

Minutes from FoAGM Steering Committee Meeting – June 24, 2004

Final – Approved 8/3/04

Present: David White, Andrea Golden, Sandra Ruggerio, John Bartstein, Don Miller, Mike Tabaczynski, Laurel Carpenter.

1. May meeting minutes were approved.
2. Next meeting will be 7:30 pm, Tuesday, August 3 at the home of Laurel Carpenter, 94 Pleasant St, Lexington. Directions will be sent with the next meeting reminder. Parking is limited so carpooling is encouraged. An agenda item for this meeting is to review and perhaps update our goals.
3. Financial report: Mike reported that he is not aware of any new requests.
4. Educational activities update
 - School programs: Sandra reported that she led 6 of 7 planned elementary school trips this spring; the 7th trip was rained out. The status of next year's programs is uncertain due to the relocation of Waldorf High School to Belmont. There was discussion of working with Arlington High School on this project in the future, and also following up with Lexington Christian Academy. Francesca Coltera, a parent volunteer, was very involved in coordinating the elementary school trips. It was suggested that she could submit a proposal to request funds for equipment such as bug jars, trays, sieves, and an inexpensive field guide brochure.
 - Summer nature walks: Chris Floyd led a successful breeding birds walk (co-sponsored with Menotomy Bird Club) on June 12. See appendix 1 for his notes. It is not clear how many people attended the walk. **Laurel Carpenter** and **Andrea Golden** volunteered to lead a plant and insect walk on Sunday, August 1 from 8:00-10:00. Meeting place is behind Waldorf School.
5. Resource management activities update
 - Trail grant application: Mike was informed that RTP grant application has a 50% chance of being approved.
 - **Don Miller** reported that he will be meeting Roly on the following Friday to make adjustments to the owl nest box.
 - Sign project. Posts were made from cedar 4x4s. Alex flagged a number of locations where the posts were to be installed, and Mike raised questions for discussion about the placement of posts in two locations: Emerson Gardens and Brandon Street. SC members will visit the sites to gain perspective. It was agreed that these posts would not be installed without communicating first with the abutters.

- Reference Maps: **Mike** will make some 18"x24" base maps for our general use.
- May 22 Invasive plant removal
A total of 55 high school students were present at the May 22 invasive plant removal day, and the unfocused energy of this group exceeded the amount of available supervision. One strategy for the future will be to control the group size by requiring students to sign up in advance. Once they have committed to the project, they will be informed where to meet. Sign-off forms can also be printed in advance, and John Bartstein volunteered to draft a form for "certification of community service work" in order to streamline the checking out process.

A side discussion ensued about FoAGM's liability with regard to volunteers in the event of a mishap. John commented that, in general, persons without compensation are not liable for civil damages resulting from problems occurring while they were acting in good faith. Waiver forms were discussed but seemed invoke more complications than would be worthwhile, so it was agreed that as a whole FoAGM would practice general safety awareness during events and take reasonable precautions to prevent problems. One thing to do is to keep track of who comes and goes especially in severe weather.

Andrea Golden brought in samples of swamp milkweed she propagated from seed and distributed seedlings to SC members. She was planning to schedule a date to clear a plot of purple loosestrife which will be replaced by the swamp milkweed. It was suggested the plot be marked for monitoring. Andrea also said the black swallowwort is at a height now when it should be cut down.

Mike (with possible help from David) will pursue the Japanese Knotweed removal plan with the Lexington ConCom.

7. Yard waste reduction measures. John Bartstein reported on his research into Lexington town regulations with regard to dumping and littering, and there are both town by laws prohibiting such activities and regulations stemming from Great Meadow's status as a wetlands overlay zone. Such regulations give support should FoAGM wish to post signage reminding abutters of the "no dumping" prohibition. John also reviewed information at the Lexington assessor's office and found that no management company is listed for Emerson Gardens. The question was also raised about whether lawn care companies are significant contributors to this problem. We discussed drafting a letter to distribute to abutters.

Respectfully submitted by Laurel Carpenter. Minor additions by David White 7/19/04.

Appendix One: Chris Floyd's report on Breeding Birds Walk at Arlington Great Meadows on June 12

We had a great walk at Great Meadows this morning, perhaps the most satisfying of these trips I've led over the years. One small down side was that I found the marsh crossing a bit too treacherous this year. So we drove around from Waldorf School to behind the nursing home to do the far side. Selective species list follows:

Turkey Vulture 1 soaring overhead with R-t. Hawk and crow
Red-tailed Hawk 1 soaring
Black-billed Cuckoo 3: 1 very cooperative right on the bike path, 2 later in trees in the marsh
Ruby-throated Hummingbird 1 male that perched in dead branches of several shrubs near the marsh crossing
Red-bellied Woodpecker 1 male in big woods near Infinity Pond
Downy Woodpecker 3: pair at nest hole in first dead tree on right of bike path just east of Waldorf School
Northern Flicker 1
Eastern Wood-Pewee 1 in big woods near Infinity Pond
ALDER FLYCATCHER 1 heard/seen well near marsh crossing, far side
Willow Flycatcher 3-5
Great Crested Flycatcher 1 heard
Warbling Vireo 2 (low)
Brown Thrasher 1 sang an impressive concert near woodcock grounds
Cedar Waxwing 4 flybys
Yellow Warbler 4 (low)
Common Yellowthroat 2 (low)
Scarlet Tanager 1 heard near Waldorf School (!)
Swamp Sparrow 1 heard/seen fairly well at marsh crossing
Brown-headed Cowbird 4-6, including 1 chick being fed by Song Sparrow

Orchard Oriole 4: including PAIR AT NEST in exactly same tree as last year. A few yards past dead tree with Downy nest (see above), look on opposite (marsh) side of bike path for a red maple growing just to the left of a white birch (branches of these two trees interlace). The nest is at the top of the maple, no more than a foot or two from its location of last year!

Baltimore Oriole 3-5 (low, no nests located)

Notable for their absence were the following birds seen in past years: Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Blue-winged Warbler, Field Sparrow. Maturing woodland may be pushing the latter two species out.

Chris Floyd
Lexington