

Arlington's Great Meadows to undergo restoration

This upland meadow area in Arlington's Great Meadows showcases the encroaching sumacs and other trees. About 10 years ago this was an open area.

By Maria Chutchian/Staff Writer
[GateHouse News Service](#)

Posted Aug 19, 2010 @ 08:30 AM
Arlington, Mass. —

Arlington's Great Meadows in East Lexington will likely experience a small restoration of five acres of its upland area this fall.



Chairman of the Friends of Arlington's Great Meadows David White presented the proposal to the Board of Selectmen at last week's meeting, which was unanimously approved. He said the restoration will stop open grasslands from becoming overgrown with trees, which could affect various species of birds who live in the meadows.

Following an approval from the Lexington Conservation Commission, for which a meeting has not yet been scheduled, White said the project will begin with a handful of volunteers who will cut down as much of the growth as possible. He said at the moment, the trees have not reached the point where heavy equipment will be necessary and that the volunteers' work will hopefully prevent such action from being needed in the future. No trees will be uprooted and soil disturbance will be minimized, he wrote in a letter to the selectmen.

After the meeting, White said the project was recommended 10 years ago from a report done for the Conservation Commission. If the land is left to grow without human intervention, he said, it will eventually turn into woodlands.

"We're hoping to get to the Great Meadows before it gets out of hand," he said.

The proposed plan is expected to be low-cost, he said, due to the fact that the work will be performed by unpaid volunteers. Other than food for the volunteers and possible permitting fees, there are no major expenses factored into the project unless they find that the workload is too much to be done by hand, he said. In that case, the organization will take the next step and apply for grants to fund a larger-scale project.

The entire meadow is made up of 183 acres with about 75 percent wetlands. Arlington purchased the land in 1871 "to serve as a supplementary water storage area, but was only briefly used for that purpose," according to the Friends of Arlington's Great Meadows website.

The area that is considered uplands was home to the American Woodcock, which White referred to as a very popular and charismatic bird that residents like to observe in the springtime. The woodcock would be one of several types of birds that could potentially lose their home if vegetation is not cut back, he said.

Since the Friends of Arlington's Great Meadows was established in 2002, it has installed boardwalks and maintained basic plant control, White said.

For more information about Arlington's Great Meadows, visit foagm.org.

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