

## RECREATION, SCENIC, HISTORIC, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

### *Recreation and Scenic Resources*

Dummerston typifies the scenic, rural character that is found and valued throughout much of Vermont. Our outdoor environment is appreciated by residents and visitors alike. We find satisfaction in the “feel” of our town. Surveys by the Planning Commission have found that residents like our town the way it is—and for the most part, they want it to stay as it is. This rural character also attracts visitors to Dummerston, who enjoy these resources. Protecting and restoring Dummerston’s scenic views, starlit night skies and quiet, rural character are high priorities for the town.

The mix of recreational opportunities available to Dummerston residents and its visitors is varied and rich. They range from highly organized commercial enterprises to informal bike riding. Two campgrounds, KOA and Hidden Acres, are located in the eastern part of Town. A miniature golf course, open to the public, is located at Hidden Acres. The Green Mountain Girls Camp is located in the western part of Dummerston and scholarship assistance is available to eligible girls living in Town. Fruit and vegetable picking is also an important recreational activity for some families during the summer and early fall.

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Since most of Dummerston is comprised of forest land, it is not surprising that the forest is used for recreation throughout the seasons. In the winter, cross-country ski trails exist on many private lands. They often merge to form a loosely defined network. The Black Mountain Snowmobile Club has developed a more organized network of trails for its members. During appropriate seasons, hunting for deer, turkey, and grouse are enjoyed by many. Prospect Hill Pasture (which is owned by the town) and Black Mountain are good hiking and picnicking areas. Prospect Hill Trail, located off of Park Laughton Road, provides access to Prospect Hill Pasture. A Trails Committee is working to connect trails in Dummerston to Putney and Windmill Hill-Pinnacle Mountains. Dutton Pines State Park, a 12 acre parcel along Route 5, is mainly used by nearby residents for walking and by motorists as a rest and picnic area.

Dummerston residents have access to several main streams and two rivers that provide opportunities for recreation in the warmer months. There is a boat landing in Dummerston that provides access to the Connecticut River. Dummerston Landing (14 acres) is for non-motorized boats while Putney Landing, just to the north of the town line, is for motorized boats. Another access point, Old Ferry Road Landing, is located just south of the Town line in Brattleboro. From these points recreationists can go fishing, water skiing, rowing or paddling. Along the West River there are numerous swimming holes and two public access points: the utility substation lands and Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife lands south of the Covered Bridge. In addition, others enjoy the river for canoeing, kayaking, fishing, tubing and rafting. These activities are dependent upon water levels and therefore upon timing of water releases from the Townshend Dam. Stickney Brook provides opportunities for picnicking and swimming as well as sightseeing. Falls Brook offers excellent hiking opportunities.

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Public recreational facilities in Dummerston are scattered throughout the Town. The Dummerston School has a wonderful playground. There are extensive sport fields at the school that are used for soccer, softball and baseball, and the gymnasium is used for basketball, square dancing and teen dances. The Dummerston Community Center has a smaller playground, and in recent years residents have built an ice skating rink in the winter. The Dummerston Center Grange Hall is used for annual suppers, theater productions and private functions. The Historical Society hosts lecture programs and gallery shows. The Congregational Church also host suppers and the traditional Apple Pie Festival. The Common is used widely by various groups.

Dummerston roads, many of which are scenic, are used by walkers, runners and cyclists. Insuring public safety, while maintaining rural character, is a concern with all these recreational uses on local and state roads. Other recreational opportunities exist for exploring and photographing historical sites such as villages, buildings, bridges, cemeteries, stone walls and old cellar holes.

The Dummerston Recreation Board organizes a variety of athletic activities and programs for all ages. The Dummerston Trails Committee maintains trails on Prospect Hill and is working to expand the trail system.

### ***Historic and Cultural Resources***

Dummerston is fortunate to have individuals and groups take on local preservation and historical activities, including the collection and dissemination of valuable information about our history. The earliest documented effort is *History of Dummerston* written in 1884 by David Lufkin Mansfield. In 1986, the Dummerston Historical Society published *Dummerston, An Equivalent Lands Town (1753-1986)*. As part of the Town's 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the town's charter, Vermont Theater Company produced the play *The Equivalent Lands* written by Joe Greenhoe. A DVD of the production is available through the Historical Society.

The Dummerston Historical Society was organized in 1977. The historic one-room schoolhouse in Dummerston Center is operated by the Historical Society as a museum. The Historical Society hosts walkabouts, programs and exhibits to explore the Town's heritage.

There are 4 structures listed on the National Register of Historic Places. These are Naulakha, the Green Iron Bridge (listed on the Register as the Rice Farm Road Bridge), Scott Farm Historic District, and the West Dummerston Covered Bridge.

Of special importance to the Town are buildings, structures and areas of historical, educational, cultural, scientific, architectural and archaeological value. The following areas and sites are representative of the diversity of cultural resources in Dummerston. Most of these areas are privately owned, and permission to use them may be required. There are also many significant historic residences throughout Town that are not included on the list.

- 1) Historic settlements of West Dummerston, Dummerston Center, and Slab Hollow and their approaches;
- 2) Dummerston Center Schoolhouse (Historical Society)
- 3) Dummerston Center Grange (Evening Star)
- 4) Rudyard Kipling House (Naulakha)
- 5) Congregational Church, Dummerston Center
- 6) Alexander Kathan House (Sweet Tree Farm, formerly the Ranney Farm)
- 7) Camp Arden
- 8) Green Mountain Camp
- 9) Covered Bridge
- 10) Iron Bridge
- 11) Scott Farm
- 12) Prospect Hill Pasture
- 13) All Cemeteries

Of historical significance is the fact that the first maple tapping in Vermont by white settlers, many people believe, took place at what is now the Sweet Tree Farm on Route 5.

Route 5 is designated as part of the Connecticut River Byway. While being located on the Byway does not afford any protection, the recognition it offers brings attention to the cultural resources on the Byway.

### ***Recreation, Scenic, Historic, and Cultural Resources Vision***

Dummerston's unique scenic quality and sense of place is derived from the interrelationship among rural farmland, areas of undeveloped land and village centers. This rural character, graced with significant natural and historic resources is the quality that makes it an attractive place to live, work and play. Similarly, the historic and cultural past of Dummerston is important to its sense of place and sense of community. The scenic, cultural and historic identity of Dummerston will be recognized and interwoven into the fabric of future development in Town.

### ***Recreation, Scenic, Historic, and Cultural Resources Goals, Policies, and Action Steps***

**Goal 1:** To be stewards for recreational and scenic resources essential to Dummerston's community's character.

#### **Policy 1.1: Maintain and enhance convenient public access to public lands.**

*1.1.A Support and enhance public access to private lands.*

*Action Steps:*

- a. Work with appropriate local officials and groups to:
  - Identify public recreational areas and recommend actions for improvements;
  - Explore more extensive use of Dutton Pines State Park;
  - Design a display area(s) for Town and regional recreational events;

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- Provide information to landowners on the range of options available for allowing limited recreational use of private land;
- Identify any new recreation areas that could be purchased by the Town or acquired by gift. (Recreation Board)
- b. Encourage annual clean-ups of the most popular recreational areas in Town. (Recreation Board)
- c. Increase town awareness of and encourage participation in Ct River Byway activities.
- d. Encourage town involvement in Route 30 scenic byway activities.
- e. Seek ways to make town roadways safe for pedestrian and non-motorized vehicle recreational use.

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**Policy 1.2: Develop an integrated greenway system by linking trails and scenic roads with connections to undeveloped land and recreational areas.**

*Action Steps:*

- a. Support extension of new Town trails to Black Mountain and the Putney Mountain/Windmill Ridge Trails. (ad hoc Trails Committee)
- b. In conjunction with affected landowners, explore the possibility of greenway trails. (Planning Commission, Conservation Commission, Selectboard)

**Policy 1.3: Minimize visual impacts of ridgeline development by ensuring that development is located and designed in a manner that protects the uninterrupted skyline and minimizes adverse visual impact.**

Needs more detail in descriptive section setting out basis for policy and actions steps.

*Action Steps:*

- a. Investigate options to control the design and siting of development on ridgelines. (Planning Commission)

**Policy 1.4: Protect views of the night sky, eliminate glare, and minimize light pollution.**

*Action Steps:*

- a. Modify Dummerston's Zoning By-law or establish a separate outdoor lighting ordinance to establish strict limits on outdoor lighting. (Planning Commission)
- b. Modify Dummerston's Zoning By-law or incorporate into a new Sign Ordinance regulation to more clearly limit light pollution and light trespass from signage. (Planning Commission)

**Policy 1.5: Minimize community exposure to excessive noise.**

*Action Steps:*

- a. Explore the viability of a noise ordinance. (Selectboard)

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**Goal 2:** To preserve and protect historic and cultural properties and sites.

**Policy 2.1: Support historic preservation activities.**

*Action Steps:*

- a. Establish site planning standards to protect historic resources when development is planned on or near historic properties. (Planning Commission)
- b. Conduct an historic assets survey. (Historical Society, Planning Commission, Conservation Commission)

**Policy 2.2: Protect exemplary areas of historic resources.**

*Action Steps:*

- a. Investigate the value of and impact of nominating Dummerston Center to the State and National Registers of Historic Places (Planning Commission with assistance from the Historical Society)
- b. Investigate the value of and impact of designating Dummerston Center as a local historic district. (Planning Commission)

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