



SUMMIT VIEW

The Newsletter of the Friends of Mt. Agamenticus

Summer/Fall 2020

Mount Agamenticus COVID-19 Update

As we come into our busy season, we're asking folks to **Recreate Responsibly!** "Know before you go" and **help keep Mount A's trails safe and open!** Please continue to adhere to CDC physical distancing guidelines and follow all posted signage at Mount A. Visitors from out of state should familiarize themselves with state guidelines regarding COVID-19, which can be found at Maine.gov.

Please visit <http://agamenticus.org/july-covid-19-update/> for full, up-to-date, information.

Parking remains limited both at the base and summit, and it's likely to be at capacity if the weather is nice.

Have a backup plan and be prepared to turn around if parking areas are full. Park in designated areas only and do not block roadways. We are busiest on weekends between 10 AM and 3 PM, so plan accordingly.



There is no running water available at the summit.

Port-a-potties are open and are cleaned by an outside company twice a week, typically on Mondays and Fridays.

Be prepared by bringing drinking water, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer and a face covering with you.

Decks and platforms are open; please allow other visitors to exit before going on to a deck.

Trail boxes are now open and paper maps are available. Please take your map with you, rather than returning it to the box, and remember that trail boxes are high touch surfaces! Our trail map is also available on our website as a PDF.

Maintain a six-foot distance between yourself and other trail users. To reduce the need for passing, popular loop trails Ring and Big A are signed and recommended one-way only. **Share the trail** and announce yourself to others.

The Conservation Office is closed to the public. You can reach us by using the "Contact" form on our website or by calling (207) 361-1102. Please leave a voicemail as we may be out in the field.

Mount A Trail Challenge Goes “Virtual”

YORK PARKS AND RECREATION PRESENTS



4TH ANNUAL AND FIRST VIRTUAL
MT.A TRAIL CHALLENGE 5K 1 MILE

Complete during September 1st - 30th

5K & 1Mile - \$20 p/p - Registration Now Open!

Run Virtually Anywhere

Run it, walk it, just complete it!

In order to put the health of our community first and in an abundance of caution, York Parks & Recreation and the Mount Agamenticus Conservation team have made the decision to have a Virtual Race in 2020. We are working to make the best of a difficult situation while still offering our loyal participants and supporters an opportunity to stay healthy and engaged. This is the 4th Annual Mount A Trail Challenge and we hope you still join us, no matter where you are. If you're not familiar, a virtual run means you run the 5K or 1 Mile and self-report your time. Participants registered by September 1st will receive a free race t-shirt. You'll have an entire month to run our 5K and 1 Mile because we're encouraging participants to complete the course on-site if you're local or visiting us this September.

Course maps and the link to register via Run Signup are available on the Mount A website. Visit agamenticus.org and click "Annual Trail Challenge!"

David Tibbetts



Red and Black Elderberry

Species Spotlight Blueberry, *Vaccinium spp.*



While exploring the trails of Mt. A this summer, you may encounter a variety of berry-laden shrubs and plants. None are more iconic, or more important to Maine's economy, than the blueberry! Lowbush varieties of blueberry grow wild throughout the state and are essential sources of food to many wildlife species including black bears, coyotes, racoons, porcupine, deer, and birds. They grow from a spreading, underground root called a rhizome, and managed patches of wild blueberries are often used for "Pick Your Own" businesses. While we at Mt. A are big fans of recreational berry picking, we discourage our visitors from foraging for berries on the mountain as this removes vital food sources from our wildlife residents, and misidentification of berries can lead to many negative health impacts. Be safe out there, and be sure to enjoy this Maine staple from your local farm stand or Pick Your Own establishment!

Allegheny Mound Ant

If you hike around the three hills of Mount Agamenticus, prominent mounds can be seen in several sunny clearings and typically near areas of blueberry habitat. These are colonies of the Allegheny Mound Ant (*Formica exsectoides*), a species native to New England and regions of the Midwest and Southeast.

People often ask if they are invasive or harmful, particularly at this time of the summer when blueberries also garner a lot of attention in our region. Although the Allegheny Mound Ant can produce a stinging bite when disturbed, we're highlighting their beneficial side here. They are an important link in the ecology of the Agamenticus region in general and for blueberries specifically.

The Allegheny Mound Ants create their mound in a way that regulates its internal temperature throughout the seasons. In order to sustain their colony, the ants prey upon many different types of insects (dead and alive) thereby helping to control insect populations. Studies by entomologists have shown the ants' diet includes many blueberry pests, as well as the honeydew produced by aphids and similar insects.

We hope this helps pique your interest in Allegheny Mound Ants and answer some frequently asked questions! For more information, check out this fact sheet produced by the University of Maine Cooperative Extension: <https://extension.umaine.edu/blueberries/factsheets/insects/195-allegheny-mound-ant/>



David Tibbets

Guided Group Activities

Is your family, quarantine “pod,” or homeschool group looking for a fun, outdoor learning activity this fall? We have some options available at Mount A for small groups of **up to twelve people**.

Physically distanced small group offerings are available at Mount Agamenticus from September through October (or until the snow flies!) All activities will take place **outside**.

- Visual Fall Scavenger Hunt & Sensory Walk
- Tree Identification Walk
- Summit Story Time
- Interactive Watershed Model (hands-on activity with 6 active participant slots)

If you are interested in scheduling one of the above activities, or if you'd like more details about a particular program, please fill out our Group Registration form online: <http://agamenticus.org/planning-your-visit/groups>

Please fill out the form at least a week in advance of your desired visit date to better ensure staff availability. We'll follow up as soon as we can with additional program details, guidelines for safety, and information about pricing.



Newsletter written and designed by the Friends of Mt. Agamenticus. Scan here to Like Mount Agamenticus Conservation Region on Facebook!



Winslow Homer: Artists Sketching in The White Mountains (1868)

MT. AGAMENTICUS 1ST PLEIN AIR EVENT

Like so many other events being affected due to the pandemic, Mt. A's 1st Plein Air Event has been postponed until September of 2021. The scheduled Plein Air Event is an outdoor paint-out where artists paint on site, completing their paintings within several hours on any trail or summit vista at the mountain. The public is welcome to spectate while artists paint. Artists will then exhibit their ready to hang paintings during a reception later that evening at the York Art Association. The paintings will also be exhibited at York Public Library for the following month.

The French phrase “en plein air” translates to “in the open air.” French Impressionists started plein air painting when the paint tube was invented in the mid-1800s. It has since given artists the opportunity to use dazzling pigments to capture the immediate urgency of changing light and weather. Plein air paintings, usually landscapes, have a different “airiness-feel” to them as they are painted rapidly in a few hours capturing the essence of a lasting impression. Winslow Homer, a well know 19th century plein air artist began capturing Maine's beautiful vistas after moving to Prouts Neck and the plein air painting movement still remains popular in Maine.

A call to artists will be published in March of 2021 and we look forward to September 2021 when Mt. Agamenticus will host its first plein air paint out event.