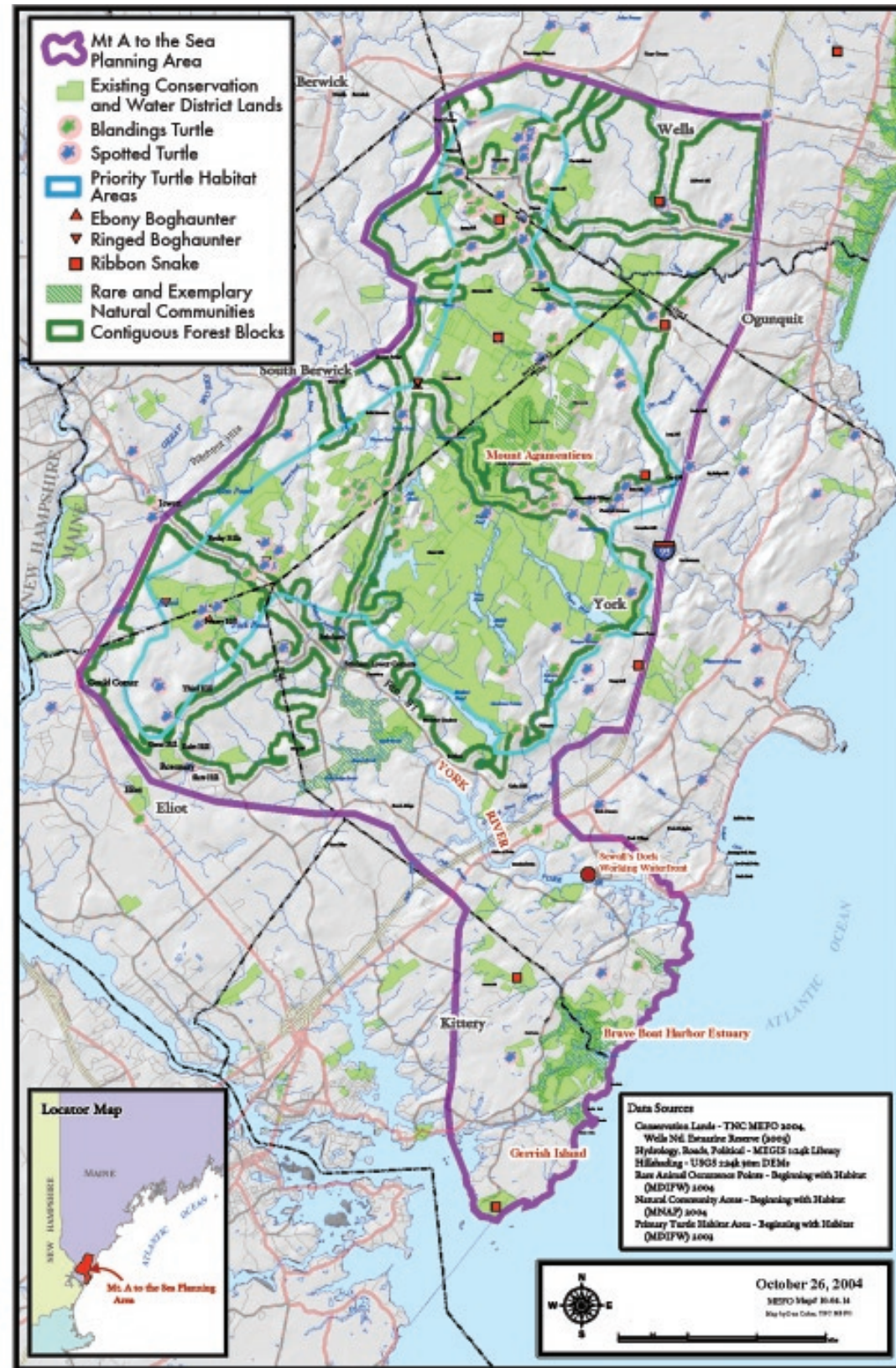


MT. AGAMENTICUS TO THE SEA PLANNING AREA AND SELECT RESOURCES



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



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Cover map: Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Project Area Map - August 2005

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

Executive Summary 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

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 and community partnerships in the region defined by the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative.



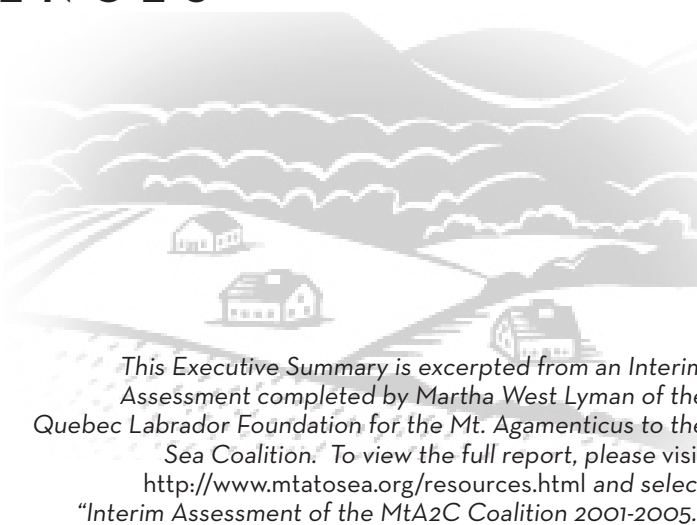
The Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative can be characterized as a capital campaign for land conservation at a landscape scale and a program to promote and implement community-based conservation planning and development. . .



REFERENCES

For organizations considering collaborative work, the following documents that are found in the Appendices of the full report may be helpful:

- Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Organizational Chart
- Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Directory
- Capital Campaign Plan
- Conservation Plan
- Organizational Protocols
 - Stewardship policy
 - Capacity Building Fund Policy
 - Memorandum of Understanding-donor Information
 - Fiscal Agreement Between Coalition and York Land Trust
- Process for Establishing Land Protection Priorities



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.



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.



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 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.



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.

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

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