
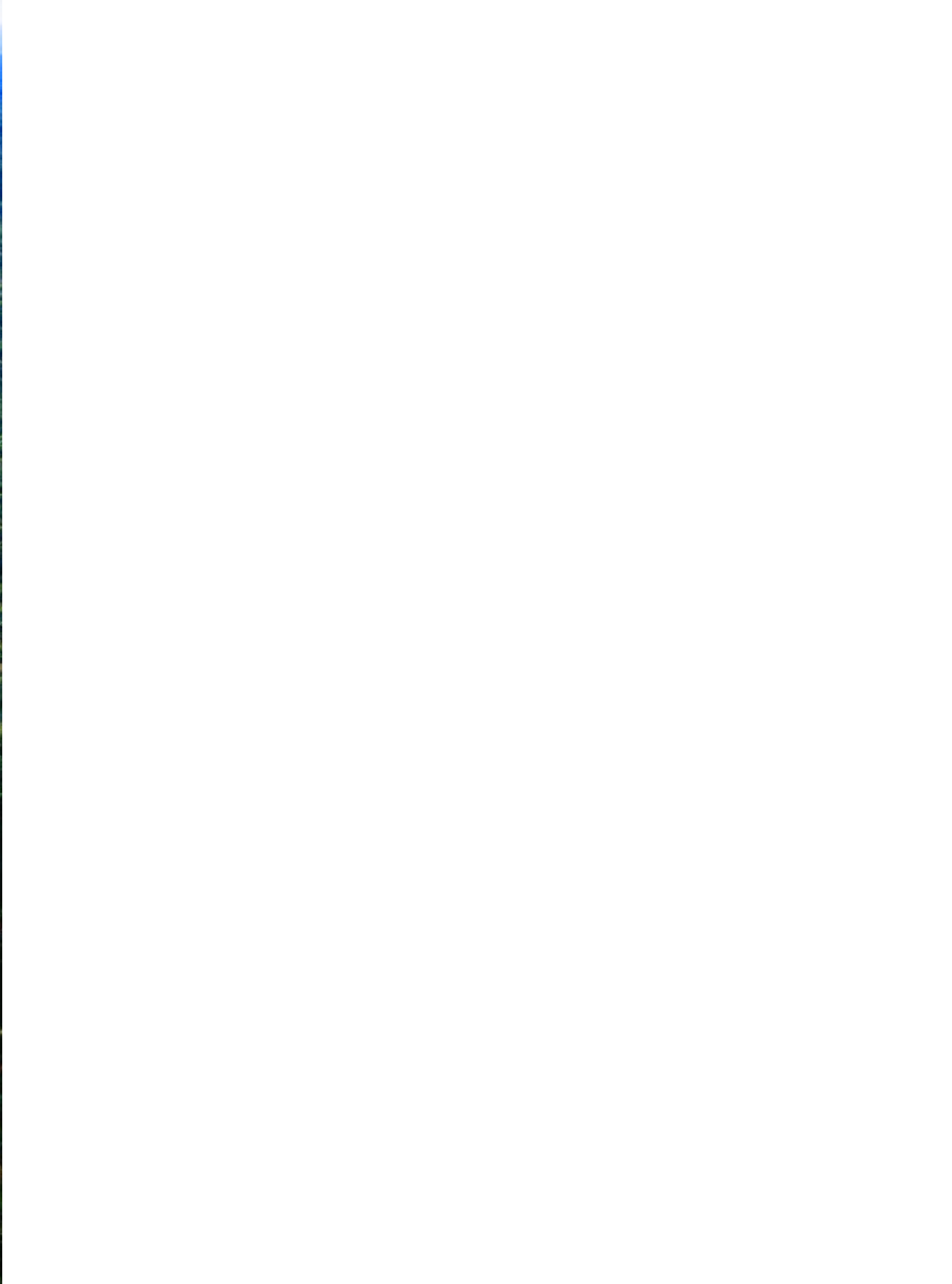




MT. AGAMENTICUS 
 TO THE SEA
CONSERVATION INITIATIVE

The challenge continues



The challenge continues

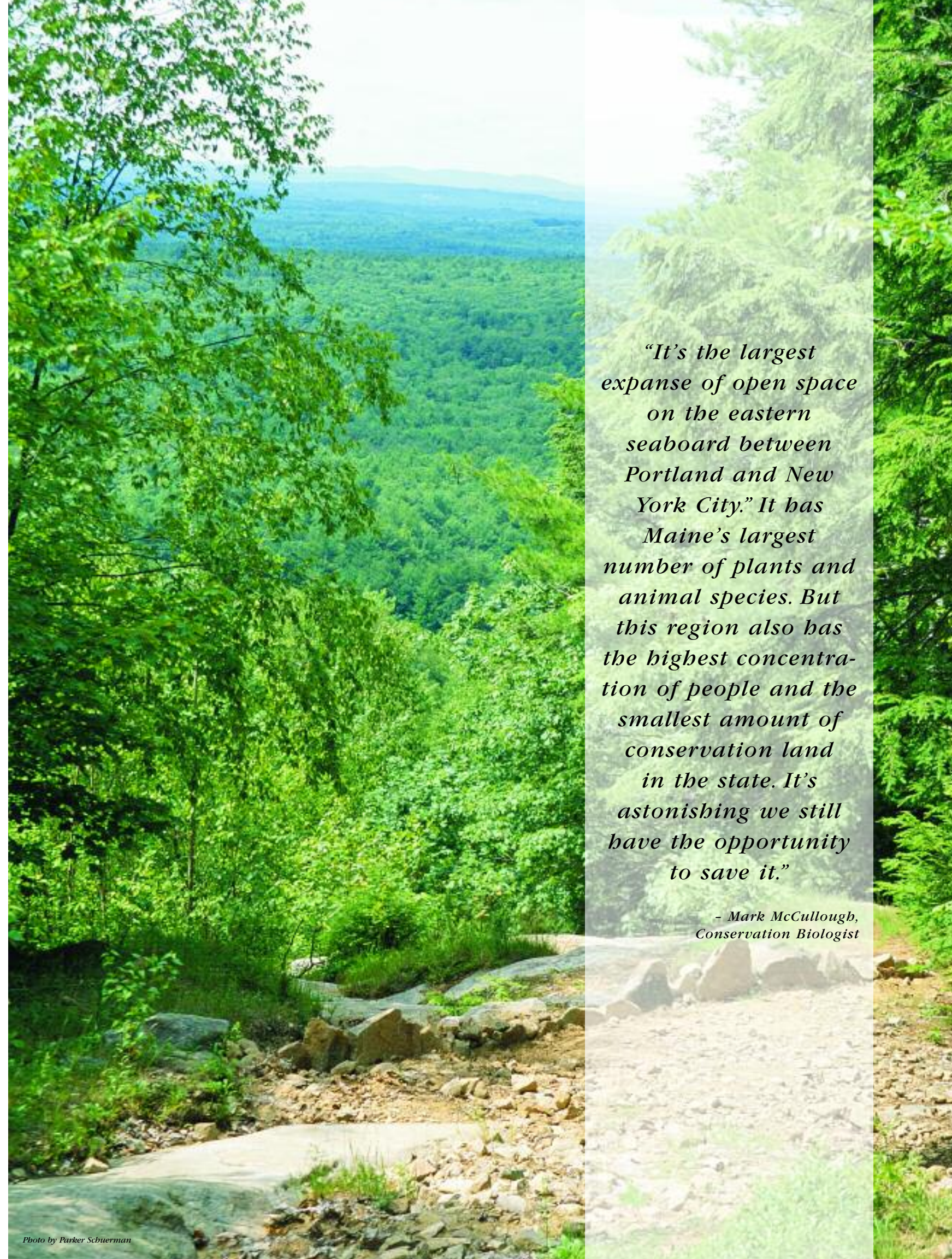
Southernmost Maine still supports a diverse landscape of forests, fields and waterways with healthy wildlife habitats, traditional working landscapes and outstanding recreational opportunities – along with Maine’s greatest variety of native plants and animals.

But these resources are threatened. Unprecedented growth is compromising our ecosystems, altering our landscapes and threatening our way of life. Each day, the area’s ecological and cultural heritage is being chipped away. Bit by bit, the small-town feel of our Maine communities is eroding.

The Mount Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative brings together ten national, regional and local conservation partners to address these threats. Its goal is to conserve a mosaic of critical lands, waterways and working landscapes in the six-town area between the Tattler Hills of Wells and Gerrish Island in Kittery Point. Working together, we are protecting both our community values and the health of our shared environment.



Photo by Nancy Sferra



*“It’s the largest
expanse of open space
on the eastern
seaboard between
Portland and New
York City.” It has
Maine’s largest
number of plants and
animal species. But
this region also has
the highest concentra-
tion of people and the
smallest amount of
conservation land
in the state. It’s
astonishing we still
have the opportunity
to save it.”*

*- Mark McCullough,
Conservation Biologist*



Photo by Harold Mathe

An Overview

Mt. Agamenticus, a landmark on the coastal plain, is surrounded by the largest unfragmented expanse of coastal forestlands between Acadia National Park and the New Jersey Pine Barrens. These large forest blocks include portions of three major rivers' watersheds – the York, the Great Works and the Ogunquit – and allow for extensive public access. Here, in the southernmost corner of Maine, this landscape supports:

- Forty miles of streams that feed the lakes and ponds on which nine communities depend for drinking water;
- The York River: a tidal waterway originating in pristine salt marshes that runs seven miles–unimpeded–to the sea. At its southern end, the York River passes the marshes, upland forests and cobble beaches of Brave Boat Harbor, Cutts and Gerrish Islands in Kittery Point;
- Two forest types–northern softwood and southern hardwood–that overlap to create a range of habitats supporting both the richest species diversity and the largest number of plant and animal species in the entire state of Maine;
- Rare and endangered plant and animal species such as the Blanding's turtle, ringed boghunter dragonfly, and Atlantic White Cedar. Large mammals, such as moose and black bear, have the room they need to roam and thrive.

Today, our communities still have the look and feel of small town Maine. Many of our neighbors still make their living from the land or the sea, while residents and visitors can walk along beautiful beaches, paddle up pristine rivers or take long hikes in the woods. We enjoy scenic vistas, access to networks of trails and clean water supplies. But all is not well in this corner of Maine.

MtA2C's unique ecological features:

- salt marshes
- coastal grasslands
- vernal pools
- Atlantic White Cedar swamps
- large wetland complexes
- chestnut oaks
- flowering dogwood
- shagbark hickory
- spicebush
- blue-spotted salamanders
- spotted turtle
- Blanding's turtle
- ringed boghunter dragonfly.



Photo by Beverly Shadley



Photo by Peter Vandermark courtesy of Cross Current Productions

Our Communities at Risk

An unprecedented rate of population growth and development are putting our wildlife habitats and our human communities at risk.

- Our six towns are changing. We are moving away from communities where residents still make their living from the land and the sea to bedroom communities for people commuting to jobs in Boston or Portland.
- The overall growth rate for York County was four times higher than the state of Maine average. York, Eliot, Wells and South Berwick have enacted growth caps in an effort to control school, road maintenance and water use costs.
- The population of the Town of York alone increased 30% in the past decade. Just five of our towns made up more than 8% of the state's entire housing unit growth during the same ten-year period.
- Public access to both land and water continues to be lost.

As people continue to stream into southern Maine, local residents who farm, fish or harvest trees are finding that their land is worth much more as

development property than as a working landscape. Simply put, if a family needs to sell, the highest bidder is probably a developer. The resulting new homes add costs to the municipal budget and detract from our sense of place. Make no mistake about it, once our rural landscape is lost, we will never regain our wildlife habitat, recreational lands, working waterfronts, farms and forests. It will simply be gone – forever.

“As a child, I could not know what the first housing developments meant. It was exciting to see the building activity, and new houses were places to play when the workers were gone.

As a wildlife manager, new housing developments sometimes represent direct loss of habitat, but more often they infringe; they partition and degrade existing habitat.”

*– Ward Feurt, Refuge Manager,
Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge*

A Coalition Moves Forward

The residents of southern York County have a long and impressive history of conservation. Since the 1970s, engaged and concerned citizens have protected over 10,000 acres of the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea region.

Most recently, The Nature Conservancy, Great Works Regional Land Trust and the York Land Trust completed The Mt. A. Challenge, a conservation effort that raised over \$3.2 million and protected 2,000 acres of land around Mt. Agamenticus between 1999-2001. The successes of the Mt. Agamenticus Challenge, combined with the increasing threat of development, have inspired the formation of The Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative: an even bolder conservation project with several new partners including:

Great Works Regional Land Trust

Kittery Land Trust

York Land Trust

York Rivers Association

US Fish and Wildlife Service/Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge

Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve

Maine Coast Heritage Trust

Trust for Public Land

The Nature Conservancy

“There is no question that the York River watershed supports an extraordinary array of ecological and biological diversity. Equally remarkable is the extraordinary threat this watershed faces from southern Maine’s exponential growth.”

*– Michele Dionne, Ph.D.
Research Director, Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve*



Photo by Jean Demetriopoulos



“The working waterfront is a non-renewable resource. Every piece we lose is almost always lost forever.”

– Patten White, Commercial Lobsterman & CEO of the Maine Lobstermen’s Association.

Photo by Carol Donnelly

A Bold Vision

The goals of the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative include:

- Adding an additional 7,000 acres of conserved land in the Mount Agamenticus to the Sea area;
- Increasing local capacity and funding to manage those lands in perpetuity;
- Working with communities and government at all levels to develop strategies beyond land conservation to strengthen the ecological and community fabric of the area.

In sum, we are striving to create a legacy of conserved land for future generations. To meet these goals, MtA2C partners are working with:

- Landowners who are interested in donating or selling the development rights to their land,
- Community members to raise additional private support to protect lands,
- Federal, state, and local officials to secure public funding,
- Local communities to educate newcomers and children, develop pollution reduction strategies and improve zoning regulations to help prevent sprawl.

Over the course of three years, the partners will raise \$10 million to meet the project’s goals. We are confident that with your help:

- One third of this amount will come through donations of land or property development rights;
- Another third will be raised by working with federal, state, and local officials to secure public funding;
- The final third will be raised in private support, from people like you who care about this region’s future.

The Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea coalition partners are deeply committed. This is a true cooperative effort, with all ten organizations bringing their extensive skills and resources to the Initiative. This coalition has the experience, dedication, and skills necessary, but we must have your help as well if we are to succeed.

“It has been my great pleasure to be associated with a community that cares so deeply about its natural resources. We’ve been working since the ‘70s to conserve land in southern York County and I expect to keep working—as long as I possibly can—to protect the places that make our communities unique.”

*– Marion Fuller Brown,
Honorary Co-Chair, MtA2C*



Photo by Bill Stilliker Jr.



Photo by Beverly Stadley



Photo by Helen Winebaum

The Legacy

We are fortunate to live in communities where large tracts of forests and fields remain open and fishing fleets are still in our harbors. We are also fortunate that many generous and forward thinking landowners have expressed a willingness to protect their lands. But time is not on our side and we must act now.

This is a remarkable opportunity. With your help, our communities will remain the places that our children and our children’s children will want to call home. With your help, our generation will do its part to sustain the forests, fields, and waterways that define this southernmost corner of Maine and the people who live within it.

“Twenty years from now, when MtA2C and subsequent projects have been completed, I visualize Southern York County as the one place in the Great Megapolis where people saw the future coming and took bold steps to change it.”

*– Keith Fletcher, Mount
Agamenticus Project Director,
The Nature Conservancy- Maine.*



Photo by Susan Ash



Photo by Sue Pike

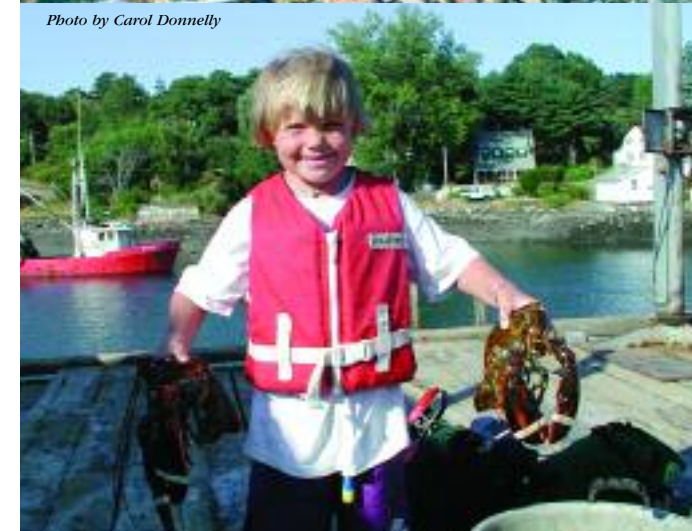




Photo by Carol Donnelly



Photo by Bruce Kidman

**Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea
Conservation Initiative**

-  Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Focus Area
-  Existing Conserved Lands & Water District Properties

Map date 1/26/04



"This is a challenge that I feel compelled to share."

*- Libby Delano,
Honorary Co-Chair, MtA2C*



Photo by Josh Royte



POCKET

"It's not only a big vision but we're making steady progress. Now that's exciting!"

*- Tin Smith,
Honorary Co-Chair,
MtA2C*



Photo by Mike Morrison

For more information about the Mount Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative, please contact:

Roger Cole
MtA2C Coordinator
Voice: (207) 439-9133
E-mail: MntAtoSea@comcast.net

To discuss making a contribution to the Mount Agamenticus to the Sea Campaign, please contact:

Beverly Shadley
MtA2C Campaign Director
Voice: (207) 363-7400
E-mail: bshadley@gwi.net