

Mount Agamenticus Steering Committee

Meeting Minutes

Day: Wednesday, September 08, 2021

Location: Mount Agamenticus Summit Lodge, York ME

Time: 9:30am – 11:10am

Members Present:

Conservation Coordinator, *Robin Kerr*
Great Works Regional Land Trust, *Donovan Spaulding*
Maine Dept. Inland Fisheries & Wildlife, -----
Town of South Berwick, *John Branagan*
Town of York, *Robin Cogger*
York Land Trust, *Doreen MacGillis*
York Water District, *Gary Stevens*

Public/others present: *Naomi Densmore*, Mt. A Park Attendant/Outreach Specialist; *Ben Jankowski*, Mt. A Trails, Grounds & Facilities Supervisor; *David Tibbetts*, Mt. A Crew Member

Chair: *Doreen MacGillis*

Minutes: taken and transcribed by *Robin Kerr*

Approve minutes from previous meeting: Minutes from 06/09/2021 meeting reviewed and approved as presented.

Public forum: n/a

Correspondence/ presentations/ requests:

Discussion items:

- *Updates*
 - *Fee Collection Discussion with Select Board*
Board asked us to bring them a recommendation; asked us to come back with options and look at not charging York residents additional fee associated with a York parking pass. Mount A Enterprise; Town revenue in parking fee not currently included; overall recommendation well received; Board needs to take deep dive and sort revenue sharing at the municipal level.
 - *Park Ordinance; Robin Cogger*
Town Manager worked on official designation of Town Parks; used National Parks criteria; been vetted and now on Town ballot to include Mount A; if approved would mean additional assistance with enforcement; Robin will send copy of draft.
 - *Parking & Restroom Project; Survey*
Viewed updated Titcomb survey of summit. Shows boundary between YWD and Town needed for parking project; Storyboards will be up by the end of the week; Wright-Pierce sending proposal for design work on the buildings for the composting toilets. Clivus does not do this portion of the work.
 - *Trail Work; Ben Jankowski*
It rained all of July; Crew worked to provide emergency access (atv) around the Ring Trail; replaced 3 boardwalks; volunteers Jared Stevens, Tommy Pratt, Dan Whittle and Forrest Henry from the Agamenticus ATV Club donated funds along with York Land Trust for over 70 yards of gravel from Libby & Sons. The 4 moved much of the material into place on Norman Mill trail over the spring and summer totaling 22 hours of volunteer labor; closed unauthorized trail connection from Norman Mill trail to Kenyon Hill property; closed the

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connection from Bennett Lot Road to Norman Mill (the second connection that had previously been closed by crew and reopened by others); worked with volunteer from Trail Life on a project improving markings/paint blazes along Third Hill trail; worked with volunteers and crew painting the summit lodge; 2 crew members have left for the season and returned to school, we have on staying with reduced hours, one new recruit plus David thru the fall and shrubland management. Closures are staying closed for now; area doesn't seem as active with mountain bike numbers this summer so far.

- *Invasive Plant Work; David Tibbetts*

Working mostly on own because invasives are more sparse (not ideal for volunteer workdays); Glossy Buckthorn still biggest one at Mount A; 2 new invasive species were located as early detection: star of Bethlehem near the lodge and smooth bedstraw by the barn; the Cedar Swamp has a population of Phragmites and trying to get State to spray as it is covering at least 2x the area now than previously observed just a couple of years ago. Native Plant Trust is doing a rare plant survey and David noted the Atlantic White Cedar population and area is expanding in the older growth approx. 2 acres; has 1 acre with a patch of buckthorn. 2 rare plant species found in new locations: feather foil and summer grape on first hill. Seems Hemlock Woolly Adelgid is here to stay. YWD doesn't report it any longer. Forest Service focused on and new sighting of Emerald Ash Borer.

- *Outreach/Lodge/Programs; Naomi Densmore*

Designed new exhibits for lodge; held pop up hours initially this spring and now more regular hours; nice to have flexibility; signs are posted noting masks are appreciated and Naomi will close the doors when 15 or more are inside at one time. Last weekend will be Oct. 24th for Lodge; Annual Visitor Use Survey was completed in person and online (new this year; used QR codes at all trail head locations; over 700 surveys were completed in total with more than 50 of those from the online option; online option providing good/critical, thoughtful responses and providing some good data. New programs developed include a nature journal club and an introduction to hiking with Leave No Trace guidelines; had first family join in on a test run; went over safety tips and then the littles lead the hike! October school groups are back with approximately 6 registered so far along with weddings.

- *5th Annual Trail Challenge*

Plus 2nd Virtual option this year; getting some registrations in and been busy cleaning up the trail route, creating and posting signage in advance this year for the virtual option. Signs are great for direction but also helping to promote event. Will need more volunteers to assist the in-person event on the 18th!

- *Inaugural Plein Air Paint Out and Reception; FOMA & YAA*

We are excited for the Friends of Mount A to host the first Paint Out on Saturday, September 25 at Mount A (rain date September 26). Artists check in at the summit, and then paint on site in location of their choosing. A bagged lunch will be provided by York Rotary. Artist then wet mount, price, and bring one piece to York Art Association for reception that evening and exhibition for the month of October. A commission on artwork sold will support YAA and the Friends of Mount Agamenticus, both nonprofit 501(c)3 organizations.

- *Invoices- coming soon*

Handed out copies; S.B. Town Manager retired; for new person include newsletter and history of partnership, etc.

- *Mapping- Inventory/Assessments; Landscape/Collector; ongoing*

Shared updated map with data collected from volunteers over the spring and summer. Also working with group assisting us with app for our own data collection; once set up should help to

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better manage trail inventory and assessment along with tracking work completed and prioritizing work needed.

Reports

Gary/Watershed

YWD is tearing down the apartments, restoring 1 outbuilding plus new building in proposed budget. If approved will tear down out building too and use for dry storage; last year added ½ mile of road; this year continued 1 mile to Chase's Pond. Next year ½ mile left. Access improvement for equipment or emergencies; runners seem to really like it; then can work on side trails and maintenance; York Police officer had dog off leash 3x; wrote email and he says he will not be back to this property; very uncomfortable position to be in for a work environment. Brene Brown quotes of encouragement from Committee: Embrace everything that sucks. It is never wrong to do the right thing. Courage over Comfort; Committee is in full support of Gary and impact/value of his work in Mount A region; Gary pulling in 3 other people to assist with patrols: Joe, Jason and Robbie; Jason is stepping down.

Doreen/Land Conservation

Chicks Brook Norton inholding submitting proposal to MNRCP; significant habitat for wetlands and Hickory Oak Forest; had done some survey and title work in the past; Rusty Norton approached YLT with 46 acres; established trails in greater Mount A area; abuts MDIFW and land trust property. YLT is hiring assistant stewardship director.

Meeting Adjournment

Next meeting date/time: Wednesday, November 10th, 9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m

Location: TBD- possibly zoom