

BROAD BROOK COALITION

Volume 24, Issue Number 1, SPRING 2012

NEWS FROM THE EDITOR AND THE BBC BOARD

Help BBC to Grow Greener

The BBC board has proceeded with steps to support the decision to “go paperless” with the publication of BBC semi-annual newsletters. We have had an ever growing “Friends” list, individuals and organizations that have been receiving a newsletter, but were not members. The list has been updated and reduced in size by Norma Roche, Alan Marvelli and others. The majority of BBC members already have provided e-mail addresses. [*Rest assured that BBC does not share e-mail addresses with any person or organization.*] To continue with our goal of going electronic, we again appeal to our “Friends” to join BBC, and seek your permission to send future newsletters via e-mail. We hope that you will support BBC and our effort to “grow greener.”

Ilene Goldstein-Editor

VOLUNTEERS LAUDED FOR CONTRIBUTIONS BEHIND THE SCENES

Stewardship of the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area is perhaps the most visible work of the Broad Brook Coalition, yet the volunteers who assist behind the scenes are crucial to the organization. Four of these volunteers were recognized by President Bob Zimmermann at BBC’s annual meeting at the Florence Civic Center in the fall. “Members don’t see their faces, but their hand is tangible” in the success of BBC, Bob said.

Broad Brook launched a new website in 2010, thanks to David Ruderman, a software engineer for university relations for the University of Massachusetts. Dave took over responsibility of updating the website after joining BBC’s Land Preservation Committee in 2009. Working with Bill Williams, a member of the Board of Directors, he revamped and reorganized the website, broadbrookcoalition.org. Check it out!

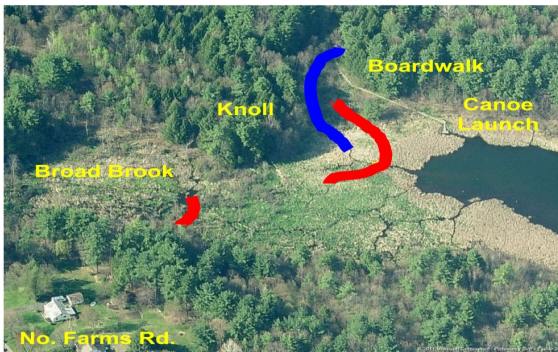
Three other volunteers play a much-needed role with membership. For several years, Tamara Barbash sent out all the acknowledgments for donations made each year to BBC. Ann Pufall, a former board member, maintains BBC’s membership list, while Nancy Chamberlain handles the labeling and mailing of the spring and fall newsletters.

BBC is successful because of the generosity of these dedicated volunteers, as well as others who contribute their time and effort. **Thank you!** *-Margaret Russell*

From the President's Desk:

BEAVER EXPLOITS

Would you characterize beavers as unpredictable or predictable? "Unpredictable" may fit their choice of places to build dams and lodges along our waterways but "predictable" surely epitomizes their persistence and creativity in maintaining their sturdily built edifices once they've chosen their favored sites. We have recently noted two intriguing manifestations of these attributes in the FLCA. The first is a long new barrier dam to the west of the Canoe Launch Boardwalk and the second is what appears to be a second "apartment" adjacent to their long-established lodge between the Canoe Launch and Fishing Place.



As can be seen in the Google map above, the new dam (longer red line) follows a serpentine path from the Canoe Launch toward the mouth of the Broad Brook. It has caused the water level in the V-shaped marsh between the Canoe Launch and the Knoll, fed by a small stream from the north (blue line), to rise by 18-24 inches. The net result is that the native shrubs in the marsh are being "drowned" and the stream has been diverted so that it runs under the Boardwalk rather than winding its way through the marsh. We are concerned that this may erode the Boardwalk supports and are working on a plan to remedy this situation. The beavers have also cut down a number of trees--some up to 10 inches in diameter--on the Knoll, chewed off the branches to fortify their dam, then gnawed on the trunk to grind down their constantly growing incisors and dine on the bark. From the perspective of the map, it looks possible that they will eventually extend the dam to

the mouth of the brook (short red line) which could lead to some flooding upstream. If this occurs, we will have to consider installing a flow device to circumvent the beavers' passion for dam-building. This actually occurred in the 1990s and we have come across an old "beaver deceiver" upstream in the brook related to that episode. Over the past summer, the occupants of the beaver lodge between the Canoe Launch and Fishing Place added a second domed structure extending into the lake as shown in the photo. Although we can't be entirely sure, we



believe that this is a second lodge built, perhaps, in response to a growing family. Could this be a beaver apartment house? Beavers do sometimes let their offspring hang around for a few years before sending them on their way. According to Mike Callahan, beaver specialist and owner of Beaver Solutions, such secondary lodges are unusual, but not unprecedented. It's not known whether the two lodges in a beaver duplex are connected. The structure of a lodge is quite a bit more complex than one would judge from the outside. Beavers enter through an underwater entrance onto a platform where they dry off and eat. They then move to a higher platform for grooming and sleeping. In the fall, we noticed a large pile of small, partially submerged tree branches extending out from this "beaver condominium" that was evidently their food cache for the winter. As the branches had almost completely disappeared as of this writing, we're quite sure that the lodge continues to thrive. Bottom line: Never underestimate a beaver!

-Bob Zimmermann

36 ACRES ADDED TO THE FLCA

INTERNET PHOTO GALLERY

Parcel by parcel, Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area continues to expand, vastly enhancing its value for wildlife habitat and passive recreation. The latest acquisition, the **Forest Legacy /Laizer** parcel, is 36-acres on the west side of Boggy Meadow Road, not far from the former Moose Lodge on Cooke Avenue. The city closed on the property in February, bringing the total acreage of FLCA to more than 680 acres.

The \$20,000 purchase was funded with \$13,000 in Community Preservation Act funds and a \$7,000 contribution from BBC. The donation, made possible by members' generous gifts to BBC's Land Fund, was not only crucial to the funding package; the demonstration of private support helped persuade the City Council to vote unanimously for the acquisition.

Although the 36 acres, which were owned by James Laizer, were protected from development under the federal Forest Legacy program, city ownership will ensure public access in perpetuity to a parcel that is a key link between FLCA and the 16 acres of the Pines Edge conservation land. The acquisition also means that the land can be managed as part of the entire conservation area, including control of invasive species.

"This fills a major inholding within the conservation area," said Wayne Feiden, Director of Planning and Development for the city. He praised the role of BBC, "which gave amazing moral support, a major cash donation to make this purchase happen, and an agreement to continue to maintain the entire conservation area."

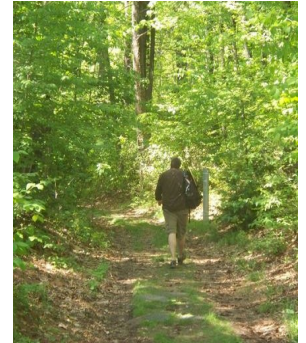
Mr. Feiden also thanked City Councilor Maureen Carney for her support of the project and the Conservation Commission, which "has helped oversee the development of Broad Brook-Fitzgerald Lake Greenway from its birth as a parcel supporting the lake and just a little more to the largest protected conservation complex in the city."

BBC's volunteers will incorporate management of the parcel into their overall stewardship of the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area. *-Margaret Russell*

WHAT YOU MIGHT FIND AT THE FLCA:



Common Yellowthroat



Out on the trail



Damselfly



Great Horned Owl



Eastern Grey Tree Frog



Viburnum

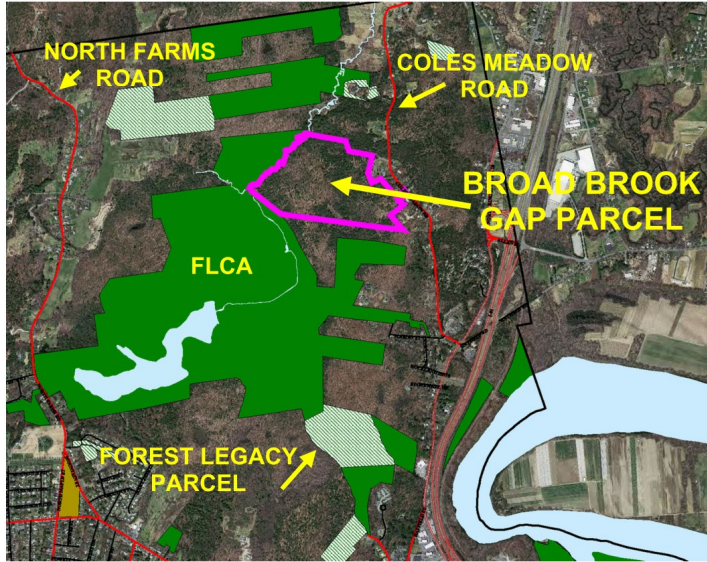
THE FLCA IS POISED TO GROW AGAIN

We are delighted to pass along the good news that the City has signed an option to acquire 88 acres of land that abuts the eastern boundary of the FLCA and extends further eastward almost to Coles Meadow Road. This property, owned for a number of decades by the Kubosiak family, adjoins a half-mile stretch of the

Broad Brook. Purchase of the parcel, provisionally dubbed the 'Broad Brook Gap' parcel, will permanently protect the eastern flank of the brook from development (see map). The Broad Brook and its associated marshes comprise a rich environment for beavers, otters, muskrats and moose; nesting sites for ducks and herons; and lush organic soil that provides habitat for a variety of native plants. The central portion of the parcel is interspersed with a number of small wetlands that support other kinds of wildlife including small mammals, birds and amphibians. The section nearest Coles Meadow Road was cut for timber 25-30 years ago, and is struggling to recover its former mature tree cover.

In addition, there are a few small dump sites that will have to be cleaned up. However, the portions closer to the Broad Brook encompass

many undisturbed stands of hemlock, oak and hickory. A rocky knoll, the highest point in the parcel, rises above a very attractive section of the brook, bounded by large boulders. Simply put, acquisition of the Kubosiak parcel will be a major step toward increasing the conservation value of the FLCA. According to Wayne



Feiden, Director of the Office of Planning and Development, this project is the City's top conservation priority. Purchase of the Broad Brook Gap parcel received the blessing of City Council last month and fundraising for this \$535,000 purchase is already underway. An application for a Community Preservation Act grant has already

been filed to fund a portion of the purchase price, and other state, federal and private resources will be tapped for the balance. Acquisition of this land presents a fabulous opportunity which is unlikely to come our way again.

-Bob Zimmermann

CALLING ALL PHOTOGRAPHERS, ARTISTS, AND WRITERS

Are you inspired by your experiences at Fitzgerald Lake? We would love to include your images and musings in our newsletter. Our digital age allows you to easily share your unique interpretations of FLCA. Contact the newsletter editor at: igoldstein@williston.com

MARCH 30, 2012 AMERICAN WOODCOCK IN COURTSHIP DISPLAY

Friday evening, 6:30-9 p.m. Former Moose Lodge. Dr. Josh Rose- Amherst naturalist.

APRIL 7, 2012 LIVES AND LOVES AMID THE VERNAL POOLS

Saturday, 1:00-3:00 p.m. North Farms Rd. Brandon Abbott and co-sponsored by the Kestrel Trust.

MAY 6, 2012 ENTER THE BIRDS

Sunday, 7a.m. Former Moose Lodge. Andrew Finch Magee.

MAY 12, 2012 EXPERIENCE THE DAWN CHORUS CRESCENDO

Saturday, 4 a.m. Former Moose Lodge. Frank Bowrys. (contact bhart2000@aol.com for possible 2nd start time @ 7 a.m.)

ANNUAL CLEANUP AT THE NORTH FARMS ROAD ENTRANCE

Saturday, 9:00-11:00 a.m. North Farms Road. Contact: Bruce Hart at 584-4176.

MAY 20, 2012 WILD EDIBLES WALK

Sunday, 1:00-3:00 p.m. North Farms Rd. Blanche Derby, wild food enthusiast

JUNE 2, 2012 BREEDING BIRDS - VARIED HABITATS

Saturday, 7-9 or 10 a.m. North Farms Rd. Andrew Finch Magee.

SHRUBLAND HABITAT AND NATIVE PLANTS

June 2, 9:00-12:00 a.m. Contact: Bob Zimmermann at 585-0405.

JUNE 30, 2012 DRAGONFLIES, DAMSELFLIES, BUTTERFLIES, BEETLES AND BUGS

Saturday, 10a.m.- 3p.m., North Farms Rd. Dr. Josh Rose- Amherst naturalist.

JULY 14, 2012 WATER COLOR SKETCHING

Saturday, 10 a.m.-1p.m., (Rain date, Sunday, July 15) North Farms Rd. Betty Wolfson. Call 584-1470 to pre-register and get details.

JULY 15, 2012 REMOVAL OF WATER CHESTNUT FROM FITZGERALD LAKE

Sunday, 10 a.m-1 p.m. Contact: Bruce Hart at 584-4176.

JULY 21, 2012 IT'S ALL ABOUT HABITAT

Saturday, 9a.m. North Farms Rd. Molly Hale.

AUGUST 11, 2012 REMOVAL OF WATER CHESTNUT FROM FITZGERALD LAKE

Saturday, August 11, 9-12 a.m. Contact: Bruce Hart at 584-4176.

2012 FITZGERALD LAKE CONSERVATION AREA (FLCA) WALKS & TALKS

Brought to you by the members and the naturalists of the Broad Brook Coalition (BBC).

North Farms Rd. entrance is off Bridge Rd., N. of Mountain St. or N. Maple St. in Florence

Moose Lodge, (now closed), is off Hatfield St., which is above the WalMart/Big Y shopping center, to the end of Cooke Avenue. Park only on the right side.

Questions, 2nd start times, and program suggestions: contact : bhart2000@aol.com

AMERICAN WOODCOCK IN COURTSHIP DISPLAY

DR. JOSH ROSE- AMHERST NATURALIST

MARCH 30, 2012 FRIDAY EVENING, 6:30-9 P.M.
FORMER MOOSE LODGE

FLCA has close to 700 acres, yet we have only 2 locations of Early Successional Habitat, marginally amounting to 1.5% of our landscape, that can be breeding habitat for the American Woodcock. Every spring the *Timberdoodle* puts on a show that must be seen (or at least heard) to be believed.

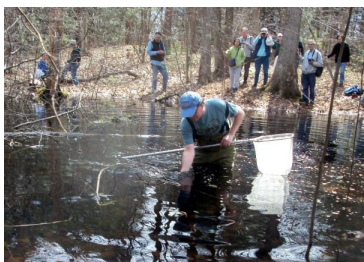
Be prepared for a substantial walk, about 1.25 miles each way to Cooke's Pasture, then a return trip in the dark, in potentially muddy conditions. If it is raining, we might look for the salamander migration. A flashlight or spotlight with a red filter can help you find your way without spoiling your night vision. Another fun program for children and adults alike, just consider the mileage.

LIVES AND LOVES AMID THE VERNAL POOLS

BRANDON ABBOTT AND CO-SPONSORED BY THE
KESTREL TRUST

APRIL 7, 2012 SATURDAY, 1:00-3:00 P.M.
NORTH FARMS RD.

The 2 hour program will involve the ecology, natural history, biology, and conservation of vernal pools and their necessary surrounding habitat. We'll consider the life cycles of the obligate vernal pool species (and some others), vernal pool conservation issues and topics, and we'll explore these transient pools, looking for amphibians and invertebrates. A welcome arrival of spring that's fun for both adults and children.



ENTER THE BIRDS

ANDREW FINCH MAGEE

MAY 6, 2012 7A.M. FORMER MOOSE LODGE
(CONTACT BHART2000@AOL.COM FOR POSSI-
BLE 2ND START TIME @ 8 A.M.)

This will be a beginner bird walk to introduce people to the wonders of birding but will also be of interest to intermediate birders. We'll *respond* to all birds in the environment, but with an added focus of helping newcomers experience what is often unseen and not heard. Andrew will lead folks down the dirt path/road called Boggy Meadow Road and on to the wildlife blind overlooking the wetlands surrounding the Broad Brook. This is during spring migration so it's a great time for numerous sightings. If time allows we'll also try to make it out to the dam that impounds Fitzgerald Lake. Andrew is a long time birder, and the illustrator of *The Bird Finding Guide to Western Massachusetts*. All ages are welcome. Bring binoculars.



EXPERIENCE THE DAWN

CHORUS CRESCENDO

FRANK BOWRYS

MAY 12, 2012 4 A.M. FORMER MOOSE LODGE
(CONTACT: BHART2000@AOL.COM FOR POSSI-
BLE 2ND START TIME @ 7 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 near peak migration, so come join us in this wonderful phenomenon. We don't get up this early because we enjoy it, we do it because we enjoy the Philharmonic (and can sleep later). Dress warmly, bring binoculars, any recording equipment you might have and bring a flashlight.

WILD EDIBLES WALK

BLANCHE DERBY, WILD FOOD ENTHUSIAST
MAY 20, 2012, SUNDAY, 1:00-3:00 P.M.
NORTH FARMS RD.

On this leisurely walk, you'll learn about some common plants with culinary and medicinal properties. Some of these are dismissed because they're weeds, but you'll discover that they're actually good for something! This walk is mostly stop and start, so it's appropriate for all ages. It should take about 2 hours.

Blanche Derby leads edible plant walks all over New England. She has written/illustrated three books and made three films.

For more info, check out her Web site: www.tagyerit.com/freefood.htm. and watch some of her wild food videos on YouTube.

BREEDING BIRDS - VARIED HABITATS ANDREW FINCH MAGEE

JUNE 2, 2012 SATURDAY, 7-9 OR 10 A.M.,
NORTH FARMS RD.

Hopefully, by this date, many birds will have located a proper home and are calling forth. This is often with only the strength of a creature that weighs the same as a stick of gum, maybe a 5 pack, maybe more. But they are on territory and singing their little hearts out hoping to attract a suitable mate with their melodious songs. Ah, the scent is in the air. Then it is on to setting up housekeeping and bringing up a fine brood of healthy and happy young'uns. For many, the next step is going off to the land of the 'snow birds'.

Some possible target species: Ruffed Grouse, Veery, Common Yellowthroat, Wood Thrush, Ovenbird, Red-Eyed & Yellow Throated Vireo, Blue-winged warbler, Black-throated Green warbler, American Redstart and many more.

DRAGONFLIES, DAMSELFLIES, BUTTERFLIES, BEETLES AND BUGS

DR. JOSH ROSE- AMHERST NATURALIST
JUNE 30, 2012 SATURDAY, 10A.M.- 3P.M.,
NORTH FARMS RD.

A walk at FLCA last July 1 documented 10 species of dragonflies, 7 of damselflies, and 7 of butterflies. We also photographed several strikingly beautiful beetle species and some distinctive moths, one of which was performing a dance routine. What will we find this year? Join Amherst naturalist Dr. Josh Rose and find out! Lunch at the dam. Be prepared for the weather, mosquitoes, ticks, and a couple of miles'

CONT.

walking; bring a lunch as well as plenty of water. Binoculars, cameras, and field guides may come in handy as well. If you want to run a photo or two of some of the critters from last year:

<http://bugguide.net/node/view/555881>, <http://bugguide.net/node/view/556049>

<http://bugguide.net/node/view/556039>, <http://bugguide.net/node/view/556057>

<http://bugguide.net/node/view/556092>



WATER COLOR SKETCHING BETTY WOLFSON

JULY 14, 2012, SATURDAY, 10 A.M.-1 P.M.,
(RAIN DATE, SUNDAY, JULY 15) NORTH FARMS
RD. CALL 584-1470 TO PRE-REGISTER AND GET
DETAILS.

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

(Watercolor sketch by Betty Wolfson from last years' walk.)

IT'S ALL ABOUT HABITAT

MOLLY HALE

JULY 21, 2012, SATURDAY, 9A.M. NORTH
FARMS RD.

HELP WANTED: VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

BBC accomplishes its goals only with the generous volunteer efforts of its members. There are many ways you can help. 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.

Fundraising: We plan to launch a fundraising campaign later this year to assist the city with a major land acquisition. Stay tuned! We will need volunteers to work with the Board of Directors on mailings, appeals to local businesses and others, and apply for small grants. If you're interested in helping, from stuffing envelopes to identifying potential donors, it's not too soon to let us know.

Trail Maintenance and Invasive Plant Removal: Watch for notices on our website and in the Daily Hampshire Gazette for work days to maintain trails, remove invasive plants and conduct general cleanup. The Stewardship Committee will lead a cleanup of the Broad Brook/Beaver Brook conservation area, off Route 9, north of the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area, on Saturday, April 14, from 9 AM – noon. BBC contributed \$10,000 to the city's purchase of this parcel, which is at the head of the Broad Brook/Fitzgerald Lake Greenway. Check our website for more details of the work day.

Outreach: Help us get the word out! Work with Board members, event organizers, the web master, and our local media to let people know about BBC events and issues and to increase our membership. You'll need good writing skills and access to the Internet. Knowledge of the community and interest in developing connections with our local media would be a plus.

Board Members: Elections for members of the Board of Directors are held at the Annual Meeting in November. The Board meets monthly, and the nine members are also involved in subcommittees and other aspects of running an all-volunteer organization.

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.

WORKDAYS AT THE FLCA : SPRING AND SUMMER 2012

Clearing debris at the Beaver Brook/Broad Brook Conservation Area Saturday, April 14, 9:00-12:00 a.m.

We will clean up and clear out debris--paper, glass, old tires and more--from the portion of the new Beaver Brook/Broad Brook Conservation Area that lies between Haydenville Road (Rte 9) and the Beaver Brook. If time allows, we will also begin to pick up fallen branches and tree limbs for disposal by the city. Added bonus: discover artifacts from the farms that once occupied this land! We have already found an old saw mill ensnared in trees that have grown up, around and through it, and we're sure there's more to unearth. Meet at Northampton Corrosion Control Facility on Haydenville Rd. at 9:00 a.m. Contact: Bob Zimmermann at 585-0405.

Annual Cleanup at the North Farms Road Entrance

Saturday, May 12, 9:00-11:00 a.m. 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 fell alongside the path in last year's storms and sweep up debris from the path itself. Contact: Bruce Hart at 584-4176.

Shrubland Habitat and Native Plants:

Saturday, June 2, 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 8:30 a.m. or at the Fitzgerald Lake dam at 9:00 a.m. Contact: Bob Zimmermann at 585-0405.

Removal of Water Chestnut from Fitzgerald Lake

Sunday, July 15, 10 a.m-1 p.m. and Saturday, August 11, 9-12 a.m.

While we've managed to suppress the proliferation of the Water Chestnut in the lake, 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 15 and at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, August 11. Contact: Bruce Hart at 584-4176.

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. It organizes volunteer days for trail improvement and maintenance and invasive species removal, runs educational Walks and Talks at FLCA, raises funds for the expansion of FLCA, and monitors land conservation and affordable housing issues.

Broad Brook Coalition

Board of Directors

2011-2012

Bob Zimmermann, President
Dave Herships, Vice President
Margaret Russell, Secretary
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 _____

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

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

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

Broad Brook Coalition needs your help, too!

We appreciate your membership dues, but want you to know that you can contribute in other ways, too. Members and friends are needed to help carry out our goals. Please consider one or more of the following volunteer opportunities:

Trail maintenance and repair 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

Broad Brook Coalition

P. O. Box 60566
Florence, MA 01062

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VISIT US ONLINE AT:

www.broadbrookcoalition.com

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.

NEW NATURE TRAIL
GUIDE

After several years out of print, the brochure for the Self-Guided Nature Trail at the FLCA has been extensively revised and are now available in the box at the beginning of the Canoe Launch Boardwalk. We hope it will add to your enjoyment of a leisurely walk along the Boardwalk and around the Fishing Place-Lake Trail loop.