

SUMMIT VIEW

The Newsletter of the Friends of Mt. Agamenticus

Fall 2018

A Rising Kettle of Hawks Friends Soar the Updraft!

Autumn in Maine and it's hawk migration time. Especially for our Broad-winged Hawks which travel about 70 miles per day, to gain an average of 4,350 miles to Central and South America for the winter.

"Broad-wings", form huge flocks which can include tens of thousands of individuals, including other species of raptors. They find and ride the updrafts, "thermal uplifts", or "thermals", which form as the sun heats the land and hot air rises. Rather than flap their wings, the hawks soar upon the updrafts to conserve energy for their long journeys. These swirling columns of hawks are called, kettles, and can be seen from many hawk-watch sites when there's a good north or north-west wind. Sometimes they're only specks in the sky because they're flying so high. But with binoculars or a spotting telescope, trained and experienced birders can identify individual species and count the number of birds in the kettle! The hawks will then glide, or "stream", from one "thermal" to the bottom of the next, again conserving their energy. "Kettling" hawk numbers can be astonishing, especially when they converge into great rivers of raptors near Veracruz, Mexico, and across Panama.

In Maine, the summit of Mount Agamenticus is a popular hawk-watch site, as are Cadillac and Bradbury mountains farther north.

Because of a hawk's superb eyesight, they've been known to symbolize vision, clear-sightedness, and the big picture. Their appearance is considered to be a blessing.

And so, it is with vision, clear-sightedness, and gratitude that those of us who are FRIENDS OF MOUNT AGAMENTICUS, come together and "kettle" with new and current volunteers to grow our organization into a Non-profit, 501(3)(c)*. Hawks are our call to take notice!

Our first goal as a non-profit will be to help fund an extension to the Big A Universal Access Trail that leads to the new northern overlook deck. Come soar with FRIENDS! Help us realize a community that is educated about and inspired to protect our hawk flyways, wild forest, drinking water, rare wildlife and their habitats, all in the Mount Agamenticus Conservation Region.



Broad-winged Hawks soar and glide - riding the thermals.

For more information, please call 207-361-1102; or visit: agamenticus.org/friends-of-mt-a

More about hawks: www.hawkmountain.org/why-raptors

*Section 501(c) (3) is the portion of the US Internal Revenue Code that allows for federal tax exemption of nonprofit organizations.

Photos from Cornell University Macaulay Library; Diagram from fotolibra.com & Miles Kelly Publishing.

Bald Eagle



Andrew Aldrich

Osprey



Andrew Aldrich

MOUNT A 5K/1Mi TRAIL CHALLENGE

The York Parks and Recreation Department and the Friends of Mount A presented the second annual Mount A 5K/1Mi Trail Challenge on Saturday, September 15th!



Despite the fog and damp trail conditions, the event brought approximately 130 people together to enjoy the trails and mountain park.

The day was geared toward improving overall health and wellness in our community and featured the new Big A Universal Access Trail. Roger Clements, Trail Crew Leader Alumni, Race Director, and Volunteer Extraordinaire developed both a 5K trail challenge and a 1-mile trail challenge for running or walking.

The 1-mile course traversed the new Big A Universal Access trail that is open for use all year. The Big A trail can accommodate all capabilities and fitness levels, while adjoining trails offer even greater challenges for those navigating the 5K.

The Trail Challenge was a great success due to the support from wonderful volunteers, including a strong showing from York & Traip Cross Country teams, and the following sponsors:

- ♦ Rock Coast Training
- ♦ SoMe Brewing Company
- ♦ Runner's Alley
- ♦ York Hospital

We look forward to hosting this fun CHALLENGE again next year, so if you missed out, you can start training along the remarkable trails at Mount A now!

Save the date for the third annual Mount A Trail Challenge (always the third Saturday in September): September 21, 2019!



All Mt. A Challenge photos by Lyn Buckley

Why Do We Need A Dark Sky?

Whether their realm is land, sea or air, Earth's lifeforms depend on natural light transitions throughout the day to night cycle and from season to season.

The International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) website notes that "less than 100 years ago, everyone could look up and see a spectacular starry night sky. Now, millions of children across the globe will never experience the Milky Way where they live."

As "light pollution" (excessive light from artificial sources) proliferates around the world, the IDA states, "a growing body of evidence links the brightening night sky directly to measurable negative impacts", including wasted energy, disruption to ecosystems and wildlife, negative health effects for humans and expanded crime or safety concerns.

Many species expend valuable energy as artificial light distracts them away from finding food or following migratory routes; others that rely on darkness for cover become more vulnerable to predators or have less time to forage safely for food; and light pollution increases our own susceptibility to sleep disruption which has been linked to depression, insomnia and other serious health conditions.

There is a growing awareness of the detriments of light pollution and many ways we can diminish its effects. Unlike many other forms of pollution, this is one we can all easily contribute to minimizing!

For dark-sky viewing in Maine, check out these places: Acadia National Park, Katahdin Wood and Waters National Monument and Appalachian Mountain Club's 100 Mile Wilderness Area and to learn more, visit the International Dark-Sky Association's website: darksky.org/light-pollution.



Thinking Winter?

Winter is right around the corner and a fresh coat of snow may soon blanket Mount Agamenticus. Skiing has been a part of the Mt A Conservation area dating back to the 1960's when the Big A Ski Area first opened. Due to warm coastal influences and poor snowmaking conditions the ski area was closed in the 1970's.

Today skiers and other visitors still enjoy winter use on the mountain. If there is a big snow event it is common to see backcountry skiers flock to the area to enjoy short-lived fresh powder in the glades and the old ski trails.

Although the use of much of the snow-covered glades is allowed, there are a few things to be aware of:

- Cutting trees and branches or removing any vegetation is not permissible. Skiers are encouraged to use the designated trails in the area with caution.
- Places designated and signed as "Regrowth Area" or "Closed Area" are closed year-round. This will help protect fragile plants and prevent the underlying erosion control measures from becoming dislodged or hurting anyone.
- Weather conditions may cause temporary closures to Mount Agamenticus Road (the summit access road). This road is plowed in the winter months but if it is icy or there are wind drifts it can be difficult to keep it clear. We also ask that people do not park in the lots until they have been plowed.
- The dirt section of Mountain Road along the backside of the mountain is CLOSED and is not plowed during the winter months.
- Skiing and sledding is also not allowed on Mount Agamenticus Road as it is a safety hazard.

Let's all have fun and stay safe this winter!



News from the Trail **New Universal Access Viewing Platform Now Open!**

If you visited the summit of Mount A this summer, you were probably wondering what was being built off the old ski lift cement slab. One of the season's major projects included building a new Universal Access Viewing Platform attached to the Big A Trail.

Contractor and Mt A. Conservation Crew Alum Rob Hopkinson designed the structure and was the lead on this project. He shared his Finish Carpentry knowledge and worked with the 2018 Conservation Crew to build this beauty made with custom ordered White Oak for the decking and Western Red Cedar for the railings.

The platform is located on the north side of the summit and has views looking north towards the White Mountains including Mount Washington.

Come check it out!



Join us on Saturday, November 3rd from 9:00am to 12:30pm for our last Volunteer Community Work Day of the season!

Come to Mount Agamenticus and learn how to maintain your hand tools! Maintenance topics will include sharpening, re-handling, handle care, reconditioning tool heads and more. If you have broken or dull tools sitting in your garage that you would like help with please bring them along. Equipment and training will be provided for by Mt A. Please park in the lot located at the top of Mount Agamenticus Road on the 1st Hill Summit. Plan to meet at 9:00 am by the barn located on the west side of the summit.

What to Bring: Sturdy shoes, water, work gloves (we have spares if you don't have any), and any tools you would like help maintaining. Ages 16+. Youth volunteers are welcome to attend but parent/guardian must accompany for the duration. Time frame for the day is 9:00am-12:30pm with light refreshments after. Please reserve your spot by emailing our Trails Supervisor, Darin: dradatz@yorkmaine.org

The Friends of Mount Agamenticus is a volunteer advocacy and stewardship group for the Mount Agamenticus Conservation Region. We assist program staff in carrying out educational, interpretive, community out-reach, and public use objectives without compromising the integrity of the region's sensitive ecological habitat.

To learn about additional Mt. A conservation opportunities, please visit our website: agamenticus.org or call 207-361-1102.

Scan Here To Like Mount Agamenticus Conservation Region on Facebook!



Newsletter written and designed by volunteers at the Friends of Mt. A.

