

**Friends of Arlington's Great Meadows  
Steering Committee  
May 4, 2010  
Approved 6/8/2010**

**Present:** David White, Sandra Ruggiero, Mike Tabaczynski, John Bartenstein, Sandy Vorce, Don Miller.

**Minutes:** The minutes of March 23, 2010 were approved with one edit.

**Next Meeting:** Tuesday, June 8, 7:30pm, at David's.

**Nature Walks:**

**Third Saturday Walk.** Eight people attended the "cancelled BUT" walk in April, despite the drizzle and rain and 40 degree temps. Half the group continued on for the "optional" additional hour. A report of this walk was published in the Advocate as a guest column.

**Spring Butterfly Walk.** Tom Whelan did an excellent job leading the spring butterfly walk at AGM. About 18 people attended, including some very experienced in these tiny, nickel-sized butterflies. Elfin butterflies are brown, so hard to see when they fly and hard to see when they land. Spring Azure butterflies are a lovely light blue, much more visible. Sometimes two of them will swirl around each other quickly – hard to tell if they are fighting or flirting, but they are beautiful.

**Harvard Course Coming to AGM.** Prof. Don Pfister will bring a Harvard class to AGM on Saturday, May 8. He knows AGM well now, so our presence is welcome but not necessary. We will try to have someone there to take photographs for the annual report. Don M. will respond to him.

**Family Hikes.** It was proposed that we hold one or two "family hikes", walks in nature at AGM with occasional stops for teaching about nature. These would be aimed at families with children, no age limits. Publicity will be done in Arlington only to increase awareness of AGM there. Hikes would not be held on Sunday afternoons so as to avoid competing with Bay State Kids Outdoors, the group from whom Don got the idea and their leader's blessing to use it. **Don** will set up a date or two, arrange publicity, and lead the hikes, starting from the Waldorf side.

**Naomi Wharton's Proposal.** This teen has proposed to develop some materials to teach people, particularly children, about nature at AGM. She has seen such materials at national parks. She did not ask for funds, but the SC approved the idea of offering her an Educational Mini-Grant if she would like one to pay for materials. **Sandra** agreed to work with her, discuss the mini-grant possibility, help her fill out the application, and generally guide her. Don is available to teach her plants in AGM if she wishes.

**JKW Plot.** The re-emergence of Japanese knotweed in the plots is encouraging, for it is noticeably less vigorous and robust than in previous years. Many small areas on both the east and west sides do not have JKW stalks yet this year. There is virtually no JKW in the area left covered with black plastic. Recently the plastic has torn, leaving much of the area uncovered. This week **Sandra** will work with ten of her students to begin preparing the soil and sewing a special seed mix used for such locations. They will also dig out some JKW root crowns as time allows.

**Trail Maintenance.** The work to widen certain trails for fire trucks was completed last fall. On the boardwalks, some cross-planks have begun to warp and pull up from the stringers. The SC approved up to \$200 for new pressure-treated lumber to replace the planks as needed. **Mike** will manage the project and arrange volunteers.

**New Signage.** There is a need for signage to enable a person not familiar with AGM to get from the kiosk near Waldorf School to the kiosk above the nursing home parking lot. Sandy showed photos of the trail signs at Habitat which are designed to be vandal-resistant, effective, and minimalist in approach. **Don** will come up with a proposal for location of such posts. There was consensus that our signage should be minimal.

**Existing Sign.** The AGM sign on the way up the slope from the nursing home parking lot appears to need repair as the posts are rotting. It is leaning backward. [**Mike** will take care of this as part of the Trail Maintenance work above.]

**Bird Houses.** We have two owl/kestrel houses currently sited in garages. We wonder where they might be better placed and how. **Sandy** will investigate these questions.

**Meadow Restoration.** **David** will post a “save-this-date message” on the web site for the October 23 work day, 8:30am to 3:30pm. The SC will arrange for lunch for the volunteers: sandwiches, cookies, chips, water. **Don** agreed to do a survey of the flora in the entry meadow as baseline data before the restoration work begins, covering the area between the north and south trails. How far east from the kiosk will be covered is not yet clear. The methodology has yet to be decided, but data will need to be collected at least several times during this growing season. **Sandra** offered to help. **David** will look into some grant possibilities for the next stage.

The meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,  
Don Miller  
*With a few edits by David*