

## Mt. Agamenticus Area

Eliot, South Berwick, Wells, and York, Maine

### ***Description:***

The greater Mt. Agamenticus area extends from York Pond in Eliot northeast through the Tatnic Hills area in Wells. The greater Mt. Agamenticus area includes rugged terrain, several lakes and ponds, and numerous small wetlands that together comprise the largest contiguous block of lightly developed land in southern York County. Mt. Agamenticus is the most outstanding feature at the site, both topographically and ecologically. Other prominent physical features are Horse Hill, Second and Third Hills, the Chick's Brook watershed, Chase's Pond, Folly Pond, Middle Pond, Bell Marsh, Warren Pond, Welch's Pond, Round Pond, and York Pond.



Atlantic white cedar swamp at Mt. Agamenticus

The area's numerous upland and wetland complexes are ecologically significant because they contain plant and animal assemblages that are at their northern range limits. For example, at least three animal and 20 plant species are restricted to this extreme southern portion of Maine, and many other common species in this area occur only sparingly further northward. This pattern extends to natural communities as well. The Atlantic white cedar swamp, hemlock - hardwood pocket swamp, and pitch pine bog that occur in this area are all restricted to southern Maine, and the oak-pine-hickory forest that extends from Mt. Agamenticus north through Third Hill includes the only remaining intact Chestnut oak woodland community in the entire state.

### ***Rare Plants:***

Of the twenty-one rare plant species known to occur in the Mt. Agamenticus area, fourteen are considered rare because Maine is the northeastern limit of their range; that is, they are much more common further southward and westward. For a few of these species, such as large beak-

rush (*Rhynchospora macrostachya*) and flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*), the greater Mt. Agamenticus area supports the furthest northeastern occurrences in their range.



Feather Foil (*Hottonia inflata*)

Of the two species that are not range-restricted in Maine, wild leek (*Allium tricoccum*) and alga-like pondweed (*Potamogeton confervoides*), wild leek is uncommon because it occurs only in nutrient-enriched hardwood forests, and alga-like pondweed occurs very sporadically in shallow, soft-water ponds.

***Rare Species/Natural Community Table for Greater Mt. Agamenticus Area:***

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status	S-Rank	G-Rank
Rare and Exemplary Natural Communities				
Atlantic White Cedar Swamp	Atlantic White Cedar Swamp	n/a	S2	G3
Chestnut Oak Woodland	Chestnut Oak Woodland	n/a	S1	--
Pocket Swamp	Hemlock - Hardwood Pocket Swamp	n/a	S2	--
Leatherleaf Bog	Leatherleaf Boggy Fen	n/a	S4	--
Grassy Shrub Marsh	Mixed Graminoid – Shrub Marsh	n/a	S5	--
Sandy lake bottom	Pipewort–Water lobelia Aquatic-Bed	n/a	S5	--
Pitch Pine Bog	Pitch Pine Bog	n/a	S1S2	--
Red maple Swamp	Red maple -Sensitive fern Swamp	n/a	S4	--
White Oak – Red Oak Forest	White Oak – Red Oak Forest	n/a	S3	G5

Rare Plants				
Wild leek	<i>Allium tricoccum</i>	SC	S2	G5
White wood aster	<i>Aster divaricatus</i>	T	S2	G5
Upright bindweed	<i>Calystegia spithamea</i>	T	S1	G4G5
Atlantic White-Cedar	<i>Chamaecyparis thyoides</i>	SC	S2	G4
Spotted Wintergreen	<i>Chimaphila maculata</i>	E	S1	G5
Sweet pepperbush	<i>Clethra alnifolia</i>	SC	S2	G5
Flowering dogwood	<i>Cornus florida</i>	E	S1	G5
Eastern joe-pye weed	<i>Eupatorium dubium</i>	T	S1	G5
Featherfoil	<i>Hottonia inflata</i>	T	S1	G4
Smooth winterberry holly	<i>Ilex laevigata</i>	SC	S2	G5
Slender blue flag	<i>Iris prismatica</i>	T	S2	G4G5
Mt.ain Laurel	<i>Kalmia latifolia</i>	SC	S3	G5
Spicebush	<i>Lindera benzoin</i>	SC	S3	G5
Broadbeech fern	<i>Phegopteris hexagonoptera</i>	SC	S2	G5
Pale green orchis	<i>Platanthera flava</i>	SC	S2	G4T4Q
Alga-like pondweed	<i>Potamogeton confervoides</i>	SC	S3	G3G4
Chestnut oak	<i>Quercus montana</i>	T	S1	G5
Tall beak-rush	<i>Rhynchospora macrostachya</i>	E	S1	G4
Sassafras	<i>Sassafras albidum</i>	SC	S2	G5
Swamp Saxifrage	<i>Saxifraga pensylvanica</i>	T	S2	G5
Columbia Water-Meal	<i>Wolffia columbiana</i>	T	S2	G5
Rare Animals				
Spotted Turtle	<i>Clemmys guttata</i>	T	S3	G5
Wood Turtle	<i>Clemmys insculpta</i>	SC	S4	G4
Blanding's Turtle	<i>Emydoidea blandingii</i>	E	S2	G4
Northern black racer	<i>Coluber constrictor</i>	E	S2	G5
Ribbon snake	<i>Thamnophis sauritus</i>	SC	S3	G5
Swamp darter	<i>Etheostoma fusiforme</i>		S1	G5
Brown snake	<i>Storeria dekayi</i>	SC	S3	G5
New England cottontail	<i>Sylvilagus transitionalis</i>	SC	S2	G4
Spring salamander	<i>Gyrinophilus porphyriticus</i>	SC	S3	G5
Scarlet Bluet	<i>Enallagma pictum</i>		S?	G3
New England Bluet	<i>Enallagma laterale</i>	SC	S1	G3
Ringed Boghaunter Dragonfly	<i>Williamsonia lintneri</i>	E	S1	G2

\*see Appendix 1 for explanation of ranks

**Other Resources Mapped by MDIFW:**

Deer Wintering Area  
Wading Bird / Waterfowl Habitat

**Conservation considerations:**

Residential Development: Poorly planned development in the area may cause irreversible impacts to the natural systems through fragmentation due to roads and land conversion. Increases in invasive plant species often accompany development.

Timber Management: Timber management can lead to increased fragmentation and isolation of habitat patches and conversion to other forest types. However, timber management, applied properly within pitch pine habitats may actually help regenerate some barrens community types.

Wetlands and Aquatic Systems: The integrity of wetlands are dependent on the maintenance of the hydrology and water quality of these systems. Intensive logging, clearing, soil disturbance, new roads, and development on buffering uplands can result in greater runoff, sedimentation, and other non-point sources of pollution.

Preserving Natural Communities: Preserving natural communities and other sensitive features will be best achieved by conserving the integrity of the larger natural systems in which these features occur. Conserving the larger systems helps ensure both common and rare natural features will persist in this part of the state.

Set Asides: Conservation planning for upland features should include setting some areas aside from timber harvests to allow for the development of some unmanaged forests.

Vernal Pools: Close adherence to Best Management Practices for forestry activities near vernal pools (see Forestry Endangered and Threatened Species Guide) will ensure the protection of wetlands and the amphibian food source they supply.

Off Road Vehicle (ORV) Use and Wetlands: Where there is use by ORV's care needs to be taken that ORV's stay on existing trails and remain out of all wetlands.

***Protection Status:***

Over 7,000 acres of the greater Mt. Agamenticus area is in public or quasi-public ownership, divided among the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, Town of York, Town of South Berwick, Town of Eliot, York Water District, and Kittery Water District. The Nature Conservancy and the Great Works Regional Land Trust both also own land and are actively pursuing conservation strategies on additional parcels. While the abundance of protected land affords a significant opportunity for habitat protection, fragmentation is occurring on all sides of the site. This fragmentation is taking many forms, most notably residential development, quarrying, and commercial gravel mining.

