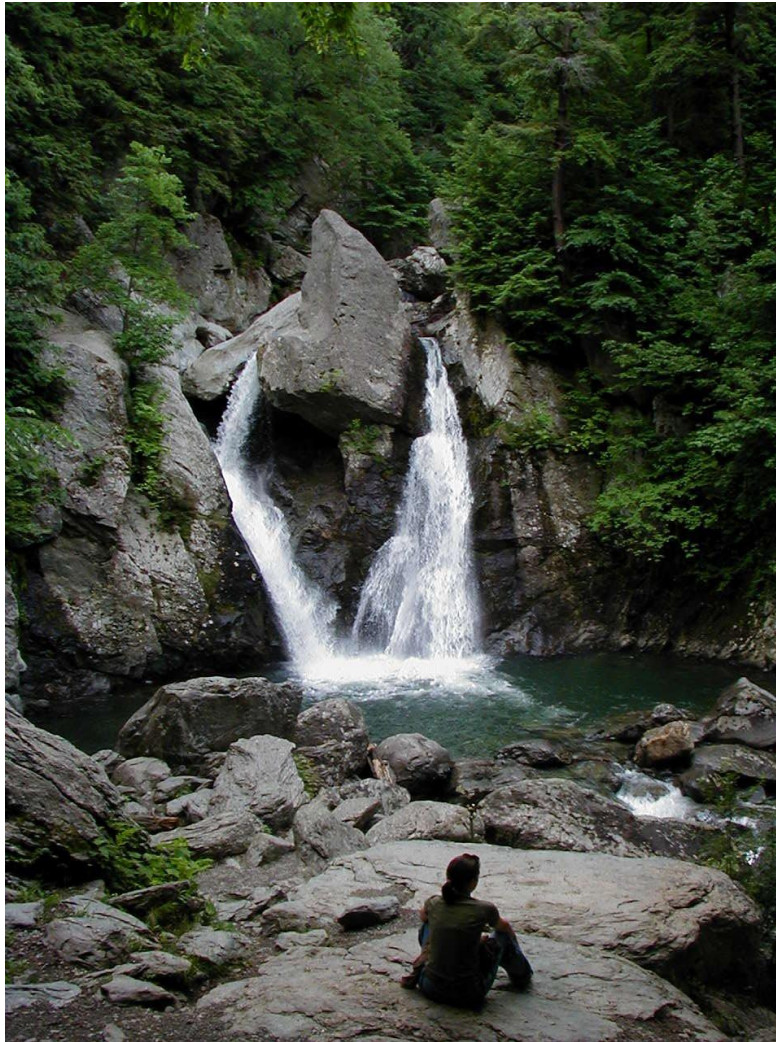


Master Plan & Open Space and Recreation Plan



For the Town of Mount Washington

Draft - July 2000

This plan was developed with funding from
the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
I. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY.....	1
A. Introduction to the Master & Open Space/Recreation Plans.....	1
B. Purpose, Scope and Authorization of this Plan.....	2
C. Planning Process	3
D. Community Goals	4
E. Summary of Plan Sections.....	5
II. FROM PAST TO PRESENT, A SPECIAL COMMUNITY	9
A. History	9
B. Historical Community Services and Facilities.....	11
C. Other Historical Resources	12
D. Modern Culture and Sense of Community	14
E. Challenges, Needs and Opportunities.....	14
III. POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS	15
A. Population Trends	15
B. Demographic Characteristics	16
C. Population Projections.....	17
D. Challenges, Needs and Opportunities	18
IV. COMMUNITY SERVICES, FACILITIES AND SUPPORT	19
A. Town Buildings.....	19
B. Other Town Facilities and Capital Assets	19
C. Town Services, Government and Fiscal Conditions	19
D. Non-Municipal Community Facilities and Services	21
E. Challenges, Needs and Opportunities.....	21
V. THE LOCAL ECONOMY AND REGIONAL ECONOMIC CONDITIONS.....	22
A. Local Employment and Income.....	22
B. Regional Economic Factors of Importance to the Mount Washington Community.....	22
C. Challenges, Needs and Opportunities	22
VI. HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS	23
A. General Characteristics and Conditions	23
B. Future Issues of Housing Supply and Affordability.....	23
C. Sprawl and Nurturing Alternative Forms and Patterns	23
VII. TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY	24
A. Road Inventory and Motorized Transportation	24
B. Pedestrian and Non-Motorized Transportation Connections.....	26
C. Scenarios, Issues, and Transportation Enhancement Toolbox.....	26
VIII. SUSTAINABLE LAND USE.....	27
A. Existing Land Uses and Trends	27
B. Land Use Trends	27
C. Current Land Uses and Related Regulations	28
D. Build-out Analysis	28
E. State Management Plans and Policies	28
F. Potential Land Uses and Regulatory Options	28
IX. NATURAL RESOURCES, WATERSHED PROTECTION, OPEN SPACE & OUTDOOR RECREATION.....	29

.....	31
THE OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN	31
OS/R Section 1. Plan Summary	33
OS/R Section 2. Introduction	Error! Bookmark not defined.
OS/R Section 3. Community Setting	34
OS/R Section 4. Environmental Inventory and Analysis	36
OS/R Section 5. Inventory of Lands of Conservation and Recreation Interest	54
OS/R Section 6. Community Goals	60
OS/R Section 7. Analysis of Needs	61
OS/R Section 8. Goals and Objectives	67
OS/R Section 9. Five-Year Action Plan	69
OS/R Section 10. Public Comments	73
OS/R Section 11. References	74
.....	77
X. IMPLEMENTATION	77
A. Employing Strategies to Sustain Mount Washington Over the Long Term.....	77
B. Five Year Action Plan for the Master and Open Space/Recreation Plans.....	77
XI. Appendices	78
Appendix A: Results of the Mount Washington Community Survey	79
Appendix B: State-Listed Species Recorded in Mount Washington.....	80
Appendix C: Mammals of Berkshire County.....	81
Appendix D: Birds of Berkshire County.....	82
Appendix E: Inventory System for Roads with Scenic Features	84
Appendix F: The Scenic Mountain Act	87
Appendix G: Build-Out Analysis for the Town of Mount Washington	88

LIST OF TABLES AND EXHIBITS

	<u>Page</u>
Table TRAN1 Town Roads	24
Table TRAN2 Traffic Counts	25
Table LU1 Land Uses and Land Use Change in Mount Washington.....	27

LIST OF MAPS

<u>Open Space and Recreation Maps</u>	<u>After Page</u>
Environmental Constraints	42
Land Use 1999	43
Subregional Habitat and Open Space	48
Scenic Resources	51
Open Space	57
Proposed Scenic Mountain Area	68
Open Space Action Map	72

I. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

A. Introduction to the Master & Open Space/Recreation Plans

Mount Washington is a unique rural community in the Taconic mountains of southwestern Berkshire County, Massachusetts. Residents of Mount Washington take great pride in their town's natural resources and beauty, and their spirit of community cooperation and participation. These important strengths must be preserved and the needs of Mount Washington's citizens met into the future.

Mount Washington remains a rare community for southern New England with a mix of mountains and rustic rural character more reminiscent of remote sections of Vermont. The Town is at the center of one of the most unique and valuable large-scale habitat areas remaining in southern New England and lower New York State. Large undeveloped tracts of forest, scenic mountains such as Mount Everett, rural roads, and critical watershed and habitat resources are treasured highly by local residents and state, regional and national conservation organizations.

Mount Washington is a place where families have lived for generations and a long-term seasonal haven for many. It is a place where newcomers seeking a peaceful refuge choose to live. Both permanent and part-time residents appreciate the benefits of living in a small, interdependent community where every family makes a difference.

Due to the small size of the community's permanent population, the level of participation by residents in civic organizations is necessarily high. Volunteerism is crucial to making the town work and that has led to a rare level of understanding and involvement in the details of town governance by many citizens.

Mount Washington's location in the popular Southern Berkshires, within 100 miles of the New York City metropolitan area and its population of more than 20 million persons, may have both positive and negative impacts on the community's future. The Town will likely face increasing development pressures and a need to guide local and external forces to maintain an overall quality of life and community character.

The Master Plan and Open Space/Recreation Plan [OS/R Plan] are being prepared under the active direction of the Master Plan Steering Committee [MPSC] by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission [BRPC]. They are intended to help guide the Town toward the future its full- and part-time residents envision. Toward this end, the MPSC and BRPC are soliciting public input through community surveys, an upcoming half-day public planning session, and follow-up public presentations and public hearings.

The Master Plan should be valuable for shaping Mount Washington's future. The purpose of the Open Space & Recreation Plan is to protect and preserve open spaces in Mount Washington. In the future, as changes in the community are proposed, the following questions should be asked: What is the relationship of a proposed change to existing conditions? Would the change be consistent with the Town's goals, policies and plans as established in its Plans?

B. Purpose, Scope and Authorization of this Plan

The purpose of the Master Plan is to provide a guide for the town's future to help town boards and organizations coordinate their regulations, decisions and actions. The Plans will also help the town obtain state funding and support for town projects and priorities.

Massachusetts state law (Chapter 41, section 81D) states that a town shall make a Master Plan. The Master Plan is advisory and does not impose additional requirements or regulations on the town. The Master Plan can provide a basis for future regulatory changes that are desired by the community. The Plan can be updated at any time.

Prior to this process, Mount Washington had never completed a Master Plan or an Open Space and Recreation (OSR) Plan. In 1998, the Mount Washington and Egremont Planning Boards worked with the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) to secure a growth management planning grant from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA). Preparation of the Plans was also funded with \$3,000 from the Town and through in-kind services from the town and other organizations.

In June of 1999, volunteer Steering Committees in the Towns of Egremont and Mount Washington began efforts to develop master and open space/recreation plans for both towns with the assistance of the BRPC.

For both towns, the project was intended to help to direct development in a fashion which respects the character of the communities and the environment. The specific goals of this project were:

- 1) To develop up-to-date community master plans and open space/recreation plans for both Egremont and Mount Washington which address pertinent growth management, environmental, economic and community character concerns;
- 2) To develop a sub-regional growth policy plan, based on both town planning efforts, the Regional Plan for the Berkshires and supporting memoranda of agreement among these communities, adjoining communities, and the BRPC regarding developments of regional interests and areas of critical planning concern.

The goal of the Mount Washington Steering Committee was to draft these Plans based on the town's shared vision for its future. Throughout the process, they actively and frequently solicited the opinions, comments, and suggestions of all town residents, property owners, and taxpayers. They examined existing conditions within the town, recent changes, needs, opportunities, and alternatives. They considered such factors as: population characteristics; housing; development patterns and land use; natural resources and open space; recreation; cultural and historical resources; and, public services, facilities, and infrastructure.

The volunteer Steering Committee of Mount Washington residents created and distributed a short survey as a first step to learning resident opinions about the town and its future. The surveys were distributed to town residents and taxpayers with an enclosed envelope. BRPC compiled the responses. The Steering Committee used the responses to help set goals and frameworks for the Plans.

The general aim of creating this Plan was achieved through collaborative work within each community and at the sub-regional level as the Commission worked with the Steering Committees to prepare these Plans based on input from the public. Several area-wide organizations also contributed toward the ultimate goal of helping build a sustainable future for the area that is sensitive to the environment, community character, and economic base of the communities.

C. Planning Process

The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission has received grant money from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs to assist the town with developing a Master Plan and an Open Space and Recreation Plan. These plans will address growth management, environmental issues, economic development, and community character concerns. The **Master and Open Space/Recreation Plans** are being prepared by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) with the direct involvement of a broad Mount Washington Planning Steering Committee. A great deal of public input is being sought through community-wide surveys, an upcoming visioning meeting, and follow-up public presentations and public hearings.

Many of the factors involved in resource preservation and habitat protection cross municipal borders, necessitating that Mount Washington work in cooperation with other communities. A parallel planning process is also ongoing in the adjacent town of Egremont, which provides many economic and service links to Mount Washington. Both communities have pledged to coordinate their planning efforts and search for mutual benefits. A second goal of the project is to develop a sub-regional growth policy plan, based on both town planning efforts and the Regional Growth Policies Plan, and supporting memoranda of agreement among these communities, adjoining communities, and the BRPC regarding developments of regional interests and areas of critical planning concern.

The planning process began in June of 1999 with an expected date of completion by year-end 2000.

D. Community Goals

The Mount Washington Master Plan Steering Committee developed the following community goals based on public input and an analysis of the Town's needs and assets:

- Protect and preserve the historic resources of the Town.
- Retain Mount Washington's small scale and character.
- Improve services when specific needs are identified and agreed upon.
- Exercise fiscal responsibility in Town governance.
- Continue to limit non-residential development.
- Guide residential development to maintain the scenic and environmental qualities of the Town.
- Protect and preserve scenic and community qualities along roads.
- Maintain safe roads.
- Minimize negative impacts of traffic.
- Maintain existing dirt roads.
- Encourage continuing education for all Town-appointed and elected officials and employees.
- Maintain existing bridges at current scale and character.
- Protect mountain ridges and steep slopes.
- Protect and preserve water resources and riparian and wetland habitat.
- Protect open spaces necessary for the maintenance of community character and/or environmental or scenic resources.
- Protect existing passive recreational activities.
- Encourage land use that preserves the quality of environmental and scenic resources and meets community needs.

E. Summary of Plan Sections

The following is information selected from the Master Plan and OS/R Plans.

Historic and Cultural Resources

Mount Washington was originally settled in the late 1600s and incorporated in 1779. The town grew rapidly following the Revolutionary War. At that time nearly the entire county was agricultural in nature. However, when farming in New England went into steep decline in the mid-19th century, the topography and location of the town precluded a local transition to mill manufacturing that occurred in other parts of the Berkshires. Taking in summer boarders became a principal occupation of many town residents. In the Victorian age, many summer guests eventually bought land and built private houses for summer use.

Only a few structures from the early days have survived. The Benjamin Osborne House, named after the original builder/owner, was constructed in 1762. It served as the summer cottage of Ann Lee, founder of the Shaker religion. The Osborne house, set back from the road on the east side of West Street, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Union Church remains an important resource with historical, cultural and religious connections. The old boarding house Pennyroyal Arms and other privately owned properties reflect earlier eras.

Mount Washington's history remains vital in the preservation of sites and structures that date back to the Town's early days. The Town's historical resources and traditions are important factors to consider during the planning process.

Population and Demographics

Mount Washington's population reached its peak almost 200 years ago, with a total of 474 residents in 1810. In the mid-20th century the Town experienced a sharp decline, with the 1950 census recording only 34 people living in the Town. Since the 1970s, the population has begun to grow again reaching 135 persons in 1990. Still, Mount Washington has the second lowest population of all Massachusetts towns.

Mount Washington shares some demographic characteristics of many towns in the southern Berkshires. Despite having many families, the Town has a relatively low household size and low birth rates. The median age (nearly 45 in 1990) is the highest in the Berkshires, much higher than the state median, and is probably continuing to rise, consistent with national trends. According to census figures, the population is not racially or ethnically diverse.

According to the 1998 Annual Town Census, Mount Washington has a resident population of 123 persons. However, current population figures do not take into account the large and very significant non-permanent population. At any point in the peak summer period, the town may have an estimated additional population of over 200 persons. This overall total of approximately 350 persons is also often supplemented by significant numbers of other short-term visitors staying overnight at various locations.

BPRC's middle range Regional Economic Model forecast indicates that the Town may grow to 200 persons by 2010, and continue to increase in the following decades. The middle population projection is 240 persons for year 2020. The potential for growth is related to national and regional growth projections (including a projected reversal of a declining population trend of the Berkshires in recent decades) and demand generated by Mount Washington's desirability as an exclusive rural retirement location (for more information consult Master Plan Section III).

As a general rule, the smaller a community's population, the greater the potential range of future population change. Since Mount Washington has experienced extreme changes in its population, projections should be viewed with care. Because of the high incidence of seasonal development, projecting the potential increase or decrease of housing units, rather than residents, may be more valuable for community planning.

Community Services, Facilities & Support

Due to its small population and tax base, Mount Washington cannot support the number and level of services many large towns provide. To some extent, residents rely on services and facilities located in nearby communities. The Southern Berkshire Regional School District, with facilities in Egremont and Sheffield, provides public education on a tuition basis. The Town does provide certain services, including road and town facility maintenance, community events, waste management, and others. The Town Hall and the Library are valuable facilities. Non-municipal sites also host community activities.

According to the Mount Washington's 1999 Quick Planning Survey, residents are generally satisfied with the level and quality of town services. A quarter of the survey respondents thought fire protection and fire fighting capability could use some improvement. The MPSC may investigate this issue further.

Several studies in Massachusetts have shown that commercial development generally produces a net fiscal boost while residential development is generally a net fiscal drain. It has been demonstrated that a parcel developed for typical residential use will have less of a negative impact on a town's fiscal health if left as a non-tax paying, non-cost generating Open Space (see Master Plan Section IV).

Recent data indicate that over 95% of the town's property tax base is residential and more than half of that base is seasonal residential. In FY 2000 the tax rate for all types of property was \$5.68 per one thousand dollars of value, which is the lowest property tax rate in Berkshire County and one of the lowest in all of Massachusetts. This translates into an average annual tax bill of \$1,025, which is significantly lower than the County average of \$1,697.

The largest General Fund operating expense in Mount Washington is usually public works with the majority of this expense related to road maintenance. Spending on education is a sizable portion of the budget but significantly less than for most towns in Berkshire County, due to the small number of school-age children living in Mount Washington.

Due to the state system of supporting public education primarily through local property taxes, there is almost a direct correlation between low school enrollments per housing unit and low local tax rates. In Mount Washington, these costs are offset by seasonal, retirement, or second-home residences that require fewer services and don't necessitate educational costs, a factor contributing to the Town's relatively low residential tax rates.

While a fiscal analysis of most communities would point to certain forms of development such as commercial or seasonal residential as fiscally beneficial, it is hard to conceive of Mount Washington's tax rate falling any lower than it currently is. More likely, increases in nearly every form of development would accelerate the demand for services and trigger tax increases.

Economics and Business

[SECTION NOT YET COMPLETED]

Housing and Development Patterns

[SECTION NOT YET COMPLETED]

TRANSPORTATION

The Town can be reached by four roads, although only the road from Egremont and to a lesser extent the road from Copake Falls NY are passable reliably throughout the year. In such a remote, hilly area, people are particularly dependent on the Town highway department to keep the roads open and safe during inclement weather.

Despite the low traffic counts in town, increasing traffic generally can have a negative impact upon a rural community. Future changes to traffic would be connected to local land uses, to visitor attractions in Mount Washington and to regional planning factors for certain roads. Of equal or potentially greater concern, is the potential impact of development upon scenic roads such as East Street. Development that is not managed correctly may mar views or otherwise change the character of a rural road.

To maintain the values supported by the majority of survey respondents, it will be important to enhance coordination between land use, preservation of scenic resources, and road maintenance (see Master Plan Section VII).

Natural Resources, Open Space & Outdoor Recreation

The Town already has an extensive inventory of open space, including thousands of acres under State ownership. Mount Washington is almost completely surrounded by protected open space. The Mount Washington State Forest, including the Mount Everett State Reservation, protects many of the steep, wooded mountainsides visible from the Town. However, as mentioned previously, it is unclear to what extent State lands might be developed by the State itself, or whether the Town could influence what happens in these areas.

The Federal government also owns land as part of the Appalachian Trail Corridor passing through the southeastern corner of the Town. A few other protected parcels are in private hands. The Nature Conservancy recently purchased a large tract of forestland in the southern part of Town, known as the Dombrowski property. Blueberry Hill Farm is temporarily protected through the Chapter 61A program. Several treasured spots and important habitat areas are unprotected or in temporary protection.

One of Mount Washington's prime resources is the scenic quality of the surrounding mountains. From many of the Town's rural roads and trails one can view Mt. Everett, Mt. Darby, Alander, and other landmark peaks. Clear streams and waterfalls coursing down from the mountains add to the Town's scenic beauty, as do picturesque farmsteads such as Blueberry Hill Farm and historic buildings such as Union Church. Residents value highly the unspoiled, woodland character of their Town.

Mount Washington is located within two major watersheds: the Housatonic River watershed to the east, and the Hudson River watershed to the west. Water from Mount Washington feeds streams in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New York State. Parts of both the state-designated Karner Brook Watershed Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) and the Schenob Brook Drainage Basin ACEC are located in the Town. Much of the water that flows into these high-quality streams depends upon the health of Mount Washington's forests, streams, and groundwater seeps. Most of the streams in the Town flow into Bash Bish Brook, which is part of the Hudson River watershed. Other bodies of water of note are Guilder Pond, Plantain Pond, and Hunts Pond. Mount Washington is also home to high-quality wetland habitat.

The wooded slopes that surround the Town comprise part of the largest relatively unfragmented forest bloc in southern New England. Undeveloped land in Mount Washington makes up a significant portion of the 36,000-acre "forest core" along the boundary of Massachusetts, New York, and Connecticut. Mount Washington's forests support a variety of habitats and rare species, as well as playing an important role in the water cycle that recharges wetlands at the base of the mountains. Development or timber harvesting in these sensitive areas could be a threat to those resources if not managed carefully.

Steep slopes and their associated thin, rocky soils are significant factors affecting the future development of Mount Washington. Many of these steep slopes are under permanent protection or would be difficult to develop due to their highly erosive soils. Even some of the soils in flatter areas present limitations to development, either because they have shallow bedrock or are unsuitable for septic fields. These factors make much of Mount Washington's terrain unsuitable for development and result in premium costs for development and acquisition of buildable land. Increasingly, new development may be attempted on marginal lots. The protection and management of Mount Washington's open spaces can continue to evolve to protect wildlife habitat and natural resources, provide recreation activities that respect their natural surroundings, maintain scenic views, and preserve the Town's rural mountain character.

SUSTAINABLE LAND USE

[SECTION NOT YET COMPLETED]

II. FROM PAST TO PRESENT, A SPECIAL COMMUNITY

A. History

Mount Washington was originally settled in the early 1700's and incorporated in 1779. The town has an unusual history of settlement, virtual desettlement, and resettlement in the last half century. Mount Washington grew very rapidly following the Revolutionary War. At that time nearly the entire county was agricultural in nature. The town hosted its largest population in 1810 but severely declined after 1850 (reference the Population & Demographics section for more information).

Farming in New England went into steep decline before the mid 19th century. Near this time, the railroad also became a boon to larger areas with direct rail access. This eventually had the affect of closing down the nearby rural iron furnaces that used local charcoal. The topography and location of the town precluded a local transition to mill manufacturing that occurred in other parts of the Berkshires. Instead, the "Mountain" became a summer refuge for visitors while remaining the year round residence for only a small number of hardy families.

A majority of the information in this section has been taken from: *The History of Mount Washington, Massachusetts*, Evelyn Bium Shearn, 1976; second printing 1985, and a more recent report on the Town's history written by Jamie Lovejoy.

Early History

The Mount Washington area was originally known as "Taghconic Mountain," since it is part of the Taconic Range, which lies between the Housatonic and Hudson rivers. The earliest inhabitants were the Mahican Indians, who, forced out of the Hudson Valley by the Dutch, had made their way eastward through the mountain passes from present-day Copake Falls, New York. The first white men in the area were Dutch traders from the Hudson Valley. There are some indications that Mount Washington was settled earlier than the rest of Berkshire County. The first settlers were tenants of the Dutch patroon Robert Livingston, the first land owner in this region, who are believed to have arrived from the Hudson Valley via the Bash Bish ravine in 1692.

In 1724, an English committee for settling Housatonic townships purchased a tract of land from the Mahicans, in consideration of "four hundred and sixty pounds, three barrels of cider and thirty quarts of rum". The tract conveyed by this deed included the whole of the towns of Sheffield, Great Barrington, Mount Washington, Egremont, and the greater part of Alford. The Indians reserved within this tract a strip about five-eighths of a mile wide through Egremont, extending from the Housatonic River to the line of the State of New York, near the northernmost tip of Mount Washington.

Land claims to territory were disputed by the governments of New York and Massachusetts. The first step towards the establishment of an official boundary line between New England and New York was taken in 1664 or 1665 by Royal commissioners. It was finally placed at a general distance of 20 miles east of the Hudson River, but was not finally surveyed and marked until as late as 1731. The boundary was finally fixed after the Revolutionary War, in 1787.

Boston Corners; originally the Boston Corner “triangle” of 1,200 acres, was made a district of Mount Washington in 1847, however, citizens were unable to participate in town functions due to the high mountain wall that separated the town residents.

Agriculture was prominent in the early days, even though it increasingly shared economic importance with industry after 1820. Still, an 1829 description noted:

“The inhabitants of this town are almost universally farmers. Some of the land in the central part of the town is arable, and produces rye, oats, Indian corn, etc. It is not however, so fertile as the land in neighboring towns; and is best adapted to pasturage. A large portion of the timber is chestnut, which has become valuable for fencing and charcoal.”

In the 1860’s potatoes remained an important crop. In 1869, Henry Goodale of Sky Farm, a former agricultural editor of the *Berkshire Courier*, had twenty-four acres of seed potatoes planted, one lot containing 140 distinct varieties. Blueberries, or whortleberries, grew abundantly in the town.

Industrial History

Mount Washington early on had a grist and sawmill necessary to build and maintain a town, having two or more of each about 1760, and possibly a third mill at Bash Bish falls. During the war of 1812-1815 there was a tannery on the Bash Bish brook, and there was a sawmill above the falls about 1822. In 1829, there were four sawmills in town. Around 1836, a tannery was also in operation on Huckleberry Brook and at “the city”, the center of Mount Washington.

The most important early industry in Mount Washington was the manufacture of charcoal. The mountaintop forests provided the necessary source of supply: cords of wood. It took two weeks to “run down” (smolder process) 25 cords of wood. The charcoal was brought down the mountain by wagon. All that remains now are circles of heavy black dirt deep in the woods indicating the site of a charcoal pit.

In the early 1800’s, much of the charcoal was sold to the Mount Riga furnaces where it was used to smelt iron ore, once plentiful in the Salisbury and Lakeville area of Litchfield County, Connecticut. At the height of the activity, in the 1840s and 1850s, charcoal was supplied to the iron smelters at Mount Riga, Dalzell’s axle factory in Egremont, and the Copake Iron Works in New York, which manufactured railroad cartwheels, axles, and gunbarrels until 1854.

The heyday of manufacturing in Mount Washington was ushered in by John D. Joyce. Beginning with a blacksmith shop near the Dewey Melius barn, he moved to “the city”, about 1821. He enlarged his business to include: a forge and trip hammer and making and repairing all kinds of agricultural implements, harpoons for Hudson whalers, ox chains, and the large chains and tires for hauling and raising and immense blocks of marble from the Goodale quarry in Egremont to Hudson for Giraud College. In this business he employed some twenty men.

Joyce later located his manufacturing at a spot that became known as Hammertown, about two miles south and east of Plantain Pond, just over the state line. Here he established scythe works and made sickles, axes, and other hardware. Water for power came from Sages Ravine Brook, which was insufficient during dry seasons. Accordingly, the first Plantain Pond dam was

erected, around 1857. The water was released from Plantain Pond as necessary and was diverted by means of a ditch dug to Sages Ravine Brook.

B. Historical Community Services and Facilities

At one time, the town had three school districts and three schools. The earliest mention of a school is found in a road description prior to 1780, but this was probably private. On November 3, 1800, the town voted to appropriate \$60 for schools, and in 1804 set up three school districts, whose boundaries were defined in 1809.

The North School was built between 1809 and 1811, \$86.70 having been assessed to complete it. A second schoolhouse, to replace the first, was completed in 1867 for \$1,200. It stood on the west end of the north cross road. Some time after 1867, it was moved across the road to its present location on West Street. This building is now used as the town library and is registered with the Massachusetts Historical Commission in Boston.

The first South School was constructed in 1839 in the woods on the west side of the road to Salisbury, Connecticut. By 1865, the town had been reduced to two school districts and a new South schoolhouse was built. Over the years, it was repaired several times and finally, in 1895, was moved across the road to its present site. The building, now a private residence, has been extensively renovated. The Middle School was built in 1908 and stood on ground annexed to the center cemetery around 1900. As the town's population declined, this school was also abandoned. By the 1930s, only the North School was in use, and by the 1940s, with only one student left, it too was closed.

One usually strong source of community interaction, organized religion, had a slow start in Mount Washington. Perhaps this was largely due to the variety of faiths represented, as well as because of the town's small population and inconvenient location. In 1806, the town voted to build a meeting house. It chose Fenner King, David Booth, and William Lee as a committee to oversee the work, and instructed them to proceed to build that spring, adding that "said house be free for all religious sects not intruding upon each other's appointments." It was voted to set the meeting house at the west end of Cross Road on the north side of the road. The committee was instructed to hire one man, and \$184 was appropriated. By September 6, 1806, the meetinghouse stood ready for use on land given by John King.

By 1867, town meetings were being held at the Middle School, indicating that the original meetinghouse was no longer in use. In 1876, the residents voted to procure a site to build a new "town house" and the building committee of Orrin C. Whitbeck, D.P. Turner, and Issac Spurr was appointed. Land was given at the site of the present building. By the next year, with additional money appropriated for seats and lamps, the new town hall was in use. It has been somewhat modernized since 1877, and is still in use.

Organized church services sporadically occurred through the 1800s. After several suspensions of work due to lack of funds, the present church, the Union Evangelical Church, was dedicated on November 24, 1869.

To the north of “Cottage Farms”, in a quiet, secluded stand of trees, is one of the oldest cemeteries in Berkshire County. In a section of town formerly known as “the city,” another old cemetery stands deep in the woods on private property. The town cemetery currently in use stands off Cross Road, not far from the church. It reported has a gravestone dating back to 1772.

Mount Washington did not have public utilities until electricity and telephone service were brought to town in 1950.

C. Other Historical Resources

The oldest building still standing is referred to locally as the Ann Lee Cottage. Between May, 1781 and August, 1783, Ann Lee, the founder and leader of the Shaker religious sect in America, traveled in Massachusetts and Connecticut preaching the gospel. It was reported that in 1781 she preached at a meeting in this cottage, then owned by Benjamin Osborne. This building, which belongs to the state, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as the Benjamin Osborne House.

Several notable historical structures have hosted visitors. As manufacturing declined, the taking in of summer boarders became a principal occupation of many town residents. In 1852, the Harlem Railway had come to Copake Iron Works, New York, bringing many families from New York City to the scenic mountaintop community for the summer. One of the first boarding houses was Isaac Spurr’s “Pennyroyal Arms.” The building was recently occupied by the Spurr family and may be restored to take in guests.

Many families came to Mount Washington in late spring, attracted by the quiet, wholesome farm atmosphere. Hiking, walking, and croquet seem to have been the chief pastimes. Each boarding house had a horse and wagon to meet the train and transport the guests and their baggage up the mountain. There was a horse shed, no longer standing, behind the church, where the wagons parked while guests and residents attended services. Large gardens provided fresh vegetables for the family-style meals. The meat served was often “home-raised”.

In the 19th century a boarding house called “Cottage Farm”, located on East Street, began operation. It has also been called “Top of the Berkshires” and was accommodating guests as recently as 1973. “Alander”, another of the town’s popular boarding houses, still stands in the south end of town, on the road to Salisbury, Connecticut. Formerly owned and operated by Ms. Vicki Whitbeck” Ms. Whitbeck wrote a weekly column in the *Berkshire Courier* in Great Barrington entitled *Vicki's Kitchen* and published a book entitled *The Best of Vicki's Kitchen*. Once one of the largest houses on the mountain, twenty-eight rooms were removed from “Alander” to make it a private residence.

In the Victorian age, many summer guests eventually bought land and built private houses for summer use. In 1893, Mr. Leonard Hosford of New York City bought the Wright homestead, a farm of about 600 acres. In 1897, following some shady financial dealings, parcels were sold consisting of two acres and an undivided one-eighth interest in the whole 600 acres. Most of the owners built summer cottages on their two-acre plots, several of which are still owned by the original purchasers. The deeds stipulated that the land not designated for a residence would be

left in its natural state. Today, therefore, the “clubgrounds,” as the area is known locally, still retains its beauty and private tranquility.

Table HIST1 Historical Buildings

Building Name	Location	Present Use	Yr. of Construction	Style	
Alander Hotel	East St./Hunts Pond	Residence	N/A	Classic Revival	
Benjamin Osborn House (Ann Lee Cottage)	East of West Street	?	circa 1762	Cape	
Elmer Keith House (Twin Brooks)	West Road	Residence	1842	Greek Revival	
Penny Royal Arms	East St.	Residence and apartments	1820	Greek Revival	
Evangelical Church	East St./Town Center	Union Church	1869	Carpenter Gothic	
North School House	West Rd.	Library	1868	Late Revival	Greek
South School House	Salisbury Rd./East St.	Residence	1865	Late Revival	Greek
Town Hall	East St./Town Center	Town Hall	1876-1877	Late Revival	Greek
Top of the Berkshires/Cottage Farm	East Rd.	Residence	N/A	Federal	

Source: *Inventory of Historic Resources, Mount Washington, Massachusetts, BRPC.*

Other 20th Century Tidbits

Mount Washington, with its streams, caves, rocky dens, and heavy forest has always provided some of the state’s best hunting and fishing. Several residents ran deer camps for many seasons. Babe Ruth, the late “Sultan of Swat,” was the town’s most famous hunter, staying on the mountain as the guest of Mr. Fred Wright at “Woodchuck Hollow” in the early 1940’s. Recreational camps also became popular. The YMCA Camp was established in 1936.

The natural qualities present made Mount Washington a desirable location for summer residents who, by the late 1930s, owned close to two-thirds of the taxable real estate. After electricity was available, many of the cottages were winterized, allowing year-round use.

The 1955 hurricane caused major flooding and permanently closed most rudimentary “roads” going out of town.

D. Modern Culture and Sense of Community

The Berkshires are known and marketed as: “America’s Cultural Resort”. A plethora of cultural opportunities in the fields of music, art and drama are within easy driving distance of Mount Washington. Mount Washington also has some local artists of its own. Additionally, the town’s Arts Council is an active outlet for residents. Each year a wide variety of performances take place, with many residents taking part in the festivities.

Union Church is a seasonal spiritual and social center. It is only open in the summer, from June to the first Sunday in September, and the present minister is a summer resident. Every August, a church fair is held to raise funds for the upkeep. Attendance is always large, making the fair the social highlight of the summer.

In a wider sense, the “cultural character” of the community remains present today. Both permanent and part time residents understand and appreciate the benefits of a very small community where every family makes a difference and every person is worthy of special consideration. “The Mountain” is a neighborly place in which to live, where residents and visitors feel safe and welcomed. It is the true small town that most other communities can only aspire to be.

Mount Washington is a rare example of a truly rural community in the ever-growing New England region. The rural mountain setting and lack of commercial development in town are also intricately linked to the “cultural character”. Most residents believe the lack of residential and commercial development in Mount Washington is a strong contributor to what makes the town so unique - and they want to keep it that way. As is the case with long-term part and full-time residents, visitors and newcomers often also find themselves reluctant to change the town once they come to know it.

E. Challenges, Needs and Opportunities

Through effort, the history of Mount Washington can be preserved by preserving its historic buildings and its historical documents and materials. The town’s Historical Commission may have the opportunity to further advance Historical preservation.

Mount Washington’s intriguing history also continues to be recorded today. The town’s unique sense of community is a blending of old and new traditions of its people that is an important factor to consider when planning for the future.

It will be a challenge for Mount Washington to preserve the community as is, a sentiment expressed by many in the community survey. All things change even when we don’t want them to. However, it is certainly possible to limit change. Many preservation strategies are discussed throughout this Plan.

[SECTION NOT COMPLETE]

III. POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Mount Washington is a very small, stable mountain community with a strong contingent of long-term full-time inhabitants and families as well as significant numbers of seasonal, part-time, and newer residents.

A. Population Trends

According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census, Mount Washington's population peaked in the 1800s, and went into a steady decline through most of the early 20th century. Population reached a low in the 1950 Census, which recorded only 34 people living in the Town. From 1970 on, the number of residents began to rise again. The community has been in a period of growth for the past two decades, with population increasing by roughly 60% between 1970 and 1990. Between 1980 and 1990 the town gained 45.1% more people, while household size decreased from 2.33 persons per household to 2.29 persons per household. The year-round population is estimated to have remained stable during the 1990's, and both the 1998 U.S. Census estimate and the 1999 Annual Town Census both indicate a very slight decrease in the population since 1990.

Table POP1 Modern Population Census Data and Trends

Year	Population	Decennial Change	% Decennial Change
1970	52		
1980	93	+41	+78.8%
1990	135	+42	+45.1%
1998*	130		
1999**	131		
2000			

Sources: 1970-1990, 2000 U.S. Census; * 1998 U.S. Census Estimate; ** 1998 Annual Town Census

Mount Washington's population trend has historically mirrored that of South Berkshire County, although the Town's small size and mountain character make it distinct from other communities in the region. South Berkshire County, defined as all communities south of the Massachusetts Turnpike, has experienced increasing population in every decade since mid-century, including the 1990s. Mount Washington comprises about .6% of South Berkshire County's population of approximately 21,000.

Seasonal Population

Mount Washington has a proportionately large seasonal population that peaks in the summer months and ebbs during the winter. Approximately 200 seasonal residents, more than the full time population, live in Mount Washington for part of the year. A large number of these seasonal residents hail from the New York City metropolitan area. Many people reside in town on a part time basis as "weekenders," a lifestyle that may or may not be related to seasons. In addition, the visitor population can swell during the summer due to vacationing tourists.

B. Demographic Characteristics

Mount Washington continues to experience changes to its demographic composition. The median age rose from 41.1 in 1980 to 44.8 in 1990, considerably higher than the state and county median, and also the highest in South County, which on average has an older population than the rest of the Berkshires. Relative to state and national averages, there are larger than average numbers of elderly singles and married couples without children, and smaller numbers of young adults in town. Birth rates are also low. The 18-24 year range is particularly under-represented in the Berkshires and Mount Washington, which can be attributed largely to the number of young people who leave to attend college. The following table, though dated, gives a basic indication of age demographics for the permanent population.

Table POP2 Population By Age – U.S. Census

Age Group	Mt. Washington 1990	% Washington Pop. 1990	Mt. % Southern Mt. Berkshire Washington County Pop. 2000 1990	Numerical Change Mt. W. Washington 1990-2000	% Change Mt. W. Washington 1990-2000
Under 5 years	8	5.9%	5.8%		
5 to 17 years	14	10.4%	17.9%		
18 to 24 years	9	6.7%	8.1%		
25 to 34 years	13	9.6%	13.7%		
35 to 44 years	24	17.8%	17.0%		
45 to 54 years	28	20.7%	10.7%		
55 to 64 years	11	8.1%	9.5%		
65 to 74 years	15	11.1%	9.3%		
75 to 84 years	9	6.7%	5.7%		
85 years and over	4	3%	2.3%		
	135	100.0%	100.0%		

Note: The columns to the right are included to facilitate easy updating and analysis when information from the 2000 U.S. Census becomes available

The proportion of persons over the age of 65 remained relatively stable between 1980 and 1990, though higher than the rest of the County, averaging 20.6% of the population. The overall increase in age median age has been due to an increase in the number of people between the ages of 45 and 64, who more than doubled their proportion of the population between 1980 and 1990, possibly due to early retirees seeking homes in Town. Conversely, the proportion of Town population between the ages of 25 and 44 dropped from 39.8% in 1980 to 30.7% in 1990. The percentage of residents under the age of 18 remained consistent, however.

As population has increased in the past few decades, so have the number of households. Growth of households has outpaced population slightly, due to a trend of decreasing household size as indicated by the U.S. Census. In 1970 the number of people per household averaged 2.6; it dropped sharply to 2.33 in 1980, and decreased slightly in 1990 to 2.29. According to BRPC

population modeling, the trend is believed to have flattened out in the 1990's. Household size in Mount Washington is slightly lower than state and county averages.

Like most small towns in the Berkshires, there is not much racial or ethnic (Hispanic origin) diversity within the population. Because Mount Washington has a relatively small population, changes involving a few people can have a significant effect on demographic trends.

C. Population Projections

A practical view of Mount Washington's future population change, taking into consideration local and market factors, indicates that population will likely grow slowly in volume but significantly in percentage. The middle range BRPC Regional Economic Model forecast indicates that Mount Washington's population will grow to 200 persons by 2010, and continue to grow in the following decades. The middle population projection for year 2020 is 240. This would represent a population increase of over 33% in the next 20 years. The Model also predicts a 62% increase in households of between 2000 and 2020, consistent with a continued decline in the number of persons per household.

Table POP3 Town Population Projections

Year	BRPC Low Range Projection	BRPC Middle Projection	BRPC High Range Projection	U.S. Census Trend Projection
2000	100	160	230	
2010	120	200	270	
2020	150	240	330	

Source Notes:

BRPC's population estimates are based upon a Regional Economic Models, Inc. (REMI) Amherst, MA, forecast for Berkshire County using economic and U.S. Census population data from 1960 to 1990, and BRPC's addition of town population shifts using U.S. Census data. There is a 95% probability that the actual future population will be within the BRPC low and high range estimates.

U.S. Census Trend: Straight Line using U.S. Census and U.S. Census Estimate: 1970-1998

These local projections are largely tied to projected regional growth in population, including an expected reversal of the trend of declining population in the Berkshires of recent decades. As Berkshire County grows, Mount Washington is projected to grow according to its share of the regional population.

The BRPC model assumes that the Town's share of regional population will remain roughly the same. The projections also do not specifically make adjustments for the seasonal nature of a significant percentage of new housing in Mount Washington. More information is contained in the Housing section.

The BRPC model uses a population estimate for 2000 that may be too high (this number cannot be adjusted). Also, due to the seasonal use of residences, when the Census is taken in 2010 and

2020, the population may well prove to be lower than the BRPC middle projection, although the addition of new residential units may be consistent with, or exceed, the projected level of growth.

D. Challenges, Needs and Opportunities

The BRPC population projections are inconsistent with local desires expressed in the community survey. It is important to note that the year round population has apparently not increased as predicted by the BRPC model estimate for 2000. However, since the town has experienced severe changes to population in the past, the town must consider such growth as a realistic possibility. If the BRPC model projection is valid, it would have many planning repercussions, since the challenge becomes one of planning to limit or prevent population growth rather than accommodating it.

If an increasing population materializes, it will potentially create increased demand for some services. Perhaps most importantly, regardless of the level of population, the population will continue to age. Nationally and regionally this trend will accelerate greatly as the Post World War II “Baby Boom” generation begins to enter retirement in the next decade. In Mount Washington, the senior population will likely fall into two basic categories: 1) “young” seniors who simply continue their current lifestyles, and 2) “upper age” seniors who require assistance with living. Unless specifically supported in town, many in the second age group will relocate to areas where expanded life and health services are available. Income is another factor considered in the Economics section.

Regardless of how people are counted, and whether they are permanent or seasonal residents, the potential for residential growth generated by Mount Washington’s desirability as a retirement location does exist. This scenario, along with changing demographics, needs to be considered when planning for the future. It would be advantageous for Mount Washington to make policy decisions about how to accommodate its future population without damaging the natural qualities that make it a desirable place to live.

IV. COMMUNITY SERVICES, FACILITIES AND SUPPORT

A. Town Buildings

Mount Washington has a few town buildings to serve its limited needs. The most central of these is the Town Hall, which is located on East St. and contains a meeting room, a small town office, two secure safes, and shelves that house a portion of the Town Library's collection. The building is handicap-accessible.

The main branch of the Mount Washington Library, located on West St., is only open during the summer months. The library buys its own books as well as housing a rotating Bookmobile collection. Internet access is available at the main library building. A small library collection is available at the Town Hall during the winter.

The Department of Public Works uses several maintenance and storage buildings on Cross Rd, including a shed for storage of road salt.

B. Other Town Facilities and Capital Assets

The Town operates a transfer station and a Recycling Shed to handle solid waste generated by its residents. Town funds maintain the grounds of the town cemetery on West St. and VanderSmitten Memorial Park (see OS/R Section 5). Major equipment owned by the town includes a single-axle dump truck and several road maintenance vehicles.

C. Town Services, Government and Fiscal Conditions

Mount Washington's government is made up of an open Town Meeting and an elected board of two Selectmen, with a multitude of other elected and appointed officials, boards and commissions, including a Town Clerk. The Annual Town Meeting is held in May.

Town Boards

Board of Assessors

School Committee

Planning Board

Library Trustees

Cemetery Committee

Council on Aging

Solid

Historical Commission

Camp Hi-Rock Board

Conservation Commission

Board of Health

Arts Council

Zoning Board of Appeals

Finance Committee

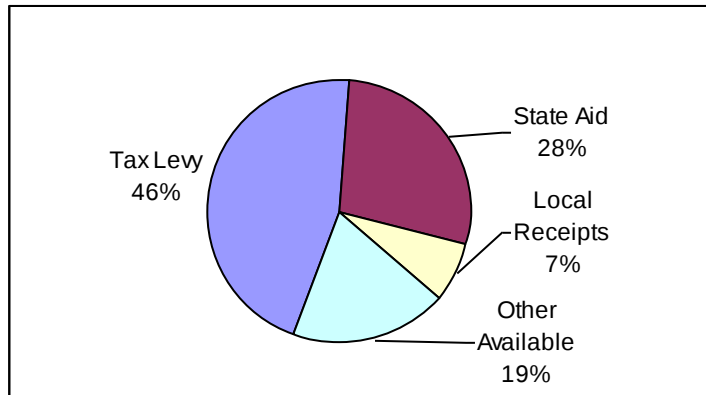
Waste

Commission

Revenue & Expenses

The Town currently provides a wide variety of services and facilities to residents, including provision and maintenance of physical infrastructure and utilities. Currently all municipal functions are funded by property taxes, excise and other taxes, service fees, licenses, and transfer payments from state and federal levels.

Chart COM1 Revenue Sources for FY 2000



Property taxes provide the bulk of town revenue, comprising 46% of the revenue base for FY 2000. State aid provides 28%, with local receipts and other available revenue providing the remaining 26%.

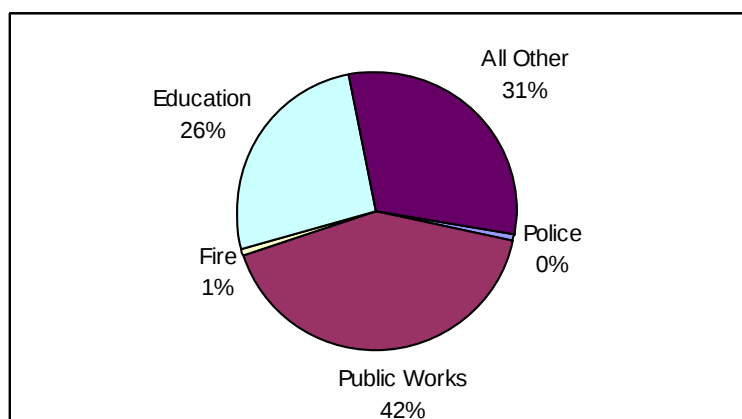
Property tax revenues for FY 2000 were \$196,085, with 95% of this fund derived from residential assessments. Personal property (probably second

homes) provided 3.4% of the tax revenue. Properties classified as commercial or industrial together provided just 1.8% of the tax base. In FY 1999 the tax rate for all types of property was \$6.00 per one thousand dollars of value. This rate has actually fallen to \$5.68 per \$1000 for FY 2000, which is the lowest property tax rate in Berkshire County, less than half of the County median value for FY 1999, \$13.75 per \$1000. The rate is also one of the lowest in Massachusetts.

The Massachusetts Department of Revenue statistics note 134 single family parcels in FY 2000, with an average assessed value of \$180,501. This average assessment value is much higher than the County average but close to that of many communities in the southern Berkshires. Single family properties generated approximately \$137,000 in tax levies, with an average annual tax bill of \$1,025, significantly lower than the County average of \$1,697.

General fund expenditures for FY 1997 were \$270,681 with an additional \$7,828 going to special revenue expenses.

Chart COM2 Actual Expenditures in FY 1997



The largest General Fund operating expense in Mount Washington for FY 1997 was public works, making up 42% of the budget. The majority of this expense is related to road maintenance. Spending on education was 26% of general fund expenditures, a sizable portion of the budget but significantly less than most towns in Berkshire County, due to the small number of

school age children who live in Mount Washington. Police and fire make up a small fraction of expenditures, a combined 1.2%. Other expenses, such as town administration and operational funding for Town Boards and organizations comprised the remaining 31% of Mount Washington's \$270,681 FY 1997 budget.

D. Non-Municipal Community Facilities and Services

Many of the small towns in the Berkshires pool their resources in order to supply their residents with adequate services. Mount Washington relies on regional service providers for schools, fire protection, and ambulance services. Although the Town is not formally part of the Southern Berkshire Regional School District, children in Mount Washington are bussed to Sheffield's Undermountain School and Mt. Everett Regional High School for grades K-12. The Town pays for tuition and transportation on a per student basis. Mount Washington contributes to the Egremont Fire Company for fire protection, and the South Berkshire Volunteer Ambulance Squad for emergency medical services.

E. Challenges, Needs and Opportunities

A Town Hall Renovation Committee was appointed by the Selectboard in November 1995 to "ensure the structural and aesthetic integrity of the Town Hall, while maintaining the town government's ability to carry out all of its required duties and functions." In their 1998 report, the Renovation Committee described cramped conditions within the current structure. There is not enough room for town offices, and records are being stored in areas where they are exposed to mice, mildew, and heat. The Committee came up with a plan for additions to the current structure, which is still under revision. The Town hopes to seek funding for these additions from outside funds in order to avoid raising taxes. However, it is likely that the project will receive most of its funding from local tax money.

Currently the tax rate in Mount Washington is the lowest in the County, with a corresponding level of municipal services (See Section IV: Community Services, Facilities, and Support). A higher tax rate may be necessary in order to accommodate a growth in services. Deliberately keeping the level of services low may have the effect of encouraging seasonal residents to move to the area, since they usually have little need for schools or winter road maintenance, while discouraging prospective year-round residents.

V. THE LOCAL ECONOMY AND REGIONAL ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

A. Local Employment and Income

As a very small residential community, Mount Washington does not have a local commercial economy. It does have some home-based business establishments, namely bed and breakfast inns. A number of persons work in their homes, some aided by telephone-computer connectivity to the external economy. The largest employer in town is the YMCA Hi-Rock camp. The most visible economic activity occurring in town is probably residential construction. Similarly, the most significant local economic commodity is probably real estate.

B. Regional Economic Factors of Importance to the Mount Washington Community

Some residents are a part of the tourism-dominated south Berkshire economy. Others work in Great Barrington or other locations in the Berkshires. Some commute to New York. Occupations include trade and services at all levels, artisans, entrepreneurs, and even part time farmers. Many residents are retired or semi-retired, some are homemakers. Overall per capita and median household and family incomes are very high relative to the Berkshire region.

C. Challenges, Needs and Opportunities

As the southernmost access point into the Southern Berkshires from the very highly populated New York City metro area, and with its plethora of natural beauty, Mount Washington could be well positioned to participate in the County's tourism sector. However, according to the survey results, residents do not want additional tourist activity. Nevertheless, Mount Washington's prominent State Forest sites are popular visitor destinations. Unlike private commercial entities that would be controlled by local zoning, it is possible the state could independently develop its properties in forms similar to commercial uses.

Mount Washington is also not immune from the effects of the modern global economy. The 1996 Federal Telecommunications Act prevents communities from excluding telecommunication structures and, in response to that reality, the Town has designated Mount Darby as its telecommunications overlay district.

[SECTION NOT YET COMPLETED]

VI. HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

A. General Characteristics and Conditions

Although Mount Washington's permanent population has been relatively stable since 1990, the number of housing units and the number of permanent resident households has increased. These trends are expected to continue for the foreseeable future. In the 1990s the vast majority of new homes built and existing homes sold have been occupied on a seasonal basis. In the Berkshires there is an apparent trend of second-home owners building permanent retirement homes, which may also be occurring in Town.

B. Future Issues of Housing Supply and Affordability

The average value of homes in Mount Washington is relatively high for the Berkshires but not overly expensive when compared to the upper-tier housing costs of Boston, Hartford, and most importantly the New York City metropolitan area. This may mean that housing in Mount Washington is attractive to the vast and wealthy New York City market, while possibly providing an affordability challenge to some longtime town residents and families.

Housing demand is related to regional economic conditions. Mount Washington does not have a sufficient level of services to support a significant level of rental or special needs housing, although the community may have options to increase opportunities for residents to remain in the community. (see Master Plan Section VI).

C. Sprawl and Nurturing Alternative Forms and Patterns

There are various spatial patterns of residential land uses and development that can be seen throughout the region. The ones that are particularly evident in Mount Washington are:

1. Hamlet (a small group of homes near an intersection with community facilities)
2. Small Scale Suburban Residential (subdivisions and continuous roadside development)
3. Rural Forest/Residential.

Mount Washington does not have any area that constitutes a mass of population density. The community does have a center of sorts around the Town Hall and Union Church. Although the Town is obviously rural in nature, it is not immune to sprawl or the well-documented environmental, social, and fiscal deficiencies that accompany sprawl. Sprawl is simply the spreading of development outwards from centers of existing development, and can occur at different densities. This trend is difficult to stop completely, although some of its effects can be mitigated.

A positive alternative to sprawl that may be applicable to Mount Washington is the historic hamlet neighborhood pattern (see Master Plan Section VI for more information).

Large resort-like developments have often been built or proposed in the Berkshires. Mount Washington may face such a proposal in the future. Such a development, even if well designed, would radically change the character of the community.

VII. TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

A safe, convenient and economical transportation network is essential to the social well being of people of Mount Washington. Although the town has very limited access, townspeople have come to depend on the existing network as they travel to points within town, to work, shopping, and cultural events. They depend on it for emergency access to homes and rely on roads being safe and useable during inclement weather. Others rely on the transportation system as they visit the town and the Berkshire region to marvel at the many wonderful natural and cultural resources the town and region have to offer.

The local transportation system should function and exist in a manner that is sensitive to community character and the natural environment. Transportation and mobility can include a variety of modes such as public or private transit, carpooling, walking, biking, etc. and link to trail systems used for outdoor recreation.

A. Road Inventory and Motorized Transportation

Road Network

There are no state highway routes in town. Essentially, there is only one route connecting the town to the region to the north, one route to the west, and one seasonal access route to the south that is seldom used. The town has a total road network of 17.3 miles. Most of the town's road network is found in the center and northwest corner of the town. Paved portions of the road network total 9.3 miles. The following roads comprise the network:

Table TRAN1 Town Roads

Road	Length (miles)	Function	Surface	Characteristics
WEST STREET	4.4	Major Collector and Local	Paved and Dirt	
WEST STREET BRANCH	0.2	Major Collector	Paved	
FALLS ROAD	1.9	Major Collector	Paved	
EAST STREET	8.1	Local	Paved and Dirt	
CROSS ROAD	0.6	Local	Dirt	
PLANTAIN POND ROAD	1.3	Local	Dirt	
EAST STREET BRANCH	0.2	Local	Dirt	
ROADS END ROAD	0.5	Local	Dirt	

Several private roads and DEM roads also exist.

Pavement and Bridge Conditions

In 1996 BRPC completed a pavement management analysis of East Street (North of West Street intersection), West Street (from East Street to Falls Road) and Falls Road; a total of 3 miles.

These 3 miles yielded at least .5 miles (the western section of Falls Road) of road which are considered “failing”.

There is only one bridge in Mount Washington. The bridge, constructed in 1956, is located on West Street crossing Water City Brook. It has an AASHTO rating of 90.6 which indicates it is in good condition.

Traffic Volume/Capacity Relationships

There are 5 different stations in Mount Washington where traffic counts have been performed.

- East Street @ the Mt Washington/ Egremont Townline
- East Street Branch just south of West Street Intersection
- Falls Road @ N.Y. State Line
- Cross Road just East of West Road
- East Road @ Conn. State Line

These counts were taken by BRPC and by Mass Highway between 1991 and August 1999. See Table TRAN2 below for more details on the counts.

Table TRAN2 Traffic Counts

Map Site #	Placement	Year	AADT	Start Date	End Date	% Trucks	Raw Count	Peak Day (amount)	Peak Hour (amount)
1	East St. At State Line	1991	210						
2	Cross Road East of West St.	1991	210						
		1997	200	25-Jul	27-Jul	1.6%	266		
3	Falls Rd	1999	209	31-Aug	7-Sep	8.3%	283	Sun Sept. 5 (562)	1:00PM (41)
4	East St. South of West St Intersection	1991	220						
5	East Street @ Egremont T.L.	1989	241						
		1992	410						
		1995	550						
		1997	451	25-Jul	27-Jul	2.7%	601	Sat July 26 (914)	9:00AM (98)
		1999	469	31-Aug	7-Sep	3.0%	634	Sun Sept. 5 (898)	2:00PM (67)

Sources: 1989, 1991, 1992, 1995 Data: Mass Highway; 1997, 1999 Data: BRPC

Notes: AADT is Annualized Average Daily Traffic (adjusted Raw count)

Time listed for Peak Hour is beginning time (ie. 1:00 pm = 1-2 PM)

Raw count is unadjusted count

Currently, by defined state and regional transportation standards, there are no volume/capacity problems in Mount Washington since volumes are very small. The highest annualized average daily traffic volume (469 AADT) occurs on East Street at the Mt Washington/Egremont town line. This volume corresponds to a state defined level of service (LOS) of A, or excellent. In order for a degradation of LOS, down to LOS B, to occur on East Street, the AADT would have to jump to 7,190 vehicles.

However, when the traffic situation is considered in the community context, surges of seasonal summer weekend and event traffic involving visitor attractions and camps can be significant. This is one reason that the Town has required and implemented a Traffic Management Agreement with the YMCA Camp Hi-Rock.

It is difficult to draw conclusions since only two roads in Mt Washington have a history of traffic counts. Cross Road has been counted twice (1991 & 1997). East Street at the Egremont Town-Line has been counted 5 times (1989, 1992, 1995, 1997 and 1999). Cross Road volume dropped 11 cars (4%) from 1991 to 1999. East Street increased 29% from 1989 to 1992. From 1992 to 1999, annualized ADT's have leveled out and fluctuated.

The latest available state transportation accident data indicates a low volume of accidents corresponding to the low volume of traffic. Intersections are controlled by STOP signs.

Scenic Road Qualities

See OS/R Section 4.6: Scenic Resources for an inventory of roads with scenic features.

Transportation Patterns

B. Pedestrian and Non-Motorized Transportation Connections

C. Scenarios, Issues, and Transportation Enhancement Toolbox

The town will continue to search for an acceptable balance between providing adequate levels of transportation service, dealing with growth, and serving the needs of tourists all while trying to preserve the unique character of Mount Washington. Despite the low traffic counts in town, increasing traffic generally can have a negative impact upon a rural community. Future changes to traffic would be connected to local land uses, to visitor attractions in Mount Washington and to regional factors for certain roads. Of equal or potentially greater concern, is the potential impact of development upon scenic roads.

West Road and Falls Road

Although traffic data is not available for West Road from Falls Road to East Road, it is anticipated that this stretch might have a comparable volume to East Street at the Egremont town-line. This road which carries a large percentage of the town's traffic, is narrow and unpaved.

Falls Road may also be of concern in that it is a narrow unpaved winding road with sections in poor condition. Although posted speed limits are low, the steep curves are potentially dangerous due to their nature and limited sight distances. The failing western section of Falls Road indicated on the Transportation Network Map may be of particular concern. There are no current plans to improve the road. Any potential improvement would need to be sensitive to the character and setting of the road.

OTHER ISSUES AND ALTERNATIVES

VIII. SUSTAINABLE LAND USE

A. Existing Land Uses and Trends

Mount Washington is fortunate to have a very high percentage of land (believed to be the highest percentage for any Commonwealth community) in a natural, passive or cultivated state. Over 98% of all land is forested, undeveloped, or used for open space and agricultural purposes according to BRPC's 1997 survey of land use. Of the developed areas, the largest portion in town is comprised of single family residential uses.

Table LU1 Land Uses and Land Use Change in Mount Washington

Land Use Categories	1985 Acres	1997 Acres	Change in Acres 1985-1997	% Change 1985-1997
Forest	13,485.3	13,413.7	-71.7	-1%
Agriculture				
Pasture, extensive	189.7	183.0	-6.6	-3%
Cropland, intensive	123.0	116.3	-6.7	-5%
Woody perennial orchard, nursery	12.6	12.6	0.0	0%
Agriculture Subtotal	325.3	311.9	-13.4	-4%
Open land without veg. or agr., power lines	218.1	231.8	13.7	6%
Residential > 1/2 acre density	149.1	207.5	58.3	39%
Other Developed				
Urban Open *	11.1	17.0	5.9	53%
Waste disposal - landfills, lagoons	3.6	3.6	0.0	0%
Industrial **	3.4	3.4	0.0	0%
Water based recreation - beaches, marinas	3.0	9.1	6.1	206%
Participation recreation - tennis, playgrounds	1.7	2.7	1.0	61%
Other Developed Subtotal	22.7	35.7	13.0	57%
Wetland - non forested	29.9	29.9	0.0	0%
Water	88.5	88.5	0.0	0%
TOTAL ACREAGE	14,318.9	14,318.9		

Sources: 1985 information UMASS McConnell Land Inventory, 1997: BRPC

Notes: * Urban Open includes parks, cemeteries, public & institutional greenspace

** Describe "industrial" use

B. Land Use Trends

Development, however, is occurring in a low density sprawl-like form, causes permanent loss of scenic resources and is potentially damaging to habitats – the very qualities that give Mount Washington its distinctive character and environmental value. Although much of town is permanently protected from development, a build-out analysis, funded by the Executive Office

of Environmental Affairs [EOEA], determined that approximately 970 additional housing units could theoretically be developed under current zoning.

C. Current Land Uses and Related Regulations

Having only one primary zoning district with one set of standards to cover most of the developable land in town has not allowed the town much flexibility in defining rules for residential development for locations with differing environmental or community characteristics.

D. Build-out Analysis

E. State Management Plans and Policies

F. Potential Land Uses and Regulatory Options

Currently there is little easily developed land available in Mount Washington (see Section IX: Sustainable Land Use). Increasing population may place a higher demand on land that is less suitable for development due to poor soils or steep slopes, as well as raising prices for more easily developed land.

It may therefore be a challenge for Mount Washington to preserve the community as it is now, a desire expressed by many in the community survey. Mount Washington's zoning bylaws and other land use regulations have helped to curb many potentially detrimental impacts from development. Town zoning is relatively straightforward and does not allow most non-residential uses. This policy approach was supported by the public in the survey. Some communities have identified special areas in order to provide another level of protection for important resources. The Scenic Mountains Act is one such tool.

A sustainable land use strategy generally involves further protection of fragile and important natural resource areas, designation of areas where development should be restricted, as well as areas where land may be developed and used to meet needs in ways the community sees fit (see the Master Plan Section IX).

In the Master planning process it is important to consider different perspectives on what constitutes the public interest within a comprehensive framework for the future that carefully considers a variety of factors. For instance, if the town were to pursue more restrictions to protect the environment, it might also consider enabling some additional limited forms of spatially efficient housing in appropriate locations, to meet identified needs and desires.

Mount Washington may be able to learn from other communities; however, Mount Washington is a unique community, with special challenges that may warrant innovative solutions.

IX. NATURAL RESOURCES, WATERSHED PROTECTION, OPEN SPACE & OUTDOOR RECREATION

AS NOTED IN THE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY, THE MASTER PLAN AND THE OPEN SPACE/RECREATION PLAN ARE INSEPARABLY LINKED. THE OPEN SPACE/RECREATION PLAN IS INCORPORATED INTO THE MASTER PLAN AS SECTION IX. COVERING NATURAL RESOURCES, WATERSHED PROTECTION, OPEN SPACE & OUTDOOR RECREATION; AND MASTER PLAN SECTION X. COVERING IMPLEMENTATION, ALONG WITH REFERENCES TO OTHER SECTIONS OF THE MASTER PLAN. WE ALSO RETAIN THE OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN FRAMEWORK TO MEET ALL DOCUMENT REQUIREMENTS.

Open Space and Recreation Plan



For the Town of Mount Washington

THE OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN

The OS/R Plan sections that will follow are listed below:

- I. Plan Summary
- II. Introduction
 - A. Statement of Purpose
 - B. Planning Process and Participation
- III. Community Setting
 - A. Regional Context
 - B. History of the Community
 - C. Population Characteristics
 - D. Growth and Development Patterns
- IV. Environmental Inventory and Analysis
 - A. Geology, Soils and Topography
 - B. Landscape Character
 - C. Water Resources
 - D. Vegetation
 - E. Fisheries and Wildlife
 - F. Scenic Resources and Unique Environments
 - G. Environmental Problems
- V. Inventory of Lands of Conservation and Recreation Interest
 - A. Private Parcels
 - B. Public and Nonprofit Parcels
- VI. Community Goals
 - A. Description of Process
 - B. Statement of Open Space and Recreation Goals
- VII. Analysis of Needs
 - A. Summary of Resource Protection Needs
 - B. Summary of Community's Needs
 - C. Management Needs, Potential Change of Use
- VIII. Goals and Objectives
- IX. Five-Year Action Plan
- X. Public Comments
- XI. References

List of Open Space and Recreation Maps

Map

After Page

Environmental Constraints

42

Land Use 1999

43

Subregional Habitat and Open Space

48

Scenic Resources

51

Open Space

57

Proposed Scenic Mountain Area

68

Open Space Action Map

72

I. Plan Summary

A. Introduction

The *Mount Washington Master Plan and Open Space and Recreation Plan* has been developed in recognition of the fact that the protection of open space and natural resources and the provision of recreational opportunities are key aspects of the community's quality of life. To this end, the Plan is intended to document the Town's natural and community resources, and outline goals for their protection and enhancement. It includes a comprehensive inventory of the town's natural resources and protected areas. It also lists natural resource and open space goals, developed with extensive public input, concluding with a five-year Action Plan with specific management recommendations. Some of the most compelling findings of this study are:

- Mount Washington's most defining characteristic is its rural mountain character. Residents have consistently said that the landscape—a unique pattern of mountain views, forested hillsides, winding rural roads, and small settlements—is the aspect of the town most important to preserve for the future.
- Mount Washington is home to unusual natural features and habitats that are home to at least nineteen State-listed rare species. This includes the summit of Mt. Everett, which has an extremely rare dwarf pitch pine community. This and other unique places are irreplaceable aspects of the Town's natural heritage and need to be safeguarded for the future.
- Ongoing efforts by state and local boards and organizations have increased the level of protection for many of the Town's most significant natural places. These efforts include State designation of the Karner Brook and Schenob Brook Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, and the permanent protection of almost 7,500 acres of open space (including state-owned land). This plan recommends continuing conservation of rare-species habitat and unique places.
- As Mount Washington's largest landowner, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has a great deal of power over what happens in many of the Town's most significant and valued places. At times town residents and the Department of Environmental Management have come into conflict over management decisions for state-owned lands. This plan recommends establishing formal means for communication and compromise between the Town and DEM.
- Residential development on steep slopes and hillsides is increasing, and has the potential to mar scenic views and cause erosion and other environmental problems. Mount Washington should consider limiting and/or reviewing more closely building in higher elevations and slopes, potentially through implementation of the Scenic Mountain Act.
- Many residents enjoy the beauty of the natural landscape through outdoor recreation such as walking, hiking, or nature study. However, areas in Town that are suitable for

community recreational or cultural events are particularly vital to maintain. Although generally not used by residents, facilities at the YMCA Camp Hi-Rock would seem to be an ideal site for certain types of community events, providing an additional opportunity to strengthen ties between the Town and the Y-Camp.

B. Statement of Purpose

The *2000 Open Space and Recreation Plan* reflects Mount Washington's commitment to protect, preserve, and enhance its rural character, unique natural resources, and recreational opportunities. Until now, Mount Washington has not had an open space and recreation plan or a master plan. While facing increasing development pressures in recent years, the Town has been without a framework to preserve the characteristics that contribute to its current high quality of life. It is the intent of the combined Master and Open Space and Recreation Plan process to document the Town's natural assets and the needs of its community, and to help direct development in a fashion that respects the character of the community and the environment.

C. What is Open Space and Why is it Important?

"Open space" is usually conceived of as conservation land that is protected from development. While this is true in part, the term also carries a broader definition, including wildlife sanctuaries, forests, conservation land, private and public recreation land, cemeteries, and historical properties. Open space usually consists of undeveloped land, although this is not always the case. The category includes lands used for agriculture and recreation, and often those that are of historical interest to the community. These lands include areas of town where people can explore, walk their dogs, or play soccer, as well as privately held land which provides passersby with wonderful views but no public access. These lands comprise an important component of community character, and their maintenance and preservation are difficult but essential tasks for the town to undertake.

S/R Section 3. Community Setting

A. Regional Context

MASTER PLAN SECTION I.A HIGHLIGHTS MOUNT WASHINGTON'S CONTEXT IN THE REGION.

B. History of the Community

SEE MASTER PLAN SECTION II. FROM PAST TO PRESENT A SPECIAL COMMUNITY, FOR INFORMATION ON MOUNT WASHINGTON'S HISTORY.

C. Population Characteristics

SEE MASTER PLAN SECTION III. POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS, FOR INFORMATION ON MOUNT WASHINGTON'S POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS.

D. Growth and Development Patterns

REFER TO MASTER PLAN SECTION VIII. SUSTAINABLE LAND USE, FOR AN ANALYSIS OF GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS RELEVANT TO OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION.

OS/R Section 4. Environmental Inventory and Analysis

A. Environmental Inventory

1. Geology, Soils and Topography

Topography

Mount Washington is truly a mountain town, located in a rolling, narrow hollow between two steep ridges of the Taconics. Bash Bish Mountain, Alander Mountain and Mount Ashley lie to the west, and Mount Race, Mount Everett, and Mt. Darby to the east. At the southernmost and northernmost edges of town, the valley narrows precipitously. Mt. Everett is the highest point in Mount Washington, at 2,602 feet.

Geology

The bedrock underlying Mount Washington is mainly made up of schistose and phyllitic rocks, which are harder and more resistant to erosion than the softer marble and limestone bedrock more common in the Housatonic valley. Bedrock in Mount Washington has weathered slowly in comparison to that of the valley towns.¹ Two main types of rock underlie the town: the Everett



Formation, which is mainly quartzose argillite in shades of green and gray green; and Egremont Phyllite, which is carbonaceous, black to silvery gray, fine-grained quartzose silty slate and phyllite. The Everett Formation underlies all of the steep slopes and mountain tops, while Egremont Phyllite, a softer rock, underlies the central valley.²

The present topographic features of Mount Washington are the result of geologic erosion by tributaries of the Housatonic River as well as changes caused by the glacier that covered the area until 10,000 to 11,000 years ago. The glaciers deposited layers of sand, silt, gravel, and clay, which are thick in the valleys and thin or absent in the uplands.³ As an upland town, Mount

¹ Soil Survey of Berkshire County, Massachusetts, 1988.

² U.S. Geological Survey *Geologic Quadrangle Map*, Bashbish Quadrangle, 1966.

³ Soil Survey of Berkshire County, Massachusetts, 1988.

Washington has very few glacial deposits. Water-laid ice contact deposits are or were present in a gravel pit north of Plantain Pond, and along East St. near the Lee Pond Brook wetlands.⁴

Soils⁵

Most of Mount Washington is mountainous and covered by thin, rocky soils. There are no prime agricultural soils. Nearly all the soils in Mount Washington present difficulties to development, because of slope, low or excessive permeability, depth to bedrock, or a high water table. However, there may be areas within the general soil associations that have fewer or more restricting limitations on development. On-site investigation is needed to determine the suitability of particular areas for any use.

Soils of the *Taconic Macomber Association*, formed in glacial till derived from phyllite, cover much of the Taconic Range and therefore most of Mount Washington. Steep areas in the western and eastern mountains are covered almost exclusively by Taconic-Macomber soils. These soils are strongly acid, rolling to steep, and very stony. Although the soils have moderate to moderately rapid permeability, the depth to bedrock can be less than 20 inches and there may be outcropping of bedrock as often as every 10 feet, particularly on the steep slopes and hilltops. Both the slope and the shallow depth to bedrock may impede development.

Lanesboro-Dunnerston Association soils are formed in the same kind of slaty till as Taconic and Macomber soils, and can be found on the sides of hills and mountains. They are steep, with slopes from 15 to 45 percent. Stones and boulders, 5 to 100 feet apart, cover the surface. Lanesboro soils are well drained in the upper stratum, but with a dense substratum that has slow permeability. They have a seasonal high water table at 2 feet. Dunnerston soils are well drained but without the dense substratum or high water table. The main limitation to development in areas with these soils is slope. On Lanesboro soils slow permeability is also a limitation, because of the difficulty in placing septic fields.

On the east side of Mount Washington there are very occasional pockets of *Hoosic gravelly fine sandy loam*. These soils are very deep, somewhat excessively well-drained, and very strongly acid. They tend to have 8 to 15 percent slopes. Placing septic fields on these soils may pose a danger to groundwater, because of the excessive permeability of the soil.

In less steep areas of Mount Washington, one can find *Fullam-Lanesboro Association* soils. These soils are very deep, moderately well-drained, and strongly acid to moderately acid. They are rolling and very stony. The main limitations to septic field siting are a seasonal high water table in Fullam soils and slow permeability.

In Mount Washington, *Brayton silt loam* is found on foot slopes and drainageways, around bodies of water such as Hunt's Pond, and in the wetlands along the southern part of East Street. These soils are nearly level and gently sloping, very deep, and somewhat poorly drained. Permeability of these soils is moderate above the substratum and very slow in the substratum. The seasonal high water table is perched above the substratum in winter and spring and after

⁴ U.S. Geological Survey *Geologic Quadrangle Map*, Bashbish Quadrangle, 1966

⁵ Soil Survey of Berkshire County, Massachusetts, 1988.

prolonged rains. This high water table and slow permeability make siting buildings and septic fields difficult.

For soils information relevant to development, see the map of Environmental Constraints, after page 42, and the Proposed Scenic Mountain Area map, after page 68.

2. Landscape Character

Mount Washington is a mountain village, surrounded on all sides by wooded slopes. From many of the Town's rural roads and trails one can view Mt. Everett, Mt. Darby, and other landmark peaks. Clear streams running down from the mountains add to the Town's scenic beauty, as do picturesque farmsteads such as Blueberry Hill Farm and historic buildings such as Union Church. Residents value highly the unspoiled, woodland character of their Town. Undeveloped tracts of forest surrounding the town comprise a significant portion of the 36,000-acre "forest core" between Massachusetts, New York, and Connecticut, one of the last such places in New England.

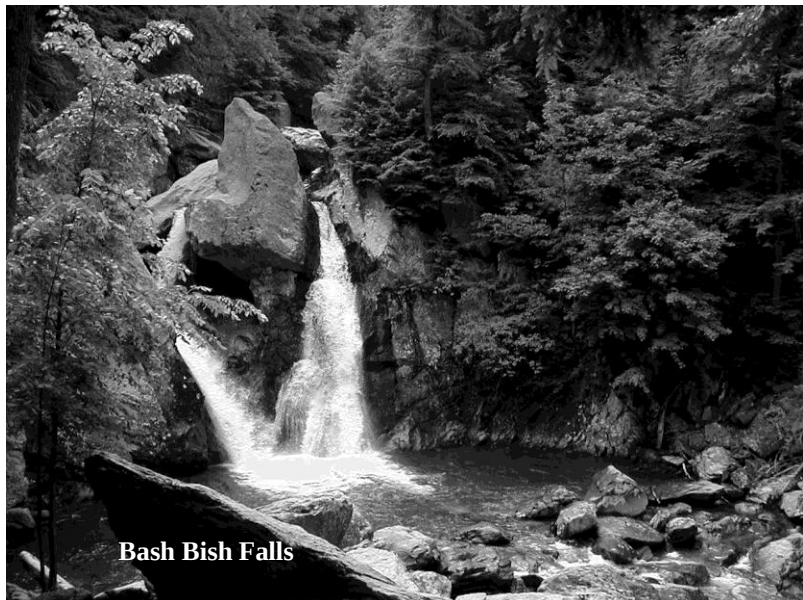
For more detailed information on significant natural features see OS/R Section 4.6: Scenic Resources.

3. Water Resources

Surface Water

Mount Washington is located in two major watersheds: the Housatonic River watershed to the east, and the Hudson River watershed to the west. Streams and groundwater from Mount Washington feeds watersheds in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New York State. Three subwatersheds have their origin in the steep slopes of Mount Washington: Bash Bish Brook, which flows west into the Hudson River watershed, drawing water from most of the town; Karner Brook, which flows north and east into the Housatonic River watershed; and Schenob Brook, which flows through Sheffield into the Housatonic, receiving water from streams on the eastern side of Mount Washington.

67% of the land in Mount Washington lies within the Hudson River Watershed. Originating in the steep mountainsides of the Taconic Range, Bash Bish Brook drains approximately 13.3 square miles of land in Mount Washington and Egremont, flowing into the Roeliff Jansen Kill in New York State, which drains into the Hudson River. Streamflow in the Bash Bish is on average a little less than



one million gallons per day (mgd).⁶ Bodies of water within the Hudson River Watershed include Lee Pond, Hunts Pond, City Brook, Guilder Brook, Guilder Pond, Bash Bish Brook, and Bash Bish Falls. The 1.9-mile length of Bash Bish Brook has been classified as a Scenic Natural Landscape, which means that it has been proposed by designation as a Scenic River and is monitored through an environmental review procedure.⁷

Karner Brook originates in the northeastern part of Mount Washington. The Brook then flows out of Mount Washington and across the valley to Smiley's Pond in Egremont, and further east into Hubbard Brook and eventually the Housatonic River. At one time there were many threats to the health of this stream, which is the source of the Egremont's water supply. These threats included siltation and excess nutrients, possibly due to lot development on slopes in the watershed.⁸ The construction of a new water filtration plant in Egremont may have contributed to siltation in recent years.⁹ In an attempt to mitigate these threats, 7,000 acres of the Karner Brook Watershed, including 1,300 acres in Mount Washington, were designated a State Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) in July 1992. According to the ACEC Program Guide, "The formal designation of an ACEC...directs state environmental agencies to take actions to preserve, restore, and enhance the resources of [the] ACEC."¹⁰ The Karner Brook ACEC contains over twenty state-listed rare species, three varieties of significant natural communities, including calcareous wetlands and acidic rocky summits, and critical fisheries habitat. Karner Brook is classified as a Class A, Outstanding Resource Water, with flow during seasons with normal rainfall at approximately 100,000 gallons a day.¹¹

Although Schenob Brook itself does not flow through Mount Washington, many of the streams that flow into it originate on the eastern slopes of Mt. Everett, Mt. Race, and Mt. Undine in Mount Washington. The Schenob Brook watershed is a designated ACEC, as "one of the most significant natural communities in Massachusetts."¹² The largest continuous calcareous seepage swamp and the finest examples of calcareous fens in southern New England are located in the ACEC. Over 40-state listed rare and endangered species can be found in these habitats.¹³ Although most of these significant wetlands are not located in Mount Washington, they originate in the springs and seeps at the base of the eastern mountains, and therefore depend on the health of this area.

Bear Rock Stream, a tributary that flows into Schenob Brook and its wetlands, originates in Plantain Pond, on the eastern boundary of Mount Washington. Plantain Pond is a 62-acre lake, located at about 1700 feet elevation, near the YMCA camp. The pond was dammed about 40 years ago at the southern end, deepening the pond and flooding marsh areas. Bear Rock Stream is probably best known for Bear Rock Falls, which lie southeast of Plantain Pond and can be

⁶ *Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management, Hudson River Basin: Inventory and Analysis of Current and Projected Water Use, Vol. 1, 1989.*

⁷ *Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management, Hudson River Basin: Inventory and Analysis of Current and Projected Water Use, Vol. 1, 1989.*

⁸ Egremont Open Space & Recreation Plan, 1988.

⁹ *Conversation with Frank Lowenstein, Program Director, Berkshires Office of the Nature Conservancy, 1/31/2000.*

¹⁰ ACEC Program Guide, June 1993.

¹¹ *The Karner Brook Watershed: A Proposal for Nomination as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern, 1991*

¹² *Designation of the Schenob Brook Drainage Basin as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern, 1990.*

¹³ *Designation of the Schenob Brook Drainage Basin as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern, 1990.*

seen from the Sheffield valley. Race Brook, another tributary of Schenob Brook, also begins in Mount Washington, in a small marshy area between Mt. Race and Mt. Everett. Three 75' waterfalls make the trail alongside this stream very popular for hikers and picnickers. The mile-and-a-half corridor of Race Brook has been designated a State Scenic River and is largely state-owned. It flows into the Dry Brook wetlands, and from there into Schenob Brook. Two other streams in Mount Washington, both originating in the Mount Undine area, also flow into Schenob Brook, through wetlands in the valley.¹⁴

The map of Environmental Constraints on the previous page shows the 100- and 200-foot riverfront areas bordering perennial streamflow.

Wetlands

Because it is so mountainous, Mount Washington does not have as extensive wetland areas as the neighboring valley communities, Egremont and Sheffield. However, Mount Washington does have many small wetlands, tucked into relatively level areas on the slopes and in the central valley. Larger wet areas are found along streams, for example, the wetlands that run along Lee Pond Brook, south of Hunt's Pond, and the wet area along Guilder Brook, off Cross Rd. Wetlands associated with the Schenob Brook watershed can be found in the south part of Mount Washington, within the Schenob Brook ACEC. Wetlands underlain with calcareous bedrock have alkaline, mineral-rich water, and may harbor unusual natural communities.

The map of Environmental Constraints on the previous page shows the 100-foot wetland buffer zones.

Flood Hazard Areas

None of the streams or lakes in Mount Washington has a 100-year floodplain, although historically floods may have occurred on Falls Rd, along Bash Bish Brook.

Aquifer Recharge Areas

Runoff and seepage from the eastern slopes of Mount Washington act to recharge aquifers in Sheffield, although there are no large aquifers in Mount Washington itself.

There is no public water supply in Mount Washington, so residents must rely on private wells. Karner Brook is the source of public water in Egremont. The source of this Class A stream lies in the northern part of Mount Washington.

¹⁴ The Schenob Brook Drainage Basin: A Nomination for An Area of Critical Environmental Concern, 1990.

4. Vegetation

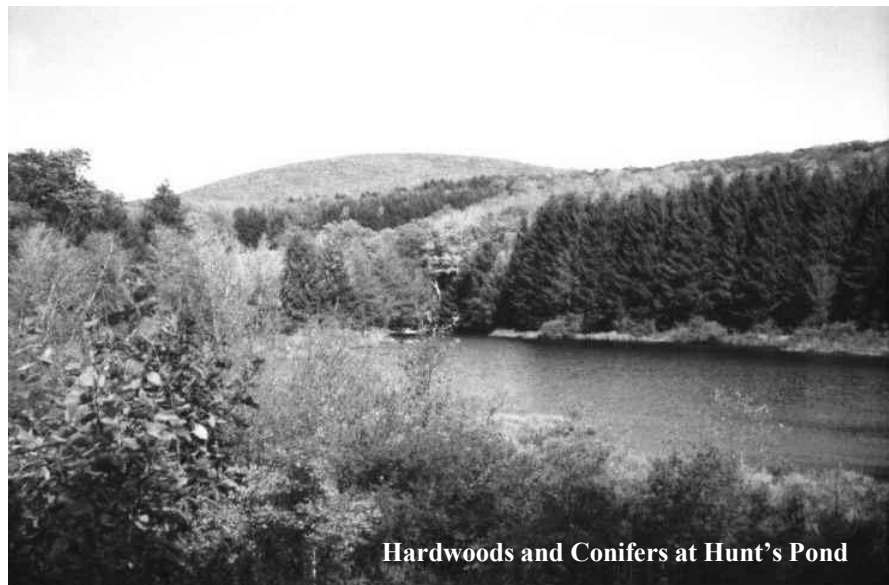
The Land Use Map on the next page shows forested and wetland areas in Mount Washington.

Upland Vegetation

The large tracts of undeveloped forestland surrounding Mount Washington comprise part of one of the most significant unfragmented forest blocks in the Taconics, second only to Mt. Equinox in Vermont. Forest in Mount Washington makes up a significant portion of the 36,000-acre “forest core” between Massachusetts, New York, and Connecticut, one of the last such places in New England. Mount Washington’s forests support a variety of habitats and rare species, as well as playing an important role in the water cycle that recharges wetlands at the base of the mountains.¹⁵ Upland forest types in Mount Washington include transitional hardwood forest, rich mesic forest, and rock outcrop communities.

A transitional hardwood forest community characterizes the upper slopes of Mount Washington. Common tree species include sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*), red oak (*Quercus rubra*), black oak (*Quercus nigrum*), and white pine (*Pinus strobus*). White ash (*Fraxinus americana*), yellow birch (*Betula alleghaniensis*), and American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*) are less common than in the northern hardwood forest found farther north. Cool, moist, shady hollows may have stands of eastern hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*), with spinulose wood fern (*Dryopteris spinulosa*), Christmas fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*), long beech fern (*Thelypteris phegopteris*), and polypody fern (*Polypodium vulgare*) growing underneath. Thickets of mountain laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*) grow in some areas, blooming with pink-and-white flower clusters in early summer. Guilder Pond is a particularly good place to view mountain laurel in bloom. The understory also contains hobblebush (*Viburnum alnifolium*) and striped maple (*Acer pensylvanicum*).^{16,17,18}

One significant forest community found in Mount Washington is rich mesic forest, with moderately moist,



¹⁵ The Nature Conservancy, Draft Mt. Everett-Mt. Riga Landscape Conservation Plan, 1999.

¹⁶ Laubach, Rene. A Guide to Natural Places in the Berkshire Hills, Stockbridge MA, 1997.

¹⁷ Weatherbee, Pamela and Garrett Crow, “Natural Plant Communities of Berkshire County, Massachusetts,” *Rhodora*, Vol. 94, pp. 171-209, 1992.

¹⁸ Conversation with Frank Lowenstein, Program Director, Berkshires Office of the Nature Conservancy, 1/31/2000.

nutrient-rich soils. This type of community is characterized by a tall, full tree canopy and a sparse subcanopy and shrub layer. It has an unusually diverse community of herbs and spring ephemerals that can include more than 100 different species. Sugar maple dominates this community, with white ash, basswood (*Tilia americana*), bitternut hickory (*Carya cordiformis*), black birch (*Betula lenta*), yellow birch, red oak, and American beech also common. Hophornbeam (*Ostrya virginiana*), musclewood (*Carpinus caroliniana*), and nannyberry (*Viburnum lentago*) are smaller trees commonly found in rich mesic forest. The herbaceous layer of rich mesic forest is made up of large numbers of ferns, sedges, lilies, and buttercups, which thrive on the thick layer of litter that builds up on the forest floor. Spring ephemerals, which flower in early spring before the canopy shades the forest floor, include wild leek (*Allium tricoccum*), toothwort (*Dentaria diphylla*), Dutchman's breeches (*Dicentra cucullaria*), trout lily (*Erythronium americanum*), and spring beauty (*Claytonia virginica*). Other typical herbaceous species include blue cohosh (*Caulophyllum thalictroides*), round-leaved hepatica (*Hepatica americana*), wild ginger (*Asarum canadense*), large-flowered bellwort (*Uvularia grandifolia*), red trillium (*Trillium erectum*), waterleaf (*Hydrophyllum virginianum*), ebony spleenwort (*Asplenium platyneuron*) and bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*). Ferns include maidenhair fern (*Adiantum pedatum*), Goldie's fern (*Dryopteris goldiana*), and glade fern (*Diplazium pycnocarpon*).^{19,20}

Where soils are thin and bedrock exposed, Mount Washington is home to rock outcrop communities, which support a mix of species primarily associated with open areas as well as herbaceous species of the surrounding forest. Rock outcrop communities can be of three types, depending on the exposed bedrock: acidic (pH <6.0), circumneutral (pH 6.0-7.5), and calcareous (pH >7.5). Mount Washington has both acidic and calcareous rock outcrop communities.²¹

Acidic rocky summit/rock outcrop communities are characteristic of the southern Taconic ridges, and in Mount Washington are found on the ridgetops of Alander Mountain, Mt. Race, and Mt. Everett. Harsh conditions on these ridges stunt the growth of the pitch pines and oaks that grow here, reducing them to twisted, shrublike forms. On Mount Everett this community looks like a dwarf forest, with pitch pines and scrub oak growing to about one meter high, with a flat-topped, laterally-growing appearance. The summit of Mt. Everett is home to the densest, most extensive community of dwarf pitch pines in the Southern Taconics. Stunted trees and/or shrubs dominate acidic rocky outcrop areas, with grasses, sedges, and a few herbaceous species forming a secondary component. Non-tree species include little bluestem grass (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), poverty grass (*Danthonia spicata*), Pennsylvania sedge (*Carex pensylvanica*), rock harlequin (*Corydalis sempervirens*), scrub oak (*Quercus ilicifolia*), and blueberries (*Vaccinium pallidum* and *V. angustifolium*).²² Bearberry (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*), a shiny, ground-hugging evergreen plant, more common in coastal areas, grows atop the escarpment south of Mount

¹⁹ Weatherbee, Pamela and Garrett Crow, "Natural Plant Communities of Berkshire County, Massachusetts," *Rhodora*, Vol. 94, pp. 171-209, 1992.

²⁰ Massachusetts Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program, Natural Community Fact Sheets, "Rich Mesic Forest," 1997.

²¹ Massachusetts Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program, Natural Community Fact Sheets, "Rocky Summit/Rock Outcrop Communities," 1999.

²² Massachusetts Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program, Natural Community Fact Sheets, "Rocky Summit/Rock Outcrop Communities," 1999.

Everett. Tree species growing in these areas include pitch pine (*Pinus rigida*) and oaks (*Quercus* spp.). The pitch pine is fire-adapted, requiring heat to open its cones and release their seeds. On Mt. Everett, where no fire has occurred for at least 25 years, there is evidence that the pitch pine community is slowly declining.^{23,24,25}

Shrubs and herbaceous plants dominate calcareous rocky summits/rock outcrop communities. Steeper and wetter ledges and cliffs support a variety of ferns. Shrubs found here include round-leaved dogwood (*Cornus rugosa*) and roundleaf shadbush (*Amelanchier sanguinea*). Herbaceous species found here include early saxifrage (*Saxifraga virginensis*), columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*), and balsam groundsel (*Senecio pauperculus*). Ferns, found in wetter areas, include bulblet fern (*Cystopteris bulbifera*), fragile fern (*C. tenuis*), ebony spleenwort (*Asplenium platyneuron*), maidenhair spleenwort (*A. trichomanes*), and blunt lobed wood fern (*Woodsia obtusa*). This community supports rare species as well.²⁶

Wetland Vegetation

Mount Washington is home to a number of species that occur only in calcareous wetlands. Calcareous fens are open, peaty wetlands with cold, alkaline groundwater that seeps or flows from a calcareous (calcium-rich) mineral substrate. Sedges, grasses, broadleaved herbs, and shrubs dominate these wetlands. Common species include American sedge (*Carex lasiocarpa*), white beak-rush (*Rhynchospora alba*), porcupine sedge (*Carex hystricina*), yellow sedge (*Carex flava*), Grass-of-Parnassus (*Parnassia glauca*), common horsetail (*Equisetum arvense*), fen cotton-grass (*Eriophorum viridi-carinatum*), and autumn, hoary, and silky willow (*Salix serissima*, *S. candida*, *S. sericeus*).²⁷

A seasonally-flooded emergent marsh bordering Lee Pond Brook was surveyed in a University of Massachusetts study of wetland habitats, and was found to be dominated by sedge (*Carex* spp.) with marsh fern, meadowsweet, Spiraea (*Spiraea latifolia*), blue joint, and bedstraw (*Galium* spp.) common associates. Some woolly bulrush (*Scirpus cyperinus*), rattlesnake grass, soft rush, royal fern (*Osmunda regalis*), and blue skullcap (*Scutellaria leterifolia*) were also found in this wetland.²⁸

Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species

The summit of Mt. Everett is home to one of the most extensive dwarf-pitch-pine/ scrub oak communities in New England. Race Mountain and Bear Mountain have smaller dwarf pitch pine communities. Only the Shawangunk Mountains in New York State have as extensive a community as is found in the Southern Taconics. It is most likely that the community on Mount Everett has been created and maintained by infrequent fires and rugged weather

²³ Laubach, Rene. *A Guide to Natural Places in the Berkshire Hills*, Stockbridge, MA 1997.

²⁴ Weatherbee, Pamela and Garrett Crow, "Natural Plant Communities of Berkshire County, Massachusetts," *Rhodora*, Vol. 94, pp. 171-209, 1992.

²⁵ *Ecological Significance of the Mount Everett Summit*, Friends of the Mohawk Trail State Forest, January 2000.

²⁶ *Massachusetts Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program*, Natural Community Fact Sheets, "Rocky Summit/Rock Outcrop Communities," 1999.

²⁷ *Massachusetts Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program*, Natural Community Fact Sheets, "Calcareous Fens," 1990.

²⁸ *Wetlands and Deepwater Habitats of the Hoosic, Bashbush, and Kinderhook River Watersheds of Western Massachusetts*, Natural Resources Assessment Group, University of Massachusetts, 1997.

conditions found in very few places in the region. A recent study of the ecology of the community revealed that some of the pines are up to 170 years old. Ecologists participating in the study also found a rare lichen and two species of rare moths, in addition to the timber rattlesnakes already known to make their homes on the mountain.²⁹

Mount Washington's calcareous rock outcrop communities support several rare plants, the presence or absence of some species depending on the amount of moisture in the area. The major impacts on these areas are trampling by people, as trails tend to run along open ridgetops where there are the best views. Viewing, picnicking, and camping can easily degrade the vegetation and destroy moss and lichen cover on rocks.³⁰

Rich mesic forest communities are home to at least eleven species of rare plants, most of which are herbaceous species and/or spring ephemerals. Threats to this community include fragmentation and isolation due to logging or development. Rich mesic forest is especially vulnerable to logging because opening up the canopy often allows invasive species such as Japanese barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*), Oriental bittersweet (*Celastrus obiculatus*), and shrubby honeysuckles (*Lonicera* spp.) to crowd out fragile herbaceous species. Soil disturbance can disrupt the nutrient and water availability requirements of rich mesic plants. The community is scarce outside of the calcareous bedrock areas of the Berkshires.³¹

The Bash Bish Falls area is habitat for many rare plants found in the southern Berkshires. NHESP has identified a stand of old growth forest in the upland areas near Bash Bish Falls and on Alander Mountain.³²

At least 57 state listed rare species of plants and animals occur in calcareous wetlands (30 of these occur in calcareous fens), making them one of the most important natural communities in Massachusetts. The most severe threat to these areas is alteration in the quantity or quality of the groundwater that feeds them, alteration that is often the result of development in sensitive areas.³³

Extensive wetlands at the base of the Taconics, in Sheffield, Egremont, and Connecticut, depend on the quality of the water that flows off the forested ridges in Mount Washington. These forests capture water and release it gradually to lower elevations, supplying groundwater recharge areas with a steady source of water. Areas of glacial till at the base of the mountains release water slowly as seepage, maintaining the extensive calcareous wetlands of this area. Alteration in Mount Washington's forests could have a far-reaching effect on the ecosystems of the region.³⁴

²⁹ *Ecological Significance of the Mount Everett Summit*, Friends of the Mohawk Trail State Forest, January 2000.

³⁰ *Massachusetts Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program*, Natural Community Fact Sheets, "Rocky Summit/Rock Outcrop Communities," 1999.

³¹ *Massachusetts Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program*, Natural Community Fact Sheets, "Rich Mesic Forests," 1997.

³² *Massachusetts Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program*, Mount Washington cover letter, 11/24/99.

³³ *Massachusetts Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program*, Natural Community Fact Sheets, "Calcareous Fens," 1990.

³⁴ *The Nature Conservancy*, Draft Mt. Everett-Mt. Riga Landscape Conservation Plan, 1999.

See Appendix B: State-Listed Species Recorded in Mount Washington. For more information on the location of significant habitat areas, see the map of Habitat and Open Space on the next page.

5. Fisheries and Wildlife

Upland Wildlife

Mount Washington is primarily a mountainous, forested landscape, which is ideal habitat for many large mammals, including black bear, bobcat, deer, fisher, coyote, and beaver. Other inhabitants of the forest landscape include small mammals, reptiles, amphibians, game birds, songbirds, and migratory birds.

Mount Washington's forests are home to many species of woodland birds. Wild turkeys and ruffed grouse are two of the larger birds that live on the ground in the woods and woodland edges. Other ground-dwellers include the dark-eyed junco, veery, wood and hermit thrushes, white-throated sparrow, and ovenbird. Oaks, beeches, maples, and birches provide nest sites for birds such as rose-breasted grosbeak, scarlet tanager, American robin, red-eyed vireo, least flycatcher, bluejay, brown creeper, and many species of wood warblers. Birds that prefer to nest in hollows and cavities in the trunks of trees include downy, hairy, and pileated woodpeckers, yellow-bellied sap-sucker, northern flicker, tufted titmouse, black-capped chickadee, and red-breasted and white-breasted nuthatches.³⁵

The summit of Mount Everett is one of the prime hawk-watching sites in the County. The best time to view hawks is from the end of August through the first half of November, after a cold front with northwest winds, when raptors are migrating south. Broad-winged, Cooper's, sharp-shinned, and red-tailed hawks may be present, as well as American kestrel, merlin, northern harrier, turkey vulture, and flocks of common ravens. From the summit, one may actually be looking down upon the birds. Rene Laubach writes about this spectacular sight in his *Guide to Natural Places in the Berkshire Hills*:

Hawks follow the Taconic Range because it enables them to take advantage of updrafts created when southbound air currents strike the ridge. Hawks also utilize rising warm air thermals by spiraling up (sometimes in large groups called kettles) and then setting their wings for a rapid downward glide toward the southwest, only to pick up another thermal there that enables them to repeat the maneuver.³⁶

South-facing acid rocky outcrops provide good habitat for snakes, including black racer and the endangered eastern timber rattlesnake, as well as other cliff-dwelling species. The longest timber rattlesnake ever recorded (6ft., 2 in.) was found near Bash Bish Falls. Other snakes found in Mount Washington include the common garter snake and the milk, northern brown, red-bellied, and ringneck snakes.³⁷

³⁵ Laubach, Rene. *A Guide to Natural Places in the Berkshire Hills, Stockbridge MA, 1997.*

³⁶ Laubach, Rene. *A Guide to Natural Places in the Berkshire Hills, Stockbridge MA, 1997.*

³⁷ Laubach, Rene. *A Guide to Natural Places in the Berkshire Hills, Stockbridge MA, 1997.*

Wetland Wildlife

Guilder Pond is home to a variety of fish and amphibian life. The pond provides habitat for at least three variety of turtles, including painted turtle, snapping turtle, and musk turtle. Wood frogs, green frogs, spring peepers, and bullfrogs may also be found here. The waters of Guilder Pond provide habitat for two common fish, chain pickerel and yellow perch.³⁸

Brook trout are found in the cold water of Bash Bish Brook and Sage's Ravine Brook. Brown trout and largemouth bass have been introduced to Bash Bish. The rocky banks of these streams also support dusky and two-line salamanders.

Several species of amphibians found in Mount Washington's woodlands require vernal pools in order to breed. Wood frogs, spotted salamanders, and Jefferson salamanders are among the species that rely on these temporary pools.

Mammals that frequent wet areas in Mount Washington include beaver and muskrat. Mink live in Sages Ravine and near Guilder Pond.



Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species

NHESP has identified several areas in Mount Washington as estimated habitats of rare wildlife. One of these areas lies along the southeastern Massachusetts-Connecticut border, along streams that flow into Schenob Brook. The other is located along the northwestern edge of Town, along Bash Bish Brook. Priority sites of rare species habitat as identified by NHESP include the upland areas along Bash Bish Brook, Plantain Pond, and the eastern slopes of Mt. Race and Mt. Everett.³⁹

Two Special Concern species of salamander, the Northern Spring Salamander (*Gyrinophilus p. porphyriticus*) and Jefferson's Salamander (*Ambystonia jeffersonianum*), as well as a Special Concern beetle may be found in Mount Washington. Protection of the salamanders depends on maintaining the water quality of cold water springs, streams, lakes, and vernal pools. Vernal pools, often found in rich mesic forest, are especially important to protect, because they provide breeding habitat for some amphibians.⁴⁰

For information on significant habitat areas, refer to the map of Habitat and Open Space after page 48. Also see Appendix B: State-Listed Species Recorded in Mount Washington.

³⁸ Laubach, Rene. *A Guide to Natural Places in the Berkshire Hills*, Stockbridge MA, 1997.

³⁹ Massachusetts Natural Heritage Atlas, 1997-8.

⁴⁰ Massachusetts Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program, Species Fact Sheet, 1994.

6. Scenic Resources

The Massachusetts Landscape Inventory lists virtually all of Mount Washington as either “Distinctive” or “Noteworthy.” A large Noteworthy region extends from the northwest corner of Town to the southeast corner, including Bash Bish Brook, Hunts Pond, and the entire eastern mountain ridge. Mount Everett is classified as Distinctive for the views of and from its summit.⁴¹

Mount Everett State Reservation

At 2,602 feet, Mount Everett is the highest peak in south Berkshire County and one of the tallest in the Taconic Range. The summit is accessible only on foot, via a trail that begins from the upper parking lot on the road that leads up to the Reservation from East Street. One can also reach the summit via the Appalachian Trail. The road leading up Mount Everett passes by Guilder Pond, the state’s second-highest body of water, ringed by mountain laurel. Bare rock and shrubby vegetation allow views that at lower elevations might be obscured by vegetation. From the summit of Mount Everett one can view Mount Race (2,365 ft.) and Bear Mountain (2,316 ft.) to the south. To the southeast lies Mount Ashley (2,390 ft.), Mt. Frissell (2,453 ft.),



and in the distance, the Catskills of New York State. The Twin Lakes of Connecticut, Washinee and Washining, are also to the southeast. One can view Mount Undine to the north, and in the distance Monument Mountain and Mount Greylock. The wetlands of the Schenob Brook Watershed spread out to the east, in Sheffield.⁴²

⁴¹ *Massachusetts Landscape Inventory*, Mass. Department of Environmental Management, 1982.

⁴² *Laubach, Rene, A Guide to Natural Places in the Berkshire Hills, Stockbridge MA, 1997.*

Bash Bish Falls and Bash Bish Brook

A Guide to Natural Places in the Berkshire Hills calls Bash Bish Falls “the most spectacular waterfall in Berkshire.”⁴³ (For a picture of the falls, see the cover of this Master and Open Space Plan). The 1.9-mile length of Bash Bish Brook has been classified as a Scenic Natural Landscape, which means that it has been proposed by designation as a Scenic River and is monitored through an environmental review procedure.⁴⁴ The fast-moving brook winds through a steep valley before splitting in two around a boulder and plunging 60 feet into a clear green pool. The best place from which to view the falls is the gravel maintenance drive above the upper parking lot. A rocky promontory that abuts the upper parking area does not provide views of the falls, but is an ideal spot from which to view the Catskills to the west and the brook 500 feet below. The steep slopes of Bash Bish Mountain (1,890 ft.) and Cedar Mountain (1,883 ft.) are visible to the right and left of this vantage point.⁴⁵

Alander Mountain

Fifty Hikes in Massachusetts touts this summit as having “the best views you can find anywhere in western Massachusetts,” although at 2,239 ft., it is not as high as Mount Everett to the east.⁴⁶ The hike from the trailhead at Mount Washington State Forest headquarters offers a walk through “beautiful flower-filled meadows, through a variety of woodlands where the sound of singing birds and splashing streams flavors the sylvan quiet, past sparkling rapids and clear green rock pools and extensive stands of pink-flowering mountain laurel.” The summit offers views of Mount Ashley, Mount Frissel, and Brace Mountain to the south and southeast; the Hudson River and the Catskills to the west; Albany and the Adirondacks to the northwest; Mount Greylock to the north; and to the east, Mount Everett.⁴⁷

Sage’s Ravine

Sage’s Ravine runs along the southeastern edge of Mount Washington, and can be accessed by the Appalachian Trail. Sage’s Ravine Brook, part of the Schenob Brook watershed, has cut this gorge into the Berkshire schist of the Taconic Mountains. Although there are no panoramic vistas from the ravine, the swiftly flowing brook is picturesque in its own right.

Scenic Roads

Opportunities for viewing the scenic areas in Mount Washington can be found along most of the roads that wind around this community. In order to assess the relative quality of these scenic roads, BRPC adapted a method used by the Jacob’s Ladder Trail Scenic Byway Study, which was based on a study by Frederic O. Sargent of the Vermont Resources Research Center. For a complete description of the assessment methods, please see Appendix E: Inventory System for Roads with Scenic Features. The results of the assessment can be found in Table NRES1: Scenic Roads, on page 53. See also the map of Scenic Resources on the next page.

⁴³ Laubach, Rene, *A Guide to Natural Places in the Berkshire Hills*, Stockbridge MA, 1997.

⁴⁴ Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management, Hudson River Basin: Inventory and Analysis of Current and Projected Water Use, Vol. 1, 1989.

⁴⁵ Laubach, Rene, *A Guide to Natural Places in the Berkshire Hills*, Stockbridge MA, 1997.

⁴⁶ Brady, John, and Brian White, *Fifty Hikes in Massachusetts*, adapted at gorp.com as “Four Hikes in Western Massachusetts: Alander Mountain”.

⁴⁷ Brady, John, and Brian White, *Fifty Hikes in Massachusetts*, adapted for gorp.com as “Four Hikes in Western Massachusetts: Alander Mountain”.

The road with the highest rating was a section of East St., including Blueberry Hill Farm, Union Church and the intersection with Cross St. It received a high rating both for views of the mountains to the west and for a variety of historic, agricultural, and forest elements. Other sections of East St. that had “Very High” scenic quality include a section north of the intersection with West St. with spectacular views of mountains to the east and the historic “cattleshed”; and a section in the southern part of the Town, with views of Hunt’s Pond and other wetlands. Sunset Rd. (also called Northwest Rd. and North Mountain Rd.) also received a rating of “Very High” because it offers views of Mt. Everett, Mt. Darby, and a picturesque farm landscape.

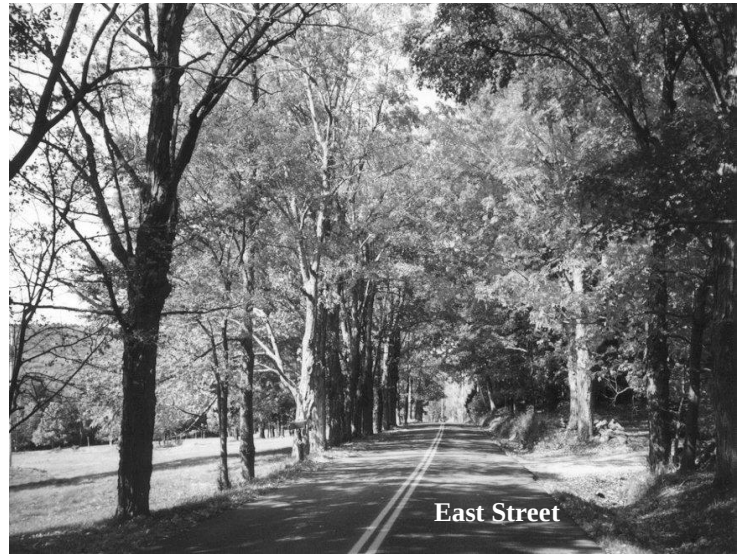


Table NRES1 Scenic Roads

Road	Map Ref. #	Variety ^a	Field of View ^b	Depth of View ^c	Diminishing Factors ^d	Overall Rating	Characteristics and Value to Community
East St., Blueberry Hill Farm to Cross Rd.	8	H (11)	H/M	M	L (0)	Very High	Blueberry Hill Farm, View of mountains to the West, historic Union Church, Town Hall, meadow & woods, agricultural pattern, town softball field, fall foliage
East St., south of W. St.	12	H (9)	H	M	M (1)	Very High	Hunt's Pond, numerous small wetlands to the east, historic schoolhouse, picturesque barn, wild turkeys, fall foliage, view of mountains to the east, some meadows, cow pen
Sunset Rd./NW St./N. Mountain Rd.	19	H (10)	M	M	M (2)	Very High	Mt. Darby, Mt. Everett, picturesque barn & fields, meadows & wetlands, stream, agricultural pattern, fall foliage, sunset visible, tower visible
East St., to West St.	5	H (7)	M	H	M (1)	Very High	"Cattleshed" at base of hill, field & forest edge, distant view of mountain range to the north, Mt. Darby to the southwest, brilliant foliage, Tower visible.
Mt Everett Rd.	9					V. High (?)	(Not accessible at time of study)
East St.	7	M (6)	M	L	L (0)	High	Stone wall runs along road, field & forest edge, sculpture garden, Pennyroyal Arms, ponds w/ wetland vegetation, fall foliage.
East St., to state line	13	M (6)	M	M	L (1)	High	mountain laurel, sugar maples line road (50-100 yrs), fall foliage, leaf tunnel effect, wooded, some stone walls, cut trees (replanted, but scars remain)
Falls Rd.	17	M (6)	M	M	M (1)	High	V. steep hillsides close to road, boulders, cliffs, Bash Bish Brook, mix of deciduous & coniferous trees, fall foliage, erosion.
West St., North of Cross Rd.	16	M (4)	M	M	L (0)	Significant	One nice view of mountains, leaf tunnel effect, fall foliage.
East St., South from town boundary	4	M (4)	L	L	M (1)	Significant	Trees line the road (leaf tunnel effect), brilliant fall foliage, occasional rock outcrop, utility poles
East St. S. of West St.	6	M (4)	L	L	M (1)	Significant	Van Der Smitten Mem. Park, spruces line road, stone wall runs along road, parklike effect, utility poles
East St., between Cross Rd. & West St.	11	M (4)	L	L	M (1)	Significant	Wooded, City Brook crossing, large maple & ash trees line road, foliage, utility poles

Road	Map Ref. #	Variety ^a	Field of View ^b	Depth of View ^c	Diminishing Factors ^d	Overall Rating	Characteristics and Value to Community
West St., to East St.	18	M (4)	L	L	M (1)	Significant	Occasional view of mountains, nice red & sugar maples, close view of tower on Mt. Darby, mix of conif & deciduous, fall foliage.
West St, South of Cross Rd.	14	L (2)	L	L	M (1)	Less Significant	Wooded, fall foliage, mostly residential, ferns in undergrowth, some cut trees.
Cross Rd.	15	L (3)	L	L	H (3)	Less Significant	Cemetery, occasional views of Mt. Everett, municipal buildings & parking lot, cut trees.

^a H = High variety, 7+ features; M = Medium variety, 4-6 features; L = Low variety, 0-3 features. Numbers in parenthesis denote number of features counted. See Appendix D for a list of scenic features.

^b H = High, view mostly unobstructed; M = Medium, view partially obstructed; L = Low, view mostly obstructed.

^c H = High, long distance view; M = Medium, mid-range view; L = Low, short distance view

^d H = High, 3+ diminishing factors; M = Medium, 1-2 factors; L = Low, 0 factors. Number in parenthesis denotes number of factors counted. See Appendix D for a list of factors.

7. Environmental Problems

Because it is so sparsely developed, Mount Washington has been largely free of environmental problems. However, given the importance and sensitivity of some habitat areas in Mount Washington, even small-scale alterations can have large impacts. Any problems that do arise are generally linked to residential development in inappropriate areas, such as steep slopes or sensitive wildlife habitat.

Water Quality Issues

Currently, the water quality of the streams and wetlands in Mount Washington appears to be excellent, with few problems. The one exception may be Plantain Pond, where the Board of Health has a concern over a suspected septic disposal problem.⁴⁸ This problem, however, has not been documented or confirmed.

Although no stormwater runoff problems have been documented on Mount Washington's dirt and paved roads, an assessment has not been performed. The slope of certain town roads, as well as their proximity to water sources, indicates that runoff problems may exist. Drainage from dirt roads may carry loads of sediment that can increase nutrients in streams, lakes, and wetlands, causing greater weed growth and destroying rare plant habitat.

Development on Steep Slopes

Recent technological advances have made it easier to place buildings on steep slopes that would have been undevelopable before. In the last few years, the Town has seen many of these homes built on private roads. One of the steepest areas where development has occurred is the southern part of East St. Mountainside development like this has environmental as well as scenic impacts. Steeper areas often have thin soils and rocky outcrops that make them more sensitive to the impacts of construction and development and more prone to erosion. The roads leading up to these structures may increase runoff on these fragile soils and contribute to erosion as well.

Invasive Species

Invasive plants are often non-native species that outcompete native species for habitat. Many invasives were originally planted as ornamentals or in hedgerows, and now thrive in forest, old field, and wetland habitats. Species that invade the understory of forests, choking out spring ephemerals and tree seedlings include Japanese barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*), Oriental bittersweet (*Celastrus obiculatus*), and non-native honeysuckles (*Lonicera* spp.) Garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*) is an herbaceous species that often invades the forest from roadside edges. Wetland invasives include purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), still planted ornamentally, and common reed (*Phragmites australis*). Methods to control the spread of these species vary, usually involving multiple cuttings and occasionally selective application of herbicide, but some (including purple loosestrife) are almost impossible to eradicate once they are established. Many of these species spread fastest in areas where disturbance has occurred, such as roadsides, abandoned fields, right-of-way corridors, and ditches.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ An Assessment of Land Use Activities and NonPoint Source Pollution in the Housatonic River Watershed, 1999.

⁴⁹ Weatherbee, Pamela, Paul Somers, and Tim Simmons. A Guide to Invasive Plants in Massachusetts, Mass. Department of Fisheries & Wildlife, 1998.

Forest Diseases and Insect Threats

Beech bark disease is a widespread killer of American beech in the Northeast. The disease is caused by a fungus, *Nectria ditissima*, spread by the beech scale insect, *Cryptococcus fagisuga*. The fungus invades the bark, girdling the trees and causing significant mortality and defect. Outbreaks may be controlled by environmental factors, such as low temperatures and predators such as the ladybird beetle. Insecticides are sometimes used on ornamental trees to prevent infestation with the scale insect, but disease in forest stands cannot be controlled at a reasonable cost.⁵⁰

The hemlock wooly adelgid (*Adelges tsugae*) is an insect that infests hemlock trees in the Northeast. Although the USDA Forest Service distribution map of infested counties indicates that the adelgid had not been reported in Berkshire County in 1999, it is present in the Connecticut and New York State counties adjacent to Mount Washington, and may pose a threat in the future.⁵¹ The adelgid, believed to be introduced from Asia, sucks sap from young twigs, reducing or preventing new tree growth. Defoliation and tree death can occur within several years.⁵² The Forest Service is currently exploring control through the introduction of natural insect predators.⁵³

⁵⁰ USDA Forest Service, Forest Insect & Disease Leaflet 75, "Beech Bark Disease", willow.ncfes.umn.edu/fidl-beech/fidl-beech.htm.

⁵¹ USDA Forest Service, "Hemlock Wooly Adelgid Distribution – 1999, www.fs.fed.us/na/morgantown/fhp/hwa/hwa99.gif

⁵² USDA Forest Service, Pest Alert, "Hemlock Wooly Adelgid," www.fs.fed.us/na/morgantown/fhp/palerts/hemlock/hemlock.htm.

⁵³ McClure, Mark, Scott Salom, and Kathleen Shields, USDA Forest Service, FHTET 96-35, "Hemlock Wooly Adelgid," 1996.

OS/R Section 5. Inventory of Lands of Conservation and Recreation Interest

Description of Protected and Unprotected Parcels

The Town already has an extensive inventory of open space, including many acres under State and Federal ownership. The Town is literally surrounded by protected open space—the Mount Washington State Forest, Mt. Everett Reservation, and Bash Bish State Park. These state holdings preserve many of the steep, wooded mountainsides visible from the Town. Privately owned protected parcels include nature preserves owned by the Nature Conservancy, as well as other private parcels protected through deed restrictions.

A few treasured spots are unprotected or in temporary protection (Chapter lands). The largest unprotected parcel in town is the YMCA Camp Hi-Rock. The protection and management of Mount Washington's open spaces can continue to evolve to protect wildlife habitat and natural resources, provide recreation activities that respect their natural surroundings, maintain scenic views, and preserve the Town's rural mountain character.

For detailed information on parcels of conservation and recreation interest, refer to Table NRES2 on page 61, and the map of Open Space on the next page.

A. Private Parcels

Lands With Permanent Protection

The highly visible Vandersmissen Memorial Park, which runs along the northern end of East Street, is permanently protected through a deed restriction. The stone walls and graceful spruces that characterize the edge of the memorial park contribute to scenic views along East St. A swimming pond and walking trails add to the recreational value of this parcel.

Lands with Partial Protection

Three major properties in Mount Washington have limited protection. Blueberry Hill Farm, a working blueberry farm with several picturesque farm buildings, is temporarily protected under Chapter 61A, a state program that reduces property taxes on farmland as long as it remains in agricultural production. The Romano Property, a 27-acre parcel near the northeast corner of Camp Hi-Rock on Plantain Pond Rd, is protected via a limited conservation easement that protects the property until 2048.



Blueberry Hill Farm

Unprotected Private Lands Important to the Town

YMCA Camp Hi-Rock is located on 691 acres in the southeast part of Mount Washington. It is an unprotected recreational property that includes frontage on Plantain Pond, a significant habitat area. The parcel abuts protected land on three sides, including part of the Appalachian Trail Corridor. If the camp ceased to operate the property would likely be vulnerable to resort development along the lake.



Two of the parcels formerly part of the Northrop Memorial Camp are unprotected and privately owned. Together, they make up approximately 162 acres. The two parcels are located on either side of West St., near Vandersmissen Memorial Park.

B. Public and Nonprofit Parcels

Lands With Permanent Protection

By far the largest protected acreage in Mount Washington belongs to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, in the form of Mt. Washington State Forest, Bash Bish Falls State Park, and the Mount Everett State Reservation. The State is the largest landowner in Mount Washington, with almost 7000 acres. The State Forest includes large tracts of steep, forested land to the north, west, and east of the Town, as well as a few isolated parcels closer to settled areas. Mt. Everett State Reservation encompasses most of Mt. Everett, including Guilder Pond and a section of the Appalachian Trail. These properties are managed by DEM.

The U.S. Department of the Interior/National Park Service owns parts of the Appalachian Trail corridor in Mount Washington. These parcels, which protect valuable scenic and water resources along the AT, are located in the southeast corner of Town.

The Town of Mount Washington owns one permanently protected property, located on the border with Egremont, adjacent to the Mount Washington State Forest.

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) has made undeveloped forest areas in Mount Washington a conservation priority, as part of a the 36,000-acre “forest core” between Massachusetts, New York, and Connecticut. Recently the organization purchased a 714-acre tract in the southeastern part of town, informally called the Dombrowski property after its former owner. TNC also owns a 181-acre parcel that was once part of the Northrup Memorial Camp, near Bash Bish and Cedar Mountain.

Inventory of Recreational Areas

Opportunities for recreation abound in Mount Washington, though few are municipally owned or managed. The Town is virtually criss-crossed by trails running through the Mount Washington State Forest and Mt. Everett State Reservation, including the Appalachian Trail. Camp Hi-Rock is a private recreation area that serves residents and visitors alike. Vandersmissen Memorial Park, with its highly visible location off East Street, provides opportunities for walking and swimming in the heart of Town. Residents visit Blueberry Hill farm to play on the town’s unofficial softball field, as well as pick blueberries.

Mount Everett State Reservation

The 1,384-acre Reservation is managed by DEM. The Reservation is most frequently visited for the spectacular views from the summit of Mount Everett and of Guilder Pond. A spur road from East St. that is closed in winter leads to an upper parking lot, from which a trail ascends the summit. Seven miles of trails wind around the reservation, including the Appalachian trail, which traverses the summit, and a loop trail around Guilder Pond. Lauren Stevens' *Hikes & Walks in the Berkshire Hills* describes a summit loop requiring two cars or a bicycle, starting from the Appalachian Trailhead on Rt 41 in Sheffield and descending the Race Brook trail, ending in the Berkshire School parking lot two miles south from the starting point.

Mount Washington State Forest

DEM maintains over 30 miles of trails within the 5,000-acre Mount Washington State Forest. One notable trail leads up Alander Mountain (See OS/R Section 4.6 Scenic Resources). Camping is allowed only at Mount Washington State Forest Headquarters on East St.

Bash Bish State Park is managed by DEM as part of the Mount Washington State Forest. Access to the State Park is available either from Falls Road in Mount Washington, or along a trail from a parking lot in Taconic State Park, just across the New York line.



Camp Hi-Rock

The privately-owned YMCA Camp Hi-rock makes up 690 acres surrounding Plantain Pond. Facilities include a dining hall, health center, arts and crafts lodge, recreation lodge, and waterfront building. The camp runs a variety of resident and day camp programs for children. YMCA Camp Hi-Rock also includes a conference center mainly used for retreats, with meeting rooms, contemporary and rustic cabins, and recreational facilities. Activities at the camp include hiking and cross-country skiing, fishing, water sports, team sports such as soccer and basketball, arts and crafts, dance, riflery and archery, horseback riding, a high ropes course, and rock climbing.

Vandersmissen Memorial Park

Vandersmissen Memorial Park is held privately by a trust, but is maintained by the Town. Maintenance includes mowing and caring for a small swimming area. Spruces and stone walls lining East St. mark the boundaries of the park. The park is home to the Town swimming hole as well as walking trails.

Blueberry Hill Farm

During the summer, residents of Mount Washington gather at Blueberry Hill Farm to play informal softball games. Blueberry picking at the farm is a popular activity for residents and visitors in late summer.

Table NRES2: Parcels of Conservation and Recreation Interest

Map Id #	Site Name/ Location	Owner/Manager	Use	Public Access	Level/ Type of Protection	Size (acres)	# Parcels	Comment
Federal Ownership – Permanent Protection Status Assumed								
F2	Appalachian Trail	National Park Service	Conservation/ Rec.	Yes	Permanent	79.26	2	
TOTAL ACRES						79.26		
State DEM/DFWELE Ownership - Permanent Protection Status Assumed								
S1	Bash Bish Falls State Park	DEM	Conservation/Rec.	Yes	Permanent	666.25	2	
S2	Mount Everett State Reservation	DEM	Conservation/ Rec.	Yes	Permanent	1,329.23	4	Includes sections of Appalachian Trail.
S3	Mount Washington State Forest (North)/ Karner Brook	DEM	Conservation	Yes	Permanent	763.92	3	
S4	Mount Washington State Forest (North)/ West St.	DEM	Conservation	Yes	Permanent	15.91	1	
S5	Mount Washington State Forest (West)	DEM	Conservation	Yes	Permanent	1,199.30	3	
S6	Mount Washington State Forest (Southwest)	DEM	Conservation	Yes	Permanent	1,854.82	1	Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund
S7	Mount Washington State Forest (South)	DEM	Conservation	Yes	Permanent	436.91	1	
S8	Mount Washington State Forest (Southeast)	DEM	Conservation/ Rec.	Yes	Permanent	293.11	7	Includes sections of Appalachian Trail.
S9	Mount Washington State Forest (Southeast)	DEM	Conservation	Yes	Permanent	7.00	1	Includes sections of Appalachian Trail.

Map Id #	Site Name/ Location	Owner/Manager	Use	Public Access	Level/ Type of Protection	Size (acres)	# Parcels	Comment
S10	Mount Washington State Forest (East)	DEM	Conservation/ Rec.	Yes	Permanent	297.86	1	Includes sections of Appalachian Trail.
S11	Mount Washington State Forest (West St.)	DEM	Conservation	Yes	Permanent	2.05	1	
S12	Mount Washington State Forest (West St.)	DEM	Conservation	Yes	Permanent	6.61	1	
S13	Mount Washington State Forest (West St.)	DEM	Conservation	Yes	Permanent	80.67	2	
S14	Mount Washington State Forest (West St.)	DEM	Conservation	Yes	Permanent	5.48	1	
S15	Mount Washington State Forest (West St.)	DEM	Conservation	Yes	Permanent	1.01	1	
TOTAL ACRES						6,960.12		
Municipal Ownership								
M1	Town land (Egremont border)	Town of Mt. Washington	Conservation	Yes	Unknown	22.71	1	
TOTAL ACRES						22.71		
Permanent Conservation/Preservation Restriction or Conservation Ownership - Private/Nonprofit								
P1	Northrup Memorial Camp	The Nature Conservancy	Conservation	No	Permanent	181.33	1	
P2	Vandersmissen Memorial Park	Vandersmissen Memorial Trust	Recreation	Private - public welcome	Permanent	160.17	6	
P3	Dombrowski Property	The Nature Conservancy	Conservation	No	Permanent	~714	2	Need map & lot verification.
TOTAL						1028.50		

Map Id #	Site Name/ Location	Owner/Manager	Use	Public Access	Level/ Type of Protection	Size (acres)	# Parcels	Comment
ACRES								
Temporary Protection - Chapter 61, 61A, 61B Lands								
C1	Blueberry Hill Farm	Blueberry Hill Trust	Agriculture/ Rec.	Private - public welcome	Temporary	169.92	1	Town uses for softball games in the summer
TOTAL						169.92		
ACRES								
Temporary or Limited Protection - Private or Nonprofit Ownership								
L1	Romano Property	Romano, L.	Conservation	No	Temporary	27.16	1	Protection ends 2048.
TOTAL						27.16		
ACRES								
Key Private or Non-profit Unprotected								
U2	YMCA Camp Hi-Rock	YMCA	Recreation	Private - public welcome	None	690.95	1	
U3	Northrup Memorial Camp	Mayer, R.	Recreation	No	None	162.35	1	
TOTAL						853.30		
ACRES								

OS/R Section 6. Community Goals

A. Description of Process

Community goals are expressed in the Mount Washington Master Plan, Section I. D. The goals were derived from public input and an assessment of needs. The process used is described in detail in Section I. C. Planning Process .

B. Statement of Open Space and Recreation Goals

The following are Master Plan Goals related to open space and recreation:

- **Protect mountain ridges and steep slopes.**
- **Protect and preserve water resources and riparian and wetland habitat.**
- **Protect open spaces necessary for the maintenance of community character and/or environmental or scenic resources.**
- **Protect existing passive recreational activities.**
- **Protect and preserve scenic and community qualities along roads.**

OS/R Section 7. Analysis of Needs

A. Summary of Resource Protection Needs

Mount Washington has a variety of natural resources, including surface- and groundwater, rare wildlife habitat, expansive tracts of mature forest, and scenic areas. Protection and management of this extensive inventory of resources has special importance in Mount Washington due to the high quality and rarity of its natural assets, as well as their contribution to the Town's character and quality of life. Undamaged natural resources ensure functioning ecosystems, which provide benefits such as clean drinking water, fertile soils, and biodiversity. These resources also contribute to the scenic beauty and rural character of the town, which many residents consider a factor in the Town's high quality of life. Public input gathered during the planning process indicates that protecting natural resources is a priority among Mount Washington residents.

In recent years, protection efforts have increased, and most natural assets are at least partially shielded from the impacts of development and other threats. However, some areas are still in need of greater protection, either from problems that are occurring now, or from issues that may threaten in the future. In this analysis, natural resource needs have been divided into three categories:

- Maintaining Ongoing Protective Efforts
- Addressing Known Current Problems
- Avoiding Impacts of Future Threats

Maintaining Ongoing Protective Efforts

As the largest landowner in Mount Washington, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, has had potentially the greatest role in resource protection in the Town, having been active in protecting land through acquisition, management, and regulation. DEM continues to maintain the Mount Washington State Forest and Mount Everett State Reservation as natural places open for passive recreation, but free of intensive development. The State has also been active in protecting water resources in Mount Washington and surrounding communities with the designation of the Karner Brook and Schenob Brook ACECs. The departments responsible for these programs will need to continue to have adequate funding to manage and monitor affected properties in an ecologically responsible manner.

The most effective, albeit sometimes cumbersome way to preserve resources is to legally restrict the activities that can occur on the property where they are located. In Mount Washington, one of the most important protective efforts in recent years has been the acquisition of land and deed restrictions by conservation organizations such as The Nature Conservancy, in cooperation with the Town and local landowners. Through these efforts approximately 900 acres of wildlife habitat in Mount Washington has been protected over the past 5 years. The organizations involved in protecting these lands will need to continue to monitor and manage these properties in the future, as well as responding to future needs.

The Conservation Commission in Mount Washington continues to review new development that could impact water resources, by enforcing the mandates of the Wetlands Protection Act. MEPA provides oversight on large projects planned within the Karner Brook and Schenob Brook

ACECs, although in Mount Washington there is little developable land within the ACEC boundaries. Both of these assessment activities are very important in maintaining the quality of drinking water and wetland habitat, and should be continued at their current level.

The public rarely acknowledges the actions of private landowners with regard to natural resources unless their actions are detrimental. However, many private landowners consciously make efforts to improve the quality of habitat and natural resources on their property. One benefit that is rarely acknowledged is the role of farmers in keeping views open through mowing and other agricultural activities on their property. The actions of private landowners may not continue when the land changes ownership. However, because much of the land in Mount Washington is privately owned, individual owners, especially of large parcels, can have significant positive contributions to the health and maintenance of natural resources. These efforts, especially by landowners that choose to donate a conservation restriction or otherwise legally protect their land, should be recognized and should continue.

Private citizens groups in Mount Washington that have made efforts to document and lobby for protection of sensitive natural areas are further testament to the commitment of Town residents to preserving natural resources. A recent survey of the dwarf pitch-pine/ scrub oak community on Mt. Everett is an example of this kind of independent effort. Townspeople can continue to be involved in documenting and protecting the ecological heritage of the area in the future.

Addressing Current Problems

Water Quality Issues

Although a nonpoint source pollution assessment has not been performed in Mount Washington, it is likely that runoff from roads is causing erosion and sedimentation of streams. Although the Town has relatively few roads, the topography of the Town ensures that many roads are on steep slopes with erodible soils, near bodies of water. Many have a dirt surface, which if not managed correctly can lose large amounts of dirt and sand during storms, causing siltation and sedimentation in streams and harming rare wetlands. Paved roads also shed a large volume of runoff, which may contain pollutants such as oil and fluids that have leaked from cars or salt and sand used in winter road maintenance. The greatest threat to sensitive wetlands in Mount Washington is deterioration in the quality of the water that feeds them and the surrounding land. Slight increases in the nutrient level of the water that feeds a calcareous fen may be enough to turn it into a cattail (*Typha* sp.) marsh. A more detailed examination of town roads should be performed to identify any stormwater problems and address them.

The Board of Health has had some concern over possible septic system issues at Plantain Pond, although no formal water quality testing has occurred. Due to the Pond's significance as rare species habitat and a site for recreation, it should be tested for contamination and any problems should be mitigated.

Development on Mountaintops, Hillsides, and Ridgelines

Recent technological advances have made it easier to place buildings on steep slopes that would have been undevelopable before, and the Town has seen several of these seemingly precariously

perched homes built in the last few years. The views that ridgetop houses afford for their residents often mar views of the hillside for everyone else.

Hilltop development may also have environmental impacts. Steeper areas often have thin soils and rocky outcrops that make them more sensitive to the impacts of construction and development and more prone to erosion. The roads leading up to these structures may increase runoff on these fragile soils and contribute to erosion as well. Mount Washington may need to guide and/or limit the siting of structures on hillsides and ridgelines in order to minimize their impact on views and the environment (there is more discussion on this issue in the next subsection on Avoiding Future Threats).

Development Along Roadsides

Residential development along existing roads, as opposed to within subdivisions, is a trend that has been occurring throughout Berkshire County, and Mount Washington is no exception. This pattern has come about because of state and local regulations that make it is easier to develop along a road than to build a new subdivision. Lots that have “practical and efficient” access to a public way are not subject to subdivision bylaws, nor is it necessary to construct a private road to the interior of the property. The majority of new development in Mount Washington in the last few years has occurred along existing roads. If this pattern of “rural sprawl” continues, it will change the character of the Town’s roadsides significantly. Development needs to be sited so as to avoid changing scenic roads by blocking views, cutting vegetation, or other effects.

Unplanned development along roads can also have consequences for the future if it blocks access to interior parcels. While roadside development may be somewhat beneficial if the interior landlocked parcels are slated to remain undeveloped, it can also have negative effects if the interior parcel is located in an area where the town would like to channel future residential growth, or if the roadside development blocks access for hunters, hikers, or other users of the property. The Town will need to take future land use into account when siting new development.

Incentives within subdivision or zoning regulations to develop “conservation subdivisions” or use shared driveways can reduce obtrusive development along roads, as well as conserving interior areas of open space to some extent. Vegetative screening and other “soft” solutions can reduce some of visual impacts of buildings along roads as well.

Invasive Species

Although a comprehensive study of invasives has not been performed in Mount Washington, invasive species such as purple loosestrife, *phragmites*, and garlic mustard are widespread in wetlands and uplands in the Northeast and Berkshire County and are almost undoubtedly present in the Town. In sufficient numbers, these invasives can outcompete native species and reduce biodiversity. This is especially threatening in habitats that support rare species. The Nature Conservancy is currently testing ways to combat invasives in South Berkshire County. The quantity and spread of invasive species in Mount Washington’s rare habitat areas, especially significant habitat areas such as Bash Bish Brook and Plantain Pond, should be monitored and controlled if possible.

Communication Between Town Residents and State Agencies

With the State being the largest landowner in Mount Washington, it is not surprising that at times town residents and DEM have come into conflict over management decisions on state-owned lands. These conflicts have reduced the ability of both groups to communicate effectively and reach compromises on management decisions. State-local cooperation needs to improve, through third-party facilitation if necessary.

Avoiding Future Threats

In the future, the greatest threat to Mount Washington's natural resources will likely be residential development in vulnerable areas. If current trends continue, Mount Washington is not likely to see an explosion of development any time soon. However, when assessing threats to resources the actual *volume* of development can be less important than its *location*. In other words, even a few new buildings could cause significant impacts if sited in the wrong place. Below are some of the resource areas in Mount Washington most vulnerable to development impacts:

Mountaintops, Hillsides, and Ridgelines

Unlike many of Massachusetts' highest peaks, including Mt. Greylock, the summit of Mount Everett has remained relatively undisturbed, with an intact, rare dwarf pitch pine-scrub oak community and several rare species. DEM has not released its most recent management plan for Mt. Everett, so it is unclear what the State's future plans are for the mountain. The State has recently proposed renovation of the fire tower on top of the summit, a project that poses minor risks to the rare summit community if completed in the manner specified. However, residents and environmental groups are concerned that renovation of the fire tower could lead to more intensive development at the summit, possibly including telecommunications towers and/or roads or utility lines, which would be extremely damaging to the rare and sensitive plant and animal communities located there. There is no evidence currently that DEM plans to develop the summit of Mt. Everett more intensively; however, nearly all of the other fire towers DEM owns have had telecommunications equipment installed in recent years. Any increase in development at the summit beyond reasonable repairs to the facilities already located there would be detrimental to the sensitive summit area, and should be avoided in the future. The current status of the project is unknown, as the Massachusetts Environmental Protection Agency has ordered an Environmental Impact Report to be performed.

As discussed previously, residential development on hillsides, ridgelines, and steep slopes is happening in Mount Washington currently and will likely increase in the future. Many of the steepest hillsides are state land or protected property, but there are a few sensitive areas that are vulnerable to increased development that may be detrimental to habitat areas and scenic views. Certain areas along East St. and West St., although close to areas already developed, have slopes that are quite steep. Dugway Hill is of relatively high elevation compared to the center of town and has a road leading to its summit. The northeastern edge of town is unprotected but has remained free of development so far, aside from multiple towers on top of Mt. Darby. As development on hillsides, ridgelines, and slopes increases, so will its impacts.

Appendix J explains one possible option to address this need, the Scenic Mountain Act. The regulations should be aimed at limiting new site development rather than relatively benign use of existing sites. See the Proposed Scenic Mountain Area map on the previous page.

Blueberry Hill Farm

Blueberry Hill Farm is the largest active farm in Mount Washington, as well as being an occasional site for Town recreation. With its picturesque farm buildings, blueberry bushes, and views of the mountains to the west, the farm is a significant asset to Town residents. The farm does not currently seem to be in danger of being developed, but it is not permanently protected. It is enrolled in the Chapter 61A program, which offers tax incentives for landowners to keep their land in agricultural use, and penalties if the land is taken out of agriculture or developed while still in the program. However, high market prices for developable land make tax penalties less convincing. The Town may need to anticipate a change in ownership of the farm that could potentially result in a change in use and a loss of its scenic qualities.

Undeveloped Forest Tracts

Forest covers nearly all of the land area in Mount Washington, interrupted by a few settlement areas in the center of town. Large contiguous areas of undeveloped forest in Mount Washington provide habitat for species that need a large range, such as black bear, bobcat, and fisher, or that prefer deep forest, such as hermit and wood thrush. Fragmentation of the landscape through development, incompatible logging practices or road building can pose a threat to species that need a large range. Groups such as the Nature Conservancy have been attempting to purchase large forested parcels abutting the State forest so as to provide a greater contiguous habitat area. Priority areas in which to avoid fragmentation are the high-elevation forests between Mt. Undine and Mt. Darby to the northeast and between Cedar Mountain and Prospect Hill to the northwest.

B. Summary of Community's Needs

Community needs other than recreation are detailed throughout the Master Plan.

Recreation Needs

As detailed in the Inventory of Recreational Areas, Mount Washington has wealth of opportunities for outdoor recreation, most of which are hiking and skiing trails located on State land. The few areas in Town that are suitable for community recreational or cultural events are particularly vital to maintain. These include Vandersmissen Memorial Park, Blueberry Hill Farm (community softball games), and a site near Union Church and the Town Hall used for cultural events.

Generally, town residents seem not to visit the YMCA Camp often nor use its facilities. With significant acreage and developed recreation areas, the camp would seem to be an ideal site for certain types of community events. The Camp would benefit from better ties to the community as well. The Town may want to strengthen the relationship between residents (especially nearby landowners) and the Camp, potentially through community events.

A potential conflict in use may exist where recreational activities take place in sensitive habitat areas. The summit of Mt. Everett and Bash Bish State Park are areas with both significant habitat and intensive recreational use. The Town may need to examine use in these areas as

outlined in the State's Draft Management Plans, to determine what recreational uses the Town is willing to support and to identify issue areas for further study.

C. Management Needs, Potential Change of Use

Many residents are very committed to the Town's civic life and participate fully in its boards, committees, and town meetings. However, because of its small size, Mount Washington does not have as many organizations and resources devoted to conservation and recreation as some larger towns. For instance, there is no local land trust that accepts deed restrictions on property in Mount Washington. To accomplish the goals of the Open Space and Recreation Plan, this plan recommends establishing a permanent, official "Mount Washington Community Committee," to coordinate implementation of the plan. The Select Board will appoint 5-9 members to this Committee, including at least one member of the Conservation Commission, one member of the Planning Board, and possibly members from the Master Plan Steering Committee.

OS/R Section 8. Goals and Objectives

Open Space

A. Protect mountain ridges and steep slopes.

1. Protect mountains and ridgelines (as well as water resources) from harmful development through implementation of the Scenic Mountains Act.
2. Work with surrounding communities to link protected mountain areas.

B. Protect open spaces necessary for the maintenance of community character and/or environmental or scenic resources.

1. Protect open spaces valued by the community, particularly lands that contribute greatly to views along scenic roads.
2. Work to protect large undeveloped forest tracts from habitat fragmentation
3. Ensure local open space/ recreation goals, interests, and concerns are considered and respected by State Agencies.
4. Continue to urge that environmental studies be conducted, with local input and participation, to document sensitive resources and identify means for their protection.

C. Protect and preserve water resources and riparian and wetland habitat.

1. Monitor water quality of ponds and improve if necessary, with priority given to ponds with significant habitat or use, such as Plantain Pond.
2. Improve water quality of rivers, streams, and wetland habitat.
3. Protect areas of Mt. Washington that feed public water supplies in surrounding communities.

D. Protect and preserve scenic and community qualities along roads.

1. Modify roadside management practices along scenic roads to preserve their scenic rural character, while maintaining safety.
2. Promote preferred development alternatives along any scenic road.

Recreation

E. Protect existing passive recreational activities and facilities.

1. Recognize acceptable recreational uses of state lands and ensure that these uses are compatible with sensitive habitat and environmental quality.
2. Maintain and increase opportunities for outdoor community recreation and events at appropriate sites.

Organization and Management**F. Facilitate implementation of the Master and Open Space Plans.**

1. Expedite the local and State review of the draft Open Space & Recreation Plan and prepare to apply for additional State funds for further specialized planning/implementation.
2. Adopt Mount Washington Master Plan, to achieve OS/R goals within a framework that also considers other community needs for the long range future.
3. Establish a permanent official "Mount Washington Community Committee" that will guide implementation of the Open Space & Recreation Plan and continue related planning efforts.
4. Encourage permanent protection of land in town through a structured means of community participation.

OS/R Section 9. Five-Year Action Plan

Objectives and Suggested Actions	Start Year	Suggested Leadership Commitment	Other Resources, Requirements, Organizations
A1. Protect mountains and ridgelines (as well as water resources) from harmful development through implementation of the Scenic Mountains Act.			
Define Scenic Mountain Areas. Coordinate definition of area with existing or potential areas in adjacent towns.	2000	Conservation Commission working cooperatively with Planning Board	Master Plan Committee, BRPC, experts, Select Board, Town meeting vote required
Define regulations for Scenic Mountain Areas. Coordinate definition of regulations with existing or potential regulations in adjacent towns.	2000	Conservation Commission working cooperatively with Planning Board	Surrounding towns, experts
Distribute information on the Scenic Mountain Areas to designated boards and hold a public hearing(s) on the Areas and on the regulations to take input.	2001	Conservation Commission working cooperatively with Planning Board	Surrounding towns, experts.
Designate Scenic Mountain Areas.	2001	Select Board	2/3 vote of Select Board required, Conservation Commission, Planning Board
Adopt regulations for Scenic Mountain Areas.	2001	Conservation Commission	Planning Board
Secure state approval of areas and regulations.	2001	Conservation Commission	
Implement regulations for Scenic Mountain Areas.	2002	Conservation Commission	working cooperatively with Planning Board
A2. Work with surrounding communities to link protected mountain areas.			
Continue to coordinate oversight and protection of mountain areas with other towns and regional organizations.	2002	Planning Board, Conservation Commission	
B1. Protect open spaces valued by the community, particularly lands that contribute greatly to views along scenic roads.			
Guide land acquisition that complements the activities of conservation organizations by targeting open spaces that are important to the community but may not be conservation organization priorities.	2002	Community Committee	
Guide land trust(s) to acquire scenic easements in identified scenic areas such as East St.	2002	Community Committee	Egremont or Sheffield Land Trust
B2. Work to protect large undeveloped forest tracts from habitat fragmentation.			
Work with DEM's Division of Forests and Parks to identify and assist properties that qualify for the Forest Legacy program.	2001	Community Committee	Assessor, DEM
Accept conservation restrictions on forest legacy properties and work with a land	2001	Conservation Commission or	The Nature Conservancy

trust or The Nature Conservancy to monitor them.		Select Board	
Modify zoning to allow and facilitate conservation subdivision design when a subdivision will occur.	2003	Planning Board	BRPC
B3. Ensure local open space/ recreation goals, interests, and concerns are considered and respected by State Agencies			
Guide land acquisition that complements the activities of conservation organizations by targeting open spaces that are important to the community but may not be conservation organization priorities.	2002	Community Committee	
Guide land trust(s) to acquire scenic easements in identified scenic areas such as East St.	2002	Community Committee	Egremont or Sheffield Land Trust
B4. Continue to urge that environmental studies be conducted, with local input and participation, to document sensitive resources and identify means for their protection.			
Work with educational and research groups and individuals to document sensitive resources.	Ongoing	Local boards and committees	DEM, TNC
C1. Maintain and improve water quality of rivers, streams, and wetland habitat.			
Conduct a volunteer "Stream Team" day each summer to monitor water quality of streams.	2001	Community Committee	Regional watershed groups, volunteers
Increase number of local residents involved in regional watershed team activities who can distribute information and educate local landowners about proper streamside management practices.	2002	Community Committee	Regional watershed groups, volunteers
Educate property owners about vernal pool identification.	2003	Conservation Commission	NHESP, Nature Conservancy, property owners
Identify and register vernal pools each spring, and monitor them in successive years.	2004	Conservation Commission	NHESP, Nature Conservancy, property owners
C2. Monitor water quality of ponds and improve if necessary, with priority given to ponds with significant habitat or use, such as Plantain Pond.			
Continue Plantain Pond membership participation in LAPA-West.	Ongoing	Plantain Pond landowners	LAPA-West
Periodically test water quality and identify probable sources of contamination, if any.	2002	Conservation Commission, Lake associations	LAPA-West
C3. Protect areas of Mt. Washington that feed public water supplies in surrounding communities.			
Educate property owners in these areas on how to avoid damaging water quality.	2002	Conservation Commission	Property owners, surrounding municipalities
If necessary, develop local regulatory provisions, or lobby for restrictive state land management policies, for protection of water resources in these areas.	2002	Conservation Commission, Planning Board	Select Board
D1. Modify roadside management practices along scenic roads to preserve their scenic rural character, while maintaining safety.			

Establish procedures to minimize cutting of roadside vegetation and paving and pursue related Master Plan strategies for Dirt Roads.	2001	Town DPW	
Designate East St. and North Mountain Rd. as Scenic Roads to be overseen by the Planning Board.	2002	Planning Board	Town voters
D2. Promote preferred development alternatives along any scenic road.			
Develop a set of voluntary design guidelines to encourage less obtrusive siting of new structures along scenic roads, through vegetative screening, etc.	2004	Planning Board	Landscape architects
E1. Recognize acceptable recreational uses of state lands and ensure that these uses are compatible with sensitive habitat, and environmental quality.			
Obtain and, critically but fairly, examine the Draft State Management Plan covering lands in Mount Washington. As first steps: 1) identify recreational uses of state lands that the town does support and begin to work constructively with State on those uses; 2) identify issue areas for further scrutiny.	2000	Community Committee, Mount Everett Reservation and Mount Washington State Forest Citizens' Advisory Council	DEM
E2. Maintain and increase opportunities for outdoor community recreation and events at appropriate sites.			
Continue to use Blueberry Hill Farm as a site for community recreation events	Ongoing	Town, Blueberry Hill Trust	
Continue to use Vandersmissen Park as a site for swimming and other activities, upgrading the site as necessary and appropriate.	Ongoing	Town	
Continue Town Hall/church site cultural events, working with the church to upgrade the site as necessary and appropriate.	Ongoing	Town, Union Church	
Continue to strengthen cooperative ties between the Town and the YMCA Camp, including nearby landowners, to find ways to continue to use (but not overuse) the site for recreational activities as well as events that include or are specifically targeted to town residents.	Ongoing	Town, YMCA Camp Director	
F1. Expedite the local and State review of the draft Open Space & Recreation Plan and prepare to apply for additional			
Finalize OS/R Plan corresponding to Master Plan completion to maintain consistency. Incorporate latest findings and public input, as well as addressing review comments of the Division of Conservation Services (DCS).	2000	Master Plan Committee	BRPC, DCS
F2. Adopt Mount Washington Master Plan, to achieve OS/R goals within a framework that also considers other			
Take all necessary actions to adopt Master Plan.	2000	Planning Board	Master Plan Committee
F3. Establish a permanent official "Mount Washington Community Committee" that will guide implementation of the Open Space &			
Select Board will appoint 5-9 members to Community Committee, including at least one member of the Conservation Commission, one member of the Planning Board, and possibly members from the Master Plan Steering Committee.	2001	Select Board	Master Plan Committee
F4. Encourage permanent protection of land in town through a structured			

means of community participation.			
Determine a means of accepting and guiding voluntary contributions for open space in town, possibly by establishing a Mount Washington wing of the Egremont or Sheffield Land Trust.	2002	Community Committee	Egremont or Sheffield Land Trust, other?

OS/R Section 10. Public Comments

OS/R Section 11. References

Areas of Environmental Concern (ACEC) Program Guide, Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, June 1993.

An Assessment of Land Use Activities and Nonpoint Source Pollution in the Housatonic River Watershed, BRPC for Mass. DEM and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, June 1999.

Barbour, Henry, Tim Simmons, and Patricia Swa. *Our Irreplaceable Heritage: Protecting Biodiversity in Massachusetts*, Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, Massachusetts Chapter of the Nature Conservancy, 1988.

Brady, John, and Brian White, *Fifty Hikes in Massachusetts*, adapted at gorp.com as “Four Hikes in Western Massachusetts: Alander Mountain”.

Community Choices: Thinking Through Land Conservation, Development, and Property Taxes in Massachusetts, The Trust for Public Land, 1998.

Copps, David H. *Views from the Road: A Community Guide for Assessing Rural Historic Landscapes*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 1995.

Datalayers for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, MassGIS, 1997.

Ecological Significance of the Mount Everett Summit: Preliminary Evaluations and Recommendations for Additional Research and Protection. Friends of the Mohawk Trail State Forest, January 24, 2000.

Egremont Open Space and Recreation Plan, Egremont, MA. Dec. 1988.

For Our Common Good: Open Space and Outdoor Recreation in Massachusetts (SCORP), Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management, 1988.

Forest Legacy Needs Assessment for Massachusetts, Mass Department of Environmental Management, May 1993.

Forest Insect & Disease Leaflet 75, “Beech Bark Disease”, USDA Forest Service, willow.ncfes.umn.edu/fidl-beech/fidl-beech.htm.

The Future of Egremont: A Land Use Plan, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, 1976.

Gardenweb’s plant database, <http://plants.gardenweb.com/plants/>

“Hemlock Wooly Adelgid Distribution – 1999, USDA Forest Service, www.fs.fed.us/na/morgantown/fhp/hwa/hwa99.gif

Hudson River Basin: Inventory and Analysis of Current and Projected Water Use, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management, Vol. 1, 1989.

Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway Study: Landscape Inventory and Assessment, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, February 1994.

Karner Brook ACEC Designation Document, Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, July 22, 1992.

Karner Brook Watershed: A Nomination for Designation as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern, prepared by the Citizens' Committee for Karner Brook Watershed, Egremont, Oct. 1991

Land Conservation Options: A Guide for Massachusetts Landowners, Trustees of Reservations, 1998.

Laubach, Rene. *A Guide to Natural Places in the Berkshire Hills*, Stockbridge, 1997.

The Massachusetts Landscape Inventory: A Survey of the Commonwealth's Scenic Areas, Department of Environmental Management, 1982.

Massachusetts Natural Heritage Atlas: 1999-2000 Edition, Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, 2000.

McClure, Mark, Scott Salom, and Kathleen Shields, USDA Forest Service, *FHTET* 96-35, "Hemlock Woolly Adelgid," 1996.

Draft Mt. Everett-Mt. Riga Landscape Conservation Plan, The Nature Conservancy, 1999.

Natural Community Fact Sheets, Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, 1999.

Open Space Data, Sweetwater Trust, 1997. (GIS)

Pest Alert, "Hemlock Woolly Adelgid," USDA Forest Service, www.fs.fed.us/na/morgantown/fhp/palerts/hemlock/hemlock.htm.

Preservation through Bylaws and Ordinances: Tools and Techniques for Preservation Used by Communities in Massachusetts, Massachusetts Historical Commission, 1999.

Schenob Brook Drainage Basin: A Nomination for Designation as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern, prepared by the ACEC Petition Committee, Sheffield, March 1990.

Schenob Brook Drainage Basin ACEC Designation Document, ACEC Program, Mass. Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, August 24, 1990.

Soil Survey of Berkshire County, Massachusetts, US Dep't of Agriculture – Soil Conservation Service, February, 1988.

U.S. Geological Survey Geologic Quadrangle Map, “*Bashbish Quadrangle*,” USGS, 1966.

Vermont's Scenic Landscapes: A Guide for Growth and Protection. Waterbury, VT: Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, 1991.

Wetlands and Deepwater Habitats of the Hoosic, Bashbish, and Kinderhook River Watersheds of Western Massachusetts, Natural Resources Assessment Group, University of Massachusetts, 1997.

Weatherbee, Pamela and Garrett Crow, “Natural Plant Communities of Berkshire County, Massachusetts,” *Rhodora*, Vol. 94, pp. 171-209, 1992

Weatherbee, Pamela, Paul Somers, and Tim Simmons. *A Guide to Invasive Plants in Massachusetts*, Mass. Department of Fisheries & Wildlife, 1998.

X. IMPLEMENTATION

Implementing the strategies of this Plan is a powerful way to contribute to the future quality of life in Mount Washington. This Section on Implementation contains both long term strategies listed below and shorter term action plan priorities with identified timing, leadership commitments, and resources for each action also listed below.

A. Employing Strategies to Sustain Mount Washington Over the Long Term

B. Five Year Action Plan for the Master and Open Space/Recreation Plans

XI. Appendices

List of Appendices

Appendix A: Community Survey Results

Appendix B: State-Listed Species Recorded in Mount Washington

Appendix C: Mammals of Berkshire County

Appendix D: Birds of Berkshire County

Appendix E: Inventory System for Roads with Scenic Features

Appendix F: The Scenic Mountain Act.

Appendix G: Build-Out Analysis for the Town of Mount Washington

Appendix A: Results of the Mount Washington Community Survey

Appendix B: State-Listed Species Recorded in Mount Washington

Scientific Name	Common Name	Global Rank	State Rank	State Status
<i>Ambystoma jeffersonianum</i>	Jefferson Salamander	G5	S3	SC
<i>Gyrinophilus porphyriticus</i>	Spring Salamander	G5	S3	SC
<i>Cicindela purpurea</i>	Purple Tiger Beetle	G5	S2S3	SC
<i>Adlumia fungosa</i>	Climbing Fumitory	G4	S2	T
<i>Amelanchier sanguinea</i>	Roundleaf Shadbush	G5	S3	SC
<i>Arabis laevigata</i>	Smooth Rock-Cress	G5	S2	T
<i>Cerastium nutans</i>	Nodding Chickweed	G5	S1	E
<i>Clematis occidentalis</i>	Purple Clematis	G5	S3	SC
<i>Cyperus houghtonii</i>	Houghton's Flatsedge	G4?	S1	E
<i>Ilex montana</i>	Mountain Winterberry	G5	S2	T
<i>Minuartia michauxii</i>	Michaux's Sandwort	G5	S3	SC
<i>Platanthera flava</i> var. <i>herbiola</i>	Pale Green Orchis	G4T4Q	S2	T
<i>Ranunculus micranthus</i>	Tiny-flowered Buttercup	G5	S2	T
<i>Ribes lacustre</i>	Bristly Black Currant	G5	S3	SC
<i>Salix serissima</i>	Autumn Willow	G4	S3	WL
<i>Solidago glutinosa</i> ssp. <i>Randii</i>	Rand's Goldenrod	G5T4	S1	E
<i>Steptopus amplexifolius</i> var. <i>americanus</i>	White Mandarin	G5T5	S4	WL
<i>Veronicastrum virginicum</i>	Culver's-root	G5	S3	SC
<i>Viburnum rafinesquianum</i>	Downy Arrowwood	G5	S2	T

Key to DFW Rank:

E = Endangered: in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portions of its range, and species in danger of extirpation as documented by biological research and inventory.

T = Threatened: likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range, and any species declining or rare as determined by biological research and inventory and likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future.

SC = Special Concern: has been documented by biological research and inventory to have suffered a decline that could threaten the species if allowed to continue unchecked or that occurs in such small numbers or with such a restricted distribution or

specialized habitat requirements that it could easily become threatened within Massachusetts.

WL = Unofficial Watch List.

Key to Global Rank:

GX = Extinct: not located despite intensive searches.

G1 = Critically imperiled: typically five or fewer occurrences or 1,000 or fewer individuals.

G2 = Imperiled: typically six to 20 occurrences or 1,000-3,000 individuals

G3 = Vulnerable: rare; typically 21-100 occurrences or 3,000-10,000 individuals.

G4 = Apparently Secure: uncommon but not rare globally; some cause for long-term concern; usually more than 100 occurrences or 10,000 individuals.

G5 = Secure; common; widespread and abundant

Appendix C: Mammals of Berkshire County

Source: James E. Cardoza, Wildlife Biologist, Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, “State Mammal List” www.state.ma.us/dfwele/dfw/dfwmam.html.

Scientific Name	Common Name
<i>Alces alces</i>	Moose
<i>Blarina brevicauda</i>	Northern Short-Tailed Shrew
<i>Canis latrans</i>	Coyote
<i>Castor canadensis</i>	American Beaver
<i>Clethrionomys gapperi</i>	Southern Red-backed Vole
<i>Condylura cristata</i>	Star-nosed Mole
<i>Didelphis virginiana</i>	Virginia Opossum
<i>Eptesicus fuscus</i>	Big Brown Bat
<i>Erethizon dorsatum</i>	Common porcupine
<i>Glaucomys sabrinus</i>	Northern Flying Squirrel
<i>Glaucomys volans</i>	Southern Flying Squirrel
<i>Lasionycteris noctivagans</i>	Silver-haired Bat
<i>Lasiurus borealis</i>	Eastern Red Bat
<i>Lasiurus cinereus</i>	Hoary Bat
<i>Lepus americanus</i>	Snowshoe Hare
<i>Lontra canadensis</i>	Northern River Otter
<i>Lynx rufus</i>	Bobcat
<i>Marmota monax</i>	Woodchuck
<i>Martes pennanti</i>	Fisher
<i>Mephitis mephitis</i>	Striped skunk
<i>Microtus pennsylvanicus</i>	Meadow Vole
<i>Microtus pinetorum</i>	Woodland Vole
<i>Mus musculus</i>	House Mouse
<i>Mustela erminea</i>	Ermine
<i>Mustela frenata</i>	Long-Tailed Weasel
<i>Mustela vison</i>	American Mink
<i>Myotis lucifugus</i>	Little Brown Bat
<i>Myotis sodalis</i>	Indiana Bat
<i>Napaeozapus insignis</i>	Woodland Jumping Mouse
<i>Odocoileus virginianus</i>	White-tailed deer
<i>Ondatra zibethicus</i>	Common Muskrat
<i>Parascalops breweri</i>	Hairy-tailed Mole
<i>Peromyscus leucopus</i>	White-footed Mouse
<i>Peromyscus maniculatus</i>	Deer Mouse
<i>Pipistrellus subflavus</i>	Eastern Pipistrelle
<i>Procyon lotor</i>	Common Raccoon
<i>Rattus norvegicus</i>	Norway Rat
<i>Sciurus carolinensis</i>	Eastern Gray Squirrel
<i>Sorex cinereus</i>	Masked Shrew

<i>Sorex dispar</i>	Rock (Long-Tailed) Shrew
<i>Sorex fumeus</i>	Smoky Shrew
<i>Sorex hoyi</i>	Pygmy Shrew
<i>Sorex palustris</i>	Common Water Shrew
<i>Sylvilagus floridanus</i>	Eastern cottontail
<i>Synaptomys cooperi</i>	Southern Bog Lemming
<i>Tamias striatus</i>	Eastern Chipmunk
<i>Tamiasciurus hudsonicus</i>	Red Squirrel
<i>Urocyon cinereoargenteus</i>	Common Gray Fox
<i>Ursus americanus</i>	Black Bear
<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>	Red Fox
<i>Zapus hudsonius</i>	Meadow Jumping Mouse

Appendix D: Birds of Berkshire County

Source: *The Karner Brook Watershed: Proposal for Nomination as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern*, 1991. The Berkshire Museum in Pittsfield, Timothy Flanagan, Curator of Natural Science.

Common Name
Alder Flycatcher
American Bittern
American Black Duck
American Coot
American Crow
American Kestrel (Sparrow Hawk)
American Robin
American Wigeon (Baldpate)
American Woodcock
Bald Eagle
Bank Swallow
Barn Swallow
Barred owl
Belted Kingfisher
Black-billed Cuckoo
Black-capped Chickadee
Blue Jay
Blue-grey Gnatcatcher
Blue-winged Teal
Broad-winged Hawk
Brown Creeper
Brown Thrasher
Bufflehead
Carolina Wren
Cattle Egret
Chimney Swift
Cliff Swallow
Common Golden-eye
Common Nighthawk
Common Moorhen (Common Gallinule)
Common Raven
Common Snipe
Cooper's Hawk
Downy Woodpecker
Eastern Bluebird
Eastern Kingbird
Eastern Phoebe
Eastern Screech owl
Eastern Wood Pewee

Golden Eagle
Golden-crowned Kinglet
Grasshopper Sparrow
Gray Catbird
Gray-cheeked Thrush
Great Blue Heron
Great Crested Flycatcher
Great Egret (Common Egret)
Great Horned owl
Greater Yellow-legs
Green-back Heron
Green-winged Teal
Hairy Woodpecker
Hermit Thrush
Herring Gull
Hooded Merganser
Horned Lark
House Wren
Killdeer
King Rail
Least Bittern
Least Flycatcher
Lesser Yellow-legs
Little Blue Heron
Mallard
Marsh Wren
Merlin (Pigeon Hawk)
Mourning Dove
Northern Flicker
Northern Goshawk
Northern Harrier (Marsh Hawk)
Northern Mockingbird
Northern Rough-winged Swallow
Northern Saw-Whet owl
Olive-sided Flycatcher
Osprey
Peregrine Falcon (Duck Hawk)
Pied-billed Grebe
Pileated Woodpecker
Prairie Horned Lark (subspecies)
Red-bellied Sapsucker
Red-breasted Nuthatch
Red-headed Woodpecker

Red-shouldered Hawk
Red-tailed Hawk
Ring-billed Gull
Ring-necked Duck
Ring-necked Pheasant
Rock Dove
Rough-legged Hawk
Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Ruby-throated Hummingbird
Ruddy Duck
Ruffed Grouse
Sedge Wren (Short-billed Marsh Wren)
Sharp-shinned Hawk
Snow Goose
Snowy Egret
Snowy owl
Solitary Sandpiper
Sora

Spotted Sandpiper
Swainson's Thrush (Olive-backed Thrush)
Three-toed Woodpecker (Northern Three-toes)
Tree Swallow
Tufted Titmouse
Turkey Vulture
Veery
Virginia Rail
Whip-poor-will
White-breasted Nuthatch
Wild Turkey
Winter Wren
Wood Duck
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher
Yellow-billed Cuckoo

Appendix E: Inventory System for Roads with Scenic Features

(See Table NR1 Scenic Roads)

Opportunities for viewing the scenic areas in Mount Washington can be found along most of the roads that wind through this community. In order to assess the relative quality of the scenic features of these roads, BRPC adapted a method used by the Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway Study, which was based on a study by Frederic O. Sargent of the Vermont Resources Research Center. Our method used four categories to assess the scenic qualities of a particular section of road: variety, field of view, depth of view, and diminishing factors. A "section of road" was determined to be any length of road that had consistent attributes and scenic qualities. Definitions of the rating categories are as follows:

Variety

One of the factors that makes a view interesting or exciting is the number of different landscape elements that one can observe from a given point. To quantify the variety of features along a given set of road, we made a list of region-specific features one could expect to find in Mount Washington. Examples of landscape features include historic buildings, brilliant fall foliage, and views of nearby mountains and mountain ranges. Each time one of the items on the list was observed, a point was added to the variety column. These points were then translated into a score of High, Medium, or Low for each section of road. A section with seven or more features would receive a High rating, sections with 4-6 features would receive a Medium rating, and sections with 0-3 features would receive a rating of Low. A list of scenic features might include:

Water

Lake, Pond, Marsh, or Wetland
River or Brook
Waterfall

Field & Forest Edge

Woodland or Tree Pattern (Species Mix, Hedgerow)
Mass of Wildflowers or Ferns
Other (Heritage tree, leaf tunnel effect)

Landform Features

Cliff, Boulder, or Rock Outcrop
Hill or Mountain
Multiple Mountains or Range (score 2)

Structures

Picturesque Farmstead
Unusual Building
Historic Structure or Archeological Site
Covered or Other Bridge
Stone Wall or Wooden Fence
Cemetery
Distant Village or Village Edge

Effects

Ephemeral Effect (sunset, mist, reflection)
Seasonal Effect (Ice formations, brilliant foliage)

Vegetation

City or Town Park
Agricultural Pattern

Wildlife/Animals

Grazing animals
Wildlife sighting

Field of View

The field of view is a measure of the degree of horizon not obstructed from view by something at the immediate roadside. The presumption is that a view is more interesting if there is more to see. Field of view is the measure of the width of the scene visible to the observer.⁵⁴ We rated sections of road on a scale of High, Medium, and Low. A section would receive a High rating if the view was not significantly compromised, with views on both sides of the road. A section with a Medium rating might have views on one side of the road, but have the view on the other side blocked by trees or another obstruction. A road would receive a Low rating if the view was mainly obstructed, for example, a road corridor with mature forest on both sides.

Depth of View

The depth of view is a measure of the perception of distance from the location of the viewer to the farthest viewable element on the horizon. Where field of view is a measure of width, depth of view is a measure of depth. Because it is difficult to gauge exact distances accurately, we determined the perceived distance of mountain peaks by observing the amount of detail we were able to see from a given point. For instance, a Low rating was given to views of a single foothill where individual trees could be seen. A Medium rating was given to distances where a single peak was visible in one shade of gray. Where multiple shades of gray were visible on successive peaks a High rating was given, indicating the farthest distance.⁵⁵

Diminishing Factors

Diminishing factors, which are any aspects that reduce the quality of the view, were measured in much the same way as Variety, with one point recorded for each factor observed. These points were then translated into ratings of High, Medium, and Low, with three or more factors denoting a High rating, 1-2 factors receiving a Medium rating, and 0 factors receiving a Low rating. However, with regard to diminishing factors, a rating of High counts *against* the overall rating of a section of road, rather than being added to it, as with the previous categories. Diminishing factors may include:

Obtrusive lumbering scar	Large parking lot
Erosion	Junkyard or garbage
Mining	Gas station
Utility line	Obtrusive signage
Strip development	Stark drainage system
Incompatible building (style)	Polluted water
Dilapidated structure	

After giving each section a rating in each of these four categories, we synthesized the ratings into a Preliminary Overall Rating for each section. Those sections of road with the greatest number of High ratings for Variety, Field of View, and Depth of View, and the lowest ratings for Diminishing Factors, were judged as having Very High scenic value. The next group of roads, with mainly Medium scores, was given a High preliminary overall rating. Roads that had low

⁵⁴ *Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway Study: Landscape Inventory and Assessment, February 1994, p.3.*

⁵⁵ *Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway Study: Landscape Inventory and Assessment, February 1994, p. 4.*

scores in the Field of View and Depth of View categories, but had medium Variety were considered Significant, in terms of scenic value. Finally, those roads with the lowest ratings were given a preliminary rating of Less Significant.

After making these observations, the Advisory Committee re-examined each section of road to assess the scenic value of that section to the community. This was to ensure that scenic roads that might not rate highly according to an objective system, but which have value to the community, would still be recognized as significant. This re-assessment allowed the Committee to create a final Overall Rating for each section of road.

Appendix F: The Scenic Mountain Act

Appendix G: Build-Out Analysis for the Town of Mount Washington