



# Brandeis University

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Dr. Robert H. Tamarin,  
Dean of Sciences  
College of Arts and Sciences  
University of Massachusetts Lowell

Dear Dr. Tamarin,

I am writing to acknowledge the assistance provided to my students and me this past fall by the Friends of Wachusett Mountain. I had not visited the State Reservation before, only the ski slopes, but the Brandeis Mountain Club requested that I lead a hike through the Reservation and I agreed. I planned to scout the trails on my own a week or so ahead of time, but then I found the Friends website and was able to obtain an excellent trail map and directions. Even more importantly, when I wrote to the Friends group explaining the purpose of the outing, they promptly replied with detailed suggestions about logistics (parking, etc.), a manageable and interesting hiking route, and key natural history features to watch for on the way. This not only made it unnecessary for me to take an advance scouting trip, it certainly enhanced the educational value of our hike. We had a great time, and we are planning a return visit this spring.

On the subject of that return visit, Mr. Scott Smyers, a key volunteer with the Friends, has kindly offered to rendezvous with the group and to share his knowledge of the local herptofauna, especially the salamanders.

I understand from Mr. Smyers that UMASS Lowell has supported the Friends group with a grant for Public Outreach and Field Research Activities. Based on my (albeit brief) communications with the Friends group to date, but also on the useful website that they have created, it appears to me that these funds are being well spent. I hope the Friends of Wachusett can continue to find partners like you in their efforts to make that local gem of a mountain a vibrant classroom and laboratory for ecological education.

Sincerely,

Dr. Eric J. Olson, PhD  
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