

The Arlington Land Trust is a community-based nonprofit organization established in 2000 to protect land in Arlington. As a membership organization, ALT accepts donations and welcomes volunteers to support its work.

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Ken Pruitt monitors the solar array on the roof of Ottoson Middle School.

On Being a Green Community

Arlington is recognized across the state as a leader in implementing green and sustainable policies and programs. This issue of ALT News profiles three people who are working in the forefront of these efforts for the Town: Ken Pruitt, Ryan Katofsky, and Charlotte Milan.

Ken Pruitt

In 2010, Arlington was one of the first municipalities to receive a Green Community designation from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Ken Pruitt, who filled a new Energy and Project Manager position for the Town in July 2017, reports that the Town remains a cutting edge leader in the sustainable communities field.

Ken comes to Arlington after 14 years in statewide leadership positions, most recently as the executive director of the Environmental League of Mass. (ELM),

and prior to that as the executive director of the Mass. Association of Conservation Commissions (MACC). He now splits his time between maintaining Arlington's existing green infrastructure and working on new energy-saving initiatives.

ALT: How did Arlington become a Green Community?

Ken: Before applying for the designation in 2010, Arlington worked hard to meet the State's five required criteria, which included a commitment to reduce energy consumption by 20% over five years and an agreement to

purchase energy-efficient vehicles for the municipal fleet. The Town also established zoning that allowed for by-right renewable energy facilities, agreed to expedite the permitting process for those facilities, and adopted the MA Building “Stretch Code,” which requires new buildings and major remodels to be more energy efficient than the traditional building code.

ALT: How does Arlington benefit from this designation?

Ken: The Commonwealth provides technical and financial benefits, and since 2010, Arlington has received nearly \$1.4M in Green Community grants. Among other things, the grants have enabled us to install LED streetlights, add solar power systems on six schools, and improve heating and ventilation systems in our municipal buildings. Along with the direct benefit of state funding, we have enjoyed significant financial savings by lowering our energy consumption by even more than the required 20%.

ALT: What are some new energy-saving initiatives that you are working on?

Ken: Most recently, I helped the Town update its vehicle fleet with two all-electric Chevy Bolts, and I am currently implementing other energy saving measures, including LED lighting upgrades at the Dallin, Brackett, and Ottoson schools, and gym air handler improvements at Dallin.

Perhaps most fascinating, however, is my work on an ongoing pilot project to replace old static facility monitoring systems with 21st century continuous Fault Detection and Diagnostic Software (FDD). The system evaluates whether building equipment is operating as efficiently as it could. Poorly functioning equipment, such as a heating boiler using more energy than it should, triggers a “fault” that alerts maintenance staff of a need for an inspection and repair. Without an FDD system, maintenance staff might never learn of the problem, resulting in significant wasted energy month after month, year after year. This software will allow very significant energy-use reductions in the future.



Ryan Katofsky

In his day job, Ryan Katofsky is vice president of industry analysis at Advanced Energy Economy, an organization of businesses working to make energy secure, clean, and affordable. Since moving to Arlington in 1999, Ryan has been actively involved as a volunteer with Sustainable Arlington for various “green projects.”

In 2012, as solar coach for the Solarize Arlington campaign, Ryan led a group of community outreach volunteers to encourage residents to install solar panels on their homes. He is also a member of the Energy Working Group, comprised of Town staff and volunteers, which has overseen many energy conservation projects, including installation of LED street lights, high-efficiency lighting and control systems in town buildings, and solar power systems on six schools. He is now involved in designing a more efficient high school as a member of the Arlington High School Building Committee.

ALT: How well do you think Arlington residents are doing to become more green and reduce our carbon footprint?

Ryan: My sense is that Arlington is doing quite well. We’ve been a state-designated Green Community for a number of years, which means the Town has been doing a lot that raises awareness about energy use and sustainability in the community. Arlington residents are pretty tuned in and are taking actions, both individually and collectively, to reduce energy usage and deploy renewable energy, mostly through rooftop solar panels.

ALT: In addition to driving hybrid and plug-in cars, taking public transportation or biking, and installing solar panels, what else can Arlington residents do to reduce their energy use?

Ryan: Everyone should have a free Mass Save energy audit. Even if you have had one in the past, it’s still free so you can have another one. Prices for solar and LED lighting have come down a lot. With the cooperation of the utility companies, homeowners can get incentives for buying higher efficiency heating and cooling systems, more insulation, and new windows. These changes will save money and make residents feel more comfortable.

ALT: If solar panels are not an option for your house or apartment, is there another way to “green up” your electricity consumption?

Ryan: Yes. Our state has mandated that all retail electricity suppliers, including our electric utilities, source a minimum of 12% (with an increase of 1% more each year) of their electricity from renewable sources. Since Massachusetts has a competitive electricity market, and by utilizing Community Choice Aggregation through a competitive process, Arlington was able to negotiate with a separate supplier, Dynegy, to provide its households with electricity containing 17% renewables. So by doing nothing different, at no extra cost, Arlington was able to increase renewable electricity by an extra 5%. Residents who want to be even more green, can “opt up” to increase their renewables share to 50% or even 100% by paying a small added cost per kilowatt-hour.

Charlotte Milan

Customer service and collaboration are key components of Charlotte Milan’s role as Recycling Coordinator in Arlington’s Department of Public Works, and they are also long-time values of a former social worker and community organizer with an MBA in nonprofit management from the Heller School at Brandeis University. After moving to Arlington in 1995, Charlotte got involved with Vision2020’s Diversity Task Group and later with Sustainable Arlington. She began her job at DPW in February 2012.



ALT: *How have you adapted your varied experiences into your role as the Town's top recycler?*

Charlotte: I think my volunteer work in Arlington helps me understand how important it is to work within the local government system to serve as a liaison among many constituencies, including town and state officials, local commissions and friends groups, nonprofits, and residents. I have to be able to understand all sides of often complicated issues and projects.

ALT: *What are some of the recycling challenges you have encountered over the past five years?*

Charlotte: While there have been changes in state regulations and even in the global recycling marketplace, Arlington residents have been very responsive to new initiatives. We now have weekly curbside pickup of trash, single-stream recyclable materials, and seasonal yard waste. The monthly Recycling Center that started in 2016 has been very popular for diverting other types of materials. We have long supported home composting of fruit and vegetable scraps and yard materials, and now we are starting a small pilot food waste drop-off program, all with the goal of reducing the weight of trash overall.

ALT: *Is Arlington keeping up with statewide trends in recycling and carbon emissions?*

Charlotte: The state's Solid Waste Master Plan for 2010–2020 outlines goals to reduce solid waste, which directly contributes to greenhouse gas emissions. Massachusetts

is bound by law to reduce emissions 30% by 2020 below 2008 levels and 80% by 2050. Through a blend of innovative policies, ranging from technical assistance to legislation to initiatives that support and increase reuse and recycling markets, the Plan addresses these challenges.

Arlington has a strong record as a designated Green Community, but we have to work constantly to find new ways to engage active participation. We want to encourage everyone to consume less and be more aware of packaging as part of the waste stream.

ALT: *What are some other ways you work with the community to raise this public awareness?*

Charlotte: With the Recreation Department and Natural Resources division of DPW we are doing more recycling in parks and playing fields. We also support many Friends groups on park clean-ups and removal of invasive plants. The Town now has a school sustainability coordinator who works with the school department and principals to develop a variety of recycling and food waste programs. And the Town website offers a lot of information about how to divert different kinds of waste.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Arlington Land Trust Friends,

As always, I extend a heartfelt thank you for your continued support of the Arlington Land Trust. Together with you—one of our 300+ individual and family members—our all-volunteer nonprofit has had another great year of working locally to make our community a better place.

Our success is always because of the volunteers and supporters of the Land Trust. Friends of Spy Pond Park's annual Fun Day is a fantastic example. Our ever-popular guided visits, made possible by ALT volunteers and the Arlington-Belmont Crew boats and drivers, brought nearly 150 people of all ages to Elizabeth Island. Although the Island is open to the public, not everyone has a boat or is comfortable taking their family in a rented canoe or kayak. The popularity of this event speaks to people's interest in the outdoor world and the importance of working to provide access to local resources.

Another place worth visiting is the former Symmes Hospital property on Summer Street, now Arlington 360, where ALT continues to oversee the protection of nearly eight acres of parks and wooded open spaces. Together with the Conservation Commission, ALT is ensuring public access to two parks near the top of the hill with fantastic views of Boston and the surrounding region.

I'm also pleased to announce that, thanks to a generous anonymous donation, ALT will be launching the Mugar Conservation Fund to help save the Mugar wetlands. See an update on the status of the proposed development project on page 7. Stay tuned for details.

In the spirit of building community, we're trying something new for our winter event! Please mark your calendar to join us on Tuesday, January 23rd, 2018 from 7–9 pm for the ALT Annual Meeting. This year it will be held at Common Ground Bar & Grill, 319 Broadway Ave. We'll be hearing from Arlington resident Kevin Knobloch, Senior Research Fellow at the Center for International Environment and Resource Policy at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. After the presentation we hope you'll stay for a while, socialize with other members, and enjoy some refreshments!

With gratitude,
Jennifer Ryan, President



Spy Pond Shoreline Project

Several areas along the Spy Pond shoreline will benefit from stabilization and restoration efforts with funding from two sources: Arlington's Community Preservation Act (CPA) program and the National Park Service's Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).

The Spy Pond Shoreline Stabilization Project, funded over two years by the CPA, is being managed by the Conservation Commission with Lela Shepherd, the Town's new Environmental Planner/Conservation Agent. The primary goals of the project are to preserve shoreline habitat, improve water quality, and manage access while addressing erosion. To ensure success of the project, the Conservation Commission is relying on community partnerships to educate the public and help control access to unauthorized paths that lead to bank erosion.

Phase 2 of this project is currently underway at four portions of the public shoreline: Spy Pond Park, Arlington Boys and Girls Club, Scannell Field, and Spring Valley Street. This phase involves botanical surveying, wetland delineations, soil sampling, and updating of the existing conditions plan. In the coming months this will result in shoreline stabilization improvements, new plantings, and educational signage.

A second project, funded by the LWCF, will cover work on the trails along the shoreline at Spy Pond Park and Scannell Field, viewing stations, and educational signage. Spy Pond Park is the main public access point to the pond. It is a heavily utilized park, which has a playground, public boat ramp, picnic area, and access to the Minute-man Bikeway. Scannell Field at Linwood Circle is adjacent to the park and includes a softball/little league field and viewing stands.

The LWCF funds will be matched dollar for dollar from the CPA funding received for the larger project. Phase 3 of the project, construction and implementation, will begin in the fall of 2018 and will conclude by mid-summer of 2019.

Spy Pond Fun Day

On Saturday, September 9, from 10 am to 1 pm, the Friends of Spy Pond Park and numerous collaborators, including the Arlington Land Trust, enjoyed one of its biggest Fun Day turnouts ever, in more than 15 years of events.

Musicians filled the park with a variety of musical genres, and a new painted bench by Anthony Vogel was dedicated as part of the Arlington Public Art program. Hundreds of kids made and launched bark boats, made sand paintings and nature crowns, caught bugs, tested water turbidity, created colorful paintings, colored nature scenes, got their faces painted, had their photos taken looking through giant fishes, and won prizes for doing Spy Pond History scavenger hunts, leaf hunts and puzzles with messages about caring for the park and the pond.

ALT sponsored boat trips to Elizabeth Island, with the able assistance of the Arlington-Belmont Crew Team, coordinated by coach Dave DeIuliis. Nearly 80 adults and 60 children were able to cross the pond and visit the island on a beautifully calm day. ALT volunteers and board members led tours along the island trail and helped people into the Crew's small boats at the park ramp and island landing site. Thanks to photographer Ram Subramanian for documenting the day and sharing his images here.



Hundreds of people attended Fun Day at Spy Pond Park, where they could take boat rides to Elizabeth Island and enjoy other activities.

Happy visitors head out to Elizabeth Island for a trail walk.



Photos by Ram Subramanian

Six Projects to Be Considered for CPA Funds in FY2019

After eight projects were submitted to Arlington's Community Preservation Act Committee this fall, six of them were selected for further consideration for the CPA funding in FY2019. Final decisions will be made after a public meeting in January, further committee deliberations, and a vote of Town Meeting to approve the committee's recommendations in the spring. Funding for this cycle of projects will begin in July 2018. Five of the six projects are continuations of previously funded CPA projects.

The application for continued work on the Jason Russell House follows completion of a master plan for repairs to the historic resource last year. The excellent report by the Arlington Historical Society spelled out immediate and long-term fixes for the house, and the most critical needs are included in this grant round.

The Housing Corporation of Arlington has submitted another grant for the Downing Square affordable housing initiative.

Another Arlington-based nonprofit, the Mystic River Watershed Association, has requested a second round of funding for a Mill Brook Linear Park Pilot Project at Wellington Park.

The Schwamb Mill Preservation Trust has requested funds to fix the windows and the envelope of the main building of the Old Schwamb Mill historic museum. Last year, the Trust received funds for the construction of a new roof on the barn, which is occupied by the Shaker Workshops retail furniture store.



Arlington Reservoir

David White

The Arlington Park and Recreation Commission has requested funds for the next phase of work on the Arlington Reservoir Master Plan. The first phase researched the needs for the Reservoir and its environs, and this continuation will include implementation of recommendations.

The new applicant this year is the Arlington Public Schools for work on the playgrounds at the Hardy School in East Arlington.

If you have any comments on these projects, please visit the Committee's page on the Town's website, and come to the public meeting to be scheduled in January. See <https://www.arlingtonma.gov/town-governance/all-boards-and-committees/community-preservation-committee>.



Class teacher Jeanette Voss (right) and woodwork teacher Andrew Freeburg (left) with Waldorf School students and the frame of the Bee Hotel.

Wild Bee Hotel at Arlington's Great Meadows

Third graders at the Waldorf School in East Lexington launched a special project last spring to provide housing for native solitary bees and other wild pollinators that do not live in large hives. Twenty students in Jeanette Voss's class built the structure during the year and installed it in nearby Arlington's Great Meadows in the spring.

The project combined the development of building skills, guided by the school's woodworking teacher Andrew Freeburg, and increased awareness of the many wild pollinators in our local environment that are critical to helping plants reproduce by spreading powdery pollen among plants of the same species. The children helped maintain the "hotel" and observed the insects, as they also learned broader lessons about stewardship of the natural landscape.

This project was supported with a mini-grant from the Friends of Arlington's Great Meadows through the Arlington Land Trust, its fiscal agent.

Thanks to you! The Arlington Land Trust thanks its members and friends for their generous contributions through November 2017.

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ALT Membership Renewal

If you have not yet renewed your ALT membership for 2018, please respond to our annual mailing, go to www.arlingtonlandtrust.org to download a membership form, or sign up at www.networkforgood.org to renew online. Thank you again for your continuing support. If you have any questions, please contact ALT at info@arlingtonlandtrust.org.

ANNUAL MEETING

Using Open Space to Store Carbon Emissions

Tuesday, January 23, 2018, 7–9 pm

Common Ground Bar & Grill, 319 Broadway, Arlington

Special Guest: Kevin Knobloch

Senior Research Fellow, Center for International Environment and Resource Policy at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University

Join the Arlington Land Trust at a new location for our Annual Meeting featuring a short business agenda and a presentation by ALT co-founder and past president Kevin Knobloch, a long-time Arlington resident.

Until January 2017, Kevin was Chief of Staff of the U.S. Department of Energy for nearly four years in the Obama Administration. Previously, he was President of the Union of Concerned Scientists for ten years and Director of Conservation Programs at the Appalachian Mountain Club. Kevin holds a Master in Public Administration degree from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and a Bachelor of Arts degree from UMass Amherst.

His presentation to the Land Trust will focus on national and international policies to address climate change, including his work on the Mid-Century Strategy, a program required of all the countries that signed the Paris Climate Accord. The strategy features an extensive discussion (and reliance upon) using agricultural lands and forest lands to store carbon and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Kevin will share his insights into how this approach is relevant to anyone who cares about the role of open space, including wetlands, farms and forests, in sharply decarbonizing our economies and planet. He will also connect this discussion to the concerns of regional, state and local land trusts.

Mugar Project Stalled

Proposed development of East Arlington's Mugar parcel is now the subject of a procedural lawsuit between the Town of Arlington and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The Town has sued the state over the withholding of information by a state agency—information that is needed to confirm the Town's claim that it has the right to enforce its bylaws, even in the face of a Chapter 40B housing proposal.

In December 2015 Arlington's Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) asserted that the Town has met one of the "safe harbor" thresholds available under Chapter 40B, that of having 1.5% of eligible land area devoted to affordable housing. If achieved, that status gives the Town more control over 40B projects and limits the developer's ability to override local zoning and wetlands protections.

Oaktree Development LLC, the would-be developer, disputed the Town's findings, and in a November 2016 decision the state Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) agreed with Oaktree. In early 2017 the Town appealed that decision to the next level, the Housing Appeals Committee (HAC).

The current dispute involves defining "land area devoted to affordable housing," which includes the area of 40B-eligible housing inventory under the jurisdiction of the state Department of Mental Health (DMH) such as group homes. In a classic Catch-22, however, the state agency that maintains the data has refused to release its records, citing privacy concerns. Arlington included an estimate in its calculations, but only with the real numbers can the land area be confirmed. The Town has sued to obtain the data, relying largely on a recent court decision resolving a similar impasse between the City of Waltham and the state, in Waltham's favor.

This court decision may take months, at which point the HAC hearing on the 1.5% claim resumes. The HAC decision, whenever it comes, cannot be appealed immediately to a court of law by either party. The full ZBA-led hearing process on the project itself would have to continue to a conclusion (approval, rejection, or approval with conditions). At that time, whichever party continued to dispute the 1.5% calculation could raise it as an issue in a court challenge.

Arlington Land Trust continues to advocate for the permanent protection of the Mugar parcel as conservation land. The site lies almost entirely in the 100-year flood plain, is subject to regular and significant flooding, and is a critical stormwater buffer for the surrounding neighborhoods of East Arlington.

UPCOMING EVENTS

EcoFest 2018: Greenward

Saturday, March 24, 2018, 10am–2pm
Arlington Town Hall
730 Massachusetts Avenue

This year's EcoFest celebration of our local environment and sustainability initiatives focuses on three topics:

- People and Healthy Ecosystems
- Land and Water Management
- Pests and Pollinators

This free event will feature about 30 topic-related vendors, activities and music for children and families, and a talk by Home Harvest owner Ben Barkan. Among the expected special exhibits will be electric bicycles and cars (Tesla and Chevy Bolt), reusable bags, and raffles of energy-efficient and bike safety products.

EcoFest is produced jointly by members of Sustainable Arlington and other volunteer groups, and staff in the Department of Public Works and the Planning Department. For more information, contact Charlotte Milan at the DPW: cmilan@town.arlington.ma.us.

28th Massachusetts Land Conservation Conference

"Leading Locally in a Changing World"
Saturday, March 24, 2018
Worcester Technical High School

The Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition's annual conference is a day-long training and networking event. It provides land trust board members and staff, parks administrators and advocates, watershed organizations, trails and friends associations, municipal commission members and others interested in land conservation with the information, skills, and connections they need to be most effective.

Workshops will address the following topics:

- Leading Locally in a Changing World and Emerging Issues
- Land Management and Stewardship
- Land Protection Tools and Techniques
- Legal, Tax and Compliance Matters
- Organizational Management and Fundraising
- Urban & Community Conservation

For more information, visit the website at www.massland.org.

ALT Annual Meeting
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7-9 pm
Common Ground Bar & Grill
319 Broadway, Arlington
"Using Open Space to
Store Carbon Emissions"
Kevin Knobloch
Center for International Environment
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