

Friends of Arlington's Great Meadows Steering Committee
Nov. 1, 2011
DRAFT Minutes

Present: David White, John Bartenstein, Sandy Vorce, David Markun, Jenny Ta, Sandra Ruggiero

Minutes: The minutes of Oct 4, 2011 were approved

Next Meeting: Tuesday, Dec. 7th at Sandy V's s at 7:30

Upland Meadow Restoration:

We reviewed the project to date to fill in our meadow volunteer team. We have greatly appreciated their work this past growing season. They have essentially kept the woody plants down in the meadow and have even tackled the Buckthorn that was along the trail on the north side of the restored area. Sandy V. advised that continued cutting of the oak and birch sprouts will eventually cause them to give up. Cherries can be more persistent. The young oak sprouts are good browse for meadow insects, so at Habitat they cut 1/3 of the area every year, which means sprouts are cut every third year. We also discussed the sumac, which can be a good winter food supply for the voles and moles. Continued cutting next season will eliminate the need to mow. There may be more germination of some of the grasses next year since some of the seed planted in May 2011 may need to go through a freeze before germinating. Jenny asked about how we would measure success. It was felt that openness and a diversity of habitat were our goals. David M. asked about future expansion of the meadow. It was agreed that we should wait to see how sustainable the current area is next growing season, after which incremental expansion might be feasible.

David and Jenny gave us feedback about their experience to date on the meadow task force. Our newspaper notice and word of mouth were the sources that informed them of the project. They recommended that there be a leader and a regular workday (perhaps monthly). Working together is more fun and safer. They felt the work was worthwhile particularly since it maintains the woodcocks' habitat. We agreed to reconvene the group in March or April and to continue to recruit volunteers. We discussed posting a sign on the kiosk acknowledging the work of this year's task force and providing contact information for other potential volunteers.

Storm Cleanup and Trail Maintenance:

Sandy V. offered to organize and lead a volunteer day to maintain the trails that needed enlarging to provide fire truck access and to work on cleanup from the recent storm. This will occur on Friday, Nov. 11 from 10-12am. Rain date will be Sat. Nov. 12.

John noted that there has been significant erosion coming down the hill by the chained entrance at the nursing home. We wondered if Mike might be able to help us resolve this.

Japanese Knotweed

We reviewed the history of this project to inform the new volunteers. We hope to recruit a second task force in the spring for this work to maintain the view along the bike path.

Tenth Year Annual Report of FoAGM

Sandra R. suggested writing an article on a keystone species. David W. mentioned that woodcock would be a perfect candidate. The valuable resources of AGM should be highlighted, including the vistas, the two major water bodies, the meadow restoration project, the boardwalks, the public walks and guided trips for school and scout groups. It is also habitat for many animals including fisher, red and grey fox, coyote, and porcupine. The beauty of the meadow throughout the seasons is certainly an unquantifiable resource.

The topic for the next meeting is looking forward.

We need to discuss the possibility of a loop trail, more signage, legal conservation protection, the idea of the land being managed by the land stewards sometime in the future, and the role of FoAGM going forward. David has invited Brian Rehrig of the Arlington Land Trust to attend this discussion. It was also suggested to bring photographs to the next meeting for the ten-year report.

Respectfully submitted,
Sandra Ruggiero