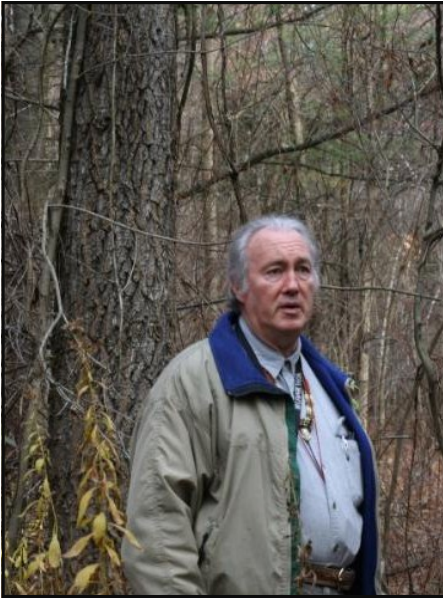
Yes they are prickly, but how can you not love an animal whose babies are called porcupettes? These amazing little porcupines are ready to defend themselves within hours after birth, when their one inch quills dry out. They are born between April and August, and remain with their mother until fall. In the wild they may live up to 10 years.

Porcupines are very common in the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area (FLCA). Their primary food source is the eastern hemlock. Look for hemlock boughs scattered on the forest floor with tips cut at a forty-five degree angle. They can also be seen in the spring, feeding on the swollen buds of maple, oak, beech and other deciduous trees. Porcupines are most active at night, and spend most of their time in trees, although you will see them on the ground as well. They are good swimmers and their hollow quills help keep them afloat.

Porcupine quills are up to three inches long, and there can be as many as 30,000 on a single animal. When attacking another animal and a quill becomes embedded, it will work its way deeper into their skin, up to an inch a day. Porcupines



have poor vision but an excellent sense of smell. They are solitary animals, although they may den with other porcupines in the winter. In cold weather, they live a sedentary existence and use as little energy as possible. For this reason huge piles of scat will accumulate in and around their dens. They are preyed upon by horned owls, coyotes, and bobcats, but their most formidable enemy is the fisher. It will relentlessly attack a porcupine's face where there are no quills, until the porcupine is helpless. Porcupines are very vocal animals and have a wide variety of calls including moans, grunts, coughs, whines, and shrieks. Hopefully, this spring you will be able to see these wonderful animals as you hike on the many trails in FLCA.



## Liriodendron Tulipifera Along Broad Brook

By Robert T. Leverett

For many residents of Massachusetts, *Liriodendron tulipifera* is an ornamental or landscaping species of tree that grows fast, has an intriguing leaf shape, and attractive orange-green flowers. *Liriodendron*'s family is Magnoliaceae, and there are only two members of its genus in existence. One is native to the eastern United States and the other is native to China. The common names for *Liriodendron* are yellow-poplar, because of the similarity of the appearance of *Liriodendron*'s wood to that of the true poplars, and the tulip tree.

I am pleased to report that *Liriodendron* is native to Massachusetts, occurring mainly west of the Connecticut River and south of Deerfield, MA. Our current thinking is that the species repopulated New England during a warming period around 3,000 years ago, and that the small populations we see today are remnants of the tulip tree's northern advance during that period.

The northeastern limit of the natural range of *Liriodendron* occurs in Massachusetts, probably around Whately. Natural tulip tree populations are rare in Massachusetts, and we are blessed with what appears to be a native population of tulip trees along Broad Brook on the west side of North Farms Road. Gary Beluzo, Bart Bouricius, and I have identified 55 individual trees, mostly young specimens seeded from about 10 mature trees. The oldest trees appear to date back into the late 1800s.

The tulip tree is a prolific grower, it quickly reaches diameters of 2 to 3 feet in our region when growing as part of a stand, and can attain trunk diameters of 4 to 6 feet in the open. In Massachusetts, heights of mature trees are commonly between 110 and 130 feet. One tree near Broad Brook is 130.3 feet. In the southern Appalachians, tulip trees can reach diameters of 7 to 8 feet and heights of 160 to 180 feet. .

In its northern range, the tulip tree needs good soil, plenty of moisture, and initially lots of sunlight. Not a part of our deep woods, once it gains some height, it outgrows its competition and establishes its place in the canopy. While our tulip trees don't rival those in the South, the species makes a definitive statement.

Championing of this charismatic species along Broad Brook would be a noble objective of any member of the community. Securing its protection would require contacting landowners and managers along Broad Brook and building awareness.

## EVENTS CALENDAR AT A GLANCE

### **May 7 - Saturday, 9 a.m.-noon**

Invasive Plant Control in our Early Successional Habitat at Cooke's Pasture. Meet at former Moose Lodge at the top of Cooke Ave.

### **May 15 - Sunday, 4 a.m.**

Birding the Dawn Chorus- Frank Bowrys, former Moose Lodge at the top of Cooke Ave.

### **June 4 - Saturday, 9 a.m.-noon**

Invasive Plant Control and Removal, North Farms Rd. entrance

### **June 5 - Sunday, 7:30 a.m. –10:00 a.m.**

Breeding Birds-Bob Zimmermann

### **June 12 - Sunday, 1 p.m.**

Odonates-Damselflies and Dragonflies-Joshua Rose, North Farms Rd. entrance

### **July 1 - Friday, 9:30 a.m.**

Butterflies, MA Butterfly Club- Bill Benner, North Farms Rd. entrance, ( may continue at Graves Farm, Williamsburg)

### **July 9 - Saturday, 10a.m.—1p.m. (rain date July 10)**

Watercolor Sketching-Betty Wolfson, North Farms Rd. entrance

### **July 17 - Sunday, 1p.m. & August 13 - Saturday, 9a.m.**

Removal of the Invasive Water Chestnut by canoe and kayak, North Farms Rd. entrance

## ***HELP WANTED: Volunteer Opportunities***

BBC can function and accomplish its goals only with the volunteer efforts of its members. There are many different projects you can help with. Time commitments vary from a few hours a year to a few hours every month. Many tasks require no special skills, only a willingness to help.

**Board Members/Board Secretary:** Elections for Board members will be held at the Annual Meeting in November. Two new members will be needed this year. The Board meets monthly, and members are also involved in subcommittees and many other aspects of running our all-volunteer organization. There are nine Board members to split the work. We're especially in need of members who might be willing to serve as officers eventually. Experience as a BBC volunteer is a plus, but is not required. We're especially in need of candidates who would be willing to serve as Secretary. The BBC Secretary takes, distributes, and keeps minutes of all Board and BBC membership meetings and performs other organizational and record-keeping tasks. If you'd like to be a candidate, please get in touch with any member of the Nominating Committee (Alan Marvelli, Bill Williams, and Bob Zimmermann) or with Jim Reis, Volunteer Coordinator. (see below).

**Publicity Coordinator:** Help us get the word out! Work with Board members, event organizers, the Webmaster, and our local media to let people know about BBC events and issues. You'll need good writing skills and access to the Internet; interest in developing and maintaining connections with our local media would be a plus.

**Fundraisers:** We hope to be planning a fundraising campaign for a major land acquisition soon—stay tuned! We're likely to need people to work on mailings, call on local businesses, and apply for small grants. If you're interested in helping us find the funds to preserve an important piece of habitat, it's not too soon to let us know.

**Trail Maintenance and Invasive Plant Removal:** Watch for notices for volunteer days at the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area. Get outdoors and enjoy some time with others who love FLCA.

**What are your skills?** If you'd like to be involved, but you don't see a task that fits your time or talents here, please talk with us! **If you're interested in helping, please get in touch with BBC's Volunteer Coordinator, Jim Reis, at 586-0567**

## About Us

Broad Brook Coalition (BBC) is a nonprofit, all volunteer community organization dedicated to the preservation of open space and the promotion of affordable housing. BBC co-manages the 646-acre Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area (FLCA) in cooperation with the Northampton Conservation Commission. We organize 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-2010-2011

Robert A. Zimmermann, President

Dave Hershops, Vice President

Alan Marvelli, Treasurer

Bruce Hart

Frank Olbris

Jim Reis

Bill Williams

Dick Wynne

- - - - - *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 \$25.00 to:

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

*(all contributions to BBC are tax deductible.)*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

### **Broad Brook Coalition needs your help, too!**

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

Members and friends are needed to help carry out our goals. Please consider one or more of the following volunteer opportunities:

Trail maintenance and repair  Newsletter editor

Invasive species removal  Stewardship Committee; manages conservation area

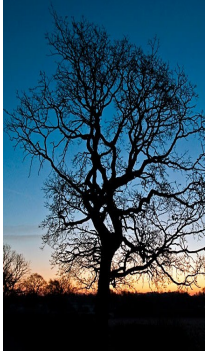
Clerical help/mailings  Land Preservation/Acquisition Committee

Computer help  BBC Board of Directors

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

Fundraising campaigns  Walks and Talks

# WALKS AND TALKS



## BIRDING THE DAWN CHORUS

**Frank Bowrys**

**Sunday, May 15, 4:00 a.m.**

Have you ever been drawn out of sleep by the sounds of birds waking and exclaiming the new day? The dawn chorus is one of the marvels of nature, birds show the greatest amount of singing activity at this time. This is also the height of migration, so come join us in this wonderful phenomenon. Dress warmly, and bring a flashlight. Meet at the former Moose Lodge at the top of Cooke Avenue.



## BREEDING BIRDS

**Bob Zimmermann, Professor of Molecular Biology, University of Massachusetts,**

**BBC Board member**

**Sunday, June 5, 7:30 a.m.-10:00 a.m.**

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



## ODANATES-DRAGONFLIES AND DAMSELFLIES

**Josh Rose**

**Sunday, June 12, 1 p.m.**

Hampshire County has 116 documented species of dragonflies and damselflies. Come join naturalist Josh Rose and discover how many we can find at Fitzgerald Lake. Josh will talk about the differences between dragonflies and damselflies, how to find them, how to tell them apart, what they do with their lives, and maybe dip-net a few larvae out of the wetlands. He will also talk about any other noteworthy insects we encounter. Bring binoculars, a butterfly net if you have one, and be prepared to walk in wet, muddy areas. The trip will be cancelled or rescheduled in the event of rain. Meet at the North Farms Road entrance.

Josh studied dragonflies for his Ph.D. from Duke University, and for several years has been leading dragonfly walks and identification workshops for the World Birding Center, the Dragonfly Days festival, and a number of Audubon chapters.

## WALKS AND TALKS, CONT.



### BUTTERFLY WALK

**Bill Benner, Massachusetts Butterfly Club**

**Friday, July 1, 9:30 a.m.-**

Join us for a half-day hike with the Massachusetts Butterfly Club. The state-endangered Dion Skipper is the prize target, but we also plan to search for what else might be around as we help the Broad Brook Coalition survey the butterfly fauna at FLCA. If time permits, we may head over to Mass Audubon's nearby Graves Farm Preserve to search for Meadow Fritillaries and other open field species. Bring lunch if desired. ( May continue at Graves Farm, Williamsburg) Call or e-mail Bill to confirm: (413) 320-4422 [billb55@aol.com](mailto:billb55@aol.com) Meet at North Farms Road entrance .



### 'WATER COLOR SKETCHING'

**Betty Wolfson, Local Artist**

**Saturday, July 9, 10 a.m.-1p.m. ( Rain date, Sunday, July 10, 10 a.m.-1p.m.)**

Come and enjoy an opportunity to create a painting from nature en plein air, while all your senses take in the beauty of FLCA, our 'right in your own backyard' conservation area. If you have ever thought working with water colors too difficult or unforgiving, minds will be changed at Fitzgerald Lake. There will be some instruction as time permits. Please call 584-1470, to pre-register and receive details.



### BEAVERS

**Patti Steinman,**

**Education Coordinator, Mass Audubon's Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary**

**Sunday, August 21, 7p.m.-9 p.m.**

Join us for an evening walk at Fitzgerald Lake while learning about beavers. The beaver is our largest rodent and has moved back to Massachusetts. We will take walk and look for beaver evidence, learn about their adaptations and visit a lodge and of course look for beavers! Along the way we will listen for late summer insect sounds. Patti Steinman has worked for Mass Audubon for over 20 years, and her favorite bird is the crow! She has a Masters degree in Environmental Studies from Antioch New England. Meet at the North Farms Road entrance.

**CHILDREN ARE WELCOME TO PARTICIPATE WITH ADULT SUPERVISION**



## **2011 VOLUNTEER DAYS AT THE FLCA**

**Opportunities for you to contribute to our conservation land**

The Broad Brook Coalition is committed to the preservation of our native habitats, the control and eradication of non-native invasive plants, and the planting and propagation of native species. To that end, we ask that our members and the larger community join us in helping to advance those objectives by assisting in one of our volunteer days. Dress accordingly: long pants and long sleeved shirts and enclosed shoes are protection from thorns, briars, vines, poison ivy and other possible allergens, ticks, mosquitos and glass. A hat, sun-screen, insect repellent, and gloves are helpful and recommended. Children are welcome to participate with adult supervision. Volunteers will have to sign a waiver pursuant to City policy.

### **INVASIVE PLANT REMOVAL IN OUR EARLY SUCCESSIONAL HABITAT: COOKE'S AND SOUTH PASTURES: SATURDAY, MAY 7 / 9:00 A.M.**

A number of invasive plant species that grow in the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area can be effectively controlled by cutting, pulling or digging. Multiflora rose, Oriental bittersweet, Buckthorn species and Autumn olive all fit this category. We will continue to maintain the three wildlife-friendly native shrub islands in Cooke's Pasture. The morning will be spent pruning the shrubs we have planted, weed removal, and replacing plants that have not survived the winter. Some tools will be provided, any additional clippers, shears and gloves are helpful. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the former Moose Lodge at the top of Cooke Avenue. We will drive to the dam, and if you plan to walk-in, meet at Cooke's Pasture. For further information, call Bob Zimmermann at 585-0405.

### **CLEAN UP AT NORTH FARMS RD. ENTRANCE: SATURDAY, JUNE 4 / 9 A.M.-NOON**

In the past few years, we have been plagued by an abundance of Garlic mustard, lesser celandine, Japanese knotweed, and Multiflora rose along the path to the canoe launch. Garlic-mustard is easy to identify in its early flowering stage and, owing to its shallow root, can be pulled by hand with very little effort. Please come on Saturday, June 4, and help us stem the tide; dedicated hand pulling will make a difference! We will begin at 9:00 a.m. and plan to work till noon. Meet at North Farms Rd. entrance. For further information, call Bruce Hart at 584-4176.

### **REMOVAL OF WATER CHESTNUT FROM FITZGERALD LAKE: SUNDAY, JULY 17 / 9:00A.M. & SATURDAY, AUGUST 13 / 1:00 P.M.**

Our efforts to curtail the proliferation of water chestnut in Fitzgerald Lake, now in its sixth year, have met with considerable success. Nonetheless, continuing surveillance is needed to prevent the resurgence of this harmful invasive species in portions of the lake where it has been previously identified and to ensure that any new growth is located and eliminated. As in the past, we will survey the entire lake and remove any water chestnut plants we find by hand. We will need canoes and kayaks to get us onto the lake, as well as large plastic buckets to collect the plants. Sharing space in a boat is typically, though not always, an option. PFDs (personal flotation devices) are required, and if you can contribute a boat, let us know. Please join us for a pleasant summer outing on Fitzgerald Lake! Meet at the North Farms Road parking lot at 1:00 p.m. on Sunday, July 17 and at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, August 13. (duration ~3 hours each day). For further information, call Bruce Hart at 584-4176.

**Broad Brook Coalition**

P. O. Box 60566  
Florence, MA 01062

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**Visit our newly designed  
website at:**

**[www.broadbrookcoalition.org](http://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.