

Friends of Arlington's Great Meadows
Steering Committee
April 1, 2008
Approved 5/14/08

Present: David White, Mike Tabaczynski, John Bartenstein, Sandra Ruggiero, Laurel Carpenter, Don Miller; Guest: Dave Pearson

Introductions were made.

The minutes of the meetings of January 15 and February 27 were approved with two edits.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 6, at 7:30pm.

Trash Barrel: The expenditure of up to \$170 was approved for the purchase of a trash barrel and domed cover to be chained to the sign post at the end of the nursing home parking lot where the AGM trail begins. Clyde Tyler, Executive Director of Golden LivingCenter—Lexington (the nursing home's new name) has agreed to have his staff empty the barrel on a regular basis. Don will be reimbursed after submitting receipts.

Educational Mini-Grants:

Bee Hive: David, Sandra, and Don went with Joe O'Regan of the Waldorf School to find a site in AGM for the bee hive to be placed in connection with the educational mini-grant which FoAGM recently awarded. The location which was agreed upon will not be made public, but FoAGM will publicize that the program is happening and ask users of AGM not to bother the hive if they come across it. The bees will assist in their own homeland security.

Application Forms: Sandra recently sent out the mini-grant cover letter and application form to those on her list of school contacts and other potential applicants. **Sandra** will send them again when the school year is about to start.

Recent Event

Woodcock Walk: On Friday evening, March 26, the FoAGM-sponsored woodcock walk went well. Seven people braved the cold, five of them new to FoAGM. Woodcock sightings were made six times during the event. [Note also that the Menotomy Bird Club had a viewing there following evening –DEW.]

Platform in Tree: Mike and David took down the plywood platform which had been observed up in a tree. Someone also cut the broken branch that was lying over the AGM sign next to the bikeway entrance.

Future Nature Events:

Don will lead two nature walks in the spring, both on Saturday mornings starting at 9:30am. The two dates are April 19 and May 17. **Don** will create a flier announcing the two walks and share it with **Mike** who will share it with CLC and the two local newspapers. **Don** will put the flier up on the two kiosks and other locations in the two towns.

Bird Walks: **Laurel** will contact the Menotomy Bird Club about doing one or more bird walks at AGM in conjunction with FoAGM.

Insect Walk: **David** will ask Andrea to lead a walk concerning dragon flies or perhaps insects in general.

Biodiversity Days: **David** will find out what date the event will be this year and post it on our web site. **Sandra** will contact Fran Ludwig.

Fire Fly Study: **David** will look into the fire fly study being done by the Museum of Science and see if there is any way that FoAGM can participate.

Land Management Activities

Japanese Knotweed Removal: On Monday, May 5, **Sandra** will have her class dig out JKW root crowns and garlic mustard plants from 9:00 or 9:15am to 11:30am. **Don** will attend, also. Although working mostly on the west side of the plot, **they** will also see if root crowns on the east side pull out easily now.

Volunteer Day: On Saturday, May 31, from 9:00am to noon, FoAGM will ask volunteers to work on removing JKW root crowns and garlic mustard plants at the bike path site. **Mike** will arrange for tools. To get community volunteer credits, students must sign up in advance and must wear appropriate attire and shoes. A maximum of ten students will be accepted. At least several adult supervisors will be arranged. **Sandra** will tell Don the name of the volunteer coordinator at Arlington High School. **Don** will give his current email address to this person.

More on JKW: We will leave the plastic on at least until this fall. Areas not covered with plastic which become bare after the removal of root crowns will be planted with grass or wild flower seeds. **David** will look into seed mixtures which would be appropriate. **Don** will plant seeds of three wild flower species he collected from the site last fall. **Don** will pursue the study of how quickly Phragmites is spreading in the wetland. Sandra's daughter, Heather, worked on removal of Phragmites for the Nature Conservancy last summer and may have insights to share.

Habitat Restoration

The group discussed a draft schedule of the project requested at the previous meeting plus a framework of the issues involved. There was agreement that we should move forthrightly toward arranging for a consultant to study how best to do the habitat restoration, including, among other things, the type of natural community which is our goal. The Rock Meadow project in Belmont obtained a consultant's report which greatly facilitated the approval of WHIP grant which it later received. ("WHIP" stands for "Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program" of the US Department of Agriculture.) The availability of funds for this in the future will depend on what Congress includes in the next Farm Bill. The deadline for the 2008 grant applications was March 31, but the regional DoA office in Westford did not know what the 2009 arrangements would be or if there would be monies available at all. The Rock Meadow project obtained a grant of \$1,000 from the Fish and Wildlife agency to pay part of the consultant's fee. Mike said we should be thinking of other areas in and adjacent to AGM which might be included in the study, some which are Lexington conservation land - specifically areas next to the southwest portion of AGM.

It was agreed that:

1. We should obtain a copy of the study done for Rock Meadow. **Mike** will obtain it.
2. We should invite Jeff Collins to come to AGM for a second field trip and review with him the other areas which might be included in the study. Specifically these would be a more expansive area on the north side than originally considered plus other non-contiguous areas in the southwest. **Don** will call him to seek some dates on which he would be available.
3. Thereafter we should request a proposal from Jeff, including what would be done and what it would cost. Our request would list the issues which we think are important to be included in the study.
4. There was consensus that such a study would be an appropriate use of FoAGM funds. No approval of a specific amount was made at this time.

The meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Don Miller