

VII. RECREATION

Recreational activities in Mount Holly have historically revolved around the fact that it is a hill country town. Much of the land was forested thereby providing excellent wildlife habitat fostering hunting and fishing. Today, hiking, horseback riding, and camping are popular, while the ponds and streams provide excellent swimming, boating and fishing.

Winter sports include snowmobiling, snow shoeing, and cross-country skiing. Part of the eastern slope of Okemo Mountain is in Mount Holly, and downhill skiing currently occurs on the mountain road and trails associated with the Okemo Mountain Ski Area.

Specific Areas:

The following list includes areas of special note but is not all inclusive. The very dispersed nature of the recreation activities in Town prohibits the naming of every location

- Star Lake.**)
- Lake Ninevah**) – see Natural Resources, above
- Tiny Pond.**)

Green Mountain National Forest.

In 1984, Congress designated part of the GMNF as the White Rocks National Recreation Area – recently renamed the **Robert T. Stafford White Rocks National Recreation Area** - the intent being to retain much of the area in a wild, remote state for the benefit of wildlife and for recreational use including hunting, fishing, camping, snowmobiling, and cross country skiing. This area was the site of the reintroduction of the pine marten into Vermont by the Department of Fish and Wildlife in 1989.

Okemo State Forest.

Fishing, hunting, hiking, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, snow-shoeing, horse-back riding, and mountain-biking are the principal recreational activities in this area.

A portion of Okemo Mountain's eastern side Ski Area is located within the Town of Mount Holly and is part of the long-term leasehold of Okemo Mountain, Inc. A hiking trail has been constructed from the site of the former Healdville railroad station to the mountain summit. As part of Okemo Mountain Inc.'s Jackson Gore development, commenced in 2002, adjacent bear habitat and corridor lands were dedicated for preservation. The Okemo Ski Resort has been developed on State Park lands.

Mount Holly School Facilities:

Ball fields for baseball, softball, soccer, and various other activities have been constructed and maintained in the area immediately behind the Mount Holly Elementary School. Swings and other pieces of playground equipment are maintained there as well. A major renovation of the fields was undertaken beginning in the summer of 1990 with assistance of the Army National Guard Engineers from Springfield, Vermont. New playground equipment was installed by volunteers in 2005.

A multipurpose addition to the school was made in 2001 – giving the Town a gym, a stage, exhibit area, and multi-purpose meeting space. Currently the school is constructing an arts center, designed by students, with a grant from the Okemo Mountain Resort.

Trails.

Vermont Association of Snow Travelers (VAST) trail is maintained by the local chapter - the Mount Holly Sno-Drifters. The trail runs through Town and has been lauded for its environmentally friendly character and maintenance. Map VII 1

The Catamount Trail is a cross-country ski trail running the length of Vermont. The route through Mount Holly travels across the northwest corner of the Town entering about a mile south of East Wallingford and following old Town roads to its exit near where Freeman Brook enters Mount Holly. Map VII 2

Hiking trails

Okemo mountain from the old Healdville station – maintained by the State.

Beaver Meadow in Green Mountain National Forest – maintained by the National Forest.

Okemo Mountain Road is accessible only from Ludlow.

Tiny Pond hiking trail is accessible only from the Plymouth side.

Use of Town roads by bicycles includes organized tour groups, as well as recreational use by local citizens. There are no bicycle paths. Mountain biking is open on VAST trails and on Okemo mountain. Volunteers are beginning to clear walking paths in Town to accommodate biking

There are complaints from some residents about a dearth of trails for horseback riding.

Walking paths are limited primarily to the sides of roads. Thought is being given to working with landowners to expand walking trails.

Hunting

Bear, deer, turkey, duck, etc. are hunted with bow and arrow, muzzle loaders, shot guns, rifles. Increasingly, hunting on private land is closed off and land is posted.

Problems

Except for trails (Catamount, VAST, hiking) and the school ball fields, there are few developed outside recreational sites.

There is little available for the elderly and disabled – a Bone Builders program has recently begun meeting in the OddFellows Hall.

The school gym and now the OddFellows Hall are the only indoor recreation facilities in Town.

Access to lake waters for swimming is limited to the beach at Star Lake. Public access to Lake Ninevah is restricted to a small water front. There is no public access to the waters of Tiny Pond.