

BROAD BROOK COALITION



www.broadbrookcoalition.org

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ABOUT US

Broad Brook Coalition (BBC) is a nonprofit, all-volunteer organization incorporated in 1988 with the mission of preserving open space and promoting affordable housing. Under a memorandum of understanding with the Northampton Conservation Commission, BBC is responsible for the day-to-day management of the 936-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.

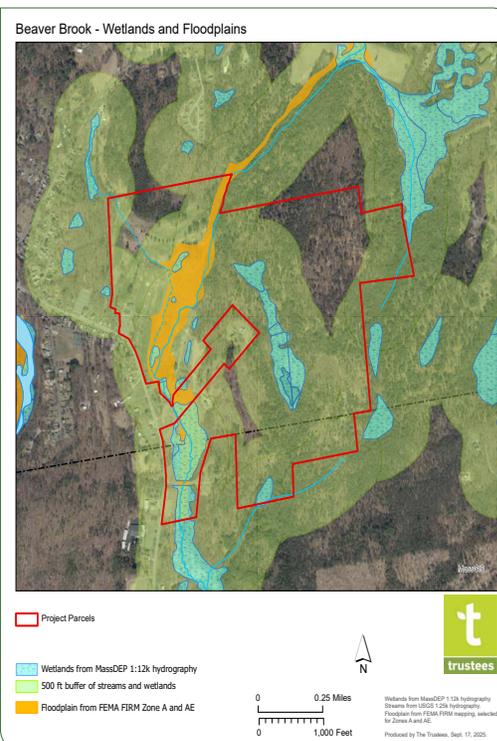
REWILDING PAGE 2 • FITZGERALD LAKE BURN STUDY PAGE 4

Broad Brook Coalition Annual Meeting

Sunday, Nov. 9 — in person — 2:00–4:30 p.m.

Members and friends are cordially invited to attend Broad Brook Coalition's annual meeting on Sunday, November 9, at the Florence Civic Center. This year's meeting will be in-person only, with no Zoom link. Light refreshments will be served at the Civic Center starting at 2:00 p.m. Please join us!

This year's speaker is Elizabeth Wroblecka from The Trustees of Reservations, who will give the keynote address titled **Recent Land Conservation Wins in the Connecticut River Watershed**. The Trustees just launched a new strategic plan focusing on land conservation, climate resiliency, and connecting people to the land. The July 2025 acquisition of the 260-acre Beaver Brook golf course in Williamsburg and Northampton by The Trustees of Reservations has generated a lot of excitement in the local conservation community. Elizabeth was the project lead on that acquisition and will give us an overview of the Trustees' new Beaver Brook Reservation including wildlife habitat, climate resiliency, and plans for public recreational access. In addition to Beaver Brook, the



Trustees are in the process of saving large blocks of forest land throughout the Connecticut River Watershed. This past April, Elizabeth also assisted Bob Vollinger in protecting his family farm on N. Farms Road with an agricultural preservation restriction held by Kestrel Land Trust. Elizabeth is an expert in the tools and techniques that made these projects possible and can answer your questions about how they could be applied to enhance the Fitzgerald Lake Greenway.

Elizabeth Wroblecka is senior land protection specialist for The Trustees of Reservations where she focuses on protecting critical forest and farmland. She formerly practiced law specializing in land conservation, environmental justice, real estate, land use, estate planning, and litigation. Elizabeth has worked as

Broad Brook Coalition Annual Meeting, continued

a staff member of the Land Trust Alliance, Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust, the Napa Valley Land Trust, and the Pacific Forest Watershed Lands Stewardship Council and served as Chief of Wildlife Lands for the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife. She currently sits on the board of The Norcross Wildlife

Foundation and LTA's Conservation Defense Advisory Council. Prior board service includes Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture and the Northampton Zoning Board of Appeals and Conservation Commission.

Conservation News: Broad Brook and the City

Because the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area (FLCA) is owned by the City of Northampton and managed jointly by the City and the Broad Brook Coalition (BBC), members of the BBC Board meet annually with City staff to discuss the FLCA and its management. Held in July, this year's meeting topics ranged widely. Conserving land at the edges of the current conservation area has always been a BBC priority, and remains a focus for the City as well. City staff explained that while no new acquisitions are on the horizon, the City remains interested in adding to the FLCA and tracks the status of adjacent properties.

City staff provided an update on a city-initiated project to create a universally accessible all-persons trail along Boggy Meadow Road from FLCA's Cooke Ave. entrance to the scenic beaver pond, about a third of a mile. The project is expected to break ground this fall under the supervision of Berkshire Design and is funded in part by a \$248,000 grant from the Community Preservation Act. The goal is to fix drainage issues, upgrade the trail with an accessible, unpaved surface, and open up this section of the conservation area to more users while improving access to emergency vehicles as well.

Boating and fishing are popular activities on Fitzgerald Lake, but access to the lakeshore is limited. The boardwalk at the North Farms entrance was extended in 2016 and has provided a reliable launch site until recently, but the waters at that end of the lake have been silting in, and launching has proved increasingly difficult. BBC introduced to the City a proposal to build a new fishing pier and boat launching dock at the Fishing Place, halfway between the current dock and the dam at the eastern end of the lake. City staff were receptive to the idea, so the BBC Board will move ahead with scoping the project, and will develop plans for the City's consideration.

Other meeting topics included how to address the problem of off-leash dogs within FLCA, BBC's plans to create a new map of the FLCA, and the need for a new FLCA management plan. To address the off-leash dog issue, BBC Board members met with the City's Animal Control Officer (ACO), Dawn Ubelaker, in early September. We identified a number of actions that can address what will ultimately need to be a change in the attitude of some dog owners. The ACO will be making walking, in-uniform visits to FLCA a regular activity during times of high visitor activity. BBC agreed to post

new signs that will emphasize that leashes are required by law within FLCA, as well as signs informing the public how to report sightings of off-leash dogs to the ACO.

Invasive species control continues to be a top priority for both BBC and the City. This year saw a strengthening of our cooperation on this work, most particularly as BBC works more closely with the City's Land and Planning Projects Assistant, Tom Annese. Several of this summer's BBC workdays benefitted from Tom's considerable knowledge and enthusiasm for managing invasives. In addition to helping us learn how to make sense of what can seem to be a limitless task, Tom identified and mentored a student who worked with BBC members to control invasive plants in Cooke's Pasture, oversaw the treatment and control of a patch of giant reed grass, and participated in several of BBC's invasives management work days.

The BBC Board looks forward to continuing to nurture our relationship with the City, and share in the management of our precious conservation lands.

—Rich Baker

Rewilding

According to the Rewilding Academy website, the transformation of manicured golf courses into conservation land is taking place in many places around the world. With our own Beaver Brook golf course set to join Pine Grove in Northampton and Hickory Ridge in Amherst as part of this movement, I decided to read up about the phenomenon of rewilding in general, from the large to the small, the intentional to the accidental. I found it to be a pretty fascinating topic.

What is rewilding? The term rewilding was coined in 1990 by members of the environmental organization Earth First. Of course the concept is to some extent as old as the conservation movement, but rewilding has a somewhat different emphasis than conservation or preservation. It is one thing to set aside land and protect it from development, as in a national park or nature preserve, but something a bit different to ensure that the

protected land maintains a fully functioning ecosystem. Though rewilding doesn't necessarily imply active management, it does stress the importance of the ecological health and biodiversity of the protected land.

Read a little about rewilding and you'll soon come across the 3 C's: cores, corridors, and carnivores. The first two C's are familiar tenets of conservation science as it applies to

Rewilding, continued

relatively large-scale areas. You need core areas large enough to accommodate the ranges and behavior of the wildlife within them, along with connecting corridors to other core areas so that populations don't remain isolated. But I found the third C a little puzzling at first. Why should carnivores be singled out over other animals?



Wolves are a widespread apex predator in rewilded areas

Apex predators The reason carnivores or other apex species are so important to rewilding involves the notion of trophic cascade, and the classic example is the return of wolves to Yellowstone Park. Wolves were reintroduced there in 1995, after a 70-year absence, and though their numbers were not particularly large – 14 the first year, 17 more the next year – their impact was substantial. The park had been over-browsed for many years by growing numbers of elk and mule deer. In many areas the vegetation, especially aspen and willow, was cropped to the ground and couldn't regenerate. As the wolf population grew, they began to reduce the elk and deer herds by predation, but they had an even bigger effect through changing their prey's behavior. The browsers began avoiding certain areas – especially in valleys and along streams – the aspen and willows were able to regenerate. In a few years the regrowth was too big to be browsed, and an ecosystem that had been compromised for years was restored.

Reading about the “trophic cascade” in Yellowstone left me truly impressed. Streambanks were stabilized by the growing root systems, leading to less erosion; beavers were attracted by the newly available aspen and willow; the water in streams was cooler because of the increased shade, which

benefited trout; and scavengers such as ravens and coyotes had carrion throughout the year instead of just the carcasses of animals that starved in winter. Returning wolves to a large tract like Yellowstone was clearly much more than just a romantic idea, as it's sometimes made out to be. It was an important piece of the restoration of a functioning ecosystem.

Intentional vs. accidental rewilding

The reintroduction of apex species such as wolves in the West, or bison on the Great Plains, or maybe someday mountain lions in the Northeast is an example of active or intentional rewilding. But I found the notion of accidental or passive rewilding at least as interesting. Two examples in particular caught my imagination, both of which have taken place in conflict zones. One is the European Green Belt, the approximately 30-mile-wide strip of land on either side of the former Iron Curtain stretching from Norway and Russia to the Black Sea. This corridor was largely depopulated during the Cold War and saw little human disturbance for some 40 years. Once the Cold War ended environmentalists in countries on both sides of the line realized that this strip had in effect undergone an unintended rewilding and now harbored numerous species of plants and animals that were uncommon or even rare in other parts of the continent. The absence of farming meant that there had been little use of chemical fertilizers or pesticides, resulting in a noticeable rebound of insects. Bear, wolves, and lynx are now established in parts of the Green Belt, which connects some 40 national parks and many more protected areas. The strip has been reforested so densely that it is visible from space as distinct from the agricultural and settled areas on either side. It is a testament to how quickly and thoroughly nature can reestablish itself if left to its own devices.

An even more startling example of unintentional rewilding is the area surrounding the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, which was the site of the world's worst nuclear disaster in 1986. Human habitation in this 2,800-square-kilometer “exclusion zone” ceased virtually overnight. Towns and extensive agricultural plots were abandoned, and as with the Iron Curtain, nature began to rapidly regenerate. While radiation remained high in certain areas, it dropped off steeply in others, and fears of negative effects on the plants and animals were largely unrealized. Wetlands that had been drained and filled were restored, and apex predators returned and thrived. The exclusion zone is now considered the third largest nature reserve in Europe and is credited with saving several iconic species, such as the greater spotted eagle, from likely extinction.

Rewilding initiatives range from the vast, such as the Yellowstone to Yukon (Y2Y) project, to the mini, such as our friendly local golf courses. While no one is proposing introducing wolves to Beaver Brook, the larger principle remains the same regardless of size: stand aside, as much as possible, and let nature heal itself.

—Dave Pritchard



Map of European Green Belt

Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area Burn Study

When I learned about the fire at FLCA in the fall of 2024, I was concerned about the forest and the people who lived nearby, but at the same time, I was already thinking about what would come next. Interesting things happen in nature after a burn, especially in the forest. Luckily, the fire was put out through a lot of hard work, without injury to people as far as I know. About 52 acres experienced some degree of burn.

I observed the area in November a few weeks after the fire was extinguished. I went back a few times over the winter and early spring, but knew that late spring and summer would bring the most interesting changes. As a member of the Pioneer Valley Mycological Association, and amateur mycologist, I looked forward with great anticipation to the mushroom club's first walk of the season in the burned region of the conservation area.

The walk was on May 17th. We met at the Marian Street parking area, to position ourselves as closely as possible to the area of the conservation area that experienced the brush fire. Peter Russell, on the board of both the Broad Brook Coalition and the Pioneer Valley Mycological Association, organized the walk with fungi expert Lawrence Millman.

We were greeted as soon as we entered the burned area by Witch's Hats aka Blackening Waxcaps, *Hygrocybe conica*, identified by Peter Russell, who is also a local expert on waxcap fungi. As we explored the area, we noticed some tiny little ascomycete fungi growing just off the path in one of the areas that had burned the hottest in the fire. I had no idea what they were but iNaturalist generated names that related to fire! Stalked Bonfire Cup and Charcoal Eyelash (*Anthracobia melanoma* in the Pyronemataceae family). I later sent a very small number of mushrooms for DNA sequencing, including one of the "Anthracobia." That particular little orange disc fungi turned out to be in the *Sphaerosporella* genus, also in the

Pyronemataceae family. A post-fire fungal study in the Smoky Mountains revealed four different species in the same family, via extensive DNA testing of what they found. I only tested one of them so it's not possible to know if the thousands that I saw were all the same species, or not.

I continued to observe the fungi in the area, along with the plants, animals, and insects, a few times a week and wondered how they got there. I have begun studying fire ecology. When we visited the burned area with the club, we observed some LBMs or "little brown mushrooms." We are usually not able to identify these. I wondered if there was a chance they were pyrophilous fungi, but by no means assumed they were since I expected many of the regular, ordinary fungi to keep popping up after the fire – and they have! Lots of Russulas, some Amanitas, some Lactifluus, some Stereum. Most of the time my iNaturalist app was as hesitant as I am to identify the LBMs. But once or twice, for a second, it thought some of those LBMs might be Bonfire Scalycaps. I had started a project on iNaturalist to record my findings in the burn area. The Bonfire Scalycap ID seemed plausible so I went ahead, looked at some photos, went out on a limb and labeled them as such in iNaturalist. A bit of time passed. Then an associate professor of mycology from the University of BC Vancouver verified that identification, and went on to identify a few more mushrooms for me.

I have labeled a fungi as pyrophilous if the iNaturalist group Pyrophilous Fungi of the World has labeled it as such, plus Witch's Hat which Peter Russell noted comes up in great numbers after a fire. Here are the names and photos of pyrophilous fungi found and identified to date at Fitzgerald Lake to my knowledge.

—Karen Hidalgo

(All photos by Karen Hidalgo; please note, the *Caloscypha fulgens* ID is probable but needs confirmation.)



Sphaerosporella, also known as *Trichophaea*



Rhizina undulata, (Doughnut Fungus)



Pholiota highlandensis, (Bonfire Scalycap)



Pholiota molesta



Pyronema omphalodes



Laccaria trichodermophora



Caloscypha fulgens, (Spring Orange Peel Fungus)



Psathyrella pennata



Hygrocybe conica, (Witch's Hat)



Geopyxis carbonaria, (Stalked Bonfire Cup)



Geoscypha violacea, (Violet Fairy Cup)

2025 Walks and Talks

This year's programs got off to a rainy start, but despite the weather we managed to hold seven walks from May to September. Several were on familiar topics – vernal pools, birds, and fungi – but others were new to our roster, including geocaching, invasive plants, and a walk to examine the effects of last year's ground fire near the Swamp Forest trail. As always, a big thank-you to our dedicated walk leaders, who came through for us rain or shine!

Vernal Pool Ecology

FLCA can count several certified vernal pools within its boundaries, and one in particular is easily accessible off the Fishing Place trail. Brad Timm has led a number of walks to this pool in recent years, and visited it again this year with his dip net and collecting trays. In addition to wood frog and caddis fly larvae, Brad scooped up a number of exquisite fairy shrimp, always a crowd pleaser. Nothing says spring like the exuberant life dipped up from a vernal pool.



Spring Birds Local bird enthusiasts Lesley Farlow and Steve Winn were back again this year to lead another walk along Boggy Meadow Road to the bird blind in search of spring migrants. This year's total was an impressive 54 species, including great blue and green herons; wood ducks; alder, willow, least, and great crested flycatchers; Baltimore orioles and scarlet tanagers; and ten kinds of warblers, among them several less common species such as magnolia and blackpoll.

Fire in the Woodland Ecosystem

BBC teamed up with naturalist Laurie Sanders in May to co-sponsor an interpretive walk in the section of FLCA

that was burned in a ground fire last fall. As described in our Spring newsletter, the fire burned some 52 acres, but because it remained at low intensity and moved slowly, it stayed near ground level and never reached the canopy. Laurie pointed out two hollow snags in which the fire "chimneyed" up to 15 feet; fortunately, it did not spread more widely at that level. However, the shrub layer was heavily impacted, though there appears to be good recovery (regrowth and resprouting) throughout the burned area. Laurie also pointed out some pyrophilic ("fire-loving") fungi that have appeared in the wake of the burn; see "Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area Burn Study" on p. 4-5 for photos of some of these fascinating fungi.



Geocaching In a first of its kind for BBC, board member Ceci Flinn led a June walk to introduce participants to the family-friendly international game of geocaching. Geocaching turned 25 this year and can be played in many outdoor spaces, including FLCA, where there are currently some 15 cached items. Part treasure hunt, part outdoor adventure, geocaching uses GPS coordinates to guide players to the vicinity of the hidden cache, where clues help them home in on it. After explaining the basics, Ceci encouraged anyone interested to get started at geocaching.com.

What's Up with Invasive Plants?

Tom Annese, of the Northampton Planning and Sustainability office, led a June walk with a focus on practical measures

to control invasive species in a forest environment. After showing samples of two of the newer invasives in our area, black swallowwort and Japanese stilt grass, Tom moved to a patch of woodland that stood between an area with few invasives and one that was much more infested. Tom emphasized the importance of devising a strategic plan for addressing such an area, including marking off discrete sections that could be monitored over time, rather than trying to attack everything all at once in a haphazard way.



Night Sounds Naturalist Molly Hale returned this year with a walk to the dock after dark to listen for night-singing insects and anything else that might be making noise. But first, she passed out red-light flashlights which allowed people's eyes to adjust more quickly to the dark than when using white light. Molly encouraged participants to listen as they would to an orchestra, trying to pick out the different voices from the wall of sound. Among the likely singers she identified were snowy tree crickets, greater angle-winged katydids, Carolina ground crickets, and a bark beetle chewing inside a stump.



The Role of Fungi in the Forest Ecosystem

Board member Peter Russell finished this year's walks season with another ramble to

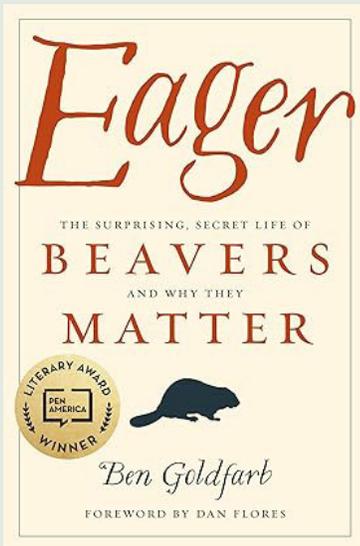
the Fishing Place looking for fall fungi. Despite a dry end of summer, there was a variety of types to talk about, including fresh examples of the delightfully named chicken of the woods, ox tongue, and sweet tooth (or hedgehog) fungi. It's always encouraging to have children along on our educational walks, and especially so on this one, considering how many mushrooms they found on their own. As one participant put it, they have an advantage – they're lower to the ground.

—Dave Pritchard



Book Pick: Ben Goldfarb, *Eager: The Surprising, Secret Life of Beavers and Why They Matter* (Chelsea Green, 2018) and Leila Philip, *Beaverland: How One Weird Rodent Made America* (Twelve, 2022)

Any hiker who has experienced both our own soggy FLCA and a typical Mountain West landscape knows them as different worlds: one a “matrix of ponds and swamps,” as Ben Goldfarb puts it, the other a parched expanse with deep-cut gullies, where water, if present at all, hurries along its scoured channel, disconnected from its surround. But as recently as four hundred years ago, according to Goldfarb and Leila Philip, these two terrains would not have been nearly so dissimilar, thanks to the abundance in both of *Castor canadensis*.



When Europeans first arrived in North America, somewhere between 60 million and 400 million beavers lived here, spread from coast to coast and from Canada to Mexico. Indigenous people were trapping and trading their pelts in the water-abundant East; and with those trappers the European fur traders began to do business – disrupting traditional trade relations in the process. Westward expansion brought contact with Indigenous

groups who understood beavers' critical role in maintaining water in a drought-prone landscape and were averse to killing them, whereupon the Europeans took to doing the trapping themselves. The waves of settlers who cleared America's forests and drained its swamps joined in the work of extermination: by the late 19th century, the beaver population in many regions was down to zero.

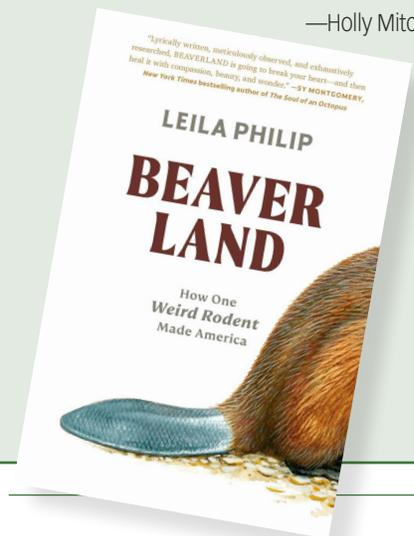
Along came Teddy Roosevelt and the wildlife conservation movement, together with a developing comprehension of the hydrological capacities of the beaver. Since 1900, restoration efforts have brought its numbers back to an estimated 2 million. As Goldfarb writes, “If trapping out beavers ranked among humanity's earliest crimes against nature, bringing them back is a way to pay reparations. Beavers ... are ecological and hydrological Swiss Army knives, capable, in the right circumstances, of tackling just about any landscape-scale problem you might confront. Trying to mitigate floods or improve water quality? There's a beaver for that. Hoping to capture more water for agriculture in the face of climate change? Add a beaver. Concerned about sedimentation, salmon populations, wildfire? Take two families of beaver and check back in a year.” By slowing the flow of water, beavers filter it and store it for dry times; they create habitat for myriad species of plants and animals and microorganisms.

The West, where the beaver's extermination did the most damage and where reintroduction projects have had the most dramatic results, is Goldfarb's focus; Philip's is the Northeast. Both authors have

accompanied wildlife biologists and “beaver believers” of all stripes in their labors of reintroduction and – through the deployment of flow devices and culvert fencing systems (local expert Mike Callahan appears in both books) – conflict resolution with farmers and highway departments who don't appreciate the flooding of their fields and roads.

You will find in each book a brief evolutionary history of *Castor*, fun facts about its anatomy and physiology and social behavior, and an explanation of the architecture and function of a typical beaver complex, with its lodge, multiple dams, and channels. But whereas Goldfarb motors right along – he's a writer both disciplined and lively – Philip wanders into musings on such things as the communion between hunter and prey, and the beaver as spirit guide; musings that this reader could have done without. Philip gets the last word, however, with this image of Diver, the pet beaver of the late-19th/early-20th century conservationist Enos Abijah Mills: Perched on top of a pack saddle, Diver enjoyed accompanying Mills on his travels, and “whenever the young beaver saw Mills saddling his horse, he would fling his arms up like a toddler and cry piteously until Mills reached for those beaver arms and picked him up to place him in the saddle.”

—Holly Mitchell



2025 Workdays

BBC organized our usual three land workdays this year: tending to the native shrub islands in Cooke's Pasture, the cleanup of the paved path at the North Farms entrance, and removal of invasives along Boggy Meadow Road. We were gratified to see that the shrub islands in the first lobe of Cooke's Pasture appear to be in good shape. They were planted in 2010 in an effort to provide habitat and food for small mammals and nesting birds. Over the years we have repeatedly pulled bittersweet and multiflora rose from these patches, and our work appears to have paid off, with only modest maintenance needed this year. However, an extensive swath of glossy buckthorn saplings were found in the southern lobe of the pasture, under the pines along the wetland margin. Tom Annese



expanding in spite of recent efforts to dig them up. In June we returned to Boggy Meadow Road, especially the stretch along the beaver pond, and tackled the usual suspects. Multiflora rose and bittersweet seem to regenerate quickly in this spot, perhaps because it's more open and has plenty of moisture, but there has been visible progress in this area too. In future years we hope to continue farther toward the dam, where winged euonymus, barberry, and privet are more prevalent. And in September Tom Annese met several volunteers from the BBC board at the Fishing Place to pull, cut, and daub the glossy buckthorn that has infested that area, along with the usual multiflora rose and bittersweet. The impressive pile of shrubbery we created made a good backdrop for a group photo. Finally, BBC volunteers were back on the water to pull invasive water chestnut this year, with five outings from June to September. At 260 pounds, this year's haul was considerably more than any year since 2018, but still far below the 1,067 pounds pulled in 2017. There are several factors at play in these numbers, perhaps the main one being that even with five or six boats on the water it is easy to miss these wily plants amid the water lilies, watershield, and water purslane, but even so the overall trend is clearly downward. Special thanks to Tina White and Holly Mitchell for organizing and monitoring these events.



returned to this spot several times over the summer, with help from several board members and a student intern paid for by BBC. Many of the sprouts could be pulled by hand, with the larger ones cut and daubed. This is a major infestation and will need to be monitored in coming years.

A small crew turned out to clean up along the path at the North Farms entrance at the end of May. Again, continued attention has reduced the amount of large bittersweet, barberry, and multiflora rose growth in this area, although we still managed to fill several large plastic bags with what we pulled and cut. Garlic mustard and goutweed continue to be a problem near the parking lot, and several patches of lesser celandine along the path have been



2025 Trails Report

This proved to be a particularly busy year for the BBC Trails Committee, which includes Jim Reis, Michael Kesten, Steve Harding, and Beth Powell. The committee submits regular reports to the BBC Board listing their activities. Ongoing tasks include repairing and re-balancing the numerous bog bridges along the various FLCA trails, repairing benches, re-blazing trails, leaf-blowing the paved path at North Farms Rd., and stocking the map, nature guide, and Mutt Mitt dispensers. Removal of downed trees and limbs from the trails is another major endeavor, and 2025 was a banner year in this regard. To quote from the committee's summer report, "During the June 6 storm more trees fell across trails than we can ever

remember – multiple trees on Fishing Place Trail, Lake Trail, the paved path, Pines Edge Trail, and Marian Street Trail." As seen in the accompanying photos, one large tree in particular fell across the trail just beyond the bridge at the end of the paved path and got hung up in another tree, creating a leaner. This was too large for the Trails crew to tackle, and after inspecting it the City decided it was safe as is for the time being. But as seen in the second photo, there was still plenty of clearing and stacking to be done. Unless you come across the crew at work, you may not realize how much hard labor goes into keeping FLCA safe, accessible, and tidy. Hats off to the Trails Committee!



BBC Trailcam Update

Broad Brook placed its first trailcam, a Browning Strike Force, in 2018 and added a second one, a Bushnell Core DS-4K, in 2023. Steve Harding and Michael Kesten of the Trails Committee monitor these cameras and move them from time to time to various locations within FLCA. Protocol requires that the cameras be placed well away from any trail. Other than that, the best locations are typically near pools or running water and with signs of wildlife usage such as game trails or beaver activity. Once the videos are collected Michael edits them for posting to the BBC YouTube channel. This involves selecting the best footage, adding titles, color-correcting, and boosting the audio. It's easier than ever to find the trailcam page on the BBC website



– simply click on "FLCA Trailcams" on the homepage top banner. Recent videos include a barred owl visiting a shallow pool with its wings aloft, a great blue heron being divebombed by a red-winged



blackbird, and, for the first time on a BBC trailcam, a moose. Check them out!

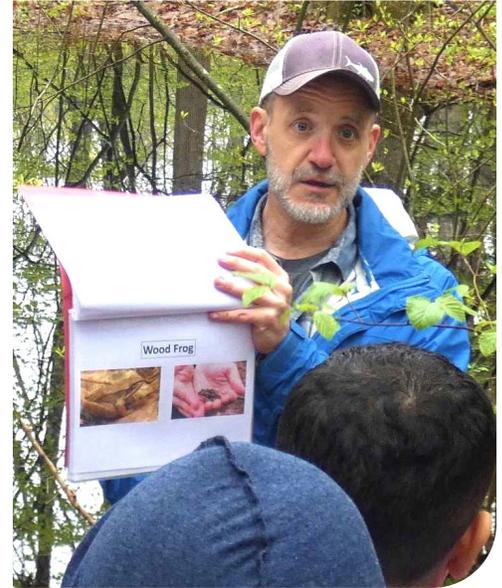


Board Member Brad Timm Steps Down

Brad Timm will be retiring from the BBC Board of Directors at the end of his term this November. Brad joined the Board in 2019, bringing with him more than fifteen years of professional experience in wildlife conservation and management, with a particular focus on amphibians and reptiles. During his time on the board Brad led a number of educational walks on topics such as local amphibians, wildlife habitats, and in particular the ecology of vernal pools. Brad was the point person at the vernal pool for the field trips BBC organized with Jackson Street Elementary School in 2023 and 2024, and he facilitated several wildlife monitoring

projects at FLCA. He also initiated the Species Spotlight feature that is regularly included in BBC newsletters, highlighting many of the animals and plants commonly found in the conservation area. Recently Brad founded the Northeast Wildlife Team (NEWT), a group of wildlife ecologists with a focus on educational materials and activities. We are sorry to see Brad leave the Board, but are pleased that he will continue as a member of our Stewardship Committee.

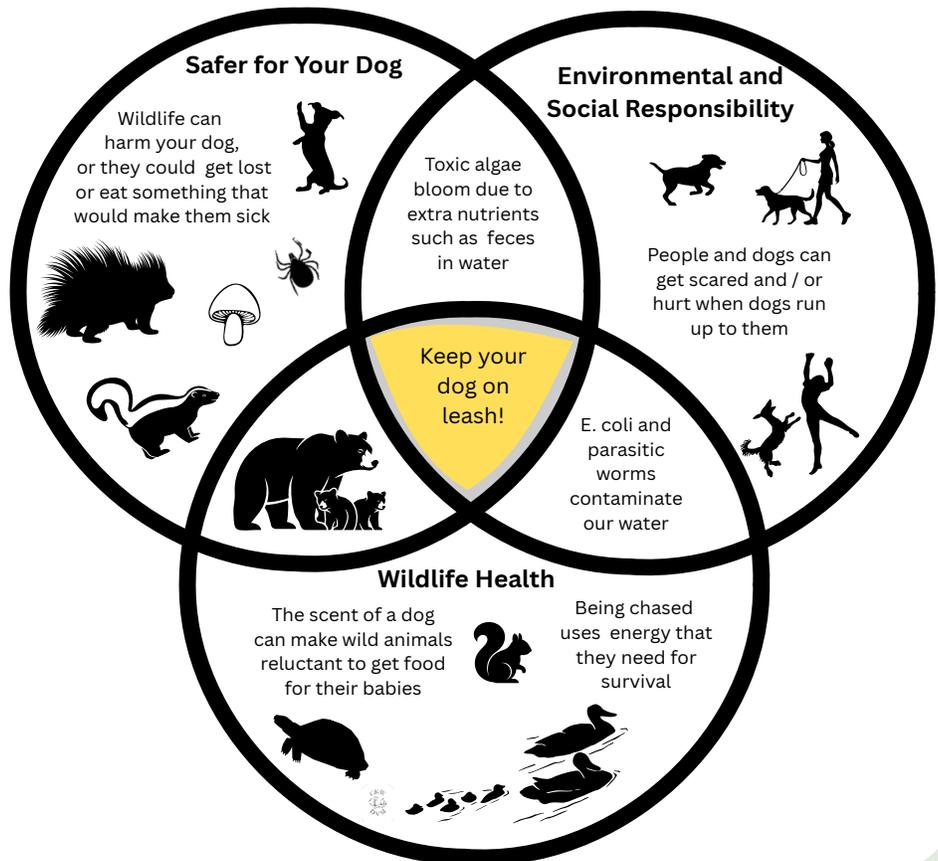
Many thanks for all your contributions, Brad!



Why Leash My Dog at Fitzgerald Lake?

As shown in this chart, there are many good reasons for leashing dogs in a conservation area, but they essentially come to the same thing: off-leash dogs infringe on others' ability to enjoy the same space. Those others can be people, wildlife, and other dogs. BBC recently launched a survey asking how people use Fitzgerald Lake. More than half of respondents spontaneously said that their biggest frustration with visiting the conservation area is off-leash dogs and their feces. The Animal Control Officer will be visiting FLCA more often in the coming months, as this department now has increased staffing. Please keep your dog on leash, pick up feces, put them in the cans at Cooke Ave. and North Farms. It's respectful of others. And it's the law.

—Tina White



FLCA User Survey

BBC is taking a survey of our users this fall. We would love for you to answer a few brief questions about how and why you use the FLCA. We will use the information to prioritize future potential improvements and to help ensure we're managing for the good of all. Please use the QR code shown, or go to our website and click the blue survey button in the middle of our home page. Thank you!



Species Spotlight

(This is the fourteenth in a series of articles featuring species of animals and plants that are readily found in the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area. A fuller version of this article will be placed on the BBC website, broadbrookcoalition.org.)

Common Name: Green Heron

Scientific Name: *Butorides virescens*

Physical Description: A relatively small and chunky heron that is often seen hunched over as it hunts from shore or standing on a log. The back is mainly blue with greenish highlights, the whitish neck is streaked with maroon, while the shoulders and breast are a more solid chestnut. It has a black cap and bright yellow legs. The thick sharp bill seems large in proportion to the head, and the yellow eye has a large black pupil. Its crest is usually lowered but is quite prominent when raised.

Size: 16-18 inches long, with wingspan ≈26 inches. Weighs ≈6 oz.

Distribution: Summer resident in most of the U.S. east of the Great Plains and into southeast Canada, also along the west coast to southern British Columbia. Withdraws from this range in all but the most southern strip, from southern California to the Gulf Coast, Florida, and South Carolina. Winters from the southern U.S. through Central America.

Habitat: Always found near water, especially small bodies of fresh water or slow-moving streams in wooded areas, also in coastal marshes. Sometimes perches on dead limbs to hunt, but more often found in shallow water near the shore.

Reproduction: Nests in a shrub or tree very close to water, sometimes on the ground. Nest is a platform of sticks. Usually lays 3-5 pale green or blue-green eggs. May have 2 broods a year if conditions are favorable.

Diet: Mostly small fish, also crayfish, aquatic insects, frogs, tadpoles. Occasionally will capture small snakes or rodents.

Conservation and Management: Populations are apparently fairly stable, though impacted by drainage and conversion of wetlands for development. Range may be extending northward with climate change.



Interesting Facts:

- Sometimes actively fishes for food by dropping a leaf or other small object in the water to attract fish.
- Their forward-and-down-facing eyes help them see food underwater without having to move their head.
- When startled, will extend their neck and spread the crest atop their head and on the back of their neck, as a way to make themselves appear larger.

—Brad Timm

Please visit our updated website at
www.broadbrookcoalition.org.

There, you can view upcoming events (such as our Walks/Talks and Work Days), learn about the animals and plants found at Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area, and access current and previous newsletters, among many other features.

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The Broad Brook Coalition needs your help, too. We are very grateful for membership dues, but want you to 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:

Occasional Work Days (invasive plants)

Education Outreach

Other (please specify) _____