

Friends of Arlington's Great Meadows Annual Report for 2022

This report recaps the accomplishments of the Friends of Arlington's Great Meadows (FoAGM) in 2022 and reports on events during the year. We wish to thank everyone who has helped in one way or another with these efforts.

Stewardship Activities

Community Outreach

With the continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic we have not sponsored any public outreach events this year. We have instead encouraged people to take walks on their own while following appropriate safety precautions. However other organizations such as Arlington Community Education (ACE) and Citizens for Lexington Conservation (CLC) have sponsored events at AGM.

The Excel nursing home off Bryant Road and Emerson Gardens Road closed in the spring of 2019. A town house development at the site was approved by the Lexington Planning Board and is now completed. Because of the construction there was no public access to AGM at this popular location for two years. The project was completed in 2022. There are now new public parking spots and an emergency vehicle and public access path to AGM at this location.

New Website

We started work on a new AGM website in 2020 and after some delays got it up and running in late 2022. The old one used twenty-year-old technology which was quite ancient in internet terms. We now have a colorful and accessible site in WordPress. Alan and Elisabeth Carr-Jones constructed it for us, and Ellen Finnie is managing the content. Stop by and visit at www.FoAGM.org.

Maintenance

This was the eighth 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 and their connections. In 2021 new navigation maps were installed at many trail junctions.

We supervised four Arlington High School students doing some of their required volunteer hours in the AGM, cutting oriental bittersweet vines, for an average of 10 hours each. They've concentrated on cutting the thickest vines visible from the bike path and the trails from Brandon St. clockwise around the wetlands to the Lily Pond boardwalk.

We continued our efforts started in 2005 to clear and maintain a stretch along the Minuteman Bikeway that had become densely overgrown with the invasive Japanese Knotweed plant. 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 and in preserving a stunning view of the Meadows from the bikeway. We especially thank Greg Shenstone and others for the recent efforts.

We continued with regular trail and kiosk maintenance. The boardwalks built in 2005 have been showing some signs of age, with decaying treads. This May scouts from Arlington Scout Troop 313 replaced many rotting boards in the Finger Marsh and Lily Pond boardwalks. Thanks to Lorelle Yee and her husband Leslie for helping us to stage these efforts.



Scouts from Arlington Troop 313 replacing boardwalk treads.

After over 15 years, some of the boardwalks are showing signs of needing more significant repairs, especially in the Finger Marsh area. That will likely need to be done in a few years. We will reach out to our volunteers and the Citizens for Lexington Conservation who helped construct them originally.

Invasive plant control and native plant restoration work has also taken place this year in AGM at the end of Brandon Road. This effort has involved Scouts from Lexington and has been organized by Holly Samuels who is a Conservation Commissioner in Lexington. These efforts have also been coordinated with the Arlington Conservation Commission.

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.

To maintain this lovely meadow, we established an annual mowing program in the fall to avoid interference with spring nesting birds and to minimize the impact on wildflowers. That mowing did not happen in 2020 and 2021 because access was temporarily blocked by construction work at the former nursing home site. Mowing was accomplished in the fall of 2022 and the area is now open again.

Financial

Donations to FoAGM in 2022 were about the same as 2021. Reported expenses were for boardwalk repair work materials and the upland meadow mowing. We continue to hold healthy cash balances and plan to apply them to boardwalk replacement work and a proposed upland meadow expansion project. 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 2022:

2022 Income

\$ 2,960.00 From almost two dozen donations.

2022 Expenses

\$ 1,099.53 Total Expenses (for boardwalk repair materials and meadow mowing).

Fund Balance as of December 31

\$ 24,861.89 FoAGM fund balance at beginning of the year

+\$ 1,860.47 Net change

\$ 26,722.36 FoAGM fund balance at the end of 2022

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 contribute online at <https://arlingtonlandtrust.org/join-donate/> by selecting the Great Meadows Fund category.

Mike Tabaczynski, Financial Officer

Friends of Arlington's Great Meadows Steering Committee

David White, Chair

Mike Tabaczynski

Jeanette Voss

Michael Ratner

Ellen Finnie

Greg Shenstone

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

Email: info@FoAGM.org

Website: www.FoAGM.org

Version: 2/15/23