

# An Evaluation of the Mt. Agamenticus To The Sea Conservation Initiative

Interim Assessment of the Coalition, Capital Campaign, and Community Engagement  
(2001 - 2005)

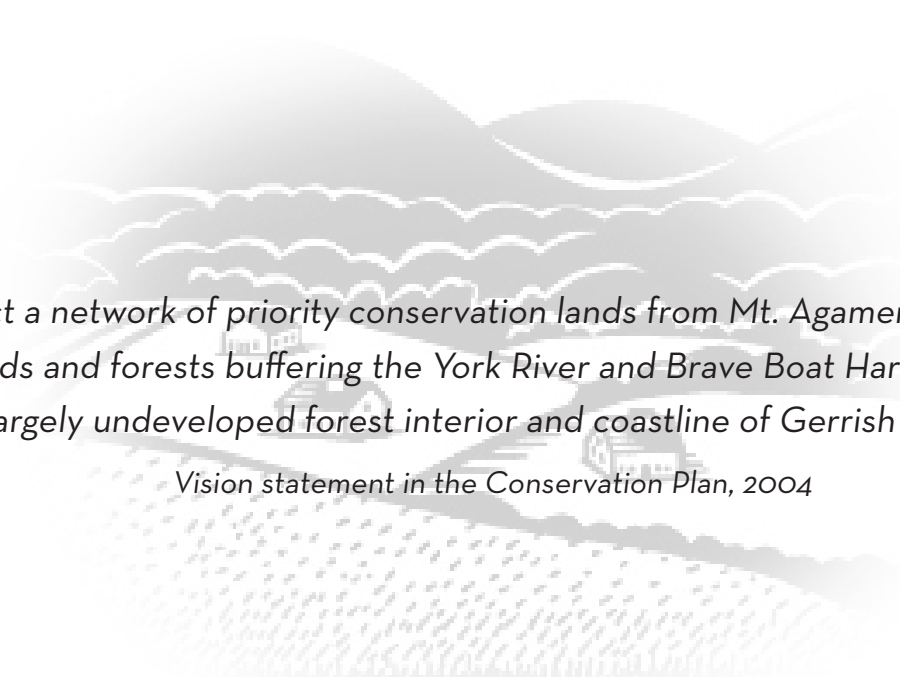


... to protect a network of priority conservation lands from Mt. Agamenticus through the marshes, fields and forests buffering the York River and Brave Boat Harbor estuary to the largely undeveloped forest interior and coastline of Gerrish Island.

*Vision statement in the Conservation Plan, 2004*

Martha West Lyman  
Quebec-Labrador Foundation/Atlantic Center for the Environment  
August, 2005

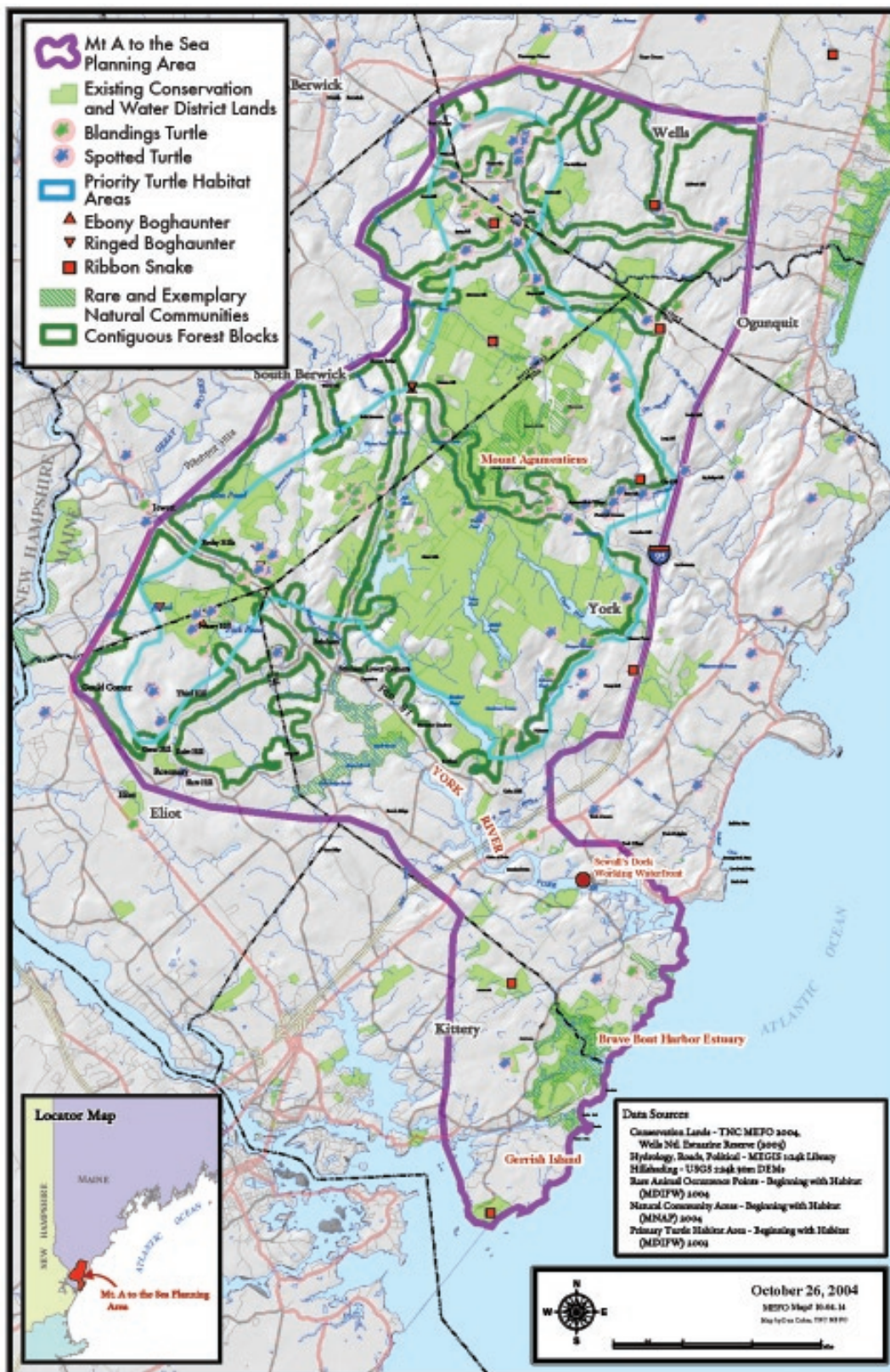
With support from the Cabot Family Charitable Trust, Maine Community Foundation, and Roy A. Hunt Foundation



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# MT. AGAMENTICUS TO THE SEA PLANNING AREA AND SELECT RESOURCES



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## PREFACE

The Opportunity to conduct an assessment of the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative offered an especially timely point at which to document and describe the added value of a collaborative effort working at the interface of human populations and ecological systems at a landscape scale. It also provided a chance to shine a spotlight on some of the most daunting challenges that we face as we practice the art of conservation – whether as volunteers in our towns, staff of non-profits and public agencies, or funders seeking to deploy valuable resources.

- The pressing demands on our natural resources from growing populations and expanding development calls for more proactive and substantive engagement at the community level in sustaining the carrying capacity of the town's natural resource systems and providing long-term stewardship of the town's culture and character. What is the capacity of towns? How can they be engaged and what resources do they need to implement proactive and substantive conservation measures?
- With limited organizational and financial resources for conservation, collaborations and partnerships have become new operating systems for conservation. What does an effective Coalition look like? How does it operate?
- Advances in conservation science reinforce the rationale for regionalism and conservation work at the landscape scale. How can we work at the landscape and local scale simultaneously?
- The availability of conservation science, and new technologies promote a higher standard of rigor in conservation planning while at the same time offering new opportunities to expand public awareness of and support for conservation. How can conservation science and new technologies be applied most effectively?

Initially, I had hoped to determine if the whole (the Initiative) is producing results that are greater than the sum of the parts (individual organizations and towns). At the first meeting I attended of the Coalition's Oversight Committee, though, one member said that the value was in the parts not just added together, but working together. "...it's in the synergy", she concluded. My challenge has been to capture and express the force produced by a synergy I believe comes from the confluence of a number of factors:

*The Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea region can be defined by significant ecological systems and values.*

*The region enjoys a long history that is characterized by a culture of conservation and stewardship.*

*The region is facing significant development pressures.*

*The rationale for conservation in the region is founded on good science.*

*The vision of the Initiative keeps the Coalition focused with its "eye on the prize".*

*The Coalition is powered by the members' passion, expertise, and energy.*

*The Coalition created and maintains a large bank of social capital in the form of networks, trust, and cooperation.*

It has been a privilege to work on this project. The region is as magnetic as the compelling reasons for its conservation. Coalition members, town officials, funders and interested individuals have been most generous with their time as well as in sharing information in a forthright and candid way that has helped to capture what is at work in the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea region.

Martha West Lyman  
August, 2005

## DEFINITIONS

**Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative** is the formal name for a broad effort to conserve the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea region by protecting land, preserving a working landscape, and expanding a stewardship ethic and conservation practices among individuals, organizations and municipalities.

**Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Coalition.** The word coalition literally means, “growing together”. The Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Coalition is a coordinated group of individuals and organizations that have come together specifically for the purpose of advancing the goals of the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative.

**Collaborative:** Collaboration means, “working together”. The word collaboration and collaborative is used throughout the report to reflect the process by which the work of the Initiative is being carried out both within the Coalition and between individuals, Coalition partners, municipal, state and federal agencies, and private philanthropy.

**Capital Campaign.** The Capital Campaign is a structured project of the Coalition to raise \$10 million for land conservation projects in the region defined by the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative.

## SUMMARY

**Purpose of the assessment:** The assessment was commissioned as a midpoint review of the Initiative to determine the added value of the ten member Coalition in achieving conservation goals in the region and to assess the role of the Coalition in expanding the capacity of the six towns to assist in advancing the Initiative's conservation goals.

**Assessment process:** The assessment was conducted primarily through the review of information and data supplied by the Coalition including the Conservation Plan, internal organizational documents, two interim reports (2002 and 2003), an operations and capital campaign plan, foundation proposals, interviews of coalition members, funders, and town officials, and visits to the region, each of the towns, and some of the priority conservation sites.

### I. Analysis of the added value of the Coalition

The analysis included a review of the capacity, mission and priorities of the individual organizations, a comparison of the relationship of organizational missions to that of the Initiative, and selection of four indicators that suggest added value:

- the efficacy of conservation
- efficiency of conservation
- expanded resources for conservation
- the expanded capacity of individual organizations.

### II. Analysis of the role of the Coalition in engaging the six towns

The analysis consisted of:

- understanding the challenges facing each town's priorities and
- the degree to which towns have active conservation programs (using indicators such as a town funds for conservation, open space committees, conservation commissions, links between planning and zoning boards and conservation committees, conservation in master plans and ordinances)

In order to analyze the impact of the Coalition, interviews were conducted to:

- assess the visibility of the Initiative
- knowledge by town officials of the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative
- knowledge by town officials of the Conservation Plan and
- use of the resources of the Coalition.

### III. Analysis of the coalition as a replicable model

The concept of a coalition working at a landscape scale is not new. Analysis of a successful one offers an opportunity to determine what characteristics are unique and what components are replicable.

### IV. Recommendations for final evaluation

The campaign is designed to sunset in 2006 with no specific sunset requirement for the Coalition or the Initiative. At a minimum, there should be an evaluation of the campaign to determine the efficacy of the campaign in achieving the goals of the Conservation Plan.

Further evaluation of the role of the Coalition in implementation of the community-based planning and development program is recommended. Proposed metrics for evaluation and potential case studies are included.

## SUMMARY FINDINGS

The Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative can be characterized as a capital campaign for land conservation at a landscape scale and a program to promote and implement community-based conservation planning and development by the six towns within the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea region. The Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Coalition is a coordinated group of ten individual organizations representing public (federal and state) and private (local, regional and national conservation non-profits) interests that exist to support both efforts.

The Initiative has had notable achievements. It has established an operating model for a land conservation capital campaign at the landscape scale. It has confirmed the important role of conservation planning and development within communities. It has expanded the metrics to evaluate a successful conservation effort from simply “bucks and acres” to incorporate a suite of conservation-related objectives such as protection of unique ecological features, expanding awareness of the region, and promoting a conservation and stewardship ethic.

The principal challenges facing the Initiative are two-fold: defining the future role of the Coalition, and making the transition from a capital campaign for land conservation to a community-based planning and development program.

### **Accomplishments:**

- Practiced more effective conservation
- Practiced more efficient conservation
- Expanded the capacity of the individual organizations to undertake conservation projects and to steward conserved resources
- Created social capital while conserving natural capital
- Stimulated action within the six towns to coordinate and advance conservation planning

The Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative can be characterized as a capital campaign for land conservation at a landscape scale and a program to promote and implement community-based conservation planning and development. . .

**Lessons learned:**

- A shared vision acts as a central organizing mechanism for a coalition
- Creating a flow of monetary benefits from the Coalition to individual coalition members and from individual members back into the Coalition provides tangible evidence of the value of the Coalition
- Fundraising within coalitions presents significant challenges
- Successful coalitions are flexible and adaptable
- Establish clear goals, accountability, and operating protocols early in the Coalition's development
- Setting priorities based on science and available resources is a difficult, but ultimately invaluable process
- Social capital is an essential asset in successful coalitions
- Volunteer time and expertise is both undocumented and undervalued

**Challenges and opportunities:**

- Realizing the full potential of the Coalition
- Defining the future of the Coalition and the Initiative at the close of the capital campaign
- Expanding interest and participation in achieving the conservation goals of the Initiative
- Making the transition from a capital campaign for land conservation to a community-based conservation planning and development program

The principal challenges facing the Initiative are two-fold: defining the future role of the Coalition, and making the transition from a capital campaign for land conservation to a community-based planning and development program.

## INTRODUCTION: WHY MT. AGAMENTICUS TO THE SEA?

The unique and valuable characteristics of the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea region compel an analysis of the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative because it is precisely those characteristics that present not only a clear and science-based rationale for conservation, but perhaps more importantly, an insight into the role they play in inspiring the passion of the people in the region to work collectively and cooperatively for its conservation.<sup>1</sup> The Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea region extends over 48,000 acres of land in southern Maine and commands attention for many of its extraordinary features.

**Ecological:** The region encompasses the largest intact coastal forest between Acadia National Park and the New Jersey Pine Barrens. It hosts a unique ecosystem where southern and northern forest types converge resulting in the most biologically diverse region of the state with the largest number of threatened and endangered species and natural communities. The estuarine system of the York River Watershed may be the most ecologically diverse coastal drainage of its size in the entire Gulf of Maine. And a large (800A) unfragmented tract of land in Kittery has been identified by the Maine Natural Areas program as having areas of statewide significance as habitat for diverse species of plants and animals.<sup>2</sup>

**Historic and cultural:** The region has supported human settlement since prehistoric times that has been exemplified in historic times by “careful stewardship [that] has sustained many generations without destroying the ecological systems on which their livelihoods depend”.<sup>3</sup> This has included sustainable economic activity and practices in forestry, agriculture and fishing as well as formal conservation efforts such as the protection of water supplies in the late 1800’s, the protection of the summit of Mt. Agamenticus in the 1970’s, the formation of the York Land Trust and Great Works Regional Land Trusts in 1986, the formation of the Kittery Land Trust in 1988, and the protection of approximately 9,000 acres surrounding the mountain by the late 1990’s.

There exists a rich civic culture in the region that includes networks of new comers, intergenerational families, town organizations and celebrations, and broad participation by town residents in town government and civic life.

**Demographics:** The Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea region is experiencing some of the most intense development pressures in the state of Maine. The region, a mere 65 miles from Boston, and 40 miles from Portland, continues to attract new residents that create demand for services, housing and schools which in turn exerts economic pressures on land values.

York County, for example, is the fastest growing county in Maine. According to the latest US Census York County has a growth rate four times the state average (Maine – 3.5% 1990-2000; York County – 13.5% 1990-2000). The population of the town of York increased over 30% from 1990-2000.<sup>4</sup>

In the face of these demographic changes, the challenge is how to protect the unique ecological systems and biological diversity, manage growth within the carrying capacity of the natural systems, and ensure the culture of the communities and the infrastructure of a working landscape. These are the challenges that the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Coalition assumed and why the Coalition responded with an effort of the scale and complexity of the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative.

<sup>1</sup> The Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea “region” has value for study by regionalists and bioregionalists. While an extensive analysis of the Initiative as a regional effort is not within the scope of this assessment, it is important to note that there is ample material for a case study on how a group defined a “region”, how the boundaries/lines were drawn and what characteristics (e.g. natural features, ecological values, social and cultural factors and pressing issues such as development threats) engage individuals in working on a regional scale.

<sup>2</sup> Description of impact of ecological values taken from Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative materials.

<sup>3</sup> Description of impact of human settlements taken from Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative materials.

<sup>4</sup> Demographic information taken from Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative materials.

## History of the Coalition

The Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative officially began in October, 2001 with three bold organizations that had just come off a successful campaign to raise \$3.2 million to protect an additional 2,000 acres around the summit of Mt. Agamenticus (Mt. A Challenge). They looked around and saw that there was more conservation work to be done. They had the scientific rationale for expanding conservation efforts beyond the immediate Mt. Agamenticus area. They recognized that a collective effort would be in their best interests. They were able to convince seven other partners to work in a coordinated and collaborative manner to protect a network of conservation lands in the region that reflects the diversity of landscapes and relationships of people to the land. To accomplish this goal, they set out to promote a broad conservation and stewardship ethic in the region, they set a fundraising target of \$10 million for land conservation, and identified the need to engage the six towns of Eliot, South Berwick, York, Kittery, Ogunquit and Wells in an active role in implementing conservation strategies consistent with the conservation goals of the Initiative.

The Coalition consists of the original ten-members: The Nature Conservancy Maine Field Office, The York Land Trust, Great Works Regional Land Trust, Kittery Land Trust, York Rivers Association, Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve, US Fish and Wildlife Service - Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge, Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, Maine Coast Heritage Trust and the Trust for Public Land. Coalition members bring a rich complex of skills and resources to the Initiative including: science, conservation planning expertise, GIS and technical mapping capacity; “on the ground agents” for fundraising and landowner contacts, knowledge of local leaders and town governance; fund raising, accounting, administrative and management expertise; and state and federal political influence.

**Organizing the Initiative:** During the course of the first year (2001 - 2002), the group met informally, once a month. They created a name, The Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative, developed relationships between Coalition members, and articulated the goals of the Initiative:

- To conserve a network of land in order to protect the unique ecological features of the region, a diversity of landscapes and working land;
- To increase local capacity to manage those lands in perpetuity;
- To expand public awareness of the region and instill an ethic of conservation and stewardship within the region;
- To work with communities and government at all levels to develop strategies beyond conservation to strengthen the ecological and community fabric of the six-town area; and
- To develop and demonstrate a model for how ten organizations can form a successful partnership.

Coalition members brought important skills and commitment to the table including significant financial, organizational and development experience, the belief and conviction in regionalism and an understanding of the value that a collaborative effort would bring to building the capacity for conservation in the region, a willingness for conciliation and an openness to accept less for the greater good. Their character, vision, energy and commitment have kept the momentum focused and directed.

Critical features of this phase include **leadership** and **building relationships**.

**Leadership:** It is clear that the initial organizing phase was successful due in large part to the leadership of the Coalition Chair, a small “working group” of Coalition members, and the active participation of two important large conservation non-profits. The Chair knew the skills of Coalition members and what would be required to achieve the goals of the Initiative. He recognized the need for a leader that was both willing and able to ask people “to give and give a lot”. In addition to coordinating the early meetings of the Coalition, the Chair spent no fewer than ten hours a week facilitating meetings, communicating with individual partners, and raising money. In addition there was a small “working group” that had the expertise, time and trust of the group. This group “kept things going” by drafting vision statements, writing grant proposals, raising money and preparing draft organizational materials. Finally, the active participation by two large conservation non-profits provided expertise, technical resources, and stature to the fledgling Coalition.

**Building relationships:** The strength of this Coalition relies in large part on its infrastructure of relationships. There was significant attention paid early in the organizing phase to establish and build the relationships within the Coalition. The Chair spent considerable time in conversation with and connecting partners within the Coalition. The process of organizing the Coalition, deciding upon a name, and articulating a vision required meetings, discussion and engagement between partners that further built relationships within the Coalition. A potluck supper, held in April, 2001 brought 50-60 interested individuals together to hear about the Initiative. It was a seminal event in the organization of the Coalition. As one member remarked “ it offered a chance for a discussion about land among neighbors...the landscape view [was] beginning to develop”. The dinner brought representatives from the boards of member organizations of the Coalition together to meet face to face for the first time. It was a chance to present a vision of and for a region. And, it created the excitement, energy and the relationships that would be required to carry out that vision.

**Building Capacity:** From 2002 through 2003 the Coalition expanded its organizing and planning phase. It is well to note the importance and value of the skills and capacity of individual members of the Coalition and existing interconnected networks (members served on the Boards of partner organizations, were engaged in other civic organizations and municipal boards in each of the six towns) within the Coalition which have been important not only in the development of the Coalition, but also in advancing the work of the Initiative. It is worth noting also, that during this period, the Coalition, while representing ten organizations, had yet to reach its stride. Much of the work was still being initiated and carried out by two or three “leaders” who have exceptional skills, capacity, interest and drive. While it hadn’t yet represented the full capacity of the Coalition, it was clearly what was needed at the time and created a sense of progress and achievement.

As important as the information in the progress report is, the role of The Nature Conservancy Maine Field Office and The Maine Coast Heritage Trust in establishing a process of accountability and some benchmarks against which the new Coalition could judge its own progress.

During this period, the Coalition worked to:

- **Define the region:** The Coalition articulated the boundaries of the region based on conservation science available at the time and agreed to “flexible boundaries” that could be adapted as relevant science-based information became available.
- **Secure financial resources:** From the outset, the Coalition’s leadership recognized the need for intensive fundraising. The initial focus was to secure individual commitments from the Boards of each Coalition partner as well as from individual donors and foundations. The Coalition requested funds from the Nature Conservancy Maine Field Office and Maine Coast Heritage Trust to support operating costs. The Nature Conservancy Maine Field Office and Maine Coast Heritage Trust laid out several criteria upon which a decision to release funding would be based.
  1. The Coalition would have to conduct a feasibility study to confirm the Coalition’s capacity to conduct a \$10-15 million campaign.
  2. The Coalition would have to show significant and tangible contributions to fundraising by Coalition members.
  3. The Coalition would have to present a strategy for detailing fundraising benchmarks.
  4. The Coalition would have to present evidence that the individual land trusts had analyzed the impact of the campaign on future staffing and capacity to steward protected properties and continue land protection in the future.
- **Complete successful land protection projects:** The Coalition recognized the value, particularly for the local groups, of completing successful land conservation projects early in the Initiative as a way of demonstrating the benefits of the Coalition and Initiative.

In December of 2002, substantial progress was reported to The Nature Conservancy Maine Field Office and Maine Coast Heritage Trust in the following areas:

- **Organizational structure:** The Coalition established an Oversight Committee, operating committees including Finance, Communication and Public Policy, Development, and three land protection committees.
- **Feasibility study:** The Coalition raised the funds for a feasibility study from each of the three land trusts (\$6,000 each), and set a time frame for completion of the study.
- **Organizational capacity:** The York Land Trust was named as fiscal agent and agreed to house the operations of the Initiative. As a result, the York Land Trust undertook a staff reorganization to strengthen its capacity to take on these responsibilities. A job description was developed for a three- year staff position to coordinate the Coalition.

As important as the information in the progress report is, the role of The Nature Conservancy Maine Field Office and The Maine Coast Heritage Trust in establishing a process of accountability and some benchmarks against which the new Coalition could judge its own progress.

By 2003, the Coalition had matured. It had raised \$2.3 million to support the Coalition and for land acquisition from individual donors and foundations including the Island Foundation, Davis Conservation Foundation, Greater

Piscataqua Community Foundation, and the Horizon Foundation. It had received important operating support from The Nature Conservancy Maine Field Office and the Maine Coast Heritage Trust (\$175,000) that enabled the Coalition to hire a coordinator and a campaign director. The fundraising successes allowed the Coalition to complete projects, secure office space and expand organizational capacity of the Coalition as well as set up and fund a Capacity Fund and Stewardship Fund to support the three local land trusts.

Again, as important as the accomplished benchmarks were, the process by which each was achieved marked important points in the maturation and efficacy of the Coalition. For example, the conversations that were held to determine who sat on the Oversight Committee, how the boundaries were to be determined, how land conservation priorities would be established, how to assign fundraising oversight, responsibility and accountability occurred as the need was determined. These conversations were possible due in part to the growing level of trust that had developed among the Coalition partners, and in part to the persistent recognition that they were working towards shared goals based on a shared vision. Many difficult conversations that might have ruptured another coalition did not, because members kept their focus – kept their “eyes on the prize”.

**Achieving programmatic goals:** During the period from 2003-2005, the Coalition made significant programmatic progress.

- **The Conservation Plan** signaled an important milestone for the Coalition and the Initiative. The Plan is based on a disciplined process that used science and good data. It represents a broad vision for the region that synthesizes input from over 80 individuals, organizations and municipalities. The Plan details the conservation targets and provides guidance for the Coalition to reach its goals. The process of developing the Plan further reinforced the collaborative energy of the Coalition and focus of the group on a common set of goals.
- **Land conservation** projects have resulted in the protection of 1,232 acres of land as of August 2005.
- **Fundraising** efforts raised an initial \$2 million dollars in the “quiet phase” of the campaign (through 2003). The capital campaign was publicly launched in June, 2005, and by August, 2005, \$7.5 million (land and cash) of the \$10 million goal of the capital campaign had been raised from individuals and foundations, as well as local/state/federal funding sources.

Many difficult conversations that might have ruptured another coalition did not, because members kept their focus – kept their “eyes on the prize”.

- **Expanded work within the six towns** has been made possible with a portion of full-time coordinator's position that now serves as community liaison between the six towns. This has resulted in expanded awareness of the Initiative, increased interest on the part of the towns in the goals of the Initiative, and the participation by all six towns in a regional planning effort linked to the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative led by the Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission (SMRPC).
- **Expanded capacity of land trusts** has resulted from the development of strategic plans, fundraising workshops, completion of successful land conservation projects, as well as monetary support from the Capacity Building Fund.
- **Political support from the Governor, congressional delegation, town councils and boards of selectmen** has promoted the Initiative, given it broader visibility and secured important federal, state and local resources.

**Transition:** While the Coalition remains intensely focused on the work of the capital campaign, there is increasing attention being directed towards the six towns in an effort to advance the community-based conservation planning and development program. Additionally there have been preliminary discussions about the future of the Coalition once the capital campaign is complete. There is some concern that burnout (as a result of the intense work required by the capital campaign), other organizational commitments and priorities of Coalition partners, and discussions about the future of the Coalition will divert the focus and attention of the Coalition before the completion of the capital campaign.

## I. ADDED VALUE OF THE COALITION

**The Coalition has resulted in more efficient conservation.** The Coalition membership represents a complex set of skills, resources and capabilities. By bringing them all to one table and providing coordination the Coalition has

- Facilitated shared responsibilities, risks and work
- Allocated and directed resources more effectively
- Achieved more targeted and more efficient use of conservation dollars

**The Coalition has accomplished more effective conservation.** The scientific, technical, and management capabilities of Coalition members and other organizations has resulted in

- Land conservation goals based on conservation science and linked to a Conservation Plan
- Proactive rather than reactive land conservation
- Specific recommendations for planning and development strategies for implementation by municipalities

**The Coalition has expanded the resource pie for conservation.** As a result of the collaborative effort of ten organizations working both on the ground and at a landscape scale, the Coalition has

- Received more funding from a broader spectrum of funding sources than any one of the individual organizations could attract
- Secured \$2.8 million in federal, state, and municipal funding to support planning and land acquisition as of September 2005
- Engaged municipalities in funding conservation

**The Coalition has engaged communities in conservation planning at a landscape scale.** The Conservation Plan emphasized the important role of towns and the need for action by towns in achieving the goals of the Initiative. Although this component is in an early stage, there are signs of engagement by the towns:

- All six towns contributed \$2,000 each as a match for a regional planning grant from the Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission.
- The town of Ogunquit passed a resolution in support of the goals of the Initiative.
- There is anecdotal evidence that the work of the Coordinator to meet with town managers, conservation commissions and various civic groups has had notable effects. The towns see themselves as part of a larger effort and feel less isolated in addressing planning and conservation challenges.

Some of the most challenging issues related to coalition building are related to establishing recognized values to the individual member.

- There is evidence that opportunities are available for measurable progress at the local level. The town of Wells, for example, has incorporated some of the recommendations and relevant language from the Initiative's Conservation Plan into the town's Comprehensive Plan. The town of Kittery has a newly established Open Space Committee, and the town of Ogunquit is working closely with a Coalition partner to protect the remaining open space in town.
- The town of York allocated \$200,000 in 2004 and \$150,000 in 2005 for specific land protection projects related to the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative, where other efforts, prior to the Initiative, to secure municipal funds for land protection had failed.

## Lessons learned:

### **A shared vision serves as an organizing catalyst**

The process of defining a shared vision and setting priorities establishes a mechanism for cooperation, facilitates discussions that build trust among Coalition partners, and provides consistent focus to the work of the Coalition.

### **Establishing organizational protocols requires a delicate balance of timing, need for structure, and the readiness of Coalition members to engage in the required discussions to design protocols**

The Coalition benefited in some ways from an "evolutionary" approach to building structure, operating protocols and policies as they were required. They were able to tackle difficult and sometimes contentious issues (such as policies for sharing donor prospect information) because members saw the need for such discussions. Difficult conversations were facilitated by a growing bank of social capital in the form of trust and a growing commitment to the vision as the Coalition matured. In hindsight, however, some members have reflected that certain protocols, such as a Fiscal Agent Agreement and a Fundraising Agreement should be in place as the Coalition is organized in order to clarify responsibilities and create accountability.

### **Creating a flow of monetary benefits from the Coalition to individual Coalition members and from individual members back into the Coalition provides tangible evidence of the value of the Coalition**

Some of the most challenging issues related to coalition building are related to establishing recognized values to the individual member. The exchange of monetary benefits is one of the most effective means of articulating that value. The contribution by each land trust to the feasibility study and the contributions from board members of individual organizations, coupled with the development of a Stewardship Fund<sup>5</sup> and a Capacity Building Fund<sup>6</sup> to benefit individual organizations is precisely the kind of exchange of value that solidifies a coalition. While the Coalition has structured impressive mechanisms for the exchange of

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<sup>5</sup> The Stewardship Fund, as of August, 2005, has accumulated almost \$170,000. There has been no distribution of the Fund as a result of a consensus decision by the Coalition to allow the fund to build over a longer period of time.

<sup>6</sup> The Capacity Building Fund distributed \$78,000 in 2004 (\$26,000/land trust) and will make a distribution at the end of 2005. The Fund, as of August, 2005, has accumulated \$24,000.

benefits, issues emerge that require on-going refinement of the concept and mechanisms. For example, there is some discussion about the need to refine the Stewardship policy to provide more specific direction on the use of the Stewardship Fund for lands protected under the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative.

### **Fundraising with a coalition is exceptionally challenging**

The issues related to fundraising include the age-old question of who is going to raise the money, agreeing on development goals and targets, and sharing information related to prospective donors. Complicating the challenge, however for this Coalition, has been an uneven capacity among Coalition members. Some of the organizations have sophisticated development capacity, access to wealthy donors, and skilled boards that are experienced in fundraising. Other organizations are new to fundraising, have limited capacity, interest and/or fundraising experience on their boards, and access to few potential donors. For this Coalition, a particularly interesting challenge has been different organizational cultures as they relate to sharing donor information. Some organizations demonstrated remarkable openness and generosity with their lists while others were reluctant to reciprocate. Though the Coalition has proven to be quite adaptable in accommodating the varying capacities and cultures, there is ample room for the Coalition to mature and create greater fundraising synergy.

### **Successful coalitions are flexible and adaptable**

The challenge of bringing multiple individuals and organizations together is one of integrating different personalities, organizational cultures and operating systems. This requires time, trust, patience and conciliation. The process of setting protocols and procedures can help, but as mentioned above, requires skillful attention to timing, need and readiness.

### **Establish clear goals and accountability early in the coalition's development**

While there is obvious rationale for setting clear goals and accountability early in the development of a coalition, the benefits extend beyond the obvious. The required benchmarks established by The Nature Conservancy Maine Field Office and the Maine Coast Heritage Trust prior to contributing cash to the Coalition not only established an early rigor to the Coalition's work, but also promoted a sense of accomplishment that built the confidence of the Coalition.

### **Recognize the importance of personalities and networks in creating value within a coalition**

The power of individual personalities offers significant value to a coalition as catalysts, facilitators, and often the "glue" for a coalition. The Mt. Agamenticus Coalition further demonstrates the importance and value of networks that exist between individuals serving on the Coalition as well as on boards of member organizations, between individuals serving on the Coalition and serving on local boards in any of the six towns. These networks facilitate communication and coordination, create opportunities for attracting or sharing resources, and facilitate the integration of different cultures and operating systems.

### **The value of volunteer time and expertise is not well documented or expressed**

The Mt. Agamenticus Coalition misses an opportunity to fully express its value by simply assuming the contribution of volunteer time and expertise. Keeping track of the time donated by volunteers as well as the skills and experience they bring to the table offers an opportunity both to calculate volunteer time and expertise, as well as to understand the resource value of that time and expertise. The full complexity and richness of the contribution, however, may be more effectively illuminated through stories that may offer a more meaningful calculus of the contribution.

## Opportunities and Challenges

One of the challenges of building coalitions is integrating different organizational cultures and blending organizations with varying capacities. This Coalition is no different. The Coalition, for example, has had to work through the fundraising challenges posed by organizations with vastly different sets of experience, skills, donor pools and interest; and different approaches to sharing information related to donor lists. The Coalition has had to work through issues related to differing expectations and to define the responsibilities of each organization.

Additionally, while the work of the Coalition is focused on a specific region with defined boundaries, the geography of all the Coalition partners extends beyond the boundaries of the Initiative. This has resulted in challenges related to organizational priorities, commitment, available time and resources, and in varying degrees depending on the overlap of organizational boundaries with the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea region.

The characteristics of this particular Coalition, however, have allowed the cultures to co-exist if not integrate. The Coalition exhibits unusual adaptability and flexibility, a willingness to engage in difficult conversations to address sometimes contentious issues, and an acknowledgement that each organization brings particular strengths to the table for the benefit of the whole. There is a generous spirit at work of wanting to help partners bring the full potential of an organization to the table, to celebrate the particular strengths of an organization, and to encourage that strength to be at the table. Further inquiry into other factors that prompt this “spirit of cooperation” received several different explanations including: a commitment to regionalism, a commitment to the vision of the Initiative, a belief in the capacity of the individual members of the Coalition, and response to a common threat.

The Coalition has yet to achieve its full potential. Individual members are, even now, defining particular strengths and resources they have to bring to the Initiative, while other organizations are developing and expanding skills and capacity heretofore unavailable to the Initiative. Particular opportunities for the Coalition include:

- **Efforts to increase public funding for land conservation:** Many of the individual members of the Coalition have extensive advocacy experience that can be organized and coordinated to support increased funding. Other institutional members of the Coalition, such as the Trust for Public Land have experience in working with towns to establish funding mechanisms for land conservation. Coordination of these specific capabilities into a coalition-wide effort is recommended.
- **Growing capacity of the land trusts:** The Coalition has invested in growing the capacity of individual land trusts in the region. As that capacity builds, there may be greater potential within the Coalition to fundraise, to identify and to protect important pieces of land beyond those identified during the campaign.
- **Impact of connections between individual Coalition members and their communities:** Many Coalition members are actively working within their own communities to advance the goals of the Initiative. This suggests a potential role for the Coalition in engaging the communities in conservation planning. Facilitating and/or coordinating the efforts of individuals within each town may provide greater impact by the Coalition in this area.
- **Emerging relationships within the Coalition:** The relationships that are being built within the Coalition are beginning to create new opportunities. One example is a growing relationship between the Maine Coast Heritage Trust and the Kittery Land Trust as a result of work on the a large land conservation project. Both organizations have recognized the value of working together, are learning their complementary capacities and skills, and are looking forward to other joint projects.

The scheduled sunset of the campaign in 2006 has been a catalyst for thinking about what comes next. Conversations have already begun concerning the future. There is both an expressed interest in keeping the work of the Coalition alive, if not the Coalition itself, as well as an acknowledged concern by some of the individuals that they have to refocus their energies and resources on organizational development issues related to their own institution.

- There is concern expressed by some members that the Coalition will evolve into a regional land trust and end up competing for available resources with the original Coalition members. The challenge will be to figure out how to continue to support the growing capacity of the individual members while maintaining the efficiencies of a regional, coordinated effort.
- The challenges of joint fundraising will be ongoing and may increase as individual organizations feel pressed to focus on their own institutional needs.
- The Coalition successfully attracted the resources and energy of ten organizations. The challenge to many conservation initiatives is how to build from that initial energy to attract new people, broaden the participation by different constituencies, and continually refresh the vision.

Finally, the Coalition's work with communities is in a fledgling stage. Given the challenges facing all six of the towns, it will require a different strategy and set of resources for the Coalition to achieve the conservation goals through local planning processes.

- The current capacity of the towns and the nature of conservation planning will require a significant investment of time and resources over a longer period of time to build the capacity of the Coalition to successfully implement conservation strategies within the individual communities. Currently, the job description of the Coalition Coordinator allocates less than half of his time to work with municipalities. If the Coalition decides to continue to support the community-based planning and development imperatives, the organization will need to expand or shift its capacity to increase staff time to coordinate the Coalition's effort to engage communities, to add staff time to support a "circuit rider" to provide a person to link the Coalition with the communities, and to provide technical assistance to communities. Funding strategies should encourage longer-term mechanisms for operating support of the Coalition, opportunities to access funds as needed to support specific projects within communities, and to support experimentation with new tools and demonstrations.
- The success of the Coalition, to date, has been in part the result of clearly defined targets for fundraising tied with very specific land conservation priorities.

Perhaps as important, however has been a sense within the communities that they are not working in isolation, that there are both other communities and other resources to look to for assistance.

The individual develops relationships, builds trust, provides a voice at the table, can observe and recognize opportunities to bring resources or information to the table.

The Community-based planning and development work may require added or a different suite of Coalition members, a different structure, set of protocols and procedures, and funding strategy. A facilitated discussion or strategic planning process is recommended to assist the Coalition in making the transition from the capital campaign for land conservation to a community-based conservation program.

## II. ROLE OF THE COALITION WITH CONSERVATION PLANNING IN THE SIX TOWNS

In order to fairly assess the role of the Coalition in engaging communities in conservation planning, it is important to note the following:

- 1) The community-based work represents the largest component of the Conservation Plan.**
- 2) While some partner organizations have been working, to one degree or another, on capital campaigns for land conservation for over twenty years, the Coalition is relatively new to community-based work. While individual members may be experienced and interested in this facet, the Coalition, as an organization, has only rudimentary capacity, minimal resources and experience to accomplish this piece of the Initiative.**
- 3) All six towns are at an even earlier stage in understanding and knowing how to participate in the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative.**

With that as a backdrop, the Coalition has made some measurable progress.

- **Staff time:** When the Coordinator's position was expanded to full time in 2004, there was an allocation of the Coordinator's time to working with the six towns.
- **Conservation Plan:** The Conservation Plan provides specific recommendations for action by the six towns.
- **Commitments by towns to Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative:** Due in large part to the efforts of the Coordinator to visit each town, present maps of the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea region and copies of the Conservation Plan, meet with town managers and conservation commissions, the towns have signaled initial support for the Initiative by allocating \$12,000 (\$2,000/town) as a match for a regional planning grant awarded by the Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission. One town, Ogunquit, passed a resolution in support of the Initiative and the goals of the Conservation Plan.

It is clear, however, that the current amount of the Coordinator's time allocated to work with the communities is insufficient. At a minimum, there is extensive work that remains to expand awareness of the Initiative within the communities. While the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative is becoming more visible and people are more aware of its purpose, the depth of knowledge, particularly as it relates to how the Initiative benefits towns, participation and support may be at a very preliminary stage. At best, the Coalition will need to support additional staff time (up to at least the equivalent of one and one-half full-time equivalent) to provide a consistent liaison with each town as well as potential technical assistance on specific projects to advance the goals of the Conservation Plan.

### Value of the Coalition:

There is already evidence of the value that the Coalition has brought to work at the community level. Early efforts to define the region, to apply a template for science based decision-making (Beginning with Habitat<sup>7</sup>), to develop maps and a conservation plan have all offered the individual towns a larger vision, and created the opportunity for consistency in basing conservation planning and land use decisions. There is anecdotal evidence from interviews that the towns do, in fact, feel as if they are part of a larger picture, that the Conservation Plan has offered guidance for the work within individual towns, and that the science and information provided by the Coalition has given substance to local voices who have been working to advance conservation planning at the local level. Perhaps as important, however, has been a sense within the communities that they are not working in isolation, that there are both other communities and other resources to look to for assistance.

### Lessons learned:

A fundamental operating principle of community-based work is the critical role of an individual who can offer a consistent, long-term, sustained presence within communities. The individual serves as the “face” of a project, organization or effort. The individual develops relationships, builds trust, provides a voice at the table, can observe and recognize opportunities to bring resources or information to the table.

It not only matters that there is a presence, but it matters who that person is and how he or she works. Characteristics that are effective include listening, responding to the stated needs within the community, and following through where input and resources are requested. The Coalition Coordinator has demonstrated these characteristics and more. His experience as a town planner and as zoning board member in his town have given him the skills, experience and insight that have been valuable to the Coalition as it develops the community-based portion of the Initiative. The result has been that the towns have become interested and engaged, they view the Initiative positively and have taken preliminary steps to participate as active partners in achieving the conservation goals of the Initiative. The Conservation Plan, according to the Executive Director of the Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission (SMRPC) offers a “great starting point for us” and served as a genesis for a regional planning grant proposal. The level of action within the towns, however, is inconsistent. While one town, for example, has incorporated some of the recommendations and language from the Conservation Plan into a newly adopted Comprehensive Plan, another town has only recently organized an open space committee. The fact that one town planner described, in his capacity as town planner, that he had never met with his counterparts in adjacent towns offers a realistic perspective on where towns are in practicing regionalism.

Perhaps as important, however, has been a sense within the communities that they are not working in isolation, that there are both other communities and other resources to look to for assistance..

<sup>7</sup> Beginning with Habitat is a Geographic Information System (GIS) series of data layers identifying the location of key wildlife and plant habitat in the state of Maine. For more information on the program visit: [www.beginningwithhabitat.org](http://www.beginningwithhabitat.org).

While the Coordinator has been the face of the Initiative and Coalition, individual Coalition members have also played significant roles as well that merit note. Several members of the Coalition are involved in the civic life of their community, whether on boards of historic associations, hospitals, conservation commissions, planning or zoning boards. They, too, then act as agents for the Initiative at the community level, transferring the science, articulating priorities from the Conservation Plan, and providing networks of resources and support between the Coalition and the communities.

### **Opportunities and challenges:**

Each of the six towns, while having their own profile, share two significant characteristics that will influence the degree to which the community component of the Initiative can be successful:

- **Town cultures:** The towns are conservative by nature and tradition. The extent to which conservation planning is a priority varies among the six towns. There is anecdotal evidence from interviews of a growing voice and influence in at least two of the towns that views conservation and private property rights at odds with one another. At the least, this may constrain the ability to raise the priority of conservation within those towns. At the worst, it may effectively create tensions within the community that will inhibit progress in conservation planning.
- **Capacity of towns:** Current budget constraints coupled with a tradition of fiscal conservatism limits the resources available for planning, implementation and enforcement programs and will be a factor in the town's capacity to meet the goals and recommendations set out in the plan. At least three of the towns have had challenges simply maintaining consistency in the staffing of key positions such as town planner and town manager. This suggests instability in town governance that will divert the attention and focus from other priorities. And there is universal acknowledgement of insufficient staff time for planning and implementation. Currently, much of the work within specific planning offices is reactive. One town planner described his job as being "swamped" by and only able to "respond" to development proposals rather than advance planning. He described a pressing need for more staff in the planning and enforcement offices. There was significant concern expressed during interviews about the available time to look ahead and work proactively.

The Coalition can provide valuable resources to help communities advance the Initiative's conservation goals:

1. The broad support and political strength of the Coalition could be directed towards advocating for increased public funding for planning.
2. Provide technical assistance to the towns by developing model ordinances, conservation financing assistance and information on conservation development strategies.
3. Establish regular meetings with town managers to provide updates on the progress of the Initiative with specific data on benefits realized by municipalities.
4. Provide a constituency for conservation planning by having the Coalition participate in the review process of individual development proposals, organize support for recommendations from planning offices that advance conservation goals, or work in partnership with the planning office, landowner and/or developer. This work is already underway on an informal basis by individual members of the Coalition, but could be expanded and formalized.
5. Provide data for planning offices. Some towns acknowledge the value of and welcome data provided by non-profit conservation organizations. In addition, there was one specific recommendation to use community volunteers to gather data needed for one of the components of the SMRPC project.

Finally, the Coalition faces several challenges that accompany work within the communities:

- Each town has its own culture. It takes time, patience and resources to build the relationships within each community that help them identify opportunities for the transfer of information, technical assistance and securing resources.
- The awareness within each community of the Initiative and Coalition, of the relationship of individual land conservation projects to the goals of the Initiative, and the benefits of the Initiative to municipalities is at a rudimentary level.
- The capacity of the Coalition to support the community-based component of the Initiative will depend on the ability of the Coalition to raise significant operating funds over a long period of time in order to sustain a presence that is perceived by the towns to be consistent and reliable.
- The work is not as well defined as land conservation projects. The responsibilities of the coordinator, the targets to measure progress, and the long-term process involved with implementing plans at the local level suggest that the Coalition will either have to adapt its management style for this component of the Initiative, or identify specific projects that have a discernible time-frame and product.
- Municipalities and land conservation organizations need to exchange information. While there is some experience on the Coalition in doing this (The York Land Trust provides the town with a list of land conservation priorities in January/February of each year and works to engage the town in providing funding support for specific projects), there is relatively little practice, on either end, in the open and honest exchange of information related to conservation priorities.
- Much of the conservation planning work requires, to some degree or another, participation in political processes. The degree of participation will require some thoughtful analysis and consideration on the part of the Coalition. How deep can the Coalition wade into local politics? How active and visible does the Coalition want to be on contentious development issues and still retain the positive and directed focus of working with individual landowners?

### **III. THE MT. AGAMENTICUS TO THE SEA CONSERVATION INITIATIVE AS A REPLICABLE MODEL**

The Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative stands out as a model for a capital campaign for land conservation and for land conservation at a landscape scale:

- The Coalition defined the region based on science and conservation data
- The Conservation Plan guides land protection, conservation planning and development strategies
- The Coalition established protocols/procedures/operating and campaign plans that offer templates for other initiatives
- The Coalition designed a process for setting land conservation priorities;
- The Coalition coordinated partners, skills, and resources at multiple scales to achieve more effective conservation and efficient use of conservation dollars

There is considerable interest on the part of other groups and funders in the potential for replication of the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative. It is at least valuable, therefore, to examine some of the characteristics of this Initiative that may have relevance elsewhere and any features that may be specifically suited for replication.

The Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative is framed by a region that can be defined, that has specific and identifiable conservation values and characteristics, and that has a critical mass of support for its conservation. The rationale for the Initiative was built on good science and the knowledge and experience of its founding members and leaders. The Coalition emerged from existing networks and capacity. It relied on volunteer time but raised substantial funds where the rationale for spending money and the accountability for how it would be spent are clear. It developed protocols and procedures for administering and managing its affairs as the Coalition evolved and the need for protocols and procedures were identified. Particularly noteworthy for purposes of replication are the following:

- The Conservation Plan
- The process for setting land conservation priorities
- Coalition structure
- Protocols and procedures of the Coalition

Some of the best and most successful conservation projects happen because of a confluence of the right people coming together around the right place at the right time. While it is clear that the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative is more than that, it offers some significant challenges to replication.

- **Contribution of volunteers:** One of the signature qualities of this effort is the impressive amount of volunteer time that has powered the Coalition - and, it is not just any volunteer time. The quality, commitment, expertise and passion of individual members of the coalition cumulatively create much of the force and capacity of the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative.
- **Existing organizational infrastructure:** The region, prior to the Initiative, had been the focus of conservation efforts by state, local, regional and national public and private institutions that provided a complex infrastructure of institutions and capacity for conservation.

The Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative and Coalition, however, offer valuable experience for groups that have organized themselves around a landscape or defined ecosystem, as a result of persistent development pressures, emerging science and good data, and/or a critical mass of either social capital or institutional capacity.

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## IV. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE EVALUATION

There are at least four compelling reasons to support ongoing evaluation of conservation efforts in the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea region:

- 1) The stated date to sunset the Capital Campaign is 2006. It is important to conduct a final evaluation in order to analyze the success of the Campaign in achieving its stated goals. In particular the specific land protection projects should be reviewed within the context both of the priorities set by the individual land committees and as they relate to overall conservation goals as set out in the Conservation Plan.
- 2) Much of the work of the Initiative and Coalition actually has been to seed “processes” for conservation such as reinforcing conservation planning within the six communities, building the capacity of the individual organizations to achieve conservation goals, and expanding the capacity for stewardship. All of these will be ongoing without a particular end-point and their impacts may be cumulative. The field of conservation would be well served by periodic assessments of these processes with concurrent identification of benchmark indicators of progress.
- 3) The Initiative itself is an organic process. While the campaign is set to sunset and the Coalition has worked primarily in support of the campaign, there is talk of continuing the work of the Initiative and/or the Coalition in some capacity. It would be informative for other efforts to learn about important decision points in the evolution of the Coalition. If the Coalition dissolves after the completion of the campaign, what was the thinking behind the decision? What lasting links were forged? What entity will carry on the remaining work of the Initiative?
- 4) The Initiative set out a specific set of operational goals and a Conservation Plan to guide its work. It is incumbent upon the Coalition to evaluate its progress against its own operational goals and the Conservation Plan.

### Proposed metrics for evaluation

- Progress in implementing the Conservation Plan
- Protection of ecological systems in Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea region
  - Diversity of species (change from 2000-2006)
  - Establishment of ecological reserves
  - Unfragmented land (% change in size of unfragmented blocks)
  - % of water district lands protected (change from 2000-2006)
  - Roads (number of unpaved roads, change from 2000-2006)  
(# of discontinued roads - % change since 2000)
- Impact of the Coalition
  - Protected priority conservation lands (change in number of protected areas 2000-2006)
  - Expanded capacity for conservation in the region (change in dollars spent for conservation 2000-2006, change in dollars available for management/stewardship)
  - Increase in public funding for land conservation
  - Capacity of individual organizations (change in memberships and board, increased number of donors, increased giving to individual organizations for land conservation, changes in staffing)
  - New partners/new participants in Coalition

- Other landscape scale conservation efforts based on the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea model
- If the Coalition dissolved, are organizations continuing to work together? If so how?
- Increased awareness of and appreciation for a regional view (survey/interviews)
- Action by communities
  - Change in town resources allocated to conservation (funds raised and committed to land acquisition, expanded staffing of relevant town offices)
  - Change in town's capacity to create proactive agenda for conservation (establishing open space committees, changes in focus of existing town committees)
  - Inter-town coordination of conservation planning and activity
  - Changes in planning programs (incorporation of recommendations from Conservation Plan in town Comprehensive Plan, development of sustainable water budgets for town)
  - Application of new tools/conservation practices (adoption of model ordinances, setbacks, impact fees, tax structures to preserve large tracts of land, innovative projects such as working waterfronts, road/drainage projects, development designs)
  - Implementation of conservation and regional components of comprehensive plans

It is recommended that the Coalition determine the most important indicators to be incorporated into future evaluations and use them to collect and inventory relevant data.

### **Proposed case studies**

The story of the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative is complex, and while the challenges and successes can be listed, the richness can be understood more clearly through the specific projects undertaken by the Coalition. The development of a series of case studies is recommended as a way of illuminating that richness. The following projects are recommended for consideration as case studies with annotations as to why:

**Sewell's Bridge Dock:** The Sewell's Bridge Dock offers an example of a "working landscape" project. It documents how a local land trust expanded its vision to embrace the vision of the Initiative, supported the needs and interests of a different constituency, attracted new resources, and expanded the capacity and confidence of the local land trust. This project laid the groundwork for the Town of York's acquisition of Strawberry Island and demonstrates the value of a project in stimulating interest within a town and expanding the capacity of a town to purchase land with town funds.

**Federal Grant Programs:** The process of applying for, receiving and managing significant federal grants exemplifies the added value of the Coalition. The \$1 million Coastal Estuarine and Land Conservation Program grant represented the first major public/governmental award received by the Coalition and represented the value of the assets represented by the individual parties at the table. It challenged the organizational capacity (related to fiscal responsibility) and was a catalyst for the Coalition to determine how large grants would be managed.

It would have been difficult, if not impossible for any single member organization to apply for a North American Wetland Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant. The combined technical resources of Coalition partners provided the science and technical information necessary to develop the proposal, as well as the organizational capacity to manage the grant. (Note: \$1 million NAWCA grant awarded to Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea in September 2005).

**A large land conservation project:** One large land conservation project provides an example of a Coalition priority land conservation effort that expands the capacity of a local land trust, demonstrates the value of networks between coalition partners (particularly the value of a local, on the ground organization working in concert with regional and national organizations), and offers a working model for future projects between Coalition partners.

**York River:** While the York River was always viewed as a priority for conservation, the rationale for conservation was at first simply intuitive - people knew it was special and therefore wanted to protect it. A case study of conservation of the York River would provide a valuable documentation of the role of research and science, the importance of "citizen" science as expressed in the work of the York Rivers Association, and the leveraging of science and good data that resulted in a higher profile for the York River that attracted multiple partners in the conservation effort.

**Town of Ogunquit:** A case study that looks at the evolving relationship between the Initiative and a single town offers a chance to describe the opportunities and complexity of the Initiative's work within towns. Activity within the town of Ogunquit is demonstrating the capacity of the Initiative to attract new participants, build awareness of and capacity within towns for conservation, and be a catalyst for conservation planning and development within towns. The Coalition has begun working with new individuals on behalf of the capital campaign. A network of relationships within the town, the municipal government and the Coalition has advanced efforts on behalf of the Initiative. And a growing partnership between the town and one of the Coalition partners is expanding the capacity of the town to do land conservation.

## **APPENDICES**

# MT. AGAMENTICUS TO THE SEA ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

**York Land Trust**  
**Great Works Regional Land Trust**  
**Kittery Land Trust**  
**York Rivers Association**

- Provide land conservation expertise
- Provide membership base for fundraising and information dissemination
- Well connectd to local community leaders and key opinion makers
- Strong expertise with local politics, zoning ordinances conservation commissions and open space efforts

**Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife**  
**Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve**  
**Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge**

- Connected to state/federal conservation priorities
- Connected to state/federal funding sources
- Perform sophisticated research that informs MTA2C work plan priorities
- Have expertise in best management practices
- Provide significant institutional memory via established long-time employees

**Trust for Public Land**  
**The Nature Conservancy, ME**  
**Maine Coast Heritage Trust**

- National and state organizaitons with household name recognition that provides instant credibility
- Have strong expertise in non-profit management, including fundraising and governance
- Are mature organizations with staying power and political influence

**MTA2C Coalition**

Governing organization made up of representatives of all 10 partner organizations who determine direction, scope, and strategy of MTA2C Conservation Initiative

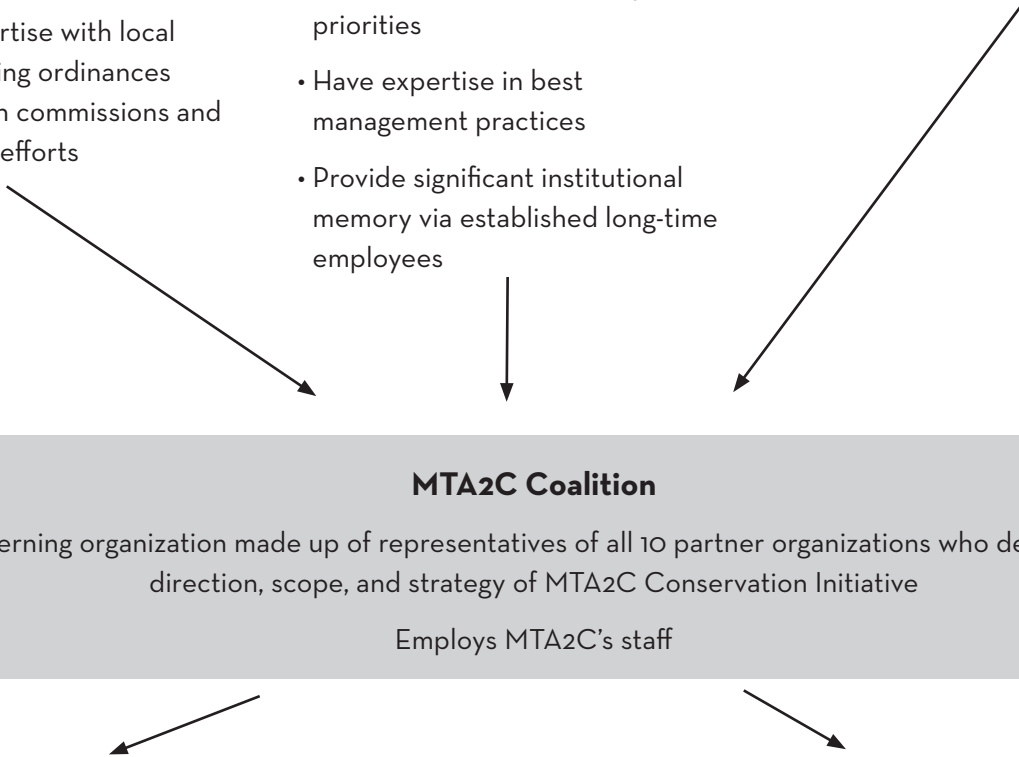
Employs MTA2C's staff

**MTA2C Coordinator**

- Coordinates the collaboration of all 10 partners
- Carries out all MTA2C educational efforts, including outreach to municipalities, town councils, and citizen groups
- Implements the community building aspects of the MTA2C Conservation Plan

**MTA2C Campaign Director**  
**MTA2C Campaign Assistant**

- Coordinate all fundraising activities, including the MTA2C Capital Campaign
- Provide fundraising training and support



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## MT. AGAMENTICUS TO THE SEA DIRECTORY

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Great Works Regional Land Trust	Liz Lane Patricia Robinson	President Board Member
Kittery Land Trust	Rob Nichols Melissa Paly	Board Member President
York Land Trust	Ala Reid Andrew Beal Marion Fuller Brown Doreen MacGillis Helen Winebaum Joey Donnelly Karen Arsenault Bill Purinton	Board Member Board Member Board Member Executive Director Board Member Board Member Board Member Mt. A. to the Sea Treasurer
Maine Coast Heritage Trust	Christina Epperson Chris Fichtel	Land Protection Asst. Land Protection Specialist
Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife	Philip Bozenhard	Regional Biologist
Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge	Ward Feurt	Refuge Manager
The Nature Conservancy Maine Field Office	Keith Fletcher	Mt. A Project Manager
The Trust for Public Land	Wolfe Tone	Project Manager
Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve	Paul Dest Tin Smith	Wells Reserve Manager Stewardship Coordinator
York Rivers Association	Carol Donnelly	Board Member
Staff	Roger Cole Beverly Shadley Denise Wester	Coordinator Campaign Director Campaign Assistant

## BACKGROUND ON THE MT. AGAMENTICUS TO THE SEA CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

This current Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Coalition grew out of a successful partnership between the York Land Trust, Great Works Regional Land Trust and The Nature Conservancy that raised \$3.2 million to purchase land on and around Mt. Agamenticus between 1999-2001. Today, 11,000 acres are protected in the Mt. Agamenticus region, and additional parcels are under agreement or in negotiation.

### Fund Raising Plan for Current MTA2 Capital Campaign

Based on the results of a feasibility study conducted in March of 2003, the Campaign Committee originally envisioned a \$7-10 million dollar campaign with three gift components. These include:

- Private Support - Gifts from individuals, corporations, foundations and businesses.
- Public Support - Federal, state, or municipal grants and/or appropriations.
- Gifts or Bargain Sales of Land and/or Conservation Easements

With steady and successful Leadership Phase progress, MTA2C's Campaign Committee has become increasingly confident that reaching the highest range of the feasibility study's projection is attainable. Overall, the Campaign Committee anticipates that \$5.2 million will be realized from private gifts, \$2 million from public gifts, and \$2.8 million from land and/or easement gifts.

The MTA2C Campaign Committee has followed a standard campaign fund raising tract to date and anticipates continuing a typical campaign model to realize the \$10 million goal. In March of 2003, a feasibility study was completed following interviews with 66 individuals representing a cross section of board members, previous donors, and individuals with no previous affiliation to MTA2C or its previous campaign ("The Mt. Agamenticus Challenge"). Following the study, Board members and trustees were asked to make gifts to lay the groundwork for MTA2C fund raising.

Toward that end, The York Land Trust's board members contributed \$604,237 (\$578,237 in cash and \$26,000 in donated easement value), and partner organizations and their board members committed \$422,053 (\$272,053 in cash and \$150,000 in donated easement value) for a total of \$1,026,290. A handful of exceptional leadership prospects were also solicited for another \$1 million, bringing the nucleus fund total to just over \$2 million.

MTA2C's Campaign Director was then hired in November of 2003 to develop a comprehensive fund raising plan, train volunteers, identify and rank all prospects, and to prepare the "back office" for a major fund raising campaign. With these tasks launched or completed, the Leadership Phase of the MTA2C Campaign began in earnest in April of 2004. As of September 2005, the Campaign Committee had solicited many Leadership and Special Gifts Phase prospects, bringing the fund raising total to over \$8.5 million.

The Campaign Committee has begun cultivating and soliciting appropriate prospects and will continue the Special Gifts Phase through most of 2005. In 2006, we anticipate full engagement in the Community Phase of the Campaign, seeking modest gifts from a wide array of individuals and constituencies.

## **Campaign Committee and Volunteer Roles**

MTA2C's Campaign Committee is one of the MTA2C Coalition's six standing committees and meets every three weeks to discuss assignments and oversee the Campaign. Eleven of the Campaign Committee's 15 members also serve on MTA2C's Oversight Committee, the governing body of the MTA2C Conservation Initiative. Primarily, membership is made up of board members from the three local land trusts. This is intentional for two reasons. First, these board members know their own prospects and members best and are very much needed for successful fund raising. Second, a goal set forth from the conception of the MTA2C Campaign was to build the fund raising capacity of each of the three local land trusts via the experience of a the MTA2C Campaign. In addition to seeing that MTA2C's Campaign goal is reached, the Campaign Director also helps board members strengthen fundraising skills including campaign planning, prospect cultivation, stewardship, and major gifts fund raising.

Campaign Committee members have come to the MTA2C Campaign with wide range of fund raising experience. Five members have a great deal of sophisticated fund raising experience. For example, Helen Winebaum, the Campaign Committee's Chair and a York Land Trust board member, is a veteran fundraiser for numerous non-profit organizations such as The Nature Conservancy, The Currier Museum, and the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation.

Other Committee members are new to major gifts fund raising and are learning as they go. This is especially true of the Kittery and Great Works Regional Land Trust's volunteers. These volunteers have made very few major gift solicitations and there is significant potential to realize new gifts from new prospects with their help. Perhaps more importantly, these volunteers will take skills learned from the MTA2C Campaign back to their organizations, increasing the capacity to raise funds for continued conservation work.

## CONSERVATION PLAN

*This is an excerpt from the plan. For a full report, go to our website at [http://www.mtatosea.org/mta2c\\_conservation\\_plan.pdf](http://www.mtatosea.org/mta2c_conservation_plan.pdf) to review the Plan in its entirety.*

### 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 Tatic Hills was coordinated by staff at the Maine Chapter of The Nature Conservancy and is available at [www.tnc.org](http://www.tnc.org). The southern plan, coordinated by Mark Ward, Ecological Consultant, includes York Pond, the York River, Brave Boat Harbor and Gerrish Island. It is available from Roger Cole, Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative Coordinator, at [MntAtoSea@comcast.net](mailto:MntAtoSea@comcast.net).

In this merged and condensed document, sections of each plan have been combined to include:

- The broad vision
- The purpose of the plan
- The methodology used
- Tables of conservation values, threats and goals
- Specific recommendations for towns, land trusts, water districts, land owners, state and federal agencies and others.

### The Vision

The shared vision of the MtA2C 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.

## ORGANIZATIONAL PROTOCOLS

### Stewardship Policy

*(Adopted by the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Oversight Committee in August 2004)*

1. MTA2C will honor the donors' intent by ensuring that an endowment is created and maintained to steward the properties in the MT A. to Sea focus area
2. MTA2C recognizes that stewardship requirements of the lands protected will vary greatly and therefore each land trust must retain some flexibility in the stewardship of its MTA2C properties
3. Stewardship includes the following tasks: property maintenance, taxes, legal defense, management planning & implementation, monitoring.
4. Stewardship does not cover acquisition related costs such as survey, appraisal, baseline data collection, and title work.
5. MTA2C Stewardship contributions will be internally tracked in 4 pools - 1 for each geographic region and 1 unrestricted pool.
6. Contributions earmarked for stewardship shall be maintained in a single stewardship fund until June 2009. At that time the remaining balance in the fund shall be distributed among the three local land trusts unless they decide otherwise. Such a final distribution shall be used for long-term stewardship purposes and shall be based on a formula determined at the time of the final distribution.
7. Each of the three land trusts may access up to \$5000 of Stewardship principal per land trust for discretionary MTA2C stewardship needs during the term of this fund. Individual Trust withdrawals will be deducted from that Trust's final distribution. However, given the fiduciary nature of these funds, any additional invasion of the principal must be agreed upon by 75% of the members of each of the three land trust boards. It is envisioned that this option will be used only under extreme circumstances.
8. It is expected that income from the Endowment will be paid out to MTA2C quarterly. The York Land Trust, acting as MTA2C fiscal agent, will distribute the income to each land trust based on the formula outlined below.
9. During this 5-year period the income shall be paid out to each of the three land trusts using a formula based on the appraised value of closed deals as a percentage of the total value of all closed deals. Only those closed deals where a local land trust is the title holder shall be used in the determination of this formula. The formula will be updated on a quarterly basis in conjunction with the income distribution from the MTA2C stewardship endowment.

For Example (values are hypothetical):

Total Endowment \$100,000

Expected Annual Pay out at 5% =\$5000

Appraised Value of Current Closed Deals:

Dock (YLT) \$410,000

Davis (YLT) \$500,000

Shaw (YLT) \$200,000

Winton (KLT) \$50,000

**(Organizational Protocols Continued)**

Total:               \$1,160,000

Percentage allocated to based on closed deals:

Dock (YLT)	gets	\$1,767	( $\$5000 * \$410,000 / \$1,160,000$ )
Davis (YLT)	gets	\$2,155	( $\$5000 * \$500,000 / \$1,160,000$ )
Shaw (YLT)	gets	\$ 862	( $\$5000 * \$200,000 / \$1,160,000$ )
Winton (KLT)	gets	\$ 216	( $\$5000 * \$50,000 / \$1,160,000$ )

10. We envision that stewardship contributions may accompany an easement donated to an individual land trust. In this case the donated funds will not become part of the MTA2C stewardship endowment and the parcel will not be counted in the income formula outlined above.
11. Each land trust has discretion over the use of its portion of the income distribution. Usage of the income need not follow the percentage apportioned to each closed parcel. The intention of this endowment is that the income should be used for the stewardship of MTA2C lands. Excess funds may go toward stewardship of parcels outside the MTA2C focus area. Each land trust may choose to reinvest its income in its own stewardship endowment.
12. This policy shall be revisited in three years and reviewed for its effectiveness in addressing stewardship needs. During the next 5 years the MTA2C Finance committee reserves the right to make changes to this policy with the approval of the MTA2C Oversight committee.

## **(Organizational Protocols Continued)**

### **MTA2C Capacity Fund Policy**

*(Adopted by York Land Trust Board of Directors August 3, 2004)*

At the beginning of this campaign, MTA2C envisioned the allocation of private cash contributions for land protection from the \$10 million campaign to be 79% for Land Protection, 10% for Stewardship Endowment, 5% for Capacity Building and 6% for Campaign Expenses. It was envisioned that any donor specified project or geographic restrictions placed on donations would be honored not only for the Land Protection allocation, but also for the Stewardship Endowment and Capacity Building allocations.

Beginning August 1st, 2004, individuals raising funds for MTA2C shall inform donors that the Capacity Building allocation will not follow donor specified project or geographic restrictions, and instead will be pooled and distributed to the three local land trust partners of MTA2C as outlined in the following policy:

1. Presently, the MTA2C Capacity Fund is divided into 4 pools - 1 for each geographic region and 1 unrestricted pool, to align with any donor specified restrictions as discussed above. This system shall be maintained for accounting purposes until the end of the 2004 fiscal year. Thereafter, the funds will be tracked in a single, unrestricted pool.
2. At the end of each fiscal year, 12/31, the total amount in the MTA2C Capacity Fund at that time shall be divided into 3 equal shares, one for each of the three local land trust partners of MTA2C: York Land Trust, Kittery Land Trust, Great Works Regional Land Trust.
3. These funds will then be distributed to each land trust during the month of January. The first distribution shall take place in January, 2005. Once distributed, the funds will no longer be considered an asset of MTA2C.
4. MTA2C recognizes that the capacity requirements of each land trust will vary greatly. Therefore each land trust may use its share of the capacity building funds in a manner of its choosing.
5. This policy shall be in force for the duration of the MTA2C Campaign. During this period the MTA2C Finance committee shall periodically review the effectiveness and if necessary make changes to this policy with the approval of the three local land trusts and the MTA2C Oversight committee.

## **(Organizational Protocols Continued)**

### **Memorandum of Understanding for Usage of Shared Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Prospect Information**

- I. This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is intended to govern the sharing of prospect and donor information for the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea (MTA2C) Conservation Initiative and its associated fundraising campaign. The target audience is primarily the staff and volunteers of the MTA2C Conservation Initiative and Campaign, the Great Works Regional Land Trust, the Kittery Land Trust, and the York Land Trust. However, the spirit and intent of this MOU should be applied to any MTA2C partner organization interested in accessing or using MTA2C prospect and/or donor information. This MOU is intended for use during the MTA2C Campaign period of November 2003- December 2006.
- II. In the spirit of cooperation, partner organizations will openly share background and information regarding organization and/or community members who are capable of and/or interested in making a gift to the MTA2C Campaign. This information includes but is not limited to: knowledge of a prospect's philanthropic giving history, and capacity; interests; suitable contacts to help engage prospects in the Campaign; relevant information regarding a prospect's community interests, connections, and history, and a prospect's interest and history regarding conservation efforts.
- III. For the duration of the MTA2C fundraising campaign, the MTA2C Campaign Director and Assistant are authorized to gather and manage all donor and/or prospect information relevant to MTA2C fundraising. This includes but is not limited to: hard copy files of donor correspondences or background information, data files shared by partner organizations, and an electronic database for managing all MTA2C donors and activities.
- IV. At the close of the MTA2C fundraising campaign, no single organization shall have unrestricted use of the pooled MTA2C donor and/or prospect information. Instead, donor and prospect information shall be released to the geographically appropriate land trust at the close of the campaign by the MTA2C campaign staff. In other words, the Great Works Regional Land Trust, the Kittery Land Trust, and the York Land Trust, will receive donor and prospect information only for individuals living within their service area.
- V. Information on donors and/or prospects who (a) are not members of the Great Works Regional Land Trust, the Kittery Land Trust, or the York Land Trust, and/or (b) live outside of the six MTA2C towns, shall be available for use by all three of the land trusts after the campaign. However, cultivation and solicitation of these donors and prospects should be coordinated among the three land trusts when the land trusts share a prospect or donor in common, such as when the individual lives or has a seasonal residence in another land trust's service area. Foundation solicitations shall be coordinated among the three land trusts during the MTA2C campaign.

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**(Organizational Protocols Continued)**

- VI. Information to be released may include but is not limited to: photocopies of hard copy file materials and electronic exports of relevant data base materials, including gift history and anecdotal information. While the MTA2C campaign staff will do everything possible to deliver this information by the close of the campaign, it may be that each land trust will need to elect an individual to assist in obtaining MTA2C prospect and donor data in cooperation with the York Land Trust's staff and volunteers.
- VII. In anticipation of additional, regional, conservation projects, the MTA2C donor and prospect information and/or database shall not be dismantled. However, its use will be firmly restricted to only those projects that boards of the Great Works Regional Land Trust, the Kittery Land Trust, and the York Land Trust collectively approve.
- VIII. By majority vote, the governing boards of the Great Works Regional Land Trust, the Kittery Land Trust, and the York Land Trust may collectively elect to dismantle and disburse the database used for MTA2C and its subsequent fundraising projects. All three boards must vote in favor of this action for it to move forward.

May 14, 2004: Developed by working team of Andrew Beal (York Land Trust), Jean Demetracopoulos (Great Works Regional Land Trust), and Melissa Paly (Kittery Land Trust).

May 25, 2004: Approved by MTA2C Campaign Committee

June 23, 2004: Submitted to MTA2C Oversight Committee

## **(Organizational Protocols Continued)**

### **Memorandum of Understanding Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Coalition**

*Adopted by the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Oversight Committee, August 2005*

#### 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. The Purpose of the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Coalition (hereinafter “MTA2C”) is to conserve a mosaic of critical threatened lands, waterways and working landscapes encompassing a six-town area in southern York County, Maine.

#### 2. MTA2C FOCUS AREA

- 2.1. The MTA2C Focus Area (hereinafter “Focus Area”) is a 48,000-acre area extending from the Tatnic Hills in Wells to Gerrish Island in Kittery Point, as depicted on Exhibit A.

#### 3. PARTICIPANTS

- 3.1. MTA2C is composed of the following Participants:

- 3.1.1. Great Works Regional Land Trust, a Maine nonprofit corporation qualified as exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (IRC), having a mailing address of P.O. Box 151, South Berwick, ME 03908; and
- 3.1.2. Kittery Land Trust, a Maine nonprofit corporation qualified as exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the IRC, having a mailing address of P.O. Box 467, Kittery, ME 03904; and
- 3.1.3. Maine Coast Heritage Trust, a Maine nonprofit corporation qualified as exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the IRC, having a mailing address of 1 Main Street, Bowdoin Mill, Topsham, ME 04086; and
- 3.1.4. State of Maine, Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, a governmental entity having a mailing address of 41 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333-0041; and
- 3.1.5. The Maine Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, a Maine nonprofit corporation qualified as exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the IRC, having a mailing address of Fort Andross, 14 Maine Street, Suite 401, Brunswick, Maine 04011; and
- 3.1.6. The Trust for Public Land, a California nonprofit corporation qualified as exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the IRC and authorized to carry on activities in the State of Maine, having a mailing address of Maine Field Office, 377 Fore Street, Portland, ME 04101; and
- 3.1.7. United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge a federal governmental entity having a mailing address of 321 Port Road, Wells, ME 04090; and
- 3.1.8. Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve a public-private partnership, having a mailing address of 342 Laudholm Farm Rd, Wells ME 04090;
- 3.1.9. York Land Trust (hereinafter “YLT”), a Maine nonprofit corporation qualified as exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the IRC and classified as a public charity under IRC Sections 509(a)(1) and 170(b)(1)(A)(vi), having a mailing address of P.O. Box 1241, York Harbor, ME 03911; and
- 3.1.10. York Rivers Association, a Maine unincorporated association, having a mailing address of Post Office Box 1106, York Harbor, Maine 03911-1106.

- 3.2. A Participant may cease to participate in MTA2C upon notice to the Oversight Committee.

- 3.3. Additional Participants may be admitted upon approval of the Oversight Committee.

## **(Organizational Protocols Continued)**

### 4. COMMITTEES

- 4.1. General. MTA2C operates through the work of established committees. The initial committees and their respective responsibilities shall be as described in this Section 4.
- 4.2. The Campaign Committee has the following duties:
  - 4.2.1. Raise, collect and track all pledges and donations to MTA2C, including donations made to YLT or to any other Participant related to MTA2C transactions. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Campaign Committee shall not be responsible for raising, collecting or tracking funds raised by Participants for their general operations needs such as staff, office space, and overhead.
  - 4.2.2. Provide accurate and timely updates of pledges receivable to the Participants;
  - 4.2.3. Develop, submit for approval to YLT, and manage an annual Campaign expense budget;
  - 4.2.4. Provide periodic updates to Participants and to the Finance Committee of projected fundraising shortfalls below or surpluses over existing pledges; and
  - 4.2.5. Cultivate private landowners and donors, in coordination with the Lands Committees.
  - 4.2.6. Initiate a planning process to consider joint post-Campaign fundraising efforts to be undertake after the completion of the Campaign on or about December 31, 2006.
- 4.3. The Finance Committee has the following duties:
  - 4.3.1. Coordinate the outgoing and incoming cash flows to best advise the other committees and YLT on availability of funds for expenditures;
  - 4.3.2. Disseminate available and future expected cash flows to all other MTA2C committees and YLT via monthly financial statements and meeting minutes;
  - 4.3.3. Recommend to the Oversight Committee and YLT actions for prudent investment and management of MTA2C's financial assets;
  - 4.3.4. Research and advise the Oversight Committee and YLT on alternative financing mechanisms such as bridge financing, revolving loan funds, and lines of credit; and
  - 4.3.5. Initiate and manage the drafting of financial policies governing MTA2C and the Campaign.
- 4.4. There are three Land Protection Committees: the Mt. Agamenticus Protection Committee, the York River/ York Pond/Eliot Protection Committee, and the Braveboat Harbor /Gerrish Island Protection Committee. Each Land Protection Committee has the following duties:
  - 4.4.1. Identify and prioritize projects for conservation within each committee's geographic scope;
  - 4.4.2. Recommend to the Oversight Committee and to YLT a list of Priority Projects;
  - 4.4.3. Communicate changes in projected cash needs to the Finance Committee as significant changes occur;
  - 4.4.4. Manage the real estate transactions, operating within budgets determined by (a) the cash resources available to each committee's geographic scope and (b) the list of approved Priority Projects for each committee's geographic scope;
  - 4.4.5. Cultivate resources for raising government funds needed to fund Priority Projects; and
  - 4.4.6. Cultivate private landowners and donors, in coordination with the Campaign Committee.
- 4.5. The Communications and Policy Committee has the following duties:

## **(Organizational Protocols Continued)**

- 4.5.1. Identify and track Public Policy issues and sources of funding and make recommendations for action.
- 4.5.2. Identify key decision-makers, elected officials and their staffs; cultivate good relations with them; raise their awareness of MTA2C and get them engaged in, and supportive of its mission.
- 4.5.3. Work with local, state and federal legislators to secure funding for MTA2C land conservation efforts.
- 4.5.4. Prepare press releases, media events and manage communications with the media to promote the work of MTA2C.

### 4.6. Oversight Committee

- 4.6.1. Each Participant has the right to be represented on the Oversight Committee.
- 4.6.2. The Oversight Committee has the following duties:
  - 4.6.2.1. Review and approve the Campaign expense budget, the list of Priority Projects submitted by the Land Protection Committees, and the financial policies and financial management recommendations submitted by the Finance Committee;
  - 4.6.2.2. Review the monthly financial statements distributed by the Finance Committee; Manage all organizational matters of MTA2C, including without limitation committee structure, personnel matters, review of YLT's role as Fiscal Sponsor, and dissolution.

- 4.7. Voting. The committee members make their best efforts to make decisions by consensus. If consensus does not exist on a matter, a majority vote of those members of the committee actually present at a meeting will prevail, unless provided otherwise in this Coalition Agreement.

### 5. YORK LAND TRUST FISCAL SPONSORSHIP.

- 5.1. Fiscal Sponsor. YLT serves as the Fiscal Sponsor for MTA2C and as Fiscal Sponsor has the ultimate responsibility for the fiscal administration of MTA2C. Notwithstanding the foregoing, YLT shall not have any responsibility for the fiscal administration of funds or property that pass directly from donors, grantors or other funders to Participants and not through any financial account of YLT. Nothing in this Coalition Agreement shall constitute the naming of YLT as an agent or legal representative of MTA2C for any purpose except as specifically and to the extent set forth herein.
- 5.2. As Fiscal Sponsor, YLT, acting by and through its board of directors, shall have the following duties:
  - 5.2.1. Maintain a restricted fund to receive donations of cash earmarked for support of MTA2C and to make disbursements; provided, however, that such disbursements have been included in the annual Campaign expense budget or in an approved Priority Project; and further provided, however, that YLT shall not have any responsibility for the administration of funds or property that pass directly from Grantors or other funders to Participants and not through any account of YLT;
  - 5.2.2. Approve, as submitted or with modifications, the Campaign expense budget submitted by the Campaign Committee; provided, however, that YLT's grounds for modification must be related to YLT's obligations as Fiscal Sponsor;
  - 5.2.3. Receive and record all cash, securities, and in-kind donations and receipts to the Campaign;
  - 5.2.4. Approve, as submitted or with modifications, the list of Priority Projects submitted by the Land Protection Committees; provided, however, that YLT's grounds for modification must be related to YLT's obligations as Fiscal Sponsor;

**(Organizational Protocols Continued)**

- 5.2.5. Approve, as submitted or with modifications, the financial management recommendations and other proposed financial policies submitted by the Finance Committee; provided, however, that YLT's grounds for modification must be related to YLT's obligations as Fiscal Sponsor;
  - 5.2.6. Review the monthly financial statements submitted by the Finance Committee;
  - 5.2.7. Administer an annual independent audit of MTA2C funds;
  - 5.2.8. Employ MTA2C staff and manage payroll and tax withholdings for MTA2C staff and contractors;
  - 5.2.9. Ensure that all MTA2C transactions are in furtherance of YLT's charitable purposes and in compliance with IRC Sections 501(c)(3) and 4958, and their accompanying regulations, as amended; provided, however, that, upon completion of a transaction, YLT shall have no ongoing responsibility with respect to the management and administration of property conveyed by that transaction to other Participants; and
  - 5.2.10. Administer a cost sharing arrangement between YLT and MTA2C for office space and office, administrative, and audit expenses that are shared by YLT and MTA2C.
- 5.3. YLT shall have the right, as Fiscal Sponsor, to establish and implement standards and practices for all MTA2C-funded transactions. Such standards may include, without limitation, title insurance, legal review, environmental (hazardous materials) inspections, and surveys.
  - 5.4. YLT shall have the right, upon ninety (90) days advance written notice to all of the Participants, to terminate its role as Fiscal Sponsor.

**6. LEGAL STATUS**

- 6.1. This Coalition Agreement shall not be deemed to create any general relationship of agency, partnership, or joint venture among the parties hereto, and Participants shall make no such representation to anyone. It is understood that as long as YLT is acting as the Fiscal Sponsor, MTA2C shall exist as a program of YLT.

**7. VOLUNTARY TERMINATION**

- 7.1. MTA2C and this Coalition Agreement may be terminated by the Oversight Committee. The Oversight Committee shall wind up any outstanding affairs of MTA2C. This Agreement shall sunset on December 31, 2009, unless extended or modified by the MTA2C participants by a vote of the Oversight Committee.

**8. LAND TRANSACTIONS WITHIN THE FOCUS AREA**

- 8.1. The Participants agree to disclose in advance to the other Participants all proposed land transactions in the Focus Area involving that Participant.

**9. AMENDMENT**

- 9.1. This Coalition Agreement will be reviewed by the Oversight Committee at least once annually and may be amended by the Oversight Committee.

**10. MISCELLANEOUS**

- 10.1. This Coalition Agreement may be separately signed in counterpart originals.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Participants and the Participant/Fiscal Sponsor, by their duly authorized representatives, have signed and sealed this Coalition Agreement as of the dates indicated below.

PARTICIPANTS SIGNATURES. . .

## (Organizational Protocols Continued)

### ESTABLISHING LAND PROTECTION PRIORITIES

The Coalition's early land protection efforts began with several false starts resulting from "reactive" projects. As a result, the group had a number of "healthy conversations" that acknowledged the need to set priorities. The following is a brief outline of how the Coalition proceeded to frame a structure and process for setting land protection priorities.

**I. Organize Committees:** Three committees were organized and designed not to overlap with the individual land trust regions. Committees were given specific and individual authority by the Oversight Committee to set priorities for land conservation:

- *Mt. Agamenticus/Tatnic Hills:* Andrew Beal, Helen Winebaum, Pat Robinson, Keith Fletcher, Doreen MacGillis, Tin Smith, Jean Demetracopoulos, Roger Cole
- *York River/York Pond/Eliot:* Carol Donnelly, Jean Demetracopoulos, Doreen MacGillis, Chris Fichtel, Wolfe Tone, Roger Cole
- *Brave Boat Harbor/Gerrish Island/Route 103:* Rob Nichols, Chris Fichtel, Ward Feurt, Wolfe Tone, Roger Cole

**II. Identify land protection priorities:** The three committees generally followed the same procedures, with some minor variations related to the criteria upon which the lands for the initial priority list were identified.

#### Step 1. Establish a list of targeted lands

**Mt. Agamenticus/Tatnic Hills:** The Committee knew they would need state/federal money to make many of the land transactions possible. As a first screen, they applied the criteria the state uses to determine which lands the state will hold. Information from the state Natural Areas Program and Beginning with Habitat, a Geographic Information System data series that defines habitat for rare, endangered and threatened species, served as a guide in drawing lines around areas of interest. Within the areas of interest, the Committee then looked for parcels that fell within large unfragmented blocks, parcels that were contiguous to other significant blocks of land, or land that would have an impact on road frontage. Finally, the Committee assessed each parcel by analyzing current or potential opportunities and landowner interest.

**York River/York Pond/Eliot:** The Committee used the same template and criteria as the Mt. Agamenticus/Tatnic Hills Committee, relying in large part on the Conservation Plan that specifically emphasized the valuable resources of the York River. Additionally, the Committee created a list of 10-12 landowners who they knew were both interested and would be willing sellers.

**Brave Boat Harbor/Gerrish Island/Route 103:** The Committee relied on the Conservation Plan as it marked the boundaries of the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative in this region and helped identify eligible lands. Additional criteria used in developing the list included lands adjacent to the Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge that the US Fish and Wildlife Service had identified as priorities for conservation; large properties where there was some indication of interest on the part of the landowner, and properties that would have additional interest to donors based on ecological values (using the Maine Natural Areas map, Beginning with Habitat data, and the identification of important natural features).

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## **(Organizational Protocols Continued)**

### **Step 2. Financial analysis**

As properties were listed, it became abundantly clear that there were more properties to conserve than there were financial resources. A financial plan was developed as another screen with which to analyze and set priorities. The Plan allocated land acquisition funds equally among the three committees. One of the members of the Finance Committee developed a cash flow spread sheet that identified the source and availability of funds. The information was broken down by committee and tracked over time so that the Committees could match the flow of resources with the requirements of each transaction. This financial component of the priority setting process has ensured that the lists are based on both the conservation needs and on the reality of available funds necessary to complete transactions.

### **Step 3. Create priority lists**

The Committees also identified other criteria to guide their action that influenced the timing of action on specific projects including the willingness of landowners if resources could be brought to the table, whether a project could be completed in a reasonable time frame (i.e. within the period of the Campaign), and whether a commitment had already been made to a landowner. These criteria along with the financial plan allowed the Committees to create A and B lists. As fundraising projections change, landowner situations change, and/or the timing of fund availability changes, the Committees can go to the B list for a project.

The result of this process has been a land protection program that couples targeting specific pieces of land that advance the goals of the Initiative (and are founded on both science and conservation goals) and that have a likelihood of success by linking willing landowners with secure financing of a project.

## MTA2C COALITION QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire was sent to Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Oversight Committee Members in preparation for this report in order to determine the added value of the Coalition to each of the member organizations and to conservation goals in the MTA2C region

- Please call if you have any questions
- Please fill out the questionnaire by April 1:

Martha West Lyman  
 415 North River Road  
 Manchester, NH 03104  
 603-647-8081  
 mlyman@qlf.org

**What are the conservation needs in your community:**

**What are the conservation needs in the region?**

Name of organization:

Mission statement:

**Does the organization have a strategic plan?**

If yes, please identify the top three priorities/goals of the organization:

**What are the principle programs that address these priorities/goals?**

**How does the organization measure progress in achieving its goals?**

**What is the organization's annual budget?**

- What are the principle costs for the organization?
- What are the principle sources of income?
- How does the organization leverage resources?

Staff composition and capacity:

Number\_\_ (program\_\_ admin/mgmt\_\_)

Staffing of principle programs (please describe relevant skills, background and experience of staff):

**Does your organization have the staff capacity to achieve the organization's goals?**

If not why/what is needed?

**What are three significant challenges faced by your organization?**

**Have there been projects/programs that the organization has wanted to do but can't?**

**What are they and why?**

**What is the purpose of MTA2C? (please describe from your organization's perspective)**

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**How will you define “success” for the Coalition?**

**What, specifically, has the Coalition accomplished to date?**

**What is the cost of the Coalition to your organization (e.g. staff time, dues, etc.)**

**What is the value of the Coalition to:**

- Your organization
- Towns
- The region

**What can/does the Coalition do that individual organizations cannot? (please give specific examples where possible)**

**As part of the assessment, we will be looking to identify one or more sites or projects that provide examples of how the Coalition adds value to conservation work in the region. If you have a specific project or site that you think should be considered, please describe briefly below:**

**Please feel free to add any other thoughts, examples, data or information that you feel is relevant to this assessment:**

## NOTES





Members of the Mt. Agamenticus Coalition at their monthly Oversight Committee Meeting on the summit of Mt. Agamenticus



P.O. Box 1241  
 York Harbor, ME 03911  
 207-363-7400  
[www.mtatosea.org](http://www.mtatosea.org)

