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**A Conservation Plan
for the
Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea
Conservation Initiative**

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The Mt. Agamenticus Conservation Initiative and Partners

The Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative (MTA2C) strives to protect a wide array of ecological resources and community values in the fastest growing county in Maine. The MTA2C Initiative is a coalition of non-profit organizations and governmental agencies that work together on a landscape scale conservation project in an area of approximately 48,000 acres that encompasses the York River, the Braveboat Harbor Estuary, Gerrish Island and the largest intact coastal forest between Acadia and the New Jersey Pine Barrens. Coalition partners are:

**The Nature Conservancy
Maine Coast Heritage Trust
Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge
Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
The Trust for Public Land
York Land Trust
Great Works Regional Land Trust
Kittery Land Trust
York Rivers Association
Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve**

The region is endowed with large unfragmented forests, rare and exemplary natural communities, and the greatest diversity of threatened and endangered species of any region in Maine. Oak forests, vernal pools, salt marshes, tidal rivers and dune grasslands are among the rich ecological features found here. These natural communities provide habitat for a wide variety of plant and animal species such as migratory birds, anadromous fish and rare turtles. The Gulf of Maine coastal waters from Gerrish Island in Kittery to Cape Neddick in York have been designated as Essential Fish Habitat by the National Marine Fisheries Service for 30 species of fish and mollusks.

The Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea landscape is also rich in human history. The land, rivers and sea have provided local inhabitants with lumber, farmland and fish for over 300 years. Careful stewardship has sustained many generations without destroying the ecological systems on which their livelihoods have been built.

Conservation Plan Synthesis

This document is a combination of two separate conservation plans developed by working groups of MTA2C partners with extensive community input. The northern plan that includes the Mt. Agamenticus and the Tatnic Hills was coordinated by staff at the Maine Chapter of The Nature Conservancy and is available at www.tnc.org. The southern plan, coordinated by Mark Ward, Ecological Consultant, includes York Pond, the York River, Braveboat Harbor and Gerrish Island. It is available from Roger Cole, Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative Coordinator, at MntAtoSea@comcast.net.

In this merged and condensed document, sections of each plan have been combined to provide a whole that covers:

- the broad vision,
- the purpose of the plan,
- the methodology used
- tables of conservation values, treats and goals, and
- specific recommendations for towns, land trusts, water districts, land owners, state and federal agencies and others.

The Vision

The shared vision of the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative is to protect a network of priority conservation lands from Mt. Agamenticus through the marshes, fields and forests buffering the York River and Brave Boat Harbor estuary to the largely undeveloped forest interior and coastline of Gerrish Island.

Purpose

The purpose of the plan is to guide and focus conservation efforts throughout the MTA2C area through 2008, building on more than 30 years of conservation work on and around Mt. Agamenticus and Braveboat Harbor. The plan was developed with support and input from over 80 organizations, individuals and municipalities, so that the final document reflects a community vision for the future of the focus area.

Methodology

The plan follows the 5-S Framework for Site Conservation, developed by The Nature Conservancy, which involves the identification of: 1) *systems* (conservation targets), 2) *stresses*, 3) *sources of stress* (threats), 4) *strategies*, and 5) *measures of success*.

The plan was developed using a planning process in which a group of core conservation values (systems/targets) are identified. The major threats (stresses) to these targets are evaluated and strategies to reduce the threats and achieve conservation goals are developed. Conservation goals set minimum standards that must be achieved if efforts are to be deemed a success.

The table on the following pages lists six primary Conservation Targets as well as other conservation values captured under the broader headings. Threats ranked as Very High or High are included under each conservation target and conservation goals are in the right-hand column. Strategies were developed to combat threats. These strategies are listed as specific recommendations, beginning on page 7.

CONSERVATION TARGETS & THREATS	OTHER CONSERVATION TARGETS/ VALUES CAPTURED	CONSERVATION GOALS
<p>SIGNIFICANT CONTIGUOUS FORESTLANDS, UNFRAGMENTED FORESTED UPLANDS AND FRESHWATER WETLANDS</p> <p>HIGHEST THREATS</p> <p>LAND CONVERSION, ESPECIALLY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT</p> <p>ROAD BUILDING & ROAD IMPROVEMENTS</p> <p>INCREASING LAND VALUES</p> <p>IMPROPERLY INSTALLED OR MAINTAINED CULVERTS</p> <p>INVASIVE SPECIES</p> <p>POOR RECREATIONL PRACTICES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non harvested forest (unmanaged) wilderness • Undeveloped/no houses (unfragmented) • Habitat and connectivity for wildlife (moose, bear, bobcat, mink, fisher, otter, and turtles, etc) • Natural events/ecological events • Scenic views • Ecosystem diversity • White pine-red oak (matrix) forest type • Open space • Sensitive wildlife species • Rare turtles (spotted & Blanding’s turtles) • Mole salamanders • Ribbon snake • Ringed bog haunter • Partners In Flight bird species • (Black- billed cuckoo, Baltimore oriole, scarlet tanager, wood thrush) • DIFW deer wintering areas • White oak–red oak forest • Rare plants (White wood aster, scarlet oak, etc.) • Freshwater wetlands vernal pools • Freshwater swamps • Peat lands • Rare plants (Spicebush, etc.) • DIFW waterfowl and wading bird habitat • Air quality 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) To protect remaining unfragmented blocks of upland forests and freshwater wetlands in order to preserve exemplary and rare natural communities, rare plants and rare or sensitive wildlife species known/expected to occur there. 2) To preserve corridor connections, where present, between blocks to allow animal movement and maintain genetic variability. 3) Increase knowledge of forest stand types, distribution and condition, and populations of animal species dependent on large forested areas. 4) Treat and maintain the Mt.A -Second-Third Hill and water district areas as one large block (~ 12,000 acres) of contiguous forestland. Enhance and maintain connectivity between blocks. 5) Create functional corridors of contiguous forest between water district lands and the York Pond area and between the Tatic Hills and the core 12,000 acre block. 6) Establish ecological reserve lands, set aside from intensive recreation and forestry, where appropriate. 7) Keep all large (>500 acres) unfragmented blocks intact so as to promote viable populations of all native species, particularly those that are wide-ranging or area sensitive. 8) Manage forestlands to reflect a natural range and proportion of age classes and types; maintain existing mature or “near old growth” patches unharvested and buffered from human use. 9) Prevent development of improvement of roads within the planning area that would increase traffic volume or speed. 10) Officially discontinue town roads that are currently unimproved within unfragmented blocks.

<p style="text-align: center;">CONSERVATION TARGETS & THREATS</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">OTHER CONSERVATION TARGETS/ ALUES CAPTURED</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">CONSERVATION GOALS</p>
<p>WATER QUALITY AND QUANTITY</p> <p>COASTAL AND TIDAL COMMUNITIES</p> <p style="text-align: center;">HIGHEST THREATS</p> <p>LAND CONVERSION , ESPECIALLY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT</p> <p>ROAD BUILDING, ROAD IMPROVMENTS PAVING OF ROADS AND PARKING AREAS</p> <p>INCREASING LAND VALUES</p> <p>IMPROPERLY INSTALLED OR MAINTAINED CULVERTS, DAMS & BRIDGES</p> <p>RESTRICTONS TO TIDAL FLOW</p> <p>INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES</p> <p>POOR RECREATIONAL PRACTICES</p> <p>POOR FORESTRY PRACTICES</p> <p>STORM WATER RUN-OFF</p> <p>USE OF PESTICIDES, FERTILIZERS AND HERBICIDES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surface and groundwater quality, • Drinking water reservoirs • Riparian habitats • Swamp darter, anadromous fish runs • Aquatic plants (e.g. featherfoil, pondweed, beak rush) • Spartina saltmarsh • Migratory birds • Partners in Flight species • Saltmarsh sharp-tailed sparrow • Nelson’s sharp-tailed sparrow • Prairie Warbler • Rare plants (saltmarsh false-foxglove, etc.) • Fish spawning areas • DIFW tidal wading birds and waterfowl habitat • Beaches and dune grasslands • Rare plants (sea-beach sedge) • DIFW shorebird habitat 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) To protect exemplary and rare coastal and tidal natural communities and associated rare plant occurrences. 2) To protect coastal and tidal habitats for rare and sensitive species. 3) Maintain self-sustaining populations of rare aquatic plants and native fish, including the rare swamp darter. 4) Reduce non-point source pollution in the area. 5) Expand water-quality monitoring efforts. 6) Maintain or improve water quality in all streams and on the York River estuary. 7) Keep invasives out of all waterbodies in the greater Mt. Agamenticus area. 8) Conserve all available land within the KWD and the YWD watersheds. 9) Perpetuate a clean and continuous source of water for local residents while providing for ecological needs as well. 10) See that a sustainable water budget/usage plan is developed to address current and future water needs of the communities.
<p>RARE OR SENSITIVE HABITAT PATCHES</p> <p style="text-align: center;">HIGHEST THREATS</p> <p>LAND CONVERSION, ESPECIALLY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT</p> <p>ROAD BUILDING & ROAD IMPROVMENTS</p> <p>INCREASING LAND VALUES</p> <p>IMPROPERLY INSTALLED OR MAINTAINED CULVERTS</p> <p>INVASIVE SPECIES</p> <p>POOR RECREATIONL PRACTICES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oak-pine-hickory forest, Chestnut oak woodland, White oak-red oak forest, • Sensitive species (cavity and ground nesting birds, interior forest dwellers, dennig sites for area-sensitive species) habitat. • Atlantic white cedar swamp, pitch pine peatland, perched hemlock, black gum swamp • Rare plant populations (esp. beak rush, dogwood, featherfoil, Chestnut oak) • Rare dragonfly habitat 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Increase knowledge of location and current health of location and heath of rare plant occurrences. 2) Protect viable examples of all S1 and S2 plants or natural communities where they occur. (S1 & S2 plants or natural communities are determined by the Maine Natural Areas Program for rare species and natural communities that are critically imperiled in Maine. 3) Maintain or improve condition of all S1 & S2 plants and exemplary natural communities. 4) Monitor and prevent the spread of invasives, and eradicate where possible or necessary to protect the native flora and fauna. 5) Increase knowledge of the location and health (MDIFW rank) of rare wildlife species. Protect multiple viable examples of the rare dragonflies, New England Bluet, Scarlet Bluet and Ringed Boghaunter.

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<p>EARLY SUCCESSIONAL HABITAT</p> <p>BLANDING’S TURTLES & VERNAL POOLS</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>HIGHEST THREATS</u></p> <p>LAND CONVERSION , ESPECIALLY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ROAD BUILDING & ROAD IMPROVMENTS</p> <p style="text-align: center;">INCREASING LAND VALUES</p> <p style="text-align: center;">IMPROPERLY INSTALLED OR MAINTAINED CULVERTS</p> <p style="text-align: center;">INVASIVE SPECIES</p> <p style="text-align: center;">POOR RECREATIONAL PRACTICES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New England Cottontail • Blue-winged Warbler • Black Racer • Box Turtle • Wood frogs, spotted and blue-spotted salamanders and fairy shrimp • Wetlands • Rare dragonflies (Ringed boghaunter and ebony boghaunter) • Spotted and other turtles, ribbon snakes • Connectivity with upland habitat 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Increase knowledge of the habitat requirements of species dependent upon early successional vegetation 2) Increase knowledge of the availability and suitability of habitat within the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea area for supporting viable populations of these species. 3) Build on existing habitat and increase connectivity by working with a broad range of landowners to ensure that the land is managed appropriately. 4) Maintain 5-7 habitat patches of 30 – 50 acres each for New England Cottontail and other early successional species. 5) Increase population of Blandings turtles from current estimate of ~ 250 individuals. 6) Provide adequate habitat protection to support a minimum viable population of Blandings and spotted turtles, especially within known priority habitat areas and travel corridors. 7) Reduce road mortality of turtles 8) Protect multiple viable examples of the rare dragonflies: New England Bluet, Scarlet Bluet and Ringed Boghaunter. 9) Maine current population and habitat conditions to support the breeding population of Ringed Boghaunter where they exist. 10) Identify, map and protect significant vernal pools in the area and increase public awareness of these important resources.

CONSERVATION TARGETS & THREATS	OTHER CONSERVATION TARGETS/VALUES CAPTURED	CONSERVATION GOALS
<p style="text-align: center;">WORKING LANDSCAPES & TRADITIONAL SUSTAINABLE USES OF THE LAND AND WATERWAYS</p> <p style="text-align: center;">HIGHEST THREATS</p> <p>LAND CONVERSION , ESPECIALLY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT</p> <p>ROAD BUILDING & ROAD IMPROVMENTS</p> <p>INCREASING LAND VALUES</p> <p>IMPROPERLY INSTALLED OR MAINTAINED CULVERTS, DAMS & BRIDGES</p> <p>RESTRICTONS TO TIDAL FLOW</p> <p>POOR CRECRETIONAL PRACTICES</p> <p>POOR LOGGING PRACTICES</p> <p>POSTING OF PRIVATE LANDS</p> <p>USE OF PESTICIDES, FERTILIZERS AND HERBICIDES</p> <p>STORM WATER RUNOFF</p> <p>INVASIVE SPECIES</p> <p>OVERHARVESTING</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural lands • Working forests/tree farms • Hunting • Commercial shellfish/finfish fisheries • Recreational shellfish/finfish fisheries/clamming • Freshwater fish, anadromous fish (smelt, alewives, etc), striped bass • Passive recreational boating (kayaking, canoeing, sailing, motor boating) • High water quality • Game and waterfowl hunting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passive recreational uses • Foot-travel • Horse-riding • X-C-skiing • Snow-shoeing • Birding • Informal network of recreational trails 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Maintain and support continued traditional sustainable economic and recreational practices on the land. 2) Endorse timber management as an appropriate land use. 3) Preserve a significant portion of the agricultural resource base particularly in the Brixham-East Eliot area, the Route 91-York River corridor and the lower Great Works-Wichtrot Hills area... Ensure no net reduction of acreage currently in use as working farms. 4) Identify and help keep existing working farms and forest viable. Promote broad awareness of their significance to the community. 5) Guarantee that lands currently in use as working forests and open to hunting are not irreversibly converted to other land uses. 6) Ensure continued availability of a system of formal and informal trails and recreational access appropriate for multiples uses and manage to reduce impacts to each other and to sustain the ecological integrity of the area. 7) Maintain official authorized access points and integrate facilities such as parking, toilets and water fountains to match appropriate trail use and density. 8) Keep Mountain Road unpaved, narrow and functional as part of the trail network. 9) Develop and maintain a long-term stewardship management program that is effective and adequately funded.

CONSERVATION TARGETS & THREATS	OTHER CONSERVATION TARGETS/ VALUES CAPTURED	CONSERVATION GOALS
<p data-bbox="87 365 506 478">CULTURAL LANDSCAPE AND HISTORIC STRUCTURES, FEATURES & VIEWSHEDS</p> <p data-bbox="191 533 402 558"><u>HIGHEST THREATS</u></p> <p data-bbox="116 604 480 655">LAND CONVERSION , ESPECIALLY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT</p> <p data-bbox="162 680 435 730">ROAD BUILDING & ROAD IMPROVMENTS</p> <p data-bbox="149 747 448 772">INCREASING LAND VALUES</p>	<ul data-bbox="539 445 1000 806" style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic structures & remnants • Rural character of communities • High quality aesthetic features • Rural character • Dirt roads • Historic/archaeological sites <ul data-bbox="636 621 1000 806" style="list-style-type: none"> Known pre-historic archaeological sites Sensitive areas for potential early colonial/pre-historic archaeological sites Specific important early colonial sites (eligible for National Register of Historic Places.) 	<ol data-bbox="1032 361 1552 840" style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Make the communities more aware of their rich local history 2) Encourage local history to be recorded and made publicly available. 3) Identify, prioritize and develop a protection plan for important historical and cultural resources, including the Punkintown historic area and the Seven Wonders of the Tatnics. 4) Protect quality of identifies scenic views from being altered or diminished. Specific viewsheds are listed in both northern & southern plans. 5) Create trails to provide access to these identified scenic, historical and cultural sites, including particularly a trail to the Orris Falls overlook.

Recommendations

This section of the plan lists the strategies developed during the planning process as recommendations for various groups that would likely help to implement the plan and conserve the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea region. These recommendations are the top priorities for immediate action – the first steps to protect a landscape in southern Maine.

Please note that these recommendations, which are not listed in any particular order, go beyond the tried, true and relatively non-controversial strategy of buying conservation land. Please remember that what follows are suggestions of how your town, state agency or other organization can help conservation efforts --- or at the very least not hurt them. They are meant simply as – and hopefully will be taken as – good advice from some very committed and thoughtful citizens. That said, only a sustained and coordinated effort with full cooperation from the town, state and federal governments will lead to lasting conservation of the remarkable landscape that is the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea region.

Recommendations for the towns of York, South Berwick, Eliot, Ogunquit, Wells and Kittery

- **Make programs, policies and decisions that are consistent with efforts to conserve the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea landscape in your town. Follow the maxim of “First Do NO Harm”. Selectmen could consider passing a resolution supporting this conservation plan.**

- **Don't pave the remaining dirt roads.**
- **Improve maintenance of dirt roads to limit paving projects. Consider removing paving from existing paved roads.**
- **When roads are developed within the MTA2C region, take extra precautions to mitigate impacts on both water quality and wildlife** taking into account the potential for speed and increased development in potentially fragile areas. Work with the state to limit road projects.
- **Examine comprehensive plans for language on road building practices.**
- **Inventory town roads, particularly dirt roads, and ensure that they are properly abandoned when appropriate.**
- **Consider a study of impervious surfaces** in each town to address storm-water run-off threat.
- **Map existing informal trails, with landowner permission.**
- **Support the effort to secure a new Land for Maine's Future Bond.** The citizens of the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea region have benefited greatly from this program.
- **Establish a means to fund open space purchases for the town,** such as land bond or impact fees. Town funds can often be matched with private and state funds to provide one to four dollars for every town dollar.
- **Follow state guidelines for comprehensive plans** especially when doing the inventory resource portion of the plan. Good resource data will help guide future development where it is best suited.
- **Use Beginning with Habitat (BwH) maps** when considering resources, development issues and when subdivisions are proposed. BwH is a habitat-based landscape approach to assessing wildlife. Keep the BwH maps physically out in the open in the Code Enforcement and Planning Offices. For more information, please visit www.beginningwithhabitat.org.
- **Designate town lands in the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea region for conservation.**
- **Consider using this plan as the basis for comprehensive and open space plans** for the lands within the MTA2C region.
- **Consider undertaking a "cost of services" study and a graphic build-out, based on existing zoning** to educate residents.
- **Cooperate in regional open space planning and protection efforts.** Initiate dialogue between neighboring towns and with Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission.

- **Plan regionally**, with other towns, especially when coordinating and enforcing shoreland zoning.
- **When developments are proposed:**
 - **request significant open space/habitat areas be incorporated into the plans**, especially where such plans would otherwise sever wildlife corridors or block off traditional woods roads.
 - **If vernal pools are present**, follow the recommendations of the *Best Development Practices: Conserving Pool-Breeding Amphibians in Residential and Commercial Developments in the Northeastern United States* by Calhoun and Klemens (2002), available from Maine Audubon Society at www.maineaudubon.org
- **Develop tax structures** (e.g. through open Space Assessment protocols) to reward large-tract landowners for maintaining their land in an undeveloped state.
- For towns in the Mt. Agamenticus area, **participate in the Mt. Agamenticus Steering Committee and help implement the Mt. Agamenticus Trails plan.**
- **Learn about invasive species.** Do not introduce invasive plants onto town-owned land. Learn about native alternatives and how to identify and control invasive species that may be present.
- Work with the York Rivers Association and others to **assess and publicize the number and usability of access points to the water**, including access points for existing clam flats.
- **Consider researching the implications of the “colonial ordinance”** that provides legal rights to fish, fowl and navigation and limits ability to prohibit access to “great ponds.”
- **Remediate barriers to fish passage** in conjunction with the Maine DMR, DOT, CCA and local groups, such as the York Rivers Association.

Recommendations for Real Estate Brokers

- **Provide information to new homeowners** regarding chemical use, shoreland buffers, etc. plus information on Maine’s tradition of open access to the outdoors as well as the responsibilities of those people who hunt, clam or simply enjoy walking on someone else’s property.

Recommendations for local Historical Societies

- Consider working with local land trusts to **collect oral histories and other forms of research on the unique history and culture of the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea region.**

Recommendations for Land Trusts

These partners will:

- **Prioritize unfragmented blocks and expand the acreage of existing conserved blocks, emphasizing priority habitats and connections to other conserved blocks.**
- **Continue participating in the Mt. Agamenticus Steering Committee and implementing the Mt. Agamenticus trails Plan** to ensure continued public access and enjoyment compatible with conservation of the area's natural values.
- Consider working with other local groups to **develop trail plans for lands not within the MTA trail plan area.**
- **Continue to negotiate fee and easement transactions with willing landowners** with the goal of protecting at least 14,000 contiguous acres in the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea region. **Purchase or seek donations of buffer easements on riparian zones** in developed areas.
- **Continue raising private and public funds for land acquisition.**
- **Attempt to increase allocation of federal funding to the project** from NOAA, EPA, USFWS, NRCS and HUD, among others, in coordination with these agencies and the Congressional Delegation.
- **Attempt to increase the level of commitment of the Maine Department of Transportation to the region.** Encourage Transportation Enhancements funding for land acquisition and make MTA2C a receiving area for mitigation funds.
- **Actively work to ensure that a new Land for Maine's Future Bond is passed.**
- **Work to increase/secure funding from MDIFW** for acquisition and management in general, and for its program at Mt. Agamenticus in particular.
- **Encourage towns to inventory town roads and ensure that they are/were properly abandoned when appropriate.**
- **Grow each local land trust's capacity to acquire and manage lands** by maintaining staff and building endowments.
- **Encourage towns to use this plan when developing open space and comprehensive plans.**
- **Work to ensure that state agencies and the towns share the best available natural resources data** and that the data is available to key decision makers and planners.
- **Participate in regional conservation and planning efforts** to protect significant lands outside of the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea region.

- **Be proactive in motivating local, state and federal agencies** to carry out their share of other recommendations in this plan.
- Work with the Mt. Agamenticus Steering Committee, Land for Maine's Future Board and Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to **establish a stewardship endowment for state-owned lands at Mt. Agamenticus.**
- **Inventory and protect key farm and working forest lands.** Consider purchase of development rights.
- **Purchase development rights or docks for water access for fishing**
- **Work with landowners to protect access to clam flats.**
- **Gather resources from the Maine State Planning Office and Maine Audubon Society that show roads as a primary cause of sprawl.**
- **Work with landowners to heighten their awareness** of the conservation values on their land.
- **Make landowners aware of the tax incentives for conservation.**
- In cooperation with local historical societies, **seek resources to collect oral histories and other forms of research on the history and culture of the MTA2C region.**
- **Consider creating a mitigation "land bank".**
- **Seek EPA funding for assessment/management plans** in conjunction with appropriate organization such as Wells NERR or the York Rivers Association.

Recommendations for the Mt. Agamenticus Steering Committee

- Host a web page that includes a listing of the landowning committee members and their respective rules and regulations.
- Continue the role of providing land management and other technical assistance to local land trusts and other partners of the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea effort.

Recommendations for Water Districts

- Continue acquisition of land within reservoir watersheds.
- Participate in the Mt. Agamenticus Steering Committee.
- Consider giving or selling conservation easements to ensure permanence of protection in case other water sources/treatment options become more attractive or economically viable.

Recommendations for State Agencies

- **#1 Align programs and policies to be consistent with protection efforts in the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea region** and with this conservation plan. Avoid projects with adverse impacts on the area, provide funding and resources to assist in conservation efforts and serve as a sponsoring agency for federal funds.
- **#2 Use the best available resource data** (e.g. from the Maine Natural Areas Program, Beginning with Habitat and MDIFW, among others) when making decisions and formulating plans and policies. This could include sharing GIS (Geographic Information Systems) data layers and encouraging various GIS “shops” and staff members to work closely together. Consider extending this working relationship to the towns as well.
- **Develop an inter-agency program that will identify and monitor invasive species of plants, animal and pathogens.** The program may support a volunteer network dedicated to finding invasives before they become permanently established. Use existing resources to address specific species, including mechanical or biological controls, as appropriate.
- ***The Governor:* With the concurrence of Department Commissioners, consider issuing an Executive Order** directing all state agencies to act in a manner consistent with MTA2C protection as recommended in #1, above and to integrate resource information as recommended in #2, above.
- ***Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife:***
 - **Work with the land trusts, Mt. Agamenticus Steering Committee and the land for Maine’s Future Board to establish a stewardship endowment for state-owned Mt. Agamenticus lands.** Build the endowment using both state and private dollars, if possible. Ensure that the funds will be used only for the intended purposes, as with the Baxter State Park endowment, for example.
 - **Consider designating** a limited number of acres in South Berwick near York Pond’s “dragonfly” site as “**Essential Wildlife Habitat**” under the Natural Resources Policy Act.
 - **Complete the inventory classification and designation of Significant Vernal Pools** to provide them legal protection under the Natural Resources Policy Act.
 - **Consider modestly expanding the MDIFW focus area to include earlier successional habitat.** The area affected would be near the current Wynn-Hilton King’s Grant Land Preserve held by the York land Trust. Use the Landowner Incentive Program to work with landowners to manage land to maintain habitat for New England Cottontail and other early successional species.
 - **Work with land trusts to increase resources dedicated to the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea region.** This may include policy work by the land trusts to gain additional funding for MDIFW and/or the set-up of a Mt. Agamenticus fund.

- **Continue inventory and monitoring work for state-listed species**, such as the current turtle and dragonfly surveys. Where appropriate, make data available to the land trusts, towns and other partners for planning purposes and to track progress.
 - **Consider accepting more easements on land outside of MDIFW focus areas** to make it easier for land trusts to receive Land for Maine's Future Bond (LMFB) funds and to make this land available to match LMFB funds.
- **Maine DOT:**
 - **Consider providing Transportation Enhancement funding for land acquisition**, as has been done in Colorado and Iowa, and continue using these funds for the mitigation of turtle and other wildlife mortality on roads.
 - **Ensure implantation of MDOT's best management practices for fish passage and work with towns to remove barriers to fish passage.**
 - **Maine Turnpike Authority: Avoid construction of an additional interchange between York and Wells.** An interchange would bring rapid development in the heart of the Mt. Agamenticus area.
 - **Department of Agriculture: Consider mapping existing farms and working forest lands in the MTA2C area**, as well as land in current use programs.

Recommendations for Private Landowners

- Work with a conservation organization to ensure long-term protection for your land through purchase, easement, option, bargain sale or other means.
- **Become a champion for this plan and for conservation efforts** with local citizens and town officials.
- **Use *Forestry Habitat Management Guidelines for Vernal Pool Wildlife in Maine* and *Best Development Practices: Conserving Pool-Breeding Amphibians in Residential and Commercial Developments in the Northeastern United States* by Calhoun and Klemens (2002), available from Maine Audubon Society, to implement management of vernal pools on your land.**
- Especially for those new to the area, continue the Maine tradition of open access to the outdoors by keeping your land open for hunting and other forms of recreation. ***Please don't post.***
- **Consider long-term forest management, coupled with sale of development rights to a conservation entity, as an alternative to land development for producing income.**
- **Consider enrolling your land in the forestry or open space programs.**

- **Seek “Landowner Incentive Program” and “Private Stewardship Program” funds to help manage and protect rare and endangered species on your lands.**
- **Become a member of a local land trust** and contribute financially to their conservation efforts.
- **Learn about invasive species and native alternatives.** Do not introduce invasive plants on your land. Learn how to identify and control species that may be present.
- If you are actively harvesting trees on your land consider **“green” certification or “smart wood” certification through the Small Woodlot Owners Association.**

Recommendations for the Congressional Delegation and for Federal Agencies

- **Seek federal funds through NOAA’s Coastal Estuarine Land and Conservation Program and from other NOAA sources for land acquisition along critical streams, the York River and the Wells and Great Bay National Estuarine Reserves’ boundaries.** New Hampshire and Maine delegations could work together to obtain federal appropriation for projects within Great Bay and the Wells Reserve boundaries – and consider combining these project areas into one larger initiative.
- **Identify Mt. Agamenticus and the entire MTA2C area as a receiving area for EPA and FHWA/Maine DOT mitigation funds.** Seek changes in policies and procedures so that funds can be spent more easily on acquisition of threatened lands, as well as for on-site reclamation.
- **Support funding for U.S. EPA 319 grants to help implement watershed plans.**
- **Focus U.S. Department of Agriculture’s NRCS funding for protection and stewardship programs within the MTA2C area.**
- **Consider including parts of the MTA2C focus areas in future boundary expansions of USFWS Rachel Carson Wildlife Refuge,** making federal funds available for willing seller acquisition.
- **Support additional funding for the “Landowner Incentive Program” and “Private Stewardship Grant Program” and focus support within the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea region** to provide for the purchase of long-term management agreements and easements, and help pay for the management of rare or endangered species on private lands.
- **Continue to work with the land trusts to secure additional resources for the MTA2C region.**

What Can You Do?

If you are a public official, citizen, employee of an organization or agency, please take a look at the above recommendations and see if they make sense for you. Consider being a “local champion” for the area within the circles where you live and work.

You may also stay informed and contribute to implementation of these proposed conservation actions by joining the York Land Trust, Great Works Regional Land Trust, the Kittery Land Trust, local historical society and/or town conservation commission. You may also be able to contribute financially to local land trust campaigns, enabling them to do more conservation. Volunteer for town committees, local organizations, or the Mt. Agamenticus Steering Committee.

If you hear that legislation has been introduced at the state or federal level that would help implement aspects of this plan (e.g. increased funding for Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife), support it through phone calls and letters to your representatives. Thank the Land for Maine’s Future Board, who have committed to this project over the long haul and provided more than \$2 million, for having the vision to encourage landscape scale conservation at Mt. Agamenticus. Support future land bonds, both local and statewide.

If you are a teacher or other educator, consider using Mt. Agamenticus and other conserved lands with public access as your outdoor laboratory and teaching center. Contact the land trusts, develop curriculum, take children onto the landscape and shown them chestnut oak, salamander eggs, deer sign and listen to frog choruses.

Most of all, go visit Mt. Agamenticus. Ask the land trusts which other protected lands you can visit. Walk the trails and enjoy the views. Take a canoe or kayak up the York River, into Braveboat Harbor or explore other rivers and streams. Understand what a remarkable region we live in and what it means to have this incredible place so near.

Then, do all you can to help protect it!