

# Friends of Arlington's Great Meadows Annual Report for 2018

This report recaps the accomplishments of the Friends of Arlington's Great Meadows (FoAGM) in 2018 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

We are sponsoring seasonal "Walk All Around AGM" events to introduce people to Arlington's Great Meadows. We also organized a winter walk in February. 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 at the Waldorf School in East Lexington have an ongoing project 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 and installed the structure. This project was supported with a mini-grant from the Friends of Arlington's Great Meadows. The children will continue to maintain the bee "hotel" and observe the insects, as they also learn broader lessons about stewardship of the natural landscape.

The Excel Nursing Home off Bryant Road closed this spring and the building is currently vacant. This is a concern because their parking lot has been a major public access point to AGM for many years. Since the property is zoned residential it may be replaced by houses. We've heard nothing yet about future plans, but FoAGM and officials in Lexington and Arlington are monitoring the situation with the intent of maintaining public access at this location.

### Maintenance

This was the fourth 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 are now investigating some additional signage to further aid visitors.

We continued with regular trail and kiosk maintenance. The boardwalks built in 2005 are holding up well, although some of the treads are decaying. We are identifying and replacing them as needed. New volunteers have also come forward to take on this work.

In November we sponsored a trash cleanup and removal event at the nursing home parking lot. Since they closed last spring large amounts of trash, including some plumbing fixtures, had been dumped in this area. Volunteers collected everything into a large pile which was removed by Lexington DPW as arranged by Jordan McCarron of the Lexington Conservation Commission.



**Finger Marsh Boardwalk Repairs in October**

### **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. Inspired in part by the restoration work at Joyce Miller’s Meadows, 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 others for the most recent work.

## Financial

Donations to FoAGM in 2018 were a little less than in 2017, and expenses were also a little less, 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 2018:

***2018 Income***

\$ 1,644.30 in 17 donations

***2018 Expenses***

\$ 599.64 Total Expenses (meadow mowing and boardwalk repair materials,).

***Fund Balance as of December 31, 2017***

\$ 18,760.09 FoAGM fund balance at beginning of the year

+\$ 1,044.66 Net change

\$ 19,804.75 FoAGM fund balance at the end of 2018

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](http://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.)

Mike Tabaczynski, Financial Officer

**Friends of Arlington's Great Meadows Steering Committee**

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

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