

Friends of Arlington's Great Meadows
Steering Committee - October 16, 2007
Approved 11/27/07

Present: David White, Mike Tabaczynski, John Bartenstein, Sandra Ruggiero, Don Miller

The minutes of September 18, 2007 were approved with the revisions emailed by John and Sandra.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, November 27, 7:30 p.m., at Waldorf School.

1. **Financial Matters:** David will send the minutes regarding authorization of expenditure for the No Dumping signs to Mike.
2. **Vernal Pool Kits:** This idea is being put on hold for the time being.
3. **Mini-Grants Project:** Sandra said that she has not yet received any responses to the application forms and cover letters she mailed in September.

4. **Nature Walks in October:**

Lexington Garden Club: David and Don led a walk in AGM for the Lexington Garden Club on October 9. They visited the knotweed removal site and walked the trail including both board walks. About 15 people attended.

The Fungi Walk: The walk with Harvard professor Don Pfister was held on October 14th. About 20 people attended, most of whom had not attended a FoAGM event before. Dr. David Hewett, one of Dr. Pfister's recent PhD graduates, also attended and helped to lead it.

Boot Boutwell Walk: This will be held on October 20. **David** will send out a reminder to the email list, and he will take photographs at the walk. **Mike** and **Don** will also attend.

Cub Scout Hike: **Don** will lead a hike in AGM for a den of Arlington cub scouts and their parents on the afternoon of October 20.

All of the above groups were told – or will be told -- about AGM, FoAGM, and the importance of protecting this remarkable natural land. **Don** will write a report on each of the above events.

5. **Article on Dumping:** The draft article on the environmental impact of dumping yard waste on natural lands was discussed. It was agreed that the phonetic spelling of "mycorrhizal" should be added. A by-line should be added with an explanation that Don is a member of the Steering Committee of FoAGM.

Don will make these changes, then send the revised article out for final review by the SC members and attempt to get a suitable photograph of the No Dumping sign to add to it.

6. **Recent Graffiti:** Don removed the spray paint from about 12 trees scattered north of the Finger Marsh Boardwalk. He attempted to remove it from several rocks with incomplete results. The remaining bits of paint on the board walk itself did not respond much to the spray and brushing.

7. **Restoration of the Grassland Area:** Don worked with Harvey Cote to cut some of the sumac and other saplings and shrubs which had begun to block the view across the meadow from the kiosk above the nursing home parking lot. There was discussion of the location of the slash pile and whether its appearance is a problem.

Don called Mary Trudeau, the Liaison to the Belmont Conservation Commission to inquire about their process for obtaining a restoration grant for Rock Meadow. **Don** will return her voice mail of today.

Don spoke with Frances Clark about the idea of allowing the shrubs in the grassland area to continue growing into a shrubland type of natural community, a possibility raised by Jeff Collins of MA Audubon. Frances suggested not allowing shrubs there to grow too tall so that visitors will feel more secure walking there. She also said it would be good to leave an area, perhaps at the margin, where little blue stem grass can continue to grow. It was agreed that if we decide to recommend that the area be managed as shrubland (instead of sandplain grassland), the species of shrubs should be short so as to allow a pleasing view across the area. Most such shrub species in the area now are short.

John said he had mentioned the grassland restoration project to Brian Rehrig of Arlington Land Trust and that Brian was supportive. Brian suggested that Frances Clark be consulted (as she has been).

Don requested from **Mike** a map of the potential restoration area which Don will make into a schematic map of the area and its subsections bounded by trails, stone walls, and so on. Such a map will make it possible to depict proposals for how various sub-sections of the grassland might be restored, that is, what species of plants would be managed in what ways.

Regarding the future process of this project, it was agreed that once the Steering Committee has settled on an approach, it will be discussed with the Arlington ConCom, the Lexington ConCom, and then taken to the Board of Selectmen of Arlington (the owners of the land) for approval. There has been consensus from the beginning that the public will be informed about this project and given ample opportunity to make suggestions prior to a final strategy being adopted.

8. JKW Removal Project: John reported that the JKW in the eastern portion of the plot seems to be greatly weakened, and that the small shoots could be pulled out with pieces of rhizome more easily than before. He expressed cautious optimism that the network of rhizomes (energy-storing roots) has been weakened by the regular cutting of the shoots. Don has removed the ragweed plants and some other undesirable plants, especially from the formerly-covered portion which was planted in grasses in fall of 2006. He has collected seeds of three desirable species (common evening primrose, Queen Anne's lace, and white campion, and spread them in the grassy area. Don will save much of the seed for planting next spring, also. He reported that in the western part of the plot, the JKW shoots are much smaller in diameter than in the past. Although there are more of them, they are easier to remove. Some small areas of the western portion have no JKW shoots now, and other species are growing vigorously in some of those locations.

9. FoAGM Annual Report for 2007: First drafts of the various sections of the report are due at the next meeting, November 27th. The attached Exhibit A states the topics for which members agreed to be responsible. **David** will ask Andrea to take responsibility for the Education and Outreach section, with certain portions being written by SC members who led the activities. Mike suggested that the sections on the JKW project and the restoration idea should include significant detail, and there appeared to be general agreement.

After **Don** submits the minutes of this meeting, **David** will send the Word files of all the year-to-date minutes to all members. **Don** will review them to identify any 2007 activities and accomplishments which were not mentioned at tonight's meeting.

The meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Don Miller

Attachment: Exhibit A: Annual Report Assignments

**EXHIBIT A
ANNUAL REPORT ASSIGNMENTS**

Responsible Person	Education & Outreach	Mini-Grants	Trails etc.	Finance	Legal (?)	Invasives	Meadow Restoration	General & "Thanks-To" List	Combine with Photos & Edit
Andrea	Responsible. for section with inputs from Sandra & Don as shown								
Sandra	Vernal pools project	Responsible. for section							
Don	4 fall walks					Responsible for section	Responsible for section	(?)	(Available to help if needed.)
Mike			Responsible for section	Responsible for section					
John					(?) **				Responsible
David								(?)	

Comments added by DBM after the meeting for SC consideration:

**1. Legal: Anything to say about our legal endeavors? We might consider stating a goal of AGM being permanently protected by a Conservation Restriction, and we could provide some detail about what that would involve and why it would be good. I don't think we have stated this goal publicly before. This might begin to move the idea along. This goal could be voted upon at the November meeting and recorded in the minutes, if we choose.

2. Do we want to list goals for 2008 or more generally for "the future" in the annual report? If so, let's bring proposals to the November meeting.