

Friends of Arlington's Great Meadows Annual Report for 2019

This report recaps the accomplishments of the Friends of Arlington's Great Meadows (FoAGM) in 2019 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 tracking walk in February. In addition, many other groups, such as the Citizens for Lexington Conservation and Arlington Community Education, have discovered AGM and have held nature events there. We have also co-sponsored walks with the A-DOG group to introduce more people from Arlington to the area.

In late June a regular visitor at AGM observed skeet shooting debris along some areas near the Minuteman Trail. We reached out to the public and town officials, and posted some notices in those areas. Since then the problem has not reoccurred. AGM is in general remarkably trash free thanks to its very responsible visitors.

The Excel Nursing Home off Bryant Road closed last spring and the building is currently vacant. This will most likely be turned into housing. There is currently a proposal before the Lexington Planning Board. FoAGM and officials in Lexington and Arlington are monitoring the situation with the intent of maintaining permanent public access at this location.

Maintenance

This was the fifth 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 showing some signs of age with decaying treads. We are identifying and replacing them as needed. New volunteers have also come forward to take on this work.



Arlington A-DOG members and their friends visit AGM

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 2019 were quite a bit less than in 2018. Reported expenses were a little less, but do not include the fall upland meadow mowing costs. We continue to hold healthy cash balances and plan to apply them to the proposed upland meadow expansion project. 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 2019:

2019 Income

\$ 310.00 in 6 donations

2019 Expenses

\$ 213.02 Total Expenses (brochure reprinting).

Fund Balance as of December 31, 2018

\$ 19,804.75 FoAGM fund balance at beginning of the year

+\$ 96.98 Net change

\$ 19,901.73 FoAGM fund balance at the end of 2019

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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