

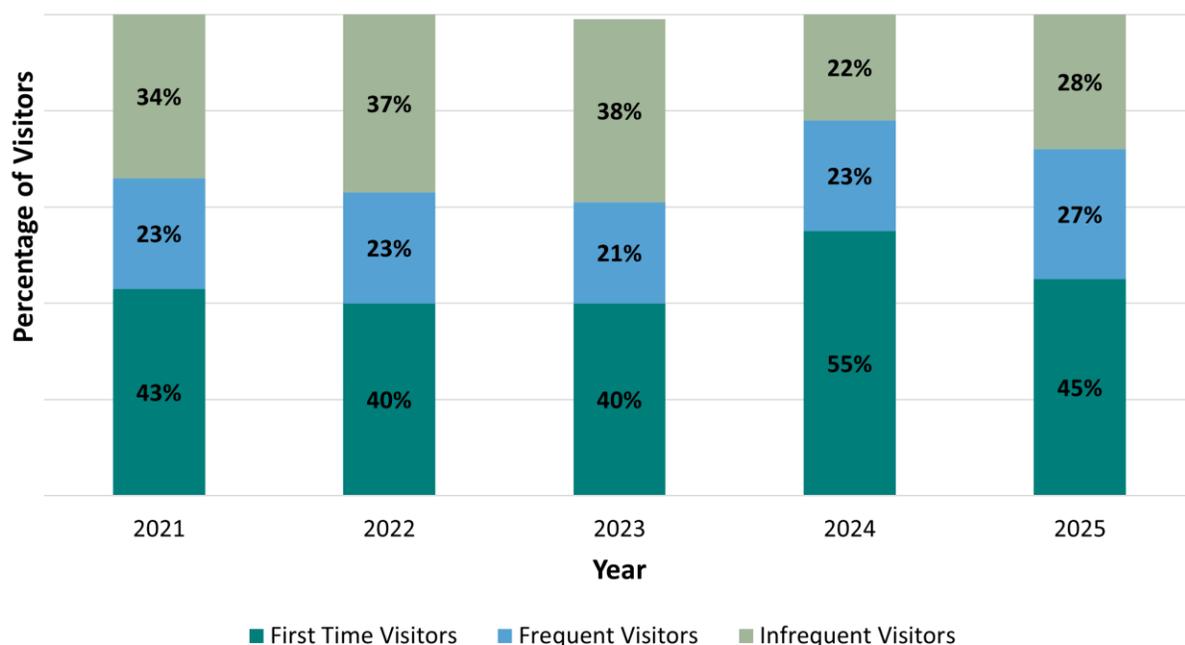
Mount Agamenticus Conservation Program 2025 Visitor Use Survey

The Mount Agamenticus Visitor Use survey is a tool that allows for the collection and analysis of data on who is visiting the mountain along with how these visitors utilize trails and surrounding lands. Conservation Program staff gathers data annually to allow for the analysis of changing trends. During three in-person survey blocks each day for seven days at the Base and Summit of First Hill, staff engaged with **1145 visitors** in **469 total surveys** over the course of **eighty-four total survey hours**. This time allows staff an opportunity to speak with visitors face-to-face and receive direct feedback. This year's survey period took place during the second and third weeks of August. An online survey was available from the end of August through mid-October, bringing the total survey count to **478** and visitor count to **1167 people**.

Highlights

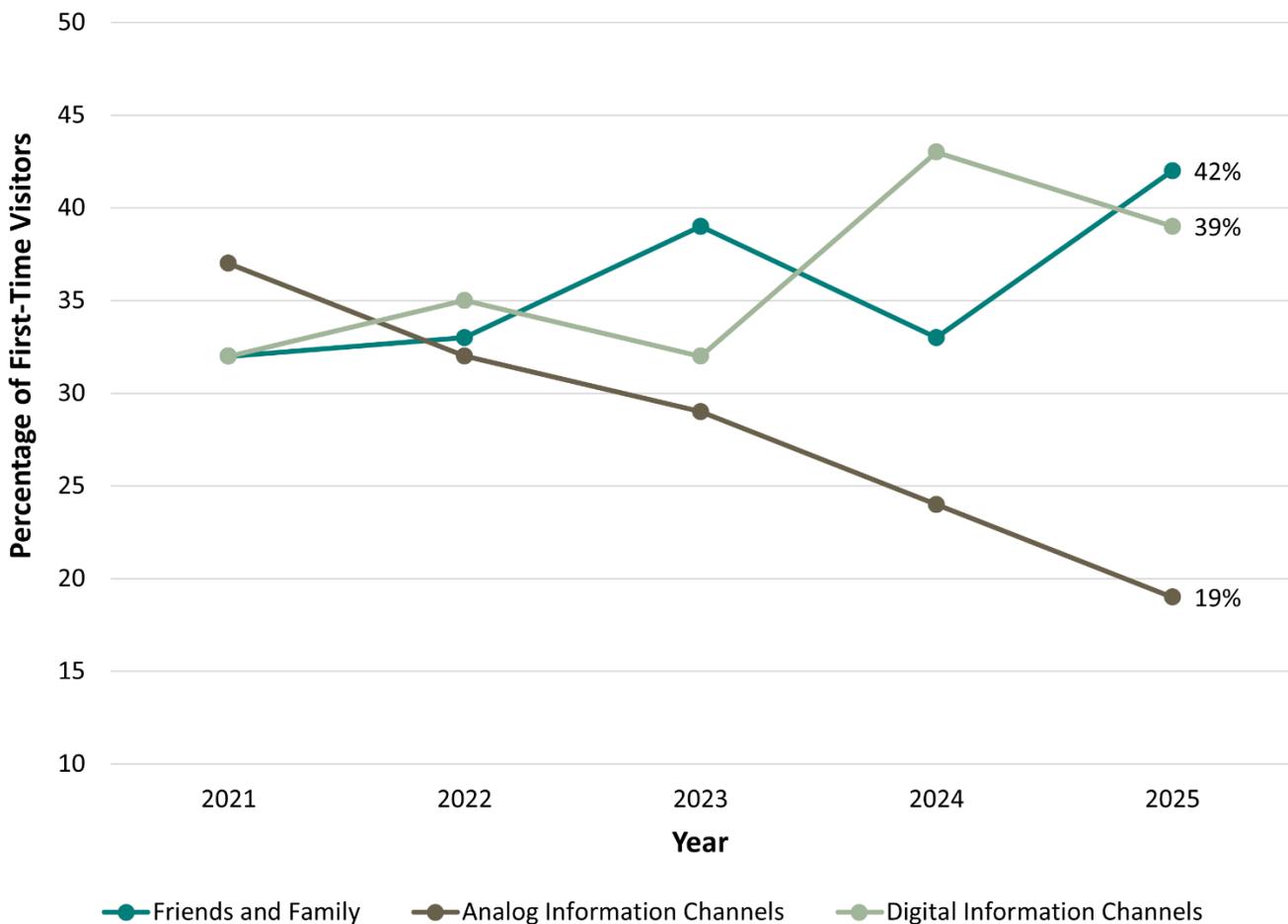
Visit Frequency:

- 212 (approximately 45% of groups) were **first-time visitors**.
 - 25% of **first-time visitors** live locally (within fifty miles).
- 127 (27% of groups) are **frequent visitors** (visiting monthly *or more often*).
 - Of **frequent visitors**, most (60%) visit at least once a month; 13% visit at least once a week; 27% visit more than once a week.
- 129 (28% of groups) are **infrequent visitors** (those who visit less often than once a month).



Comparison of visit frequency from 2021-2025.

- Most visitors, 42%, heard of Mount A through friends or family.
- **Digital Information Channels:** 33% of first-time visitors found Mount A with an internet search or through a website, with another 6% through social media, map applications, or crowdsourcing tools like AllTrails, Strava, and TrailForks, among others.
 - Internet searches included:
 - “Attractions southern Maine”
 - “Trail near York”
 - “Tourists sites”
 - “What to do in Ogunquit area”
 - This is the first year that visitors mentioned using ChatGPT and TikTok.
- **Analog Information Channels:** 16% of first-time visitors heard of Mount A via “word of mouth,” from local businesses or other means, and 3% found out about Mount A from street signs, physical maps, or information available at local welcome and information centers.

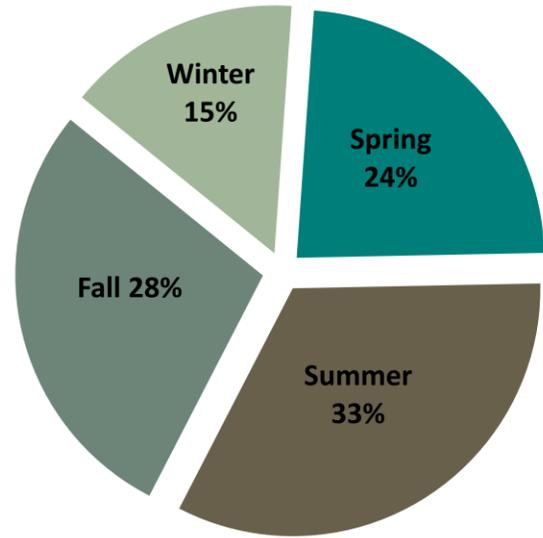


First-time visitor use of analog information channels in finding out about Mount Agamenticus has decreased over time.

Frequent Visitors:

- **Seasons:**

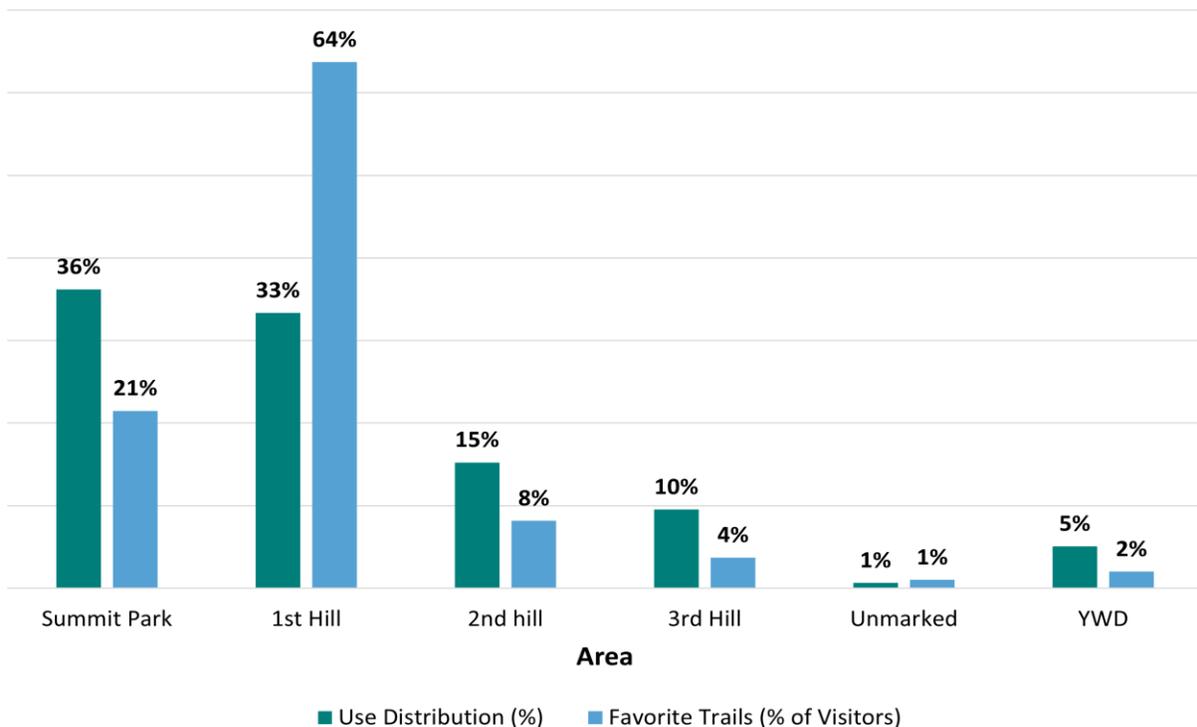
- 41% of frequent visitors surveyed visit the mountain all year round.
- 28% visit in spring, summer, and fall only.
- 14% of frequent visitors come only in the summer and fall.
- 10% of frequent visitors to Mount A visit only in the summer.
- *Note: Because in-person survey sessions take place in July and August, visitation data tends to skew more heavily toward summer, even though fall is typically a busier season.*



Distribution of seasonal use by frequent visitors.

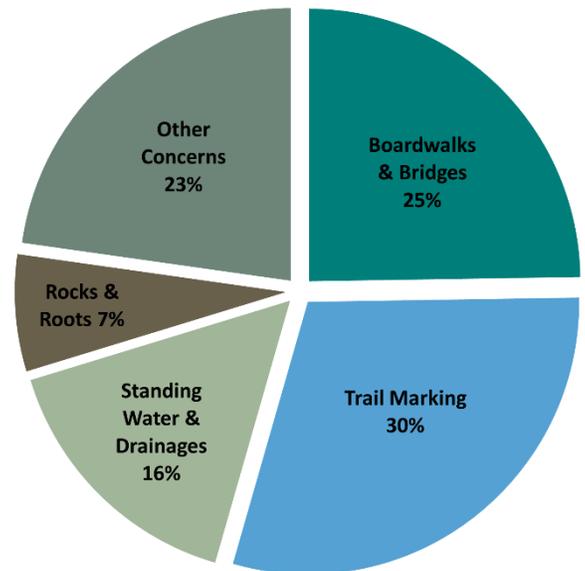
- **Areas:**

- *Use Distribution:* First Hill trails and the Summit Park are the most-used areas receiving 33% and 36% of frequent visitor use, respectively. The Second Hill area received 15% of use and Third Hill, 10%. Neighboring York Water District trails received 5%, and reported use of unmarked trails was around 1%.
- 38% of frequent visitors use both First and Second Hill trails.
- 23% utilize trails on all three hills.



Distribution of total area use shown alongside the percentage of visitors who reported their favorite trail in each area. Use percentages reflect reported visits; favorite-trail percentages reflect individual respondents.

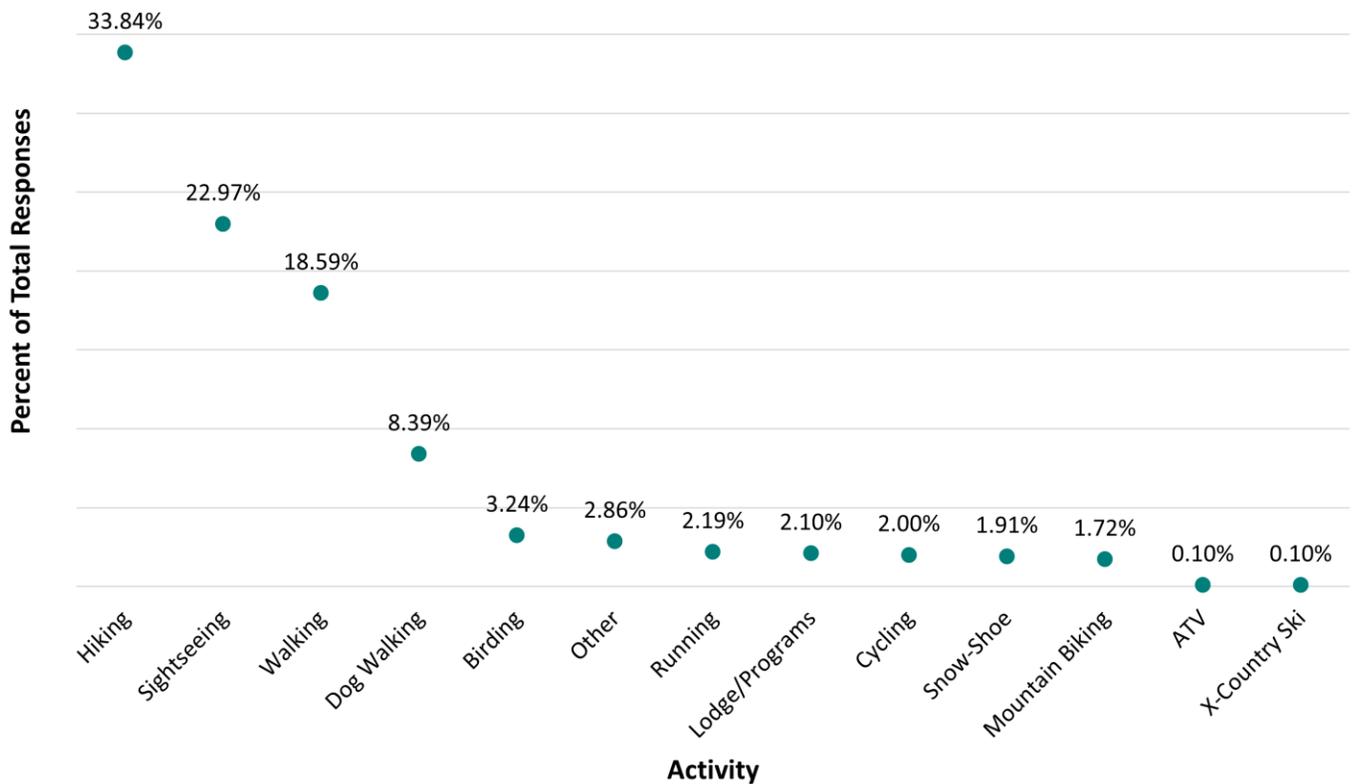
- Favorite Trails:** Ring Trail is the favorite of 35% of the frequent visitors who named a favorite trail. The next favorite is the Big A Trail (just over 20%), followed by Blueberry Bluff (16%).
 - 93% of the frequent visitors who answered named at least one specific trail on First Hill, and 6% on Second Hill. Two visitors named a Third Hill trail as their favorite.
 - 16% of frequent visitors listed more than one trail, and 10% mentioned a favorite loop or route. Some favorite routes included:
 - Big A 50K loop
 - Ring to Witch Hazel and back down Fisher
 - Second and Third Hill loop starting from Cedar to Porcupine
 - Second Hill Ridge Trail loop
 - An unnamed 7-mile loop
 - Just under 3% of frequent visitors named neighboring York Water District trails as their favorite trails or routes (13% of frequent visitors utilize those trails).
 - Another 4% of respondents named the access road; this included cyclists, motorcycle drivers, and visitors who regularly walk the road.
- Trail Feedback:** 68% of frequent visitors had *no* critical feedback about the condition of trails. Most feedback received (just under 63% of all critical feedback) was about specific locations, rather than general condition.
 - 8% of respondents were concerned about damage to boardwalks and bridges.
 - Trail Marking:** 7% of frequent visitors indicated concerns about directional signage clarity, 2% regarding blazing, and 2% had concerns about designated use indicators.
 - 5% were concerned about standing water and drainages.
 - 2% were concerned about rocks and roots on the trails.
 - Other concerns (5%) included downed trees, pruning, loose stones on rock staircases, damage to interpretive signage, and loose boards on platforms.



Critical feedback from frequent visitors regarding Mt. A trails. 68% of frequent visitors had no feedback; graph represents only critical feedback received.

Activities:

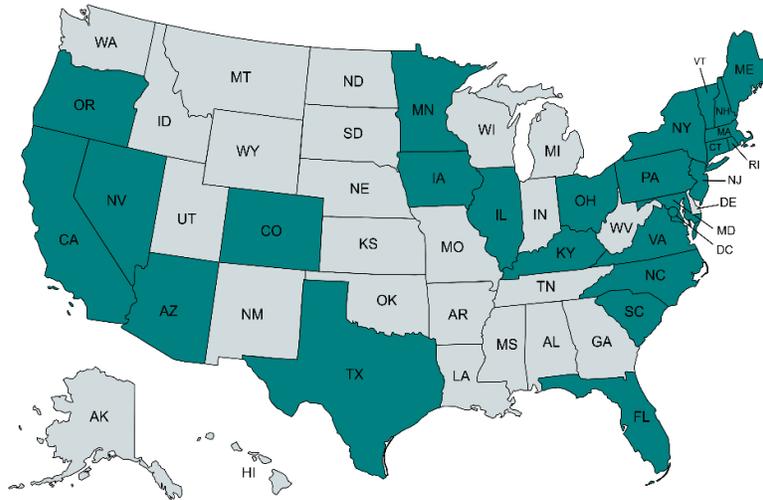
- Visitors reported participating in multiple activities during their visits to Mount A. Most people came to hike, sightsee or walk:
 - **Hiking**, 74% of groups surveyed, approximately 34% of total responses.
 - **Sightseeing**, 50% of groups, approximately 23% of total responses.
 - **Walking**, 41% of groups, approximately 19% of total responses.
- Dog Walking, 18% of groups surveyed.
- Birding, 7% of groups surveyed (a 2% increase over last year)
- Mountain Biking, 4% of groups surveyed.
- Cycling, 4% of groups surveyed.
- Running, 5% of groups surveyed (a 1% increase over LY).
- Lodge and programs, 5% of groups surveyed (a 2% increase over LY).
- ATV use, less than 1% of groups surveyed.
- Winter recreational activities, 2% of groups surveyed.
- Some of the “other” activities (6% of groups, approximately 3% of all activity) mentioned by visitors include: plant and wildlife identification, foraging and mushrooming, HAM radio, meditation, remote working, rock climbing, social gatherings and celebrations, volunteering, and yoga.



Percent of total responses for each activity, illustrating how frequently each activity was mentioned relative to all reported activities.

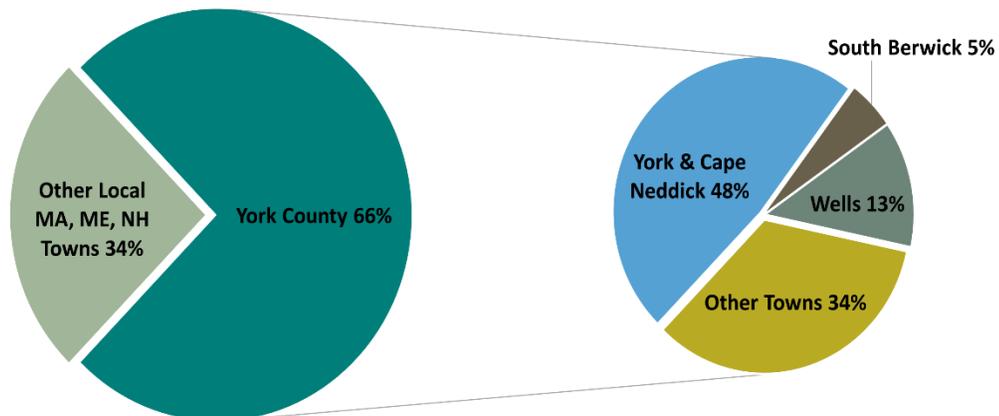
Where Visitors Are From:

- Most visitors in 2025 (53%) live locally within 50 miles of Mount A.
 - 65% of local visitors are from Maine, 31% are from New Hampshire, and 2% are from Massachusetts. Local Maine residents represent 34% of **all** visitors to Mount A.
 - 25% of local residents were first-time visitors.
- Of non-local visitors living within the United States, most were from MA (30%, representing 14% of all visitors).



The highlighted states represent where US visitors were from in 2025.

- 11% of non-local visitors are from New Hampshire, a 6% increase over last year.
- 15 international visitors came from Canada, England and the UK, Denmark, Germany, New Zealand, and Senegal.
- **York Residents:** Of local visitors who provided their town, those from York make up the largest percentage, 31%, which is an increase of 8% over last year.
 - York residents represent 16% of all visitors in 2025.
 - York residents make up 41% of frequent visitors, and 2% of first-time visitors.



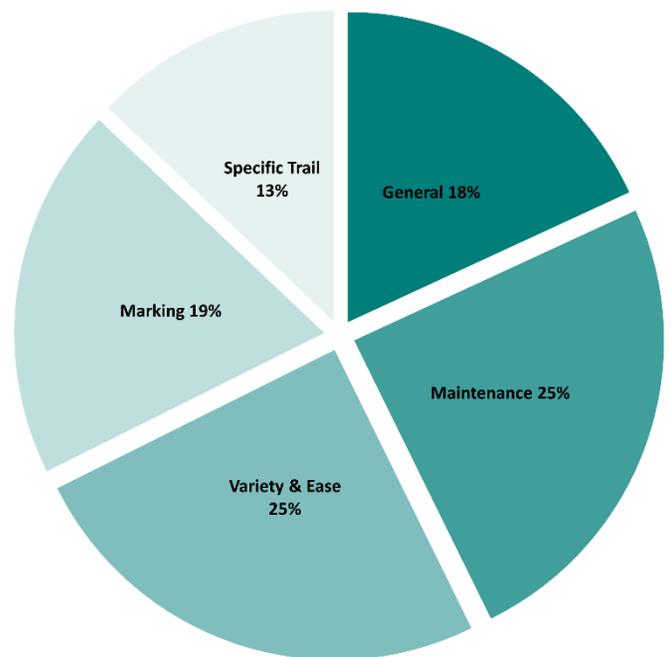
York County residents made up 66% of all local visitors, with most residing in York and Cape Neddick.

Day Trips and Overnight Visitors:

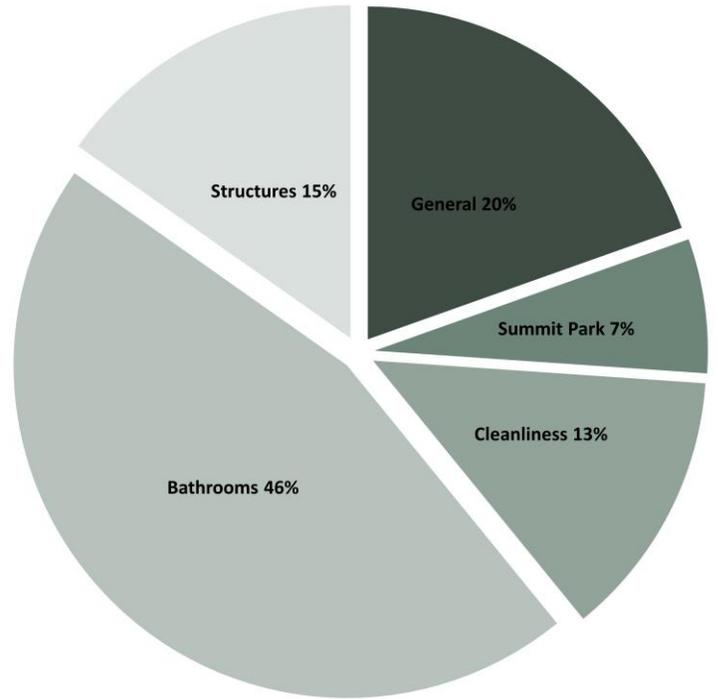
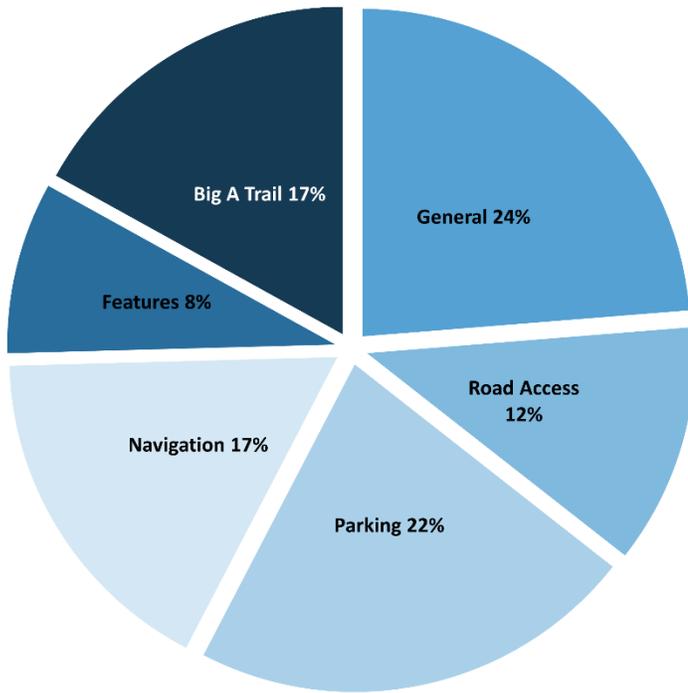
- 62% of visitors were in the area on a day trip, an increase of 6% over LY.
 - 15% of day trippers were non-local, traveling to the area from over 50 miles away. This is a 4% decrease from last year.
- 36% of visitors were in the area on overnight or extended trips, a decrease of 8% from last year.
 - 7% of overnight visitors did not say in which town they were staying.
 - Of overnight visitors who mentioned a town, 38% were staying in York, 20% in Ogunquit and 15% in Wells.
 - While most overnight visitors stay locally, there are vacationers staying further away who include Mount A in a day trip to York and the surrounding seacoast area. This year, we saw long-distance overnight visitors coming from Belfast, Maine, Nashua, New Hampshire and Boston, Massachusetts.

What Visitors Enjoy Most:

- Individual responses to this question are sorted into broader categories and then counted. Many visitors had multiple responses.
 - Through the years, “the view” is consistently the top response to this question. This year, **44% of all visitors** surveyed provided this response. 48% of *first-time visitors*, 50% of *infrequent visitors*, and 32% of *frequent visitors* most enjoyed the view.
 - Category Responses:
 - **Trails** (including maintenance, marking, variety), 15% of all; 17% of first-time; 16% of infrequent; 13% of frequent visitors.
 - **Accessibility** (including access and parking, ease, navigability, safety), 12% of all; 11% of first-time; 12% of infrequent; 14% of frequent visitors.
 - **Park Facilities** (structures and amenities including platforms, water and restrooms), 10% of all; 12% of first-time; 10% of infrequent; 7% of frequent visitors.



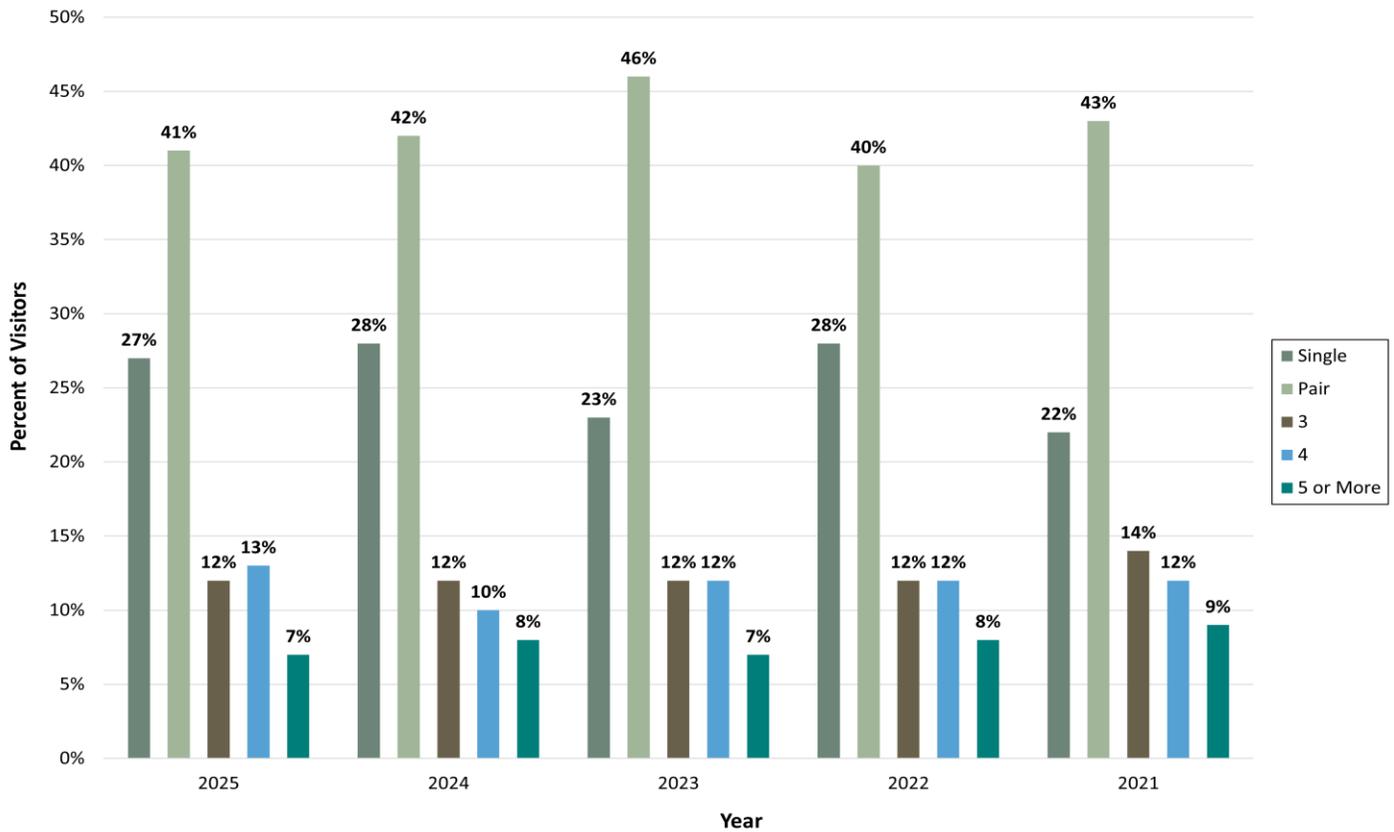
Responses from visitors who most enjoyed the **trails** were further broken down into subcategories.



Responses from visitors who most enjoyed **accessibility** (left) and **park facilities** (right) were further broken down into subcategories.

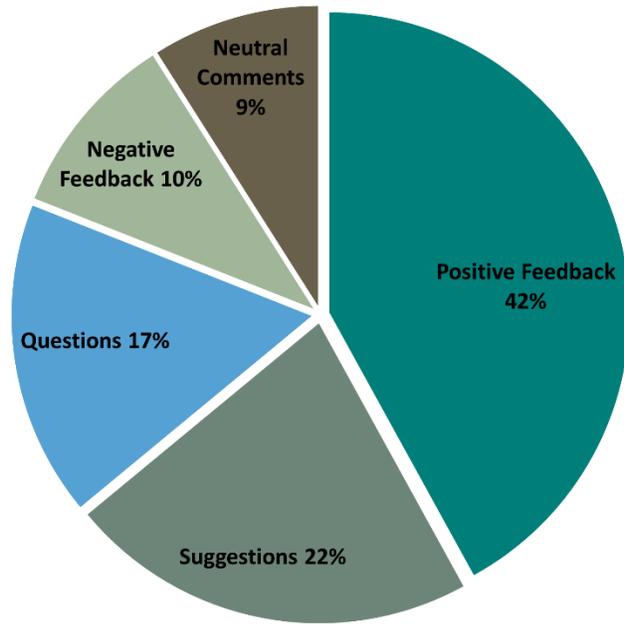
- **Dog-Friendliness**, 3% of all; one first-time visitor; 2% of infrequent; 8% of frequent visitors.
 - 29% of frequent visitors were dog-walkers.
- **Education** (including interpretive signage, programming, Learning Lodge), 12% of all; 4% of first-time; 5% of infrequent; 3% of frequent visitors.
- **Quiet**, 13% of all; 7% of first-time; 11% of infrequent; 28% of frequent visitors.
- **Nature** (any mention of spending time in nature, the outdoors, or the forest), 8% of all; 6% of first-time; 5% of infrequent; 15% of frequent visitors.
 - **Wildlife and Plants** (observation, identification, and encounters), 9% of all; 9.5% of first-time; 8.5% of infrequent; 9.5% of frequent visitors.
- **Recreation** (specific recreational activity or opportunity), 9% of all; 7% of first-time; 11% of infrequent; 12% of frequent visitors.

- **Time with Family or Friends** (including “kid-friendly and “family-friendly”), 6% of all; 4% of first-time; 7% of infrequent; 8% of frequent visitors.
 - *Group Size*: Group size patterns echo the social nature of visiting Mount A. Just under 27% of people surveyed were visiting their own, a 3% decrease from last year. Most people (41%) visit in pairs, 12% in groups of three and 13% in groups of four. About 7% of people are visiting in groups of five or more. These proportions have remained consistent over the last five years.



Comparison of group sizes from 2021–2025. Most visitors are in pairs or small groups, with the majority visiting in pairs. Single visitors make up, on average, only about a quarter of all visitors surveyed.

- Additional categories included geological features, general atmosphere (“vibe”), interaction with staff, nostalgia, proximity, the scenery, sunrise and sunset, the weather, and other answers not directly related to Mount Agamenticus. Twenty-four people did not respond to the question.



Most visitors provided positive feedback.

Comments and Suggestions:

Yearly survey sessions allow Conservation Program staff to receive comments and suggestions directly from visitors. The sessions also provide an opportunity to answer questions and address concerns. Many visitors have orientation and logistics questions, which staff can answer in the moment. Others offer suggestions that may not align with Mount Agamenticus Park Regulations or the Public Access and Trail Plan. These suggestions can lead to an opportunity for more in-depth conversations about the Conservation Program’s current work and ongoing mission. Frequently mentioned topics and repeat questions from visitors help staff gain insight into any gaps

in outreach and educational messaging.

This year, 69% of visitors surveyed had questions or provided additional feedback. Most comments, suggestions and questions fit within the following topics:

- Trails (condition and maintenance, designated use, directional clarity), 11%.
- Fees and fee implementation, 7%.
- Parking, 4%.
- Education (Learning Lodge, programming, interpretive signage), 13%.
- Restrooms, 7%. All feedback about the restrooms was positive.
- Other Ammenities (water, picnic areas, bike racks), 2%.
- Accessibility (including access points and driving directions), 4%.

There was also a wide variety of “miscellaneous” comments (16% of all feedback), as well as general praise (22%), logistical or orientation-related questions (9%), and suggestions that do not align with current regulations or the Trail Plan (7% of all feedback, 35% of suggestions). Notable repeat comments and suggestions that did not fit into the broader topics included questions about volunteering and employment, dogs, and the history of the ski area.

Conclusion:

The Annual Visitor Use Survey is only a snapshot of our estimated 50,000 plus yearly visitors. Mount Agamenticus is frequented not only by seasonal visitors to the seacoast, but by locals who visit as often as they can to enjoy a wide variety of recreational opportunities on quiet trails. We are always surprised by the number of people who are finding their way to the

mountain for the first time, but we hope that they will return for many years to come. We will continue our efforts to provide safe access to sustainable outdoor recreation and nature connections while maintaining the delicate balance of habitat protection and water quality that makes the Mount A region so special. *Thank you* for making Mount Agamenticus part of your outdoor experience and sharing this beautiful place with those close to you.

If you have questions, comments, or feedback about the Visitor Use Survey, please contact the Mount Agamenticus Conservation Program Outreach and Education Coordinator at ndensmore@yorkmaine.org.