

CONSERVED AND PUBLICLY OWNED LANDS

Dummerston contains a wide variety of conserved and publicly owned undeveloped land. As seen on the Conserved and Working Lands with Existing Development map, these areas are distributed throughout Town. In addition to showing land owned by the Town that is managed for conservation purposes, this map also shows private land in Vermont's Use Value Appraisal Program (also referred to as Current Use).

The Nature Conservancy has conserved 793 acres on Black Mountain through a combination of ownership and a conservation easement. This land, known as the Nature Conservancy Preserve, is accessible to the public via hiking trails. Black Mountain is a unique geological feature, and is the only granite in Windham County. It supports several plant species that are rare for Windham County.

The Vermont Land Trust holds conservation easements on 15 parcels in town totaling 1,571 acres. These lands have a formal, legal restriction on further development. Some are open to the public and some not.

Publicly-owned lands in Dummerston include Dutton Pines State Park and Prospect Hill Pasture. Dutton Pines State Park consists of 13 acres along Route 5. Prospect Hill Pasture is a 37-acre wooded hillside with open land at the top. This property is owned by the Town and managed by trustees with the Conservation Commission providing stewardship.

As indicated on the map, many parcels in current use either abut or are in close proximity to conservation and undeveloped land owned by the Town. Given the importance of large forest and habitat blocks for wildlife, groundwater recharge, and the preservation of rural character, it may be worthwhile for the Town to work with private owners of land in current use to afford them more permanent protection.

Conserved Lands Goals, Policies, and Action Steps

Goal 1 — Encourage preservation of undeveloped land as an important element in shaping Dummerston's development pattern and in preserving its aesthetic and environmental quality.

Policy 1.1 Strongly encourage landowners to maintain undeveloped land that:

- **Protects the water, wetland, and ecological resources discussed in this Town Plan**
- **Is adjacent to or within the important wildlife corridors**
- **Is in agricultural use, or which contain prime farmland soils**
- **Provides space for active and passive recreation**
- **Protects scenic views**
- **Provides public access to the waterfront**
- **Provides buffers between compact settlement areas and the rural countryside**

Action Steps

- a. Work with conservation land trusts and other conservation organizations to educate landowners about land conservation options. (Conservation Commission)
- b. Use multiple strategies and means to protect and preserve land and resources, including for example, direct acquisition, conservation easements and a natural heritage registry. (Conservation Commission)
- c. Consider establishment of a Conservation Fund, perhaps through expansion of the Town Farmland Protection Fund. (Conservation Commission, Farmland Protection Committee)