

# BROAD BROOK COALITION



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

Volume 38, Issue #1, Spring 2026

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2025-2026

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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.

*OFF-LEASH DOGS THREATEN WILDLIFE AT FLCA PAGE 2*  
*WILD ORCHIDS IN FLCA PAGE 6*

## From the Board: All-Persons Trails Provide Access to Nature

In February the City of Northampton posted a notice they would soon begin work on a soft-surface all-persons trail at the Cooke Avenue entrance to the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area. As described in the notice, the purpose of the project is to "create a trail to the scenic beaver pond that is able to be enjoyed by all users, while maintaining the wooded setting that makes it such a popular destination." **(Note: The Cooke Avenue parking lot and entrance to Boggy Meadow Road will remain closed for the duration of this work, which is expected to be completed in June.)**



Although Broad Brook Coalition was not involved in the planning of this project, we were excited to learn about it and look forward to the enhanced access it will offer to users of all abilities. Fitzgerald Lake is currently the only conservation area in Northampton that has an accessible trail – the paved path from the North Farms Road parking lot that leads to the boardwalk and dock overlooking the western end of the lake. When completed, the enhanced trail from Cooke Avenue will roughly double the portion of FLCA open to exploration by all.

### Brief History of the ADA

The Americans with Disabilities Act was signed into law in 1990 with a mandate to prohibit discrimination based on disability. The effect of the law was to extend the 1964 Civil Rights Act to people with disabilities in their everyday activities. Most of the law's provisions regarding access apply primarily to the built environment – things like wheelchair ramps, elevators, and toilet facilities. But Title III, which covers public accommodations, specifically includes recreational spaces such as parks, trails, and campgrounds. While there is generally no mandate to retrofit public trails, the law does specify standards that would qualify a new or reconstructed trail as ADA compliant. The all-person trail that will be completed at Cooke Ave. will fully comply with these requirements.

### The Benefits of Access to Nature

It may seem obvious, but worth underscoring, that the benefits of being outdoors in a natural setting apply to all people regardless of age or ability. Karen Foster Cannon, of All Out Adventures in Northampton, pointed me to research that supports this commonsense idea.



## From the Board: All-Persons Trails Provide Access to Nature, continued

To quote from an outline she gave me:

Research shows that participating in physical activity, sports programs, and recreational activities:

- Promotes improved mental health and reduces depressive symptoms
- Increases social connections and a sense of community belonging
- Improves overall quality of life

Time spent outdoors in nature:

- Is linked to reduced stress and improved cardiovascular health
- Is linked with a lower risk of chronic diseases, including type II diabetes, stroke, and cardiovascular-related mortality
- Supports improved overall well-being, including improved sleep, healthier cholesterol levels, and stronger self-reported health



There are many ways for people with disabilities to enjoy the outdoors, including such organized activities as paddling, cycling, and even pickleball offered by organizations like All Out Adventures. But the great advantage of accessible trails is that they can be used by individuals or groups, with or without advanced planning, and free of charge. As

noted on the Know the ADA website ([www.know-the-ada.com](http://www.know-the-ada.com)), “With parks, trails, and green spaces serving as critical environments for recreation and respite, ensuring they comply with ADA standards is essential.” In particular, accessible woodland trails offer an opportunity to spend some quiet time in nature at one’s own pace. When completed, the accessible segment of Boggy Meadow Road will end at the extensive “dead tree” swamp where Pine Brook has been dammed by beavers. This is a great spot for observing wildlife, from turtles sunning on logs to bluebirds nesting in tree cavities, from green herons stalking prey to tree swallows darting overhead. And at dusk you could quite possibly get slapped at by the beavers themselves.



It’s important to note, as all the websites I checked always did, that the concept of disability is broader than many of us typically think. Again, from the Know the ADA website: “Accessible spaces benefit everyone – not just those with permanent disabilities. Parents with strollers, elderly individuals with mobility challenges, and those recovering from injuries all appreciate environments designed with universal accessibility in mind.” BBC congratulates the City for its vision in undertaking this substantial project. It will open a significant portion of Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area to many new users. (Note: photos courtesy of All Out Adventures: [www.alloutadventures.org](http://www.alloutadventures.org).)

—Dave Pritchard

## Off-leash Dogs Threaten Wildlife at FLCA

Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area is first and foremost a nature preserve and an essential refuge for wild species. Many people are unaware of how many different wild animals live there. The wildlife of FLCA is well-documented on the Broad Brook Coalition website ([www.broadbrookcoalition.org/](http://www.broadbrookcoalition.org/)) via iNaturalist and videos from webcams (provided by volunteers Steve Harding, Michael Kesten, and Laurie Sanders). Camera “traps,” in particular, have captured amazing daytime and nocturnal footage of animals that are becoming more common at FLCA but are rarely seen – bobcats walking across beaver dams, mother bears with cubs splashing in a stream, otters on their way to their next plunge.

At least 16 mammal species have been seen at FLCA, including porcupines and the occasional moose. Local birders have identified scores of resident and migratory species that make use of diverse and insect-rich habitats, which also host at least eight species of amphibians and seven species of reptiles. FLCA has nearly ten miles of popular trails that allow people to enjoy the wonders of nature up close. Children, seniors, and everyone in between delight in spotting dragonflies, frogs, turtles, herons, wood ducks, beavers, and pileated woodpeckers, to name but a few, along with enjoyment of the area’s rich flora. Youth and school groups often visit to learn about the local ecology.



FLCA trails are open to the general public year-round and visitors are allowed to bring dogs, but some people refuse to leash their dogs as required by law, even when they are asked to do so. Apparently, these dog owners consider FLCA to be a public park where dogs are welcome to run free, despite ubiquitous



signage to the contrary. One dog owner even told us that exposure to off-leash dogs is beneficial for wildlife because they provide a “predator” experience. While smaller and older dogs may seldom stray from their owner’s side, others have the instinct to bark and chase potential prey deep into the woods. Even “friendly” dogs that run and chase each other off trail are a threat to wild animals that live within the preserve.

Off-leash dogs are not allowed in the preserve because their unpredictable and unwanted behavior can be a threat to wildlife, people, and other dogs. Research by wildlife biologists has shown that off-leash dogs harm wildlife directly by chasing, stressing, attacking, and

mauling wild species. Off-leash dogs and the scent of their feces and urine also harm wildlife indirectly. When dogs are present, wild species spend more time hiding and less time foraging for food and tending their young, making them more vulnerable to disease and even death. Bobcats, bears, deer, coyotes, and small mammals are less common within several hundred feet of trails where off-leash dogs are present. Where dogs have roamed off trail, bobcats will shift to being more active at night. Some animals are able to habituate to the routine presence of people and leashed pets, but unleashed dogs frequently attack squirrels, chipmunks, deer, and ground-dwelling birds, with cascading effects on other species.

With the arrival of spring, birds that forage and nest on the ground are especially vulnerable to harm from off-leash dogs. Woodcocks that poke their super-long bills into the soil when feeding have started their mating rituals, calling “peent” at dusk. Ovenbirds are perky, ground-nesting warblers that will soon be calling “tea-cher, TEA-cher, TEA-CHER.” Chicks of wild turkey and ruffed grouse will be scuttling through the understory behind their mothers. These birds and other forest inhabitants should be allowed to flourish at FLCA, unmolested by off-leash dogs.

**What can you do to help?** A stronger common culture of caring for nature and the purpose of FLCA is needed. Already, many people respect and support the city law prohibiting off-leash dogs. In a recent FLCA survey with the open-ended question “What frustrates you about FLCA?”, almost half of the people who answered spontaneously cited off-leash dogs and dog waste. If you see people with off-leash dogs, you can report them to Northampton Animal Control (413-587-1100). If you like to walk your dog at FLCA, you can help change the culture by always keeping your pet on a leash. This simple step will make a huge difference in protecting sensitive wildlife, young children, and other people who come to enjoy this extensive and highly accessible nature preserve.

—Allison Snow and Christina White



### Book Pick: Ben Weissenbach, *North to the Future: An Offline Adventure Through the Changing Wilds of Alaska*

*North to the Future* chronicles the adventures of a young college student into the wilds of northern Alaska, while looking at both the scientific research in the field of climate change and the melting of permafrost, and learning the appreciation of nature, its power and beauty. Weissenbach worked with notable scientists to observe the changes in northern Alaska’s Brooks Range as it is warming faster than most other habitable places on earth. He combines the science with the adventures by working with scientists who were living their research. He walked and rafted across a thousand miles of the Brooks Range with Roman Dial and a small group of young researchers, so they could see the effects firsthand. Another scientist, Kenji Yoshikawa, is living off the grid entirely and Ben has to learn to as well. While there, Weissenbach begins to realize that his “screens” – charts, graphs, and predictions – are a very limited way of studying the earth’s issues. Faced with grizzlies and wolves, he also reveals his own fears while exploring

nature in Arctic Alaska of “being small and vulnerable and almost entirely beside the point” when held up against the largeness of the natural world.

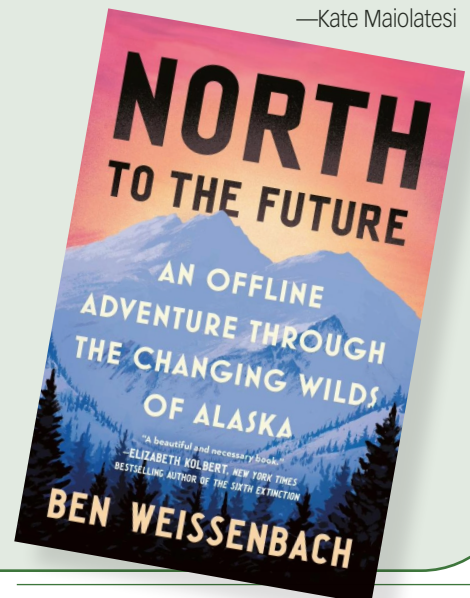
Along the way, Weissenbach quotes distinguished scientists and philosophers throughout, adding to our appreciation of the topic. “There is no holding nature still and looking at it,” because the processes of nature need to be experienced. (Alfred North Whitehead)

In the early 1800s Alexander von Humboldt began to lay the foundations of modern ecology, because “he sought to understand nature as a dynamic, interconnected whole.” He wrote, “In this great chain of causes and effects, no single fact can be considered in isolation.” Weissenbach points out that most of the evidence they gather in their research ends up being conflicting and often does not fit into any commonly held theories.

Although written from a scientific viewpoint,

one of the primary points of the book is to chronicle the author’s developing sense and appreciation of nature. This very descriptive, scientific book is written with humor throughout. Weissenbach emphasizes the wonder of the natural world and helps us recognize the importance of actually spending time “in” it, rather than researching it from afar.

—Kate Maiolatesi



## New BBC Board Member: Kate Maiolatesi



Kate’s career has been in the field of biology, with her graduate work concentrating on resource conservation. She developed the Sustainability Studies Program at Holyoke Community College with supporting grants from the National Science Foundation. The program’s primary focus is sustainable agriculture and the

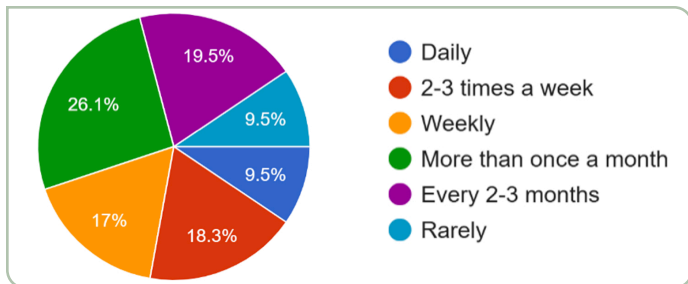
use of clean energy. While working for the Soil Conservation Service, a division of the US Department of Agriculture, she researched and published articles on plant and wildlife conservation. Additionally, she has conducted research in the fields of habitat enhancement for biological control of agricultural pests; salt marshes and barrier islands of New Brunswick, Canada, to Cape Cod; and environmental impact assessment. She has management skills from running a small business and being a member of several boards of directors for non-profit organizations.

A native of Wyoming, Kate has explored many varied habitats and appreciates the forests and swamps surrounding Fitzgerald Lake, and the opportunities for hiking and kayaking. She hopes to help enhance educational programs for the Broad Brook Coalition, as well as working for habitat protection of plants and wildlife of the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area.

## Results of FLCA User Survey

Last fall BBC carried out a survey of people who use Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area in order to gather information to help us prioritize our management goals. Board members handed copies to people at the Cooke Ave. and North Farms Rd. entrances on several occasions, and others responded to the survey online. We were very pleased with the number of responses and with the information they provided.

The following chart shows the frequency of individual use, with nearly half of respondents visiting weekly or more often.



Not surprisingly, almost 90% of respondents said they usually used either the Cooke Ave. or North Farms Road entrances. The rest were split between Marian St., Coles Meadow Road, and the Lathrop trails that connect to Boggy Meadow Road.

By far the most popular primary activity given for visiting the conservation area was Walking / Hiking, followed by Bird Watching,

Mountain Biking, Boating, and Fishing. For motivation, the clear winners were Exercise, Dog exercise, Enjoying nature, and Being with friends. In the Other category, where respondents could fill in the blank, people listed everything from cross-country skiing, ice skating, and running to photography, solitude, and frog watching. BBC obviously serves a diverse community!

We were especially interested in the responses to the question “Do you find anything frustrating about your visits to FLCA?” Of those who responded, almost half mentioned problems with dogs, in particular dogs off leash and poop bags left on the side of the trail for someone else to pick up. A typical response was “people do not leash their dogs!!! I am there to connect with the Earth not your dog...” These complaints were unprompted, and they reinforced the Board’s determination to work to change the culture around off-leash dogs. We want users to know: we love dogs too, and we welcome them to the conservation area, but for all the reasons mentioned on our signs and in our articles, they should be on a leash.

## Winter Wonderland

The winter of 2025-26 was a bountiful year for snow, as you well know. At Fitzgerald Lake this meant there was more winter recreation than we have seen in recent years. Daily cross-country skiers visited, snowshoers set trails in fresh snowfall, and evidence showed fat (mountain) bikes were out in the snow as well. There was even ice fishing on the lake this year (not sure if anything was caught though!). Snow didn’t keep the wildlife away – tracks in the snow appeared from coyote, bobcats, deer, and more – beavers were even spotted above the ice on occasion. This special area is a place we can all enjoy year round, and we appreciate your support in maintaining access. Here are some shots of the FLCA in snow.

—Ceci Flinn



## Conservation News in Brief

### Bluebird Boxes

Some years ago ten bluebird boxes were mounted in the three lobes of Cooke's Pasture. Over the years BBC volunteers have cleaned out the boxes and repaired the mounting poles and baffles in late winter. This year Holly Mitchell and Peter Russell did the honors, and reported



that of the original ten boxes, only seven remain usable due to boxes broken and poles bent beyond repair. It's been observed for years that while a few of the boxes may be used successfully by bluebird pairs, most of them end up hosting tree swallows. The Stewardship Committee will consider whether to continue maintaining the boxes as they currently are, or if we should install new boxes better positioned to encourage bluebirds and discourage tree swallows and house wrens. Holly will submit a report to the Committee detailing the research she has recently done on this topic.



### New Dog Signs

The Signage subcommittee headed by Rich Baker has designed a new sign meant to deliver a stronger message regarding off-leash dogs. In recent years BBC has put up a number of signs at trail entrances and intersections notifying dog owners of the City's leash law



and reminding them that they are required to pick up dog waste. While we recognize that the off-leash dog problem will not be solved by signs alone, the feeling has been that our signage could be more effective than what's currently posted. The new sign is considerably larger and more eye-catching, and it states the requirement for leashing in stronger terms. Also, it lists the reasons why leashing dogs is important, both for people and wildlife. Subcommittee members Rich Baker, Beth Powell, Ceci Flinn, and Kate Maiolatesi hold the new sign, and Dave Pritchard and Trail Committee member Michael Kesten join in for the mounting on Boggy Meadow Road. Seven signs will be posted at various locations in FLCA.



## Wild Orchids in FLCA

There has long been a fascination with wild orchids, driven by their beauty and rarity. North America has more than 230 species, over half of which are listed as endangered or threatened somewhere in their native range. Eleven of the orchids found in Massachusetts are listed as species of greatest conservation need (SGCN). Six wild orchid species have been recorded to date in the woods around Fitzgerald Lake, though

none yet that are on the SGCN list. Indeed, one – the broad-leaved helleborine – is a widely spread potential invasive from Europe. Their presence, however, indicates good health of the woodland. In addition to the six that have been recorded so far in FLCA, several others may yet be found, as at least eight species occur within the borders of Northampton. (Text and photos by Peter Russell.)



Broad-leaved Helleborine (*Epipactis helleborine*), introduced from Europe, common along many trails



Downy Rattlesnake Plantain (*Goodyera pubescens*), flowers in late summer; the distinctive leaves can survive freezing



Pink Lady's Slipper (*Cypripedium acaule*), occasional in several parts of the area



Green Fringed Orchid (*Plantanthera lacera*) (courtesy Thomas Annese), in one of our meadows



Nodding Ladies' Tresses (*Spiranthes cernua*), blooming in September in one of our meadows



Purple Fringed Orchid (*Platanthera psycodes*), recorded only once

## 2026 Walks and Talks

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BBC's walk programs are free and open to the public. We ask that you **register beforehand**, which will allow us to answer any questions and notify you of any changes or cancellations. **To sign up for any of the following walks, please send an email to Dave Pritchard at [Registrar@BroadBrookCoalition.org](mailto:Registrar@BroadBrookCoalition.org).** For more information call Dave Pritchard (413-695-8442).

### **A Wildlife Search at Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area**

Brad Timm  
Sunday, May 3, 10:00 a.m.–noon  
North Farms Rd. entrance

Join wildlife ecologist and author of "America is Wild!" Brad Timm as we take a leisurely stroll looking and listening for a wide diversity of animals that live in the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area. We'll look under logs for salamanders and other critters, keep our ears and eyes peeled for birds all around us, keep an eye out for evidence of different mammals (e.g., tracks, feeding evidence, scat, etc.), and much more! And we'll learn fun facts about many of these animals we come across. All ages are welcome and encouraged to join! Copies of "America is Wild!" will be available for purchase (\$20), and Brad is more than happy to sign them as well.

### **Spring Bird Walk**

Lesley Farlow and Steve Winn  
Saturday, May 9, 7:30–10:00 a.m.  
Marian St. entrance

Lesley Farlow and Steve Winn, experienced birders and members of the Hampshire Bird Club, will lead a bird walk along the Marian St. Trail to the bird blind, along the Boggy Meadow and Pines Edge Trails for a total of about 2 miles. We will look for breeding migrants and resident birds as we pass through a number of different habitats. We should be able to see and hear some migrating warblers, Wood Thrushes, and Red-eyed Vireos. We may see Tree Swallows, Great Blue Herons, Belted Kingfishers, and more. We will have a few extra pairs of binoculars, if needed. *Co-sponsored by Hampshire Bird Club. For directions to the Marian St. entrance see [broadbrookcoalition.org/about-fitzgerald-lake/how-to-visit](http://broadbrookcoalition.org/about-fitzgerald-lake/how-to-visit).*

### **Spring Nature Walk**

Rich Baker  
Saturday, May 23, 9:00–11:00 a.m.  
North Farms Road entrance

Rich Baker, a conservation biologist and curious naturalist, will lead a walk focused on the plants and animals we see along our way. We'll discuss the ecological relationships around us, share what we know, and wonder about things we don't know. There will be spring wildflowers to identify, trees to marvel at, birds to find and songs to learn, as well as the surprises and adventures that nature always provides. Bring binoculars, if you have some.

### **Pyrophilous (Fire-loving) Fungi Walk**

Peter Russell, Karen Hidalgo  
Sunday, May 17, 1:30–4:00 p.m.  
Laurel Park and Marian St. entrance

Peter Russell and Karen Hidalgo from the Pioneer Valley Mycological Association will lead this program focusing on fungi that thrive in burned-over landscapes. We will meet at 1:30 at Laurel Park's Normal Hall for a talk on fire-loving fungi followed by a walk at 3:00 to the site of the 2024 brush fire near the Swamp Forest Trail in Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area. The walk will begin at the Marian St. entrance to FLCA. From there it is about a 15-minute walk along Middle Path to the burn site. *Co-sponsored by the Pioneer Valley Mycological Association and Broad Brook Coalition. Laurel Park is located off Route 5 in Northampton. For directions to the Marian St. entrance see [broadbrookcoalition.org/about-fitzgerald-lake/how-to-visit](http://broadbrookcoalition.org/about-fitzgerald-lake/how-to-visit).*

### **Learn Your Ferns**

Randy Stone  
Saturday, June 27, 10:00 a.m.–noon  
(rain date Sun., June 28)  
North Farms Rd. entrance

Ever wonder if you might be susceptible to fernophilia? Join Randy Stone of the Pioneer Valley Fern Society for a walk through

the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area, finding common ferns and club mosses of our area. Learn the key features for easy identification of our "top 10" native ferns and maybe some uncommon ones too. Start creating a list of ferns of Fitzgerald Lake! Bring a hand lens if you have one. Wear clothing appropriate for possible encounters with poison ivy, insects including ticks, or muddy ground.

### **Late Summer Wildflowers**

Connie Parks, botanist  
Saturday, August 29, 10:00 a.m.–noon  
Cooke Ave. entrance

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 and preview of fall asters and goldenrods will be provided. Bring a hand lens and field guide if you have them, but we will have others to share. We will be walking Boggy Meadow Road, which may have wet, muddy patches, so water-resistant footwear is advised. Insect repellent and tick protection are also recommended. Connie lives in Florence and uses her expertise in plant and soil science in volunteering at Mass Audubon's Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary and the Botanic Garden of Smith College.

### **The Fungi of Fitzgerald Lake**

Peter Russell  
Saturday, September 19, 10:00 a.m.–noon  
North Farms Road entrance

Join Peter Russell of the Pioneer Valley Mycological Association for another in his walks examining the fungi found in the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area. This walk will consider the natural history of the fungi that grow in the FLCA, in particular their different types of feeding strategies and substrates, and their associations with the different species of trees. Peter is at work on an illustrated book on the fungi he has found and photographed at Fitzgerald Lake.

## Workdays at the FLCA: Spring and Summer 2026

### Annual Cleanup at the North Farms Road Entrance Saturday, May 16, 9:00–11:00 a.m.

This is the day for cleaning up the North Farms Road entrance to the FLCA. We'll clear winter debris from the path to the bridge and boardwalk, pick up trash in the parking lot, and remove by hand invasive plants such as garlic mustard, Japanese knotweed, and multiflora rose in the adjoining woods. Please help us spruce up this heavily used route to the conservation area. Tools will be provided.

Contact Tom Annese at [tannese@northamptonma.gov](mailto:tannese@northamptonma.gov) for further information.

### Shrubland Habitat and Native Plants Sunday, June 7, 9:00 a.m.–noon

Several years ago, we established three "islands" of native shrubs in Cooke's Pasture to provide food and habitat for shrubland birds and small mammals. We return every year 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. Note: The Cooke Ave. parking lot will likely still be closed for construction at this date. You can walk to Cooke's Pasture from the Marian St. entrance (via Marian St. Trail and Boggy Meadow Rd. to the dam) or from the North Farms Rd. entrance (via the Lake Trail to the dam).

We'll meet at the dam at 9:30, or in Cooke's Pasture any time after that.

Contact Tom Annese at [tannese@northamptonma.gov](mailto:tannese@northamptonma.gov) for further information.

### Removal of Water Chestnut from Fitzgerald Lake Saturdays: June 20, July 11, July 25, August 15; Sunday, September 13. 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Several years ago we implemented a new approach to controlling water chestnut in Fitzgerald Lake called "pull early, pull often." In 2017, we removed roughly 1,100 lbs. from the lake while in 2025 the yield was down to 260 lbs. Though we are pleased with the results so far, water chestnut seeds can remain viable for up to ten years on the lake bottom so we plan to continue our work again this year. We'll organize crews in late May, begin pulling in mid-June, and continue at 3-week intervals throughout the summer. Volunteers should bring their own canoes or kayaks. If interested, contact Tina White by email ([broadbrooktreasurer@gmail.com](mailto:broadbrooktreasurer@gmail.com)) or phone (413-341-0240) for further information.

### Chipmunk Trails

In mid winter some animals that have been hibernating or in torpor may emerge temporarily. These photos of chipmunk trails were taken on a warm afternoon on February 17. (Dave Pritchard)



# BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR SPOTTED LANTERNFLY



Spotted lanternfly has now been confirmed in several parts of Massachusetts. This invasive insect can be found on tree-of-heaven, grapevines, maples, and many other plants. In summer and fall, SLF can become a nuisance, gathering in large numbers and leaving behind a sticky waste product called honeydew.

## LEARN TO RECOGNIZE THIS PEST:



**Egg masses**  
(Sept.-June)



**Early nymphs**  
(April-July)

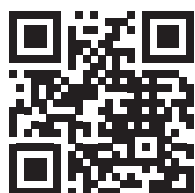


**Late nymphs**  
(July-Sept.)



**Adults**  
(July-Dec.)

## IF YOU FIND A SPOTTED LANTERNFLY:



See where SLF has already been found, report new finds, and get management tips at: [MASS.GOV/SLF](https://www.mass.gov/slf)

← Scan this QR Code, or call 617-626-1779



## Species Spotlight

(This is the fifteenth 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](http://broadbrookcoalition.org).)

**Common Name:** Southern Flying Squirrel

**Scientific Name:** *Glaucomys volans*

**Physical Description:** A small nocturnal squirrel with a long tail, silky fur, and very large black eyes. They are gray-brown above and whitish below. Despite their name, flying squirrels cannot fly, but rather glide from tree to tree or tree to ground by means of a loose flap of skin along each side of their body. When launching from a high perch they splay their legs and extend the flap of skin, creating a wide surface that buoys their glide. They use their tail as a rudder and raise it just before landing to help brake the glide.

**Size:** 8-10 inches long with a 3-4 inch tail. Weighs 2-3 oz.

**Distribution:** Throughout the eastern half of the U.S. and into SE Canada to the Maritimes, with small isolated populations in Mexico and Central America. Overlaps in NE U.S. and SE Canada with Northern Flying Squirrel, a similar but somewhat larger species ranging through N U.S. and most of Canada into S Alaska.

**Habitat:** Mature deciduous and mixed forests that contain an abundant supply of nut-producing trees. Also found in well-wooded suburbs and parks. Often nest in tree hollows, abandoned woodpecker holes, birdhouses, and old squirrel nests.

**Diet:** Acorns, nuts, seeds, lichens, mushrooms, berries, tree sap, insects, and sometimes small birds and their eggs.



### Interesting Facts:

- Glides are typically 20-60 feet but can cover several hundred feet on occasion.
- Nocturnal; most active from ≈2 hours after sunset to ≈2 hours before sunrise.
- Large eyes give them good night vision.
- Flexible bodies can fit into a hole the size of a quarter.
- Sometimes aggregate into single-sex groups (called "huddles") for warmth during the winter; can contain up to 20 individuals.

Please visit our updated website at [www.broadbrookcoalition.org](http://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.

Broad Brook Coalition  
P.O. Box 60566  
Florence, MA 01062  
[www.broadbrookcoalition.org](http://www.broadbrookcoalition.org)

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**Volume 38, Issue #1, Spring 2026**

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***Join Us!***

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. *Your contribution may be tax-deductible.*

New membership category! Volunteer 4 hours during the year and receive the newsletter and communications. See website for details.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Most of our communication is by email, we will email a link to the newsletter twice a year. *(We do not publish donor names nor share email or other contact information.)*

I prefer to receive a printed newsletter by mail.

I've included an additional tax-deductible contribution to the Land Preservation/Stewardship Fund.

***Donate Online!*** Renew your membership or join BBC on our website (click on Join/Donate)

***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) \_\_\_\_\_