

Friends of Arlington's Great Meadows Annual Report for 2016

This report recaps the accomplishments of the Friends of Arlington's Great Meadows (FoAGM) in 2016 and updates happenings during the year. We wish to thank everyone who has helped in one way or another with these efforts.

Stewardship Activities

Maintenance and Outreach

This was the second year since the ACROSS Lexington paths were extended into East Lexington and included parts of AGM. The C loop connects AGM with the Arlington Reservoir, and the D loop connects north to the Whipple Hill Conservation area. The new signage makes navigation much easier and more people are discovering these open space areas.

<http://www.lexingtonma.gov/selectmen/committee/acrosslexington.cfm>

To introduce people to Arlington's Great Meadows we are sponsoring seasonal "Walk All Around AGM" events led by David White. In addition, many other groups have discovered AGM and have held nature walks there.

We also continued with regular trail and kiosk maintenance including replacing broken and rotting boardwalk treads.

Upland Meadow Restoration

In 2010, we undertook a project to restore the upland "entry meadow" at the northwest corner of AGM, which had been rapidly reverting to woodland, to its historical open condition.

With the assistance of a large group of volunteers, we cleared the area of trees and dense shrubbery. In the spring of 2011, we planted a mix of native wildflowers in the southwestern corner of the meadow.

Since that time, with the help of volunteers, we have worked to control invasive plants and the re-growth of woody vegetation by hand trimming. To maintain this lovely meadow, we have established an annual mowing program in the fall to avoid interference with nesting birds and to minimize the impact on wildflowers. We are now considering extending this restoration effort to an adjacent area where woodcocks have nested in the past.

Invasive plant control

We continue our efforts started in 2005 to clear and maintain an approximately 100-yard stretch of AGM along the Minutemen Bikeway that had become densely overgrown with the invasive plant Japanese Knotweed. Permanent eradication of this invasive is extremely difficult, particularly without the use of herbicides. However, over the last ten years, with volunteer labor and purely mechanical means, we have succeeded in keeping this area mostly knotweed-free, preserving a stunning view of the Meadows from the bikeway.

Financial

Donations to AGM in 2016 were higher than 2015, and expenses were deferred to future projects, so we continue to hold healthy cash balances. All our income was from the generosity of individual donors and private foundations, and was not dependent on municipal budgets, corporate funding, or fundraising events. FoAGM also continues its successful partnership with the Arlington Land Trust (ALT) as fiscal agent.

Summary of activity in FoAGM's fund balances as of the end of 2016:

2016 Income

\$ 2,514.97 in 18 donations

2016 Expenses

\$ 0.00 Total Expenses (meadow mowing in the fall but not paid until 2017)

Fund Balance as of December 31, 2016

\$ 14,757.57 FoAGM fund balance at beginning of the year

+ \$ 2,514.97 Net change

\$ 17,272.54 FoAGM fund balance at year-end

We thank our new and trustworthy regular donors who have contributed to the preservation of one of the largest natural open spaces in the Arlington/Lexington region. Those wishing to make a tax-deductible donation can make a check out to "ALT FoAGM Fund" and mail it to FoAGM, Box 492, Arlington, MA 02476, or use a credit card online at www.networkforgood.org (Enter "arlington land" in the search field and select state of MA. Select Arlington Land Trust and enter "FoAGM" as a designation.)

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If you would like to help out or just want more information please contact us at:

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