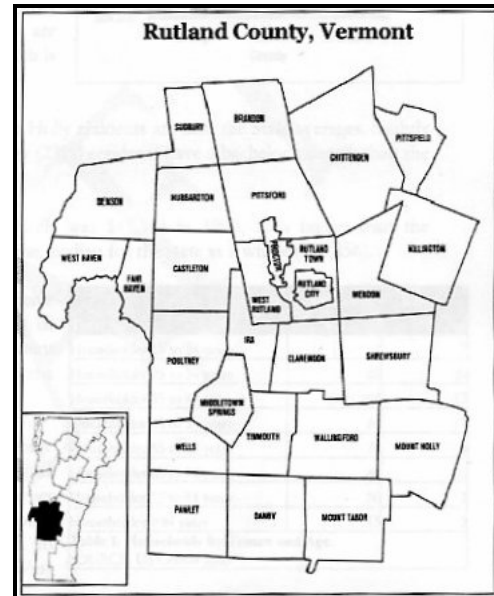


THE TOWN

II. RESOURCES

GEOGRAPHY

The Town of Mount Holly is a rural Vermont town surrounded by mountains, as its name suggests. With an estimated 2005 population of 1,236 (US Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program), it is officially classified by the Vermont Municipal Planning and Development Act as rural town.



Mount Holly is located on the southeastern edge of Rutland County. It is bordered by the Rutland County towns of Shrewsbury, Wallingford, and Mount Tabor, and it is also bordered by the Windsor County towns of Ludlow, Plymouth, and Weston. The nearest large population center is Rutland City, which has 17,292 (2000 Census) residents and is the fourth most populous city in the state.

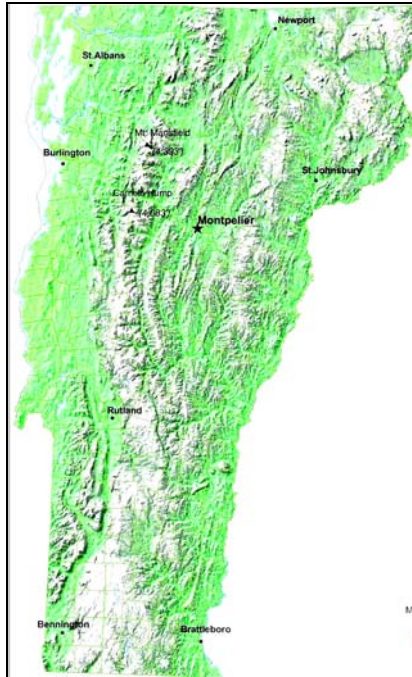
Some of the common boundary with Wallingford and the entire common boundary with Mount Tabor occurs within Green Mountain National Forest. The boundary with Wallingford and the entire border with Shrewsbury and Plymouth involve lands rural in nature with low-density housing and related agriculture or forestry uses.

Most of the common boundary between Mount Holly and Ludlow occurs on the ridgeline of Ludlow (Okemo) Mountain and within the Okemo State Forest.

The area adjacent to the Mount Holly-Weston boundary is an area of low housing density. Part of the boundary is within Green Mountain National Forest and some is within the Okemo State Forest.

In total area, Mount Holly is one of the larger towns in Rutland County with 29,338 acres (46 square miles). About one-fifth of the Town consists of publicly owned land within Okemo State Forest on the Town's eastern border, and Green Mountain National Forest on the south-western border.

Mount Holly is located on the central ridge of the Green Mountains. Its highest peak is 3,343 feet at the summit of Ludlow (also called Okemo) Mountain. The mid portion of the Town is a plateau from



VERMONT – RELIEF MAP

1,200 to about 2,000 feet above sea level that provides one of the best areas to cross the state from one side to the other. (Map II a 1, Map II a 2, Map II a 5)

Topographically (Map II a 3), the Town is composed of a series of hills and low mountains separated by mountain streams and brooks. There are three lakes: Star Lake, Lake Ninevah, and Tiny Pond.

The earliest Native American inhabitants canoed from Lake Champlain, up the Otter Creek, crossed the watershed (Map II a 4), as they walked over Mount Holly to canoe down the Black River to the Connecticut River and on to Long Island Sound. In the French and Indian War, the English built the first road across Vermont – the Crown Point Road – from Charlestown, New Hampshire to Fort Ticonderoga, New York, across the northern boundary of Mount Holly (1759).

The Green Mountain Turnpike (part of the road from western Vermont to Boston) ran along the Old Turnpike Road with a stage coach stop at the old Mount Holly Inn. The Rutland and Burlington Railroad was built across Mount Holly in 1849, and state highway Route 103 was built piecemeal from 1914 through 1963 next to the railway. The Railroad and Route 103 cut the Town in two. Old timers tell stories of the wrenching effects of the railroad dividing farms in two; and for a period of time, there were two town halls, with town meeting held in each on alternate years. Culturally, there is still a divide between the north and south of the Town, heightened by the rise of Belmont as summer vacation center (made possible by the railroad) and the relative decline of the old hamlet of Mount Holly with the demise of the stage coach.

OPEN LAND

Open lands are defined as all lands that are not forested and thus include wet lands, agricultural lands, and other non-forested lands. (Map II a 6, Aerial View - Mount Holly)

Like the rest of Vermont Mount Holly has seen the amount of forest vs. cleared land change:

	forest	cleared
1780	100%	0%
1830	20%	80%
2006	80%	20%

The definition of open land includes agricultural lands. Fields for hay are maintained widely around Town, and some corn is grown as livestock feed. The last dairy farm ceased operation in 2006. Other livestock producers: beef cattle, sheep, hogs, chickens, turkeys, horses.

FOREST LANDS

Approximately 55% of the Town is currently covered by hardwood forests, primarily sugar maple, yellow birch, and beech; while 31% is in soft wood cover mainly red spruce and balsam fir. This translates into approximately 17,634 acres of hardwoods and 9,604 acres of softwood. (Map II a 7, Contiguous Forest).

LAND USE

According to the Change of Appraisal Notice published by the Listers of Mount Holly on May 24, 2003 the Town consisted of 1,272 properties. Dwellings were located on 713 properties. (See Map II a 7, Map IV 1) and other maps in this plan for the locations of “structures” – the majority of which are residences).

The property map from the 2007 Town Report is reproduced on Map II a 8 which depicts Public Lands, Conserved Lands, and properties in the Current Use program.

PUBLIC LANDS

2,331.5 acres (9.1% of the Town’s area) is owned by the Okemo State Forest under management by the Vermont Department of Forest, Parks and Recreation. The Green Mountain National Forest covers 3,100 acres, or 9.5% of Mount Holly.

The State of Vermont owns two Wildlife Management Areas managed by the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department. The Star Lake Wildlife Management Area (Map II a 9) is a 92.3 acre parcel of land bordering northeast Star Lake. It was donated by Judson and Margaret Lyon in 1979. 48 acres of the 739 acre Tiny Pond Wildlife Management Area (Map II a 10) are located in Mount Holly. It is part of the Coolidge West Management Unit which includes Coolidge State Forest. The WMA was formed from land donated in 1996 and 2002.

CONSERVED LANDS

The Yale/Bowen Forest is a 462 acre tract adjacent to the Okemo State Forest. It was willed to Yale University School of Forestry in 1924, in perpetuity to be “kept as a forest”, by Elmer and Edward Bowen family in memory of their son Joseph Brown Bowen, a forestry graduate of Yale University, who died in service in World War I. The deed obligates the School to keep the forest forever. The land is managed by the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation. Most of the Forest is northern hardwoods with some spruce plantations. Map II a 11 shows the location in New England of the forests operated by the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.

The Vermont Land Trust has an easement on 80%, or 273 acres, of the Forest Echo Farm

In 2003, the 77 acre Dana-Seward Farmland project on Route 155 was conserved in a joint effort by the Vermont Land Trust, the Freeman Foundation, 150 contributing residents of Mount Holly, Raymond and Clare Dana, and the Seward farming family of East Wallingford. The Vermont Land Trust received donations of conservation easements: in 2004, 46 acres opposite the Dana-Seward Farmland from John Fiske and Lisa Freeman; in 2005, a parcel of 64 acres from Lorena and Pete Doolittle.

Mt. Holly Wildlife Corridor Forest Legacy project is an effort to connect the two units of the Green Mountain National Forest – north in Shrewsbury and south in Weston - with a corridor of conserved land for wildlife, primarily for black bear. A tract of 391 acres was protected with a conservation easement

in December 2002. Forest Legacy funds in the amount of \$303,000 were paid to the Ninevah Foundation. The cost share for the project was the purchase of a 273 acre tract nearby that used no Federal funds.

The Ninevah Foundation owns 840 acres as conserved land with highly restricted development available only to its members.

CONSERVED AND PROTECTED LAND

Tract	Acres
Green Mountain Nation Forest	3,100
Okemo State Forest	2,331
Star Lake Wildlife Management Area	93
Tiny Pond Wildlife Management Area	48
Yale/Bowen Forest	462
Dana-Seward Farmland	77
Fiske and Freeman conservation easement	46
Doolittle conservation easement	64
Forest Legacy	391
Forest Echo Farm - VT Land Trust	273
FEF Corp	351
Ninevah Foundation	840
 TOTAL Conserved	 8,076 = 28 %
TOTAL Mount Holly	29,338 = 100 %

As of 2003, there were 46 properties (43 with dwellings) totaling 6,315 acres in Current Use including Forest Echo Farm, Ninevah Foundation, Yale/Bowen Forest and Doolittle. Excluding those properties (featured above with a total of 1,639 acres) leaves 4,676 acres in the State's Current Use program. The full name of the Current Use program is the Agricultural and Managed Forestland Value Program.

Adding conserved or protected land 8,076 acres to current use 4,676 = 12,753 or 43% of the Town's total acreage.

However, none of those acres is under Town control. This is an important fact given that the Okemo State Forest (and the two Wildlife Management Areas) and the Green Mountain National Forest are under the control of State and Federal governments respectively, with the Town accorded no rights in determining any future use of the land. (Planning Commission paper, 2004). The Okemo Ski Resort has been built, for no fee, on State forest land on the eastern side of the Ludlow Mountain (now commonly called Okemo Mountain), see Map V 2.

As the protected status of lands under the control of State and Federal governments cannot be guaranteed, the land conserved in Mount Holly assumes greater importance. "Perpetuity", depending on the definition of the term, applies to between 922 to 1,762 acres, or 3% to 6% of the Town's total acreage

NATURAL RESOURCES			
comparison			
MOUNT HOLLY, RUTLAND COUNTY, STATE of VERMONT			
	Mt Holly	Rutland Co.	Vermont
Area of Land, Acres, 2000	31, 481	597,120	5,920,640
Area of Water, Acres, 2000	243	12,500	261,200
Private & Public Conserved Acres, 1999	6,794	134, 820	1,148,249
Private & Public Conserved Acres %	22%	23%	19%
Federal Conserved Acres, 1999	3,104	76,279	435,008
State Conserved Acres, 1999	3,213	29,948	378,563
