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 850-acre Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area. BBC's goals are to maintain and enhance the diversity and integrity of wildlife species and habitat at FLCA, promote outreach and education and provide public access for passive recreation that is compatible with habitat protection.

Our work in trail maintenance, stewardship, education and land preservation to expand FLCA is funded by the generous support of our members and occasional grants.

President's Message begins on Page 2

Broad Brook Coalition Annual Meeting

Sunday, Nov. 3, 2019 - Florence Civic Center - 4:45 to 7 PM

Members and friends are cordially invited to attend the Broad Brook Coalition's annual meeting on Sunday, November 3. Please join us for light refreshments starting at 4:45 pm, with a short business meeting to follow. Greet old friends, make new acquaintances, and catch up on what's been happening in Northampton's largest conservation area.

This year's speaker is Toni Lyn Morelli, who will give a presentation on Climate Change in Your Backyard. She will describe how the climate is changing in western Massachusetts and what the ecological consequences of those changes are likely to be, including more pests and less maple syrup.

Toni Lyn Morelli works for the U.S. Geological Survey Northeast Climate Adaptation Science Center and is Adjunct Assistant Professor at the University of Massachusetts. She uses modeling, genetics, and field methods to understand and facilitate natural resource management and conservation efforts in the face of climate and land use change, especially in New England. Previously she did work on climate change adaptation and conservation in the Sierra Nevada, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Madagascar.



Pictured: Toni Lyn Morelli

President's Message: What's In a Name?

italio

The common names that we use for the plants and animals that populate the natural world follow no discernible system. While the origins of many of these names are buried deep in the history of our language, they often reflect one or

another attribute that captures a distinguishable feature of a group or individual. Prominent among them are physical appearance (red-tailed hawk), behavior (snapping turtle), or resemblance to something unrelated (Indian pipe). In addition, some reflect the habitat that the species calls

Adoption of the genus name

Asclepias for milkweeds, inspired

by the mythological god of healing,

reflects their extensive use in

traditional medicine.

home (river otter), some relate to vocalizations (mourning dove), or even odor (skunk cabbage), while some are pure whimsy (jack-in-the-pulpit). In a category all by itself is the porcupine whose name was derived from the French *porc espin* or thorny hog.

In addition to their common names, all organisms, from bacteria to humans, have a two-word or *binomial* Latin (or latinized Greek) name. This system of taxonomic nomenclature was devised by Swedish naturalist Carl Linnaeus in the mid-eighteenth century and is used by biologists to this day. The first part of the name identifies the *genus*, a group of species that are structurally similar or evolutionarily related, and the second, the individual species. As we shall see in the following examples, the derivation of the Latin binomials is no less imaginative than traditional nomenclature.

RACCOON (*Procyon lotor*). The name raccoon was imported into English from *aroughcun*, the Powhatan term for this animal. The meaning of the Native American word – one who rubs, scrubs, and scratches with its hands – reflects one of the raccoon's most notable behaviors, and in many

languages its common name translates as "wash bear." When these uniquely North American animals were first described by Europeans in the 1600s and early 1700s, there was some confusion as



Raccoon (Peter Weimann, Picture Perfect)

to their proper place in the evolutionary tree, and they were

most often grouped with bears or dogs. In fact, Linnaeus placed the raccoon in the genus *Ursus* (bears), and it wasn't till later in the 1700s that it was accorded a genus of its own, *Procyon*, which embraces its doglike characteristics. To get to *Procyon*, let's start with Sirius, the most brilliant star in the constellation Canis Major (greater dog). The brightest star in its neighbor Canis Minor (lesser dog) was named Prokuon

by Greek astronomers because it rises before Sirius. Prokuon (or *Procyon* after latinization) is made up of the Greek words *pro* (before) and *kuon* (dog) and is thus the "Preceding Dog" or "Dog in Front." When combined with the specific name *lotor*, which in Latin means "someone who washes," *Procyon lotor*

becomes the "the little dog in front who washes." How's that for an etymology!

COMMON MILKWEED

(Asclepias syriaca). Cut the stem or leaf of a common milkweed plant and you'll notice an ooze of its thick, milky sap that gives this plant its name. Historically, milkweeds have been associated with healing and have been used in many societies to treat a wide variety of illnesses. Today, they are perhaps best known for their role in the life of Monarch butterflies:



Common milkweed (Bob Zimmermann)

they are the only plants on which Monarchs lay their eggs, their leaves and stems are the only food eaten by Monarch caterpillars, and their nectar is consumed by Monarchs as well as bees, beetles, and many other insects. Common milkweed belongs to the genus Asclepias which harkens back to the Greek demi-god Asclepius, while its specific name syriaca derives from Linnaeus's mistaken belief that it originated in the Middle East. Asclepius was born to the god Apollo and a mortal mother, Coronis. He was first mentioned in the Iliad as the physician who tended soldiers wounded in the siege of Troy, but later rose in status to the god of healing and medicine. Fearing that Asclepius might use his healing skills to confer immortality upon humans, Hades, god of the underworld, complained to Zeus who, in response, killed him with a thunderbolt. Adoption of the genus name Asclepias for milkweeds, inspired by the mythological god of healing, thus reflects their extensive use in traditional medicine.

BELTED KINGFISHER (Megaceryle alcyon). The belted kingfisher is one of over 100 kingfisher species that comprise a cosmopolitan family of birds found in the Americas, Europe, Asia, and Africa. The common name, kingfisher, seems to have originated from "king's fisher" and the epithet, belted, from its blue-gray breast band. The belted kingfisher's Latin binomial, Megaceryle alcyon, has an intriguing pedigree. The genus name is composed of the Greek word "mega," meaning great or large, and "ceryle," which refers to a mythical bird mentioned by Aristotle and other classical authors. The specific name *alcyon* is steeped in mythology. According to legend, the Greek goddess Alcyon, daughter of Aeolus, god of the winds, and her husband Ceyx angered Zeus, who had them both drowned. Other gods were more compassionate, however, and turned the unfortunate couple into beautiful birds that were named after Alcyon. They supposedly built their nests on a raft in the sea at the winter solstice, and each year at that time Aeolus calmed the ocean winds so Alcyon could safely nest and raise her young. Halcyon, the Greek name for kingfisher, is memorialized in the expression "halcyon days," which was originally a reference to the calm days at sea in mid-winter but is now more generally used to mean fondly remembered times or idyllic periods of peaceful calm.

So, what's in a name? Turns out, there's a lot!

Bob Zimmermann



Belted kingfisher (Michael R. Duncan, National Zoo)

More Poems for Fitzgerald Lake

Attendees at last year's annual meeting were treated to Kathie Fiveash reading from her newly published book of poems, Broad Brook: Poems from Fitzgerald Lake. To quote from the back cover, Kathie conceived of the book as "an expression of gratitude for a beautiful place, Fitzgerald Lake," and she has very generously donated all proceeds from sales to Broad Brook Coalition as the caretaker of this special place. BBC would like to reiterate our own gratitude to Kathie, not only for her donation but also for her inspired observations of the natural world and the thoughts and emotions it evokes. Anyone who visits FLCA will find much to think about and respond to in these poems. The book is available at Collective Copies in Florence and online at the Levellers Press website.

Among the Pines

The woods suddenly darken and we pause in the deep shade. Afternoon's lengthening light pierces the space between the boles. High above, swaying crowns caress the sky, the topmost branches almost beyond our sight brushing an air diaphanous as gauze.

Supple duff covers the forest floor, islands of partridgeberry, wintergreen, Indian pipes, subsiding logs – we could walk freely anywhere inside this wood among the straightness of the trunks, serene and sheltered, every path an open door.

And all around, in the great halls of air between the trees, the silent, tranquil fall of all the wind undoes. And in our hearts a leniency, a slow coming apart, old mortar crumbling from a broken wall, acts of forgiveness, all we had to spare.

September

Leftover leafrag carpet from last winter lies in shreds, waiting to become underlayments. Mushrooms thrust their fleshfists through the duff, dying yellow leaves speckle the forest floor under the vast gathering shutdown of the canopy's billion exhausted leafstalks, green leaking away, provender stashed, blaze of color readying. The birds are busy, silent, numerous, gathering, going about unseen. Surfeit of seedheads, air fecund with pollen, goldenrod, bee hum, frogsong, dragonflies. In all this motion, stillness, the beginnings of decay. The night is disturbed by thunder, coyote choruses, barred owl debates, and calmed by kaydids and gray tree frogs. Light diminishes. The wheel of summer turns toward autumn and the equinox.



Felling a large black cherry on the Beaver Brook site

Beaver Brook Greenway

Four years ago, several members of the Leeds Civic Association and Broad Brook Coalition met to discuss rehabilitation of the old Starkus farm on Haydenville Road near the Williamsburg town line, which had been acquired as conservation land a few years prior and had become known as the Beaver Brook Greenway. Though the property consisted of roughly 100 acres, we decided to concentrate on the six acres lying between the road and Beaver Brook. This site contained numerous vestiges of the farm, including the foundations of two houses and several outbuildings, a few pieces of old farm equipment, a variety of trees and shrubs, and beds of garden flowers planted by the former residents. Unfortunately, there was also a diverse array of invasive plants.

With a grant of \$17,000 from the Community Preservation Committee, we set to work. Over the past three years we cleared decades of accumulated woody debris with the aid of Cotton Tree Service, embarked on the control of invasive



Tom Jenkins and his team of oxen haul a log to be sawed



Volunteers position a forked post at the portable sawmill

plants with the help of Bay State Forestry, and laid out a network of trails to show off the varied habitats within this small parcel. Through the courtesy of the Northampton Water Department, we secured parking for 4-5 cars in the adjacent Corrosion Control Facility and erected an informational kiosk built by the Hampshire County House Jail at the entrance to the conservation land.

We then turned to a larger project, the construction of a wildlife viewing blind overlooking the Beaver Brook. Black walnut, black locust, and black cherry for the blind was harvested at the site by forester Tom Jenkins and sawed to shape by timber framer Neil Godden, who oversaw assembly of the blind from its components using pegs and mortise and tenon joints. Next, we installed interpretive panels, designed by graphic artist Heidi Stevens, that explain the human and natural histories of the area, as well as provide descriptions of some of the old farm equipment and the flower beds. The final amenities to be added were picnic tables, again made by the Hampshire County Jail. To the credit of all involved, the work was completed within the original budget.

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The opening of Beaver Brook Greenway was celebrated with a reception at the site last June. Although our working group consisted of only nine members, a larger number of volunteers - 25 at last count - contributed over 200 hours of time and energy to the project. We are most grateful to all of those who helped make this spot an interesting and attractive destination for a visit. Come have a look!

Bob Zimmermann



Fitting an arched beam into the blind's timber framework



The blind's frame was fitted together with no metal hardware



Treating invasive plants is an important part of maintaining one of Northampton's most the conservation area



The finished blind overlooks extensive marshes



Volunteers spread wood chips to line the paths



Raising the kiosk at the entrance to Beaver Brook Greenway



Five interpretive signs await better weather for mounting



Opening celebration of the Beaver Brook Greenway

2019 Walks and Talks

BBC sponsored another full season of educational programs in 2019, with eight walks taking place between April and the end of September. Despite a cool, rainy spring and a sweltering August, none of the walks had to be canceled, and most were blessed with fine weather. In addition to some familiar topics, such as birds, trees, and butterflies, several walks expanded BBC's repertoire to include programs on nature photography, plants of the forest floor, and the intriguing marks that insects leave on their environment. Following are some of the highlights.

Despite the raw weather at the end of April, Marcia Merithew and Betsy Higgins kicked things off with a bird walk that counted 23 species, including three late-season buffleheads, a black-throated green warbler, an osprey, and a bald eagle. The weather had improved for Laura Beltran's beaver walk, when 30 people gathered at dusk to walk along Boggy Meadow Rd. to a spot where beavers had built a dam and lodge. Laura had passed around a beaver skull, a patch of fur, and a diagram of a beaver lodge beforehand, so the group was well prepared for the visit. As it turned out, the beavers had recently abandoned this site, but their engineering skills were still on display in the long curving dam and impressive lodge, and Laura's explanation of how beavers alter the environment to suit their needs was of equal interest.

Brad Timm led a mid-May vernal pool walk on which he donned hip waders and used a dipnet to scoop up a variety of invertebrates for the 13 attendees, including 6 children, to examine. Also in evidence were wood frog tadpoles, spotted salamander egg masses, green frogs, and a garter snake. Brad described the different vertebrates and invertebrates

that use vernal pools, important aspects about their hydrology, and the potential impacts of climate change on this crucial ecosystem. The following week, 23 people turned out for a walk led by Bob Leverett,



Molly Hale examines leaf mines on her forest floor walk

cofounder of the Eastern Native Tree Society. In addition to identifying individual trees along the path, Bob discussed the differences between the remnant old-growth forest in New England, now present in only a few places, and the regrown forest as seen at Fitzgerald Lake and throughout most of the region.

Michael Jacobson-Hardy's walk in early June focused on amateur nature photography. Participants were encouraged to slow down and look closely at things they might ordinarily pass by with hardly a glance, and as a result it took the full two hours to move from the North Farms Rd. parking lot to the end of the dock. Michael's main point was, it's not the camera but rather the eye of the photographer that counts.

The target species of Tom Gagnon's butterfly walk in mid-July was the rare (for Massachusetts) Dion skipper, which has been reported intermittently at FLCA for more than a decade. To everyone's delight, a Dion skipper was indeed spotted amid the goldenrod and milkweed at the dam, prompting high-fives among many of the 17 attendees. Other

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Beaver walk has a strong turnout



Laura Beltran shows a beaver skull

species seen included the American lady, red admiral, silver-spotted skipper, Appalachian brown, dun skipper, and a tiger swallowtail. A week later, naturalist Molly Hale led a highly informative tour of the forest floor, pausing to examine some 36 species of plants that many of us overlook in our forest rambles. The day was one of the hottest of the summer, but the air in the deep shade was surprisingly cool, and Molly's enthusiastic





A woolly bear caterpillar found on the insect walk

Charley Eiseman shows bark beetle tunnels

descriptions were as interesting as the plants' names: jewelweed, enchanter's nightshade, cinnamon and hay-scented ferns, jumpseed, spicebush, and hog peanut, among many others.

The final walk of the season was another chance to focus on items that typically escape our notice, in this case the fascinating patterns and objects that insects create in their environment. Naturalist Charley Eiseman examined a number of these items, including leaf mines, leaf rolls, midge and wasp galls, the intricate tunnels of a polygamous (!) bark beetle, and the beautiful web of a black-and-yellow garden spider with its zigzag stitching. For many, though, the hit of the walk was the now-you-see-it-now-you-don't phantom crane fly glimpsed along the boardwalk that seemed to float rather than fly on its transparent wings. A small sample of the amazing, beautiful phenomena that can be found on our



Shooting a close-up at the dock



Bob Leverett at the start of his tree walk



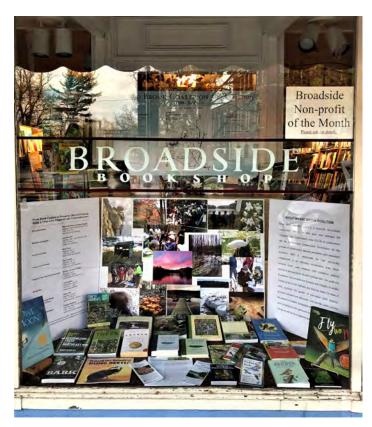
Observing a dun skipper along Boggy Meadow Rd.

Conservation News in Brief

Board Member Dave Ruderman Steps Down

Dave Ruderman will be retiring from the BBC Board of Directors at the end of his term this November. Dave joined BBC soon after moving to Northampton in 2007 and began volunteering on work days and other projects. He soon joined the Land Preservation committee, and in 2013 he became a member of the Board of Directors. Dave brought a valuable set of skills to the BBC board. He took over management of the BBC website and Facebook page, maintaining and updating their content and graphics to bring them to where they are today. He has also managed the email listserv, keeping members and the wider community informed of upcoming events and volunteer opportunities. In addition to overseeing online member renewals and credit card donations, Dave has coordinated BBC participation in community giving days such as ValleyGives and Giving Tuesday as well as with the Green Stamp program at River Valley Co-op. Dave will continue to contribute to BBC as a member volunteer and has offered to help train a replacement webmaster and social media guru.

Many thanks for all you've done, Dave!



A warm thank-you to Broadside Bookshop for featuring BBC as their Non-profit of the Month for two weeks in April! Broadside stocks a large selection of field guides, nature books, calendars, and more. (Lily Ruderman)



Norma Roche and Dick Wynne get ready to tackle water chestnut

Water Chestnut Dwindles at Fitzgerald Lake

For the third year we have pursued our aggressive efforts to control the proliferation of water chestnut in Fitzgerald Lake. This harmful invasive plant can outcompete most native aquatic plants and in the worst case, blanket a pond, lake, or cove. We've taken an approach colloquially known as "pull early, pull often," which in our case means getting a crew out on the lake to pull in mid-June and continuing every three weeks till mid-September. Results for the five pulls in 2019 were very encouraging, as we harvested only 140 lbs. compared with nearly 300 lbs. in 2018 and 1,100 lbs. in 2017. Volunteer participation was high, with an average of seven people out on the lake in kayaks or canoes on each pull. While our results suggest that we're making progress in freeing Fitzgerald Lake from water chestnut, this invasive is very persistent, and seeds that have lain on the bottom for up to eight years can still germinate under favorable conditions, so we intend to keep up the pressure in coming years.



Water chestnut catch of the day

Overnight Shelter in Urgent Need of Volunteers

The Interfaith Cot Shelter on Center Street in downtown Northampton is short of volunteers for overnight duty. Colleen Currie, volunteer coordinator for the overnight staff, sent out a plea for help earlier this month.

The shelter, operated by ServiceNet, is open to homeless men and women from November through April. About 20 people a night take advantage of the shelter to come in from the cold. Each volunteer commits to spending one night a month there. The volunteer arrives at 9 pm, empties the dishwasher, sets out food for the morning, then sleeps in a private room. The next morning, the volunteer gets up at 5:30, oversees breakfast, then puts dishes in the dishwasher and leaves at 7. Both men and women are volunteers. A ServiceNet staff member is also on duty for the night.

"I've been doing it for 10 or more years and never have had a problem, and the homeless people really appreciate it – always thanking me for helping," said Jim Reis, who is BBC's liaison for affordable housing issues.

The cot shelter started about 20 years ago, rotating from church to church until it found a permanent home on Center Street.

Anyone who would like to volunteer may reach Ms. Currie at currie@crocker.com.

American Chestnut Update



(from left) Richard Jones, Bill Williams, Bob Zimmermann, and Dick Wynne filling rain barrels in Cooke's Pasture for use in watering the three surviving American chestnuts



Tree warden Rich Parasiliti and crew preparing to add mulch around the chestnut saplings to preserve moisture and keep down weeds

A Layman's Guide to Late Summer and Fall Wildflowers at FLCA

Bob Zimmermann has recently added a third wildflower guide to the BBC website, this time to species commonly seen at Fitzgerald Lake during late summer and fall. As with the guides to spring and summer flowers, this most recent guide includes photos, descriptions, and folklore relating to 21 mostly native wildflowers as well as six photos of plants that produce conspicuous berries. All three guides are available at the website, broadbrookcoalition.org. Just click on the Fitzgerald Lake tab at the top of the page, then on Plants and Animals in the drop-down menu. We hope you enjoy looking for and identifying these and other wildflowers in your rambles at Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area.

New Land Acquisition

Over the summer, the City acquired a 5.8-acre tract on the southeast side of the FLCA.

The parcel is long and narrow, abutting conservation land to the south and extending to Boggy Meadow Road. The sale was finalized after a truckload of metal debris was removed from the site. The Board of Directors voted to contribute \$3,000, half of the cost, toward the purchase of this parcel.

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Volunteer Needed for Correspondence

BBC usually puts out calls for help with outdoor work. This time, we are looking for a volunteer who will take over the tasks of mailing out the annual fall appeal and acknowledging donations from our members, starting in January 2020. The busiest time of year requires anywhere from 5-10 hours a week from the end of October until the end of the year. In other months, the work is far less demanding.

This volunteer also collects mail at the Florence Post Office and delivers donation checks to the treasurer, prepares the membership mailing list for the annual appeal and two newsletter mailings, and sends out a reminder postcard in February to members who have not yet renewed their support.

Anyone who is interested in helping BBC with these responsibilities should email Margaret Russell at j7m4russell@gmail.com.

OR Codes

You've seen them in museums, you've seen them on new car windows, and now you can find them at the various entrances to Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area. QR codes are a kind of bar code that can be read by smart phones and other devices. Just turn on the camera, or open a QR app, and aim it at the code square. Voilà, a link will open in your device, taking you to a website where you can find out information relating to that particular code. At Fitzgerald Lake, the link takes you to the BBC website (broadbrookcoalition.org), where you can click through the



BBC QR code at the North Farms Rd. entrance

tabs to find (among other things) trail maps, the nature trail guide, regulations, and various guides to aquatic plants, wildflowers, and invasives. Many visitors to Fitzgerald Lake are happy to stow their phones or even silence them as they set off on a path, but others will enjoy the extra information available to them by this means. And in case you're wondering, QR codes are perfectly silent; you won't be disturbing anyone else if you decide to give them a try.



BBC Trailcam Update

It's been almost a year since Trail Committee members installed a wildlife motion camera, or trailcam, at Fitzgerald Lake. Since then, a variety of animals have made cameos, including deer, bobcat, wild turkey, coyote, raccoon, and black bear. This summer the trail crew moved the camera to a new location, using the same basic criteria for placement: near running water, a good distance from the nearest trail, and in an area where there are signs of wildlife activity. Selected clips from the camera can be viewed by visiting the BBC website (broadbrookcoalition.org) and clicking on the Fitzgerald Lake tab. There is also a link to the full set of videos on YouTube. You may not see many of these animals on your usual walk, but you know they're out there; now you can check out some of their activities at home on your favorite device.



Past BBC president Marianna McKim and David Maxcy enjoy the sunshine on the dock

Species Spotlight: The North American Porcupine

Common Name: North American Porcupine

Scientific Name: Erethizon dorsatum (which

translates to "irritable back")

Physical Description: The second largest rodent in North America (the American beaver is the largest). Adults typically weigh ~20 pounds and are 2-3 feet long. They have ~30,000 quills covering their entire body except for their stomach. The quills are hollow except for their solid, barbed tip.

Longevity: Known to live up to 18 years in the wild.

Distribution: Their range extends throughout all of North America, including the northeastern U.S., the upper midwestern U.S., and much



North American Porcupine

of the western U.S. into Mexico, with the exception of extreme northern portions of Canada and extreme northwestern Alaska.

Habitat: Typically found in the northeastern U.S. in coniferous and mixed forests, though elsewhere in their range they can be found in grasslands, shrub communities, and tundra as well. Porcupines spend much of their time feeding in trees, though they are also commonly found active on the ground. They do not hibernate, but during bad weather in the winter they may den (either by themselves or with other porcupines) in structures such as caves, decaying logs, or hollow trees.

Reproduction: Porcupines mate in late summer to early fall and have a gestation period of ~7 months. Typically only a single baby (called a "porcupette") is born; very rarely there are twins.

Diet: Generalist herbivores eating a wide variety of plant material. Their diet varies seasonally, typically consisting of evergreen needles and the inner bark of trees in the winter and shifting more toward green plants, fruits, seeds, leaves, and roots in the spring and fall.

Conservation and Management: Relatively abundant and secure throughout their range. Some local populations have declined due to persecution by humans because of their destructive behaviors associated with feeding on fruit and vegetable crops and trees.

Interesting Facts:

- Contrary to some portrayals, porcupines are unable to shoot their quills; the quills are very lightly attached and readily come off when contact is made with another animal.
- Porcupines are good swimmers and their hollow quills make them buoyant in water.
- Porcupines are very vocal, especially during the mating season, and make a wide variety of sounds including wails, shrieks, grunts, and howls (you should search for some clips online, they are quite fascinating!).

(This is the second 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.)

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___Board Member ___Newsletter writer ___Other (please specify)___