

Friends of Arlington's Great Meadows Annual Report for 2017

This report recaps the accomplishments of the Friends of Arlington's Great Meadows (FoAGM) in 2017 and updates happenings during the year. We wish to thank everyone who has helped in one way or another with these efforts.

Stewardship Activities

Community Outreach

To introduce people to Arlington's Great Meadows we are sponsoring seasonal "Walk All Around AGM" events led by David White. In addition, many other groups have discovered AGM and have held nature walks there including, for example, Boot Boutwell for the Arlington Community Education program.

Students from the adjacent Lexington Christian Academy have been carrying out environmental studies at AGM. They have done phenological studies and water samples. The water samples are tracking pH, nitrates, ammonia, free and total chlorine, phosphates and dissolved oxygen along Mill River and some of the waters that come off of it, as well as phenology of the vernal pond area.

Third graders at the Waldorf School in East Lexington launched a special project last spring to provide housing for native solitary bees and other wild pollinators that do not live in large hives. Twenty students in Jeanette Voss's class built the structure during the year and installed it in nearby Arlington's Great Meadows in the spring.

The project combined the development of building skills, guided by the school's woodworking teacher Andrew Freeburg, and increased awareness of the many wild pollinators in our local environment that are critical to helping plants reproduce by spreading powdery pollen among plants of the same species. The children will continue to maintain the "hotel" and observe the insects, as they also learn broader lessons about stewardship of the natural landscape.

This project was supported with a mini-grant from the Friends of Arlington's Great Meadows through the Arlington Land Trust, its fiscal agent.

Trail Maintenance

This was the third year since the ACROSS Lexington paths were extended into East Lexington and included parts of AGM. The C loop connects AGM with the Arlington Reservoir, and the D loop connects north to the Whipple Hill Conservation area. The new signage makes navigation much easier, and more people are discovering these open space areas and their connections.

We also continued with regular trail and kiosk maintenance including replacing broken and rotting boardwalk treads. Many new volunteers have come forward to take on this work.

Upland Meadow Restoration

In 2010, we undertook a project to restore the upland “entry meadow” at the northwest corner of AGM, which had been rapidly reverting to woodland, to its historical open condition.

To maintain this lovely meadow, we have established an annual mowing program in the fall to avoid interference with nesting birds and to minimize the impact on wildflowers. We are now considering extending this restoration effort to an adjacent area where woodcocks have nested in the past.

Invasive Plant Control

We continued our efforts started in 2005 to clear and maintain a stretch along the Minutemen Bikeway that had become densely overgrown with the invasive Japanese Knotweed plant. Permanent eradication of this invasive is extremely difficult, particularly without the use of herbicides. However, over the last ten years, with volunteer labor and purely mechanical means, we have succeeded in keeping this area mostly knotweed-free, and preserving a stunning view of the Meadows from the bikeway. We especially thank Greg Shenstone and his crew for this work.



Finger Marsh Boardwalk in September

Financial

Donations to FoAGM in 2017 were about the same as in 2016, and expenses were fairly modest, so we continue to hold healthy cash balances. All our income was from the generosity of individual donors and private foundations, and was not dependent on municipal budgets, corporate funding, or fundraising events. FoAGM also continues its successful partnership with the Arlington Land Trust (ALT) as fiscal agent.

Summary of activity in FoAGM's fund balances as of the end of 2017:

2017 Income

\$ 2,180.00 in 19 donations

2017 Expenses

\$ 692.45 Total Expenses (meadow mowing, brochure, board walk repairs, Wild Pollinator Hotel project).

Fund Balance as of December 31, 2017

\$ 17,272.54 FoAGM fund balance at beginning of the year

+\$ 1,487.55 Net change

\$ 18,760.09 FoAGM fund balance at year-end

We thank our new and trustworthy regular donors who have contributed to the preservation of one of the largest natural open spaces in the Arlington/Lexington region. Those wishing to make a tax-deductible donation can make a check out to "ALT FoAGM Fund" and mail it to FoAGM, Box 492, Arlington, MA 02476, or use a credit card online at www.networkforgood.org (Enter "arlington land" in the search field and select state of MA. Select Arlington Land Trust and enter "FoAGM" as a designation.)

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If you would like to help out or just want more information please contact us at:

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