

Chapter 9

NATURAL AND SCENIC RESOURCES

A. AIR QUALITY

Everybody breathes, so the quality of our air is important. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency sets health-related standards for a variety of air pollutants. The Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation monitors air quality at several locations, and all of the monitored areas currently meet the federal air quality standards. No air quality monitoring stations are located in Central Vermont, so there are no data on local air quality.

Locally, air quality concerns are limited mainly to emissions from motor vehicles, heating systems, and some agricultural practices. Emissions of air pollutants are closely related to energy use. We can help reduce air pollution by using renewable energy, increasing energy efficiency and conserving energy. These topics are discussed more fully in the Energy section of this plan. Forests can help remove some air pollutants, so maintaining forested landscapes can also help preserve air quality.

Goals and Actions

- **Goal 9.1:** Promote local actions to maintain air quality.

This goal cuts across many other areas. See actions for:

- Infrastructure (6.2.1, 6.2.2, 6.2.3, 6.2.5, 6.3.1, 6.5.1, 6.5.2, 6.6.1, 6.14.1, 6.15.1, 6.15.2);
- Economic Development (7.1.1, 7.2.1);
- Natural and Scenic Resources (9.7.1, 9.7.2); and
- Land Use (10.2.1, 10.2.2, 10.2.3, 10.2.4, 10.3.1).

B. WETLANDS AND WATERWAYS

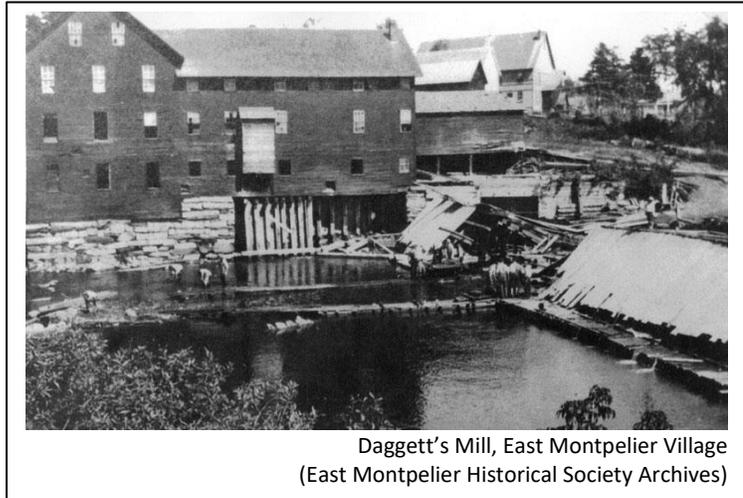
History

With the arrival of the first European immigrants into the East Montpelier area some two hundred years ago, a natural environment that had remained relatively stable for centuries began to undergo rapid change. Early settlers to this area found bear, deer, moose, and other wildlife in

plentiful supply. The free-flowing Winooski River was a popular fishing area and, for a few years in the 1860s, served as an abundant source of pearl-bearing freshwater clams. By the late 1800s, however, clearing of land and unregulated hunting and trapping had begun in earnest and profoundly influenced the area's natural resources and wildlife population.

The Winooski River and its tributary, the Kingsbury Branch, both served important roles in the early settlement of East Montpelier. Historical evidence indicates the existence of several Native American settlements along these rivers. The native Abenaki people frequently used the Winooski as a major route to eastern points. For the European settlers, the rivers and multiple streams in our area served as sources of power, food, and recreation. By the beginning of the twentieth century, many sawmills were operating along both rivers.

The use of waterways in town and in the Central Vermont area for early industrial purposes also led to abuse and pollution. Wetlands were considered a nuisance to be avoided if possible or, in cases where avoidance was not possible or desirable, to be filled or drained. With the abundance of available land and with the limited potential of wetlands for agricultural productivity, wetlands were largely ignored until the recent escalation in the value of land.



Reforestation, the consolidation of farms, and decreased human population during the first half of the twentieth century allowed some of the natural habitat and animal species to reappear in the East Montpelier area. More recently, population growth within the town and the Central Vermont region has once again brought major changes to these water and wildlife resources.

Current Status

Our wetlands and waterways have many uses and functions. Wetlands support exceptional diversity of plants and animals and play a critical role in flood resiliency and improving water quality by slowing fast moving water and filtering pollutants. Ponds and waterways provide opportunities for swimming, canoeing, kayaking, fishing, bird watching, and are important scenic resources.

Two private hydroelectric projects are located within East Montpelier. One is in North Montpelier (located on the Kingsbury Branch), and the other is located on the Winooski River between US 2 and Gallison Hill Road.

Map 4 shows the network of rivers, streams, and ponds in East Montpelier as well as numerous, mostly small, wetlands.

Major Waterways and Wetlands

The Winooski River is the major waterway running north to south in the eastern side of town. The Kingsbury Branch, Sodom Pond Brook, and Bennett Brook (also known as Mallory Brook) flow into the Winooski River, along with other smaller streams. On the western side of town, Long Meadow Brook flows out of Horn of the Moon Pond down to Wrightsville Reservoir and into the North Branch of the Winooski.

Major Rivers and Streams		
Name	Drainage Area	Drainage Area Measurement Location
** Winooski River	160 square miles	Near the mouth of the Kingsbury Branch
** Kingsbury Branch	53 square miles	At its mouth
** North Branch	67 square miles	At the outlet of Wrightsville Reservoir
* Bennett Brook (Mallory Brook)	5 square miles	At its mouth
* Sodom Pond Brook	11 square miles	At its mouth
** Partially in town; * Completely in town		

Major Lakes and Ponds			
Name	Size	Elevation above sea level	Drainage Area
** Wrightsville Reservoir	90 acres	629 feet	67 square miles
** North Montpelier Pond	72 acres	703 feet	51 square miles
* Sodom Pond	21 acres	1,058 feet	3 square miles
* Horn of the Moon Pond	10 acres	1,230 feet	<1 square mile
* Nelson Pond	10 acres	1,210 feet	<1 square mile
* Chapell Pond	2 acres	1,170 feet	<1 square mile
* Coburn Pond	6 acres	n/a	<1 square mile
** Partially in town; * Completely in town			

Forested riparian areas, along streams and rivers, are critical for river processes, aquatic biota, wildlife movement, and biological diversity, as well as other ecological functions. The Winooski River, Kingsbury Branch, Bennett Brook (also known as Mallory Brook), and Sodom Pond Brook are important to wildlife connectivity, even though some of these areas have been fragmented with development.

Wetlands are defined as “those areas of the state that are inundated by surface or groundwater with a frequency sufficient to support vegetation or aquatic life that depend on saturated or seasonally saturated soil conditions for growth and reproduction.”

Several large wetland complexes exist in town, but numerous small wetlands are also valuable. There are 146 mapped wetlands in town regulated by the Vermont Wetlands Act. They range in size from 0.12 acres to 199 acres and occupy a total of 857 acres. An official wetlands map is available from the State Department of Environmental Conservation (<http://dec.vermont.gov/watershed/wetlands>), and a copy is in the Town Office.

All wetlands shown on the Wetlands Inventory Map are presumed to be significant unless determined to be otherwise by the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). The Vermont Wetland Rules identify and protect 10 functions and values of significant wetlands and establishes a 3-tier wetland classification system to identify such wetlands. The first two classes of wetlands (Class I and Class II) are considered significant and protected under the wetland rules along with their buffer zones (generally 100-foot for Class I and 50-foot for Class II).

Chickering Bog (Fen), a Class I wetland is primarily located in Calais, but a portion of the wetland or its buffer may be located in East Montpelier. Development is prohibited in protected wetlands, although wetland rules exempt certain areas that grow food or crops in connection with farming activities.

Water Quality

The water quality of lake and pond water resources are rated by the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Lake Score Card (<http://dec.vermont.gov/watershed/lakes-ponds/data-maps/scorecard>) as “poor” to “good” based on four criteria: nutrient trends, shore and lake habitat, mercury pollution, and invasive species. Elevated levels of mercury in fish tissue are a water quality concern in all Vermont waterways. North Montpelier Pond has, since the early 1980s, been infested by Eurasian water milfoil, a nuisance non-native aquatic plant, resulting in the only “poor” rating. While their presence has been documented in nearby waters, zebra mussels and didymo (two other non-native nuisance aquatic species) have not been discovered in any waterway in town. Preventing the spread of non-native species will require the continued vigilance by residents and all who enjoy using these water resources.



Canada Geese on Templeton Pond (Gary Ann Lewis)

Vermont has state water quality standards. Water bodies that do not meet one or more standard criteria are considered impaired. East Montpelier does not have any impaired surface waters. The state classifies surface waters as either Class A or Class B. Class A waters are suitable for public drinking water supplies and include all waters in pristine natural condition and all waters above 2,500 feet in elevation. Class B waters are all other surface waters and are managed towards the objective of maintaining high quality, suitable for recreation, high

quality habitat, and drinking water supplies after appropriate filtration and disinfection. Class B waters may also include waste management zones which allow for the discharge of treated sewage. There are no waters in East Montpelier classified as Class A. All surface waters in East Montpelier are designated and managed by the state as a “cold water fishery.”

East Montpelier is located in the Winooski River basin. All surface waters in town drain into the Winooski River and ultimately into Lake Champlain. Lake Champlain is impaired, with levels of phosphorus that do not meet water quality standards. Vermont has developed a plan to clean up Lake Champlain by reducing the levels of phosphorus entering the lake. This plan is known as the Total Maximum Daily Loading (TMDL). The phosphorus comes from agricultural runoff, roadways, eroding stream banks and lawn fertilizers. Achieving the goals of the clean up plan requires that phosphorus levels be reduced from all sources throughout all the watersheds

contributing to Lake Champlain. Clean water programs to meet the TMDL will affect East Montpelier. The town is required to obtain and comply with a Municipal Roads General Permit to reduce pollutants from roadways. The town is currently participating in the Kingsbury Branch Watershed Stormwater Master Plan, which will identify and develop preliminary designs for five priority stormwater projects. This stormwater master plan will be completed in early 2019.



The Winooski River along Route 2 approaching East Montpelier Village (Jean Vissering)

Protecting Wetlands and Waterways

The continued richness and diversity of fish and wildlife within East Montpelier depend on the sustained integrity and maintenance of the places where they eat, visit, live, and reproduce. An important component of this system is the network of stream banks referred to as riparian corridors. When recognized and respected, they can play a large role in protecting fish and wildlife and in ensuring the connectivity of natural areas within the town.

All wetlands are protected by state statute. Municipally-adopted Flood Hazard and River Corridor regulations limit development within vulnerable areas along the Winooski River, Kingsbury Branch, and Bennett Brook. The town requires a minimum 50-foot buffer around all streams and wetlands.

Forested riparian areas along rivers streams and wetlands still require protection. Several ponds located within the town have only a “fair” rating for shore conditions, invasive species, mercury levels, and nutrient trends. Maintaining forested buffers can improve water quality.

There are various techniques for removing invasive Eurasian milfoil from ponds including manual removal and introducing natural predators. One potential way to help protect water quality is the use of green infrastructure (GI) and low impact development (LID) techniques during construction. Low Impact Development (LID) is development designed to minimize offsite impacts, especially run-off, sedimentation and pollutants. Techniques include using natural systems and green infrastructure. Examples include using narrow unpaved driveways, rain garden catchment areas to absorb any run-off from a site, retaining roadside vegetation, and collecting runoff from hard surfaces like roofs into rain barrels. LID approaches should be incorporated into the town's *Land Use and Development Regulations*.

Importantly, natural resource management efforts will continue to involve land in both public and private ownership.

Goals and Actions

- **Goal 9.2:** Protect wetlands and waterways as valued wildlife habitat and recreational and scenic focal points of the community.
 - ✓ **Action 9.2.1:** Consider use of the Conservation Fund for the purchase of important public access to wetlands and waterways.

- **Goal 9.3:** Ensure *Land Use and Development Regulations* promote water quality protection.
 - ✓ **Action 9.3.1:** Review and update *Land Use and Development Regulations* to include adoption of Low Impact Development (LID) techniques.

- **Goal 9.4:** Support project development and implementation of projects that will improve water quality.
 - ✓ **Action 9.4.1:** Manage highway operations and implement projects to comply with the Municipal Roads General Permit.
 - ✓ **Action 9.4.2:** Implement roadside vegetation practices that reduce runoff and sedimentation.
 - ✓ **Action 9.4.3:** Pursue funding for project development and implementation of priority projects in the Kingsbury Branch Watershed Stormwater Master Plan.

C. GROUNDWATER AND AQUIFERS

History

Early settlers depended on springs and groundwater wells to provide drinking water. As the town developed, however, inadequate procedures for waste disposal and wastewater treatment threatened the quality of surface water and groundwater. The development of stricter sewage regulations has restored much of the lost water quality.

Current Status

In this Town Plan, “groundwater” means water below the land surface as well as springs. “Spring” means a groundwater source where groundwater flows naturally to the surface of the earth. “Withdraw” or “withdrawal” means the intentional removal of groundwater from a well, spring, or combination of both.

In response to a proposed bottling plant in the western part of town, a citizen group formed in 2008 to place a moratorium on large groundwater withdrawals. The Planning Commission has since developed regulations that provide careful review of permits for such withdrawals.

The Vermont Geological Survey completed a review of the town’s geology and groundwater resources in 2013 (see Appendix D). The Moretown bedrock formation on the western edge of town is a tight rock formation with lower groundwater yields. The Waits River Formation in the center to eastern side of town has looser rock with a greater flow of groundwater. The greatest groundwater yields were found near the Winooski River. Water samples from 17 wells were tested for arsenic, nitrate, fluoride, uranium, and gross alpha radiation; none of the samples exceeded state health standards.

The report states that the bedrock aquifers are recharged by local precipitation and spring snowmelt infiltrating into the ground. This reinforces the need to ensure that large groundwater withdrawals do not impact neighboring wells. Additionally, appropriate wastewater treatment, waste disposal, and pesticide and fertilizer practices are important to prevent groundwater contamination.

Goals and Actions

- **Goal 9.5:** Safeguard the quality and quantity of the town’s groundwater.
 - ❖ **Policy 9.5:** *Groundwater withdrawals for commercial water bottling are the lowest priority groundwater extractive use.*
 - ✓ **Action 9.5.1:** Ensure that groundwater withdrawals do not harm the citizens, existing uses, water systems, or ecosystems of East Montpelier.

D. EARTH RESOURCES

History

Historically, East Montpelier had relatively small sand and gravel quarries. A former gravel pit off Coburn Road is used as a swimming hole. The town once owned and operated its own small gravel pit off VT 14, but the material extracted from the site is now considered low-grade and unsuitable for town use.

Current Status

The town's bedrock geology is dominated by two formations of metamorphic origin. The Moretown formation along the western edge of town is rich in calcium carbonate, which produces richer, more alkaline soils with a higher pH. This tight rock formation has lower yields of groundwater. The Waits River Formation in the center and eastern side of town has looser rock with a greater flow of groundwater. Between the two formations is a middle band of rock that produces rich soils but is slightly tighter in composition with less flow of groundwater.

The town's surficial geology is dominated by glacial till or lacustrine (lake) deposits of varying thickness over bedrock. The thickest surficial deposits are located in the Winooski River Valley.

According to a 1960s era state map, there are no known viable sources of sand and gravel in town. More recent surficial geologic mapping by the state indicates possible sand and gravel deposits in localized areas. No commercial sand and gravel operations currently exist in town. The town purchases the sand and gravel it needs for roadwork from outside sources.

Extraction of soil, sand, and gravel is allowed as a Conditional Use in all five current zoning districts. However, sand and gravel deposits generally follow the course of streams and rivers, which are protected from extraction by state regulations. An Act 250 permit would be needed for any new proposed extraction activity. Large-scale earth resource extraction is not encouraged within East Montpelier.

Goals and Actions

- **Goal 9.6:** Any new or expanded earth resources extraction operations will be developed to minimize impacts on the environment and community.
 - ❖ **Policy 9.6:** *Earth resource extraction facilities shall not be located within villages or defined growth areas.*
 - ✓ **Action 9.6.1:** Review and update the *Land Use and Development Regulations* to ensure that development conditions address scale, screening, truck traffic, and protection of forest and riparian habitats and scenic resources.

E. FOREST RESOURCES AND INTEGRITY

History

East Montpelier's combination of forest and farmland has defined its landscape for over one hundred years. Forest resources contribute not only to the landscape but also to the economy, wildlife habitat, air and water quality, recreational opportunities, and quality of life for residents and visitors alike. With increased development and the threats of global warming, the management and conservation of our forests and other natural resources have become more important.

In 1962, the town purchased about 100 acres of land off Haggett Road, in the northern section of town, as a Town Forest. The Town Forest Committee developed a forest management plan for the property and has conducted several timber sales over the years. The most recent timber sale was in 1998 and resulted in nearly \$48,000 in revenues for the town.

According to local legend, Janet Macleod and her dog created the first trails in the Town Forest. After that Leon Harris, a neighboring property owner, began to clear and maintain trails, and continues to do so today. East Montpelier Trails Inc. maintains a through-trail that connects from the Town Forest entrance to Templeton Road.

Current Status

Approximately 58 percent (11,419 acres) of East Montpelier is forested (see Map 9). This is less than the 74 percent of Vermont that is forested, due in part to the abundance of open agricultural land in East Montpelier.

Publicly-owned forestland accounts for about 260 acres. This land includes the following:

- East Montpelier Town Forest (100 acres, town-owned);
- Wrightsville Dam (38 acres, state-owned);
- Baird property (45 acres, town-owned);
- Town garage (26 acres behind garage, town-owned);
- Benton property (11 acres, town-owned); and
- Coburn Pond property (41 wooded acres, state-owned).

Private landowners own the remaining forest acreage. Some are actively managed; others are not. Because the future of the forest is largely in private hands and because these landowners have a wide range of values and interests for their forestland, there are challenges and opportunities for managing and conserving forest resources in town.

As Map 9 shows, much of the town's forested land is either conserved or enrolled in the state's Current Use Value Program, which provides significant tax incentives for land owners who agree to keep woodland undeveloped and follow forest management plans.



Center Road (Jean Vissering)

In addition to East Montpelier's forests, approximately 59 miles of street and shade trees lie within the public right-of-way. These trees fall under the responsibility of the Town Tree Warden. Mature trees lining our roadways contribute to roadside scenery. These cultural treasures as well as trees surrounding other public spaces such as the school, cemeteries, and town offices need to be managed as community resources. They provide shade, reduce dust,

control soil erosion, and assist in traffic calming. The "Town Green", next to the Old Brick Church, will over time become a shady community gathering spot for local events. These amenities come with maintenance responsibilities.

East Montpelier is taking part in a Roadside Vegetation Assessment Project sponsored by the state Agency of Natural Resources Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation. The project will assist the town with developing strategies to improve and maintain roadside vegetation in order to help reduce runoff and erosion that contribute to stream sedimentation and pollution.

Forest Uses and Values

Harvesting of forest products is evident throughout town, both in terms of larger commercial operations and homeowner activities for domestic firewood and other uses. Other than firewood use, most of the timber cut in East Montpelier is processed outside of town. At one time there were several commercial sawmills operating in town. Presently, Fontaine's Sawmill on VT 14 North is the only local sawmill, producing lumber primarily for local trade use. There are several small-scale wood-using manufacturing businesses in town, but perhaps the largest users of forest products are the elementary and secondary schools which are heated primarily with wood chips.

Numerous sugar bushes dot the landscape in town as well as Christmas tree farms. These value-added forests provide additional income to forest landowners.

Forestland has many non-commodity values as well. Wildlife habitats, such as deeryards, and travel corridors are enhanced by a variety of forest types. Forests act as sponges, allowing precipitation to infiltrate into the ground, reducing flash flooding and recharging our aquifers. Forest buffers along streams play a critical role in maintaining water quality by reducing soil erosion and flooding and protecting riparian and aquatic communities. Finally, forests are highly valued for recreation and aesthetics. They greatly enhance outdoor activities such as walking, bicycling, horseback riding, snowmobiling, and hunting.

Protecting Forest Integrity

Our forests are exposed to a number of threats, perhaps the greatest of which is the conversion of forests to other uses. Conversion may stem from parcelization (subdividing a large parcel of land), changing landowner objectives, and development. Fragmentation of large forest blocks impacts wildlife habitat and natural processes, the integrity of natural communities, and the ability of foresters to effectively manage forest products. Property tax burdens are often cited as a reason for forestland conversion; enrollment in the Current Use Value program continues to be important for maintaining forest integrity.

The framework for protecting forest integrity focuses on protecting priority interior forest blocks and priority habitat connectivity blocks, as defined and mapped by the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR).

Large contiguous interior forest blocks that are not broken up by roads or development are particularly valuable ecologically. Connectivity blocks link larger habitat areas allowing for the movement of animals and plants.

Map 11 shows the locations of the priority and highest priority interior forest blocks and connectivity blocks, and highest priority wildlife crossings, as identified the state Agency of Natural Resources. The state identifies blocks that are greater than 20 acres; the town may have important smaller blocks that are not shown on this map.

Most of the priority and highest priority forest blocks are in the northern part of town and connect with similar contiguous forest blocks in Middlesex and Calais. The Longmeadow Hill area, in the northwest corner of town, provides habitat for a variety of wildlife species and is part of regionally-connected wildlife corridors suitable to animal species needing wide ranges.

The larger connectivity blocks allow wildlife to roam, to adapt to changes occurring in adjacent forested areas, and to changes in forest cover due to climate change. Riparian connections are

FOREST INTEGRITY TERMS
Definitions and mapping are from ANR

- **Forest Fragmentation:** the division or conversion of a forest block by land development other than by a recreational trail or use exempt from regulation.
- **Interior Forest Blocks:** areas of contiguous forest and other natural habitats that best provide interior forest conditions. Interior forest blocks are unfragmented by roads, development or agriculture.
 - * Highest Priority Interior Forest Blocks are the largest and/or highest ranked forest blocks and provide the foundation for interior forest habitat and associated ecological functions.
 - * Priority Interior Forest Blocks are highly ranked forest blocks that provide important forest habitat and as well as ecological support to the highest priority forest blocks.
- **Connectivity Blocks:** habitats that link larger patches of habitat within a landscape allowing the movement, migration and dispersal of animal and plants. Connectivity blocks include riparian areas along streams and rivers, strips of forest cover between developed areas and even hedgerows and fencerows. Sometimes these areas are called corridors, although they are not always linear.
 - * Highest Priority Connectivity Blocks are of the greatest importance for wildlife movement and genetic exchange.
 - * Priority Connectivity Blocks are perhaps of importance for wildlife movement and genetic exchange.
 - * Riparian Connectivity Blocks are lands along streams, rivers, lakes and ponds, including agricultural lands in pasture/hay, grasslands and other natural-cover types. Does not include agricultural land in cultivated crops.
 - * Wildlife Road Crossings are locations where wildlife is likely to cross roads based on the presence of adjacent natural cover.

also important within these forest blocks. The highest priority wildlife crossings are mostly located next to priority and highest priority forest blocks or along riparian areas.

Most of the priority areas important for forest integrity in East Montpelier are privately owned. As shown on Map 11, the majority of the priority and highest priority interior and connectivity forest blocks are conserved or enrolled in the state's Current Use program.

Efforts to protect forest integrity will require both regulatory approaches (e.g., *Land Use and Development Regulations*) and non-regulatory approaches (e.g., information on the value of forest integrity, forest management information, conservation easements, etc.).

Significant Natural Communities

Some forest areas are important because of the collection of plants and wildlife that occur together or because a rare species lives there. These habitats are known as significant natural communities. The state has mapped many of these significant habitats (see Map 12). Deer wintering areas, wetlands, and sites identified to have rare, threatened or endangered species are all considered significant natural communities. Significant natural communities may overlap with priority interior forest and/or connectivity blocks.

Physical landscape diversity is associated with significant natural communities. East Montpelier is underlain by calcium-rich bedrock associated with the Waits River Formation. Calcareous bedrock is associated with high biological diversity and rare species. In addition, some of the town's forested riparian areas are critical for river processes, aquatic biota, wildlife movement, biological diversity and other ecological functions. A rare physical landscape of water- and ice-deposited sediments along the Winooski River and Kingsbury Branch between US 2 and VT 14N is shown on Map 12.

There are no state-designated natural areas in East Montpelier; however, the Agency of Natural Resources has identified four sites with rare or significant natural communities that should be recognized and protected. Another three sites associated with Chickering Bog are within 1,500 feet of the East Montpelier town boundary.

Deer wintering areas occur in many areas of town. These are areas of softwood trees, such as hemlock and pine trees, that provide an important refuge for deer and other animals during harsh winters.

Opportunities and Challenges for the Future

East Montpelier's Town Forest on Haggett Road has not had a timber sale in many years. It is due for thinning, and at some point some very large, old pine trees may need to be removed. Wildlife habitat and recreational use will remain important values in its future management. The Baird parcel is unsuited to timber harvesting due to difficult access and terrain. However, it provides valuable wildlife habitat and diverse recreational opportunities including trails for snowmobiles, walking, and bicycling that are well used.

Even though most of the forestland in East Montpelier is privately owned, it is important to recognize that forests transcend private and political boundaries. They are integral parts of an ecosystem that support a variety of social and economic, and ecological values. Maintaining the

integrity of forestland is essential. Water quantity and quality, wildlife habitats, and recreational opportunities all rely upon fully-functioning forest systems.

Planning based on an ecosystem or landscape-scale approach, rather than a parcel-by-parcel approach, is critical to sustaining forest resources as part of the common wealth of the town, community, and region. Based on the priority forest blocks (both interior and connectivity blocks), this Town Plan identifies a Forest Integrity Study Area (see Maps 11 and 14) to help focus regulatory and non-regulatory forest integrity protection efforts. East Montpelier's *Land Use and Development Regulations* should be updated to provide clear and specific guidance for siting development and associated infrastructure to protect forestland. Energy siting guidelines discourage most energy development in significant forested areas. All of these approaches will be important.

Another concern is the increase in invasive, non-native plants. Japanese knotweed, European buckthorn, Japanese barberry, Japanese honeysuckle, hogweed, and wild chervil are just several of the multitudes of plants that are taking over native vegetation along our roadways, fields and forests. The town has worked to eradicate hogweed near the East Montpelier cemetery and has held a workshop on removing and controlling wild chervil. Many citizens have actively worked to eradicate invasive species on and near their properties, but more education and town-wide efforts are needed.

While not yet in East Montpelier, the potential introduction of invasive pests, especially highly destructive pests such as emerald ash borer, Asian long-horned beetle and hemlock woolly adelgid would have devastating consequences to the forests in our town. A final threat, one with far reaching consequences, is impacts from global climate change. Healthy forests will be critical in helping to address and adapt to a changing climate.

Goals and Actions

- **Goal 9.7:** Protect forest integrity.
 - ✓ **Action 9.7.1:** Review and update *Land Use and Development Regulations* to promote protection of priority forest blocks and riparian wildlife connectivity.
 - ✓ **Action 9.7.2:** Evaluate and implement non-regulatory approaches to promote forest integrity.

- **Goal 9.8:** Ensure that existing forest areas are managed for long-term sustainability.
 - ✓ **Action 9.8.1:** Work with landowners and conservation partners to conserve the town's most valued forestland.
 - ✓ **Action 9.8.2:** Provide workshops on stewardship and management of forest lands.
 - ✓ **Action 9.8.3:** Provide education on invasive species and promote annual efforts to eradicate invasive plants.
 - ✓ **Action 9.8.4:** Encourage use of local forest resources in municipal construction and development.

- **Goal 9.9:** Manage town-owned forests for habitat, recreational, and economic values.
 - ✓ **Action 9.9.1:** Update and implement the Town Forest Management Plan to address thinning, harvesting, access rights, recreation and wildlife habitat.
 - ✓ **Action 9.9.2:** Install new signage at the Haggett Road entrance to the Town Forest.
 - ✓ **Action 9.9.3:** Evaluate the health and integrity of woody vegetation in road rights-of-way and identify areas in need of improved management.



View from Guyette Road (Terry Allen)

F. AGRICULTURE

History

East Montpelier has been a farming community since its earliest days. Its fertile soils led nineteenth-century settlers to make great efforts to clear land for farming. In the early years of agriculture, the primary industry was raising sheep; in 1850, sheep in East Montpelier outnumbered cows by more than three to one. However, the collapse of the wool market after the Civil War shifted the town's agricultural base to dairy farming. By 1880 East Montpelier had 185 farms and 1,748 milk cows. By 1890 more than 70 percent of the land in town was cleared and used for farming.

Before the invention of modern milking machinery and refrigeration, cows were milked by hand; the main farm products were butter and cheese rather than fluid milk. In the early part of the twentieth century, two creameries served farmers in East Montpelier, and cream and butter were still the major commodities produced by the dairy industry.

During the twentieth century, improved transportation and the mechanization of agriculture opened new markets for fluid milk and fostered specialization in dairy farming. In 1901, there were 112 dairy herds in town with an average size of 16 milking cows. By 2017, only three dairy farms were left in town.



Cows crossing Snow Hill Road (Terry Allen)

The LESA System

At a 1988 Town Forum, residents were asked, “What do you want your town to look like in 20 years?” They identified agriculture and open-space protection as very important to the future of the town. The Planning Commission invited a group of interested residents to form the Agriculture and Open Space Committee. The same year, the town received a state grant for the mapping and evaluation of agricultural land in East Montpelier. The committee used these funds to develop a Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) system, a method for identifying important agricultural land in town.

LESA uses a set of criteria to evaluate agricultural land on a scale of 0 to 300 points. The system ranks the suitability of soils for agricultural purposes from 0 to 100. It then uses other criteria chosen by the committee as important to East Montpelier for the other 200 points. Criteria in this category include the location, size, and workability of a parcel. Aesthetic and recreation values are also factored in. The LESA system continues to be used by the Conservation Fund Advisory Committee to evaluate projects proposed for conservation funding. The system is also useful to the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB) in determining conservation funding priorities.

Farmland Conservation and the Current Use Value Program

In 1989, the town acted on the recommendation of the Agriculture and Open Space Committee to establish a land conservation fund. The purpose of this fund is to help preserve agricultural and other lands that were identified as important in the LESA system. During the 1990s, six agricultural land parcels were preserved using money from the Town Conservation Fund. Farm and forestland lands in town continue to be protected with assistance from a variety of land conservation organizations, such as the Vermont Land Trust, Trust for Public Lands, and others. Funding from the US Department of Agriculture’s Farm and Rangeland Protection Program or Forest Legacy Program is used as well.

In 2011, East Montpelier had conserved 3,095 acres. This increased to 3,786 conserved acres by 2017. As shown on Maps 9 and 10, a large proportion of the conserved land is farmland.

The town has strongly supported its agricultural community in other ways. Beginning in 1975, the town provided tax abatement contracts with farmers to encourage farming rather than development. Town-sponsored abatements were discontinued in 2013 because the Current Use tax stabilization program (formally known as the Use Value Appraisal Program) for farm and forestland became a simpler and more appropriate option. In 2011, there were 8,823 acres of East Montpelier’s agricultural and forestland enrolled in the Current Use Program. As of 2017, there were 9,752 acres enrolled.

Public Opinions on Agriculture

The 2011 town-wide survey reinforced the importance of agriculture to the community. Preservation of rural character through protection from development of open meadows, forest areas, and active farms were extremely important to individuals who completed the survey. Local zoning regulations were considered critical to the protection of open space and the prevention of strip development.

In 2003, East Montpelier residents voted on and passed a non-binding resolution concerning genetically engineered (GE) crops. State and federal legislation to prohibit or restrict the use of GE crops was not enacted. GE crops (also collectively grouped within genetically-modified organisms, or GMO) continue to be a cause for concern by some town residents. Commonly expressed concerns relate to interference with organic production and the wisdom of consuming GMOs.

Current Status

Agricultural Enterprises in East Montpelier

- Dairy farming
- Beef production
- Growing forage crops
- Growing Christmas trees
- Growing fruit crops, including apples, berries
- Growing vegetable crops
- Maple syrup production & maple products
- Other meat production (lamb, pork, chickens, turkeys, etc.)
- Value added products, including farm food processing
- Raising horses
- Goat and sheep dairy
- Greenhouse vegetable production
- Small-scale egg production
- Growing of herbs and flowers
- Agritourism and farm-based education

The two biggest and most prominent forms of agriculture in East Montpelier today are dairy farms followed by diversified farms fueled by the local food movement. Organic production is a growing trend in town and across Vermont.

Agricultural land is defined as any land used for crops, hay, or pasture. It also includes woodland managed for maple production, Christmas trees, orchards, and nursery stock. The presence of agriculture is obvious to anyone driving around town. Over 20 percent of the acreage in town is currently under cultivation, substantially more than other towns in Central Vermont. This is due to East Montpelier's location in an upland valley with fertile soils, gently rolling terrain, and a good quantity of rain; and also to the families who own farms or farmland and who have a strong commitment to land conservation.

East Montpelier has substantial areas with prime and statewide agricultural soils (see Map 12). These soils are particularly well-suited to agriculture. The presence of these soils is a major criterion for the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board to invest in agricultural land conservation and has contributed to the high proportion of conserved farmland in town.

Dairy Farming

Three dairy farms remained in town as of 2017: Fairmont Farm (a large conventional dairy), the McKnight Farm (a large organic dairy), and the Butler Farm (a small "natural" dairy). Much of the former Lylehaven farm is now owned and managed by Fairmont Farm.



Fairmont Farm (Jean Vissering)

Although there are fewer dairy farms, each supports larger herds. The total number of dairy cows has remained relatively stable over time; however, milk production per cow has increased requiring more land to feed these animals. A considerable portion of the prime and good agricultural soils in town is devoted to grass and corn silage production for dairy feed. The ability to produce high-quality grass and corn locally has contributed significantly to the continued success of East Montpelier farms. Much of this land is leased by the dairy farms from landowners who are not farmers. This demand for crops provides income to the landowner and enables many to keep good land open and in agricultural use. The larger dairy farmers also rent substantial crop acreage in nearby towns to provide enough feed for their cattle.

Today dairying is a very capital-intensive business with a narrow profit margin. Volatility in dairy pricing is influenced by national and global market factors that are beyond the control of our farmers. Overproduction in western states and globally and fluctuating, but often high, costs of energy and grain have had a large impact on dairy farm profitability. Clearly, dairy and livestock farms have had a profound positive impact on our community both economically and visually.

Diversified Farms and the Local Food Movement

East Montpelier has had a history of primarily smaller farms. Today some of these smaller farms have had somewhat of a renaissance due to the local food and farm to table movements. Even though a number of our farms have long been producing local food, recent years have seen a greater demand for these types of agricultural products. This is due to the fact that consumers today want to know who produces their food and where it comes from. Many also attribute health benefits, higher quality, and better flavor to locally produced food. Local food can also decrease energy use by reducing the need for long distance shipping.



Center Farm Sheep (Gary Ann Lewis)

In the past over 90 percent of Vermont's food was imported into the state, although this is changing. Small and large agricultural enterprises are producing a much broader range of all types of foods and value-added products. With increasing energy costs and possible disruption of energy sources it is prudent to produce more of our food right here in town. East Montpelier's proximity to Barre, Montpelier and Burlington has provided much greater marketing opportunities for diversified farming in town. Some of these products are marketed directly to consumers through farmers markets and community-supported agriculture (CSA) programs or to restaurants, stores, schools, and other institutions. It is likely the trend in local food production will continue and diversified agriculture may have an even greater presence in our town in the future.

Vermont Required Agricultural Practice Regulations

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets regulates all farming activities and requires compliance by all farms with Vermont Required Agricultural Practice (RAP) regulations. These apply to the construction and maintenance of farm structures as well as waste management and nutrient application in order to protect water quality. Compliance with RAP takes the place of local zoning regulations for agricultural practices, although all farm structures must comply with local zoning setbacks for buildings. Towns are allowed to regulate only very small agricultural activities.

Vermont law places a high value on keeping agricultural land in production, making the presumption that farming activities that comply with RAP regulations are not a nuisance. Title 12 Section 5753 of Vermont law reads: “Agricultural activities conducted on farmland, if consistent with good agricultural practices and established prior to surrounding non-agricultural activities shall be entitled to a rebuttable presumption that the activity does not constitute a nuisance.”

Agricultural Impacts on the Community

Agriculture is not without impacts, and a few concerns have been raised in recent years.

- Larger farms generate a fair amount of road traffic. In addition, farm equipment has become increasingly large, and heavy trucks are in regular use. Residents have, at times, raised concerns about farm traffic on local roads. Excessive speeds and noise are among the concerns raised. The weight of heavy equipment can also damage town roads.
- Runoff of soil, nutrients, and chemicals associated with farming are contributing to water quality concerns in lakes and streams statewide. Improved agronomic practices can minimize runoff from fields. These approaches require state incentives and enforcement as towns have little authority.
- Field mowing practices can endanger ground nesting grassland birds such as bobolinks. The Bobolink Project, a program sponsored by the Audubon societies of Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New Hampshire, provides guidance on best practices and an economic assistance program to enrolled farmers.
- Farmland conservation is not necessarily a good idea everywhere. The town wishes to concentrate growth within its villages and growth areas. Ensuring that sufficient developable and affordable land exists for future housing growth is an important town goal. Future land conservation for agricultural purposes will not meet the goals of this town plan. Village growth areas are best suited to housing and/or businesses growth. At present, East Montpelier Village is the only village with defined boundaries.

Goals and Actions

- **Goal 9.10:** Support a diverse agricultural community.
 - ✓ **Action 9.10.1:** Consider provisions in the *Land Use and Development Regulations* that accommodate agricultural enterprises such as tourism and events, farm stands, sales of value-added products, and recreation.
 - ✓ **Action 9.10.2:** Ensure that subdivision, access, and rights-of-way preserve the viability of productive farmland.
 - ✓ **Action 9.10.3:** Showcase local agricultural products at town events.

- **Goal 9.11:** Encourage farming practices that protect wildlife habitat, water quality, and soil productivity.
 - ✓ **Action 9.11.1:** Ensure land conservation easement includes appropriate stream and roadside buffers to minimize agricultural run-off.
 - ✓ **Action 9.11.2:** Encourage productive field-mowing schedules that protect grassland birds.

- **Goal 9.12:** Support the conservation of prime and actively-used farmland outside of village and growth areas.
 - ✓ **Action 9.12.1:** Coordinate conservation efforts with landowners and conservation organizations to ensure that town goals are met.
 - ✓ **Action 9.12.2:** Use the Conservation Fund to support farmland conservation that meets town goals.



Agricultural fields along Vincent Flats Road (Kate Bean)

G. SCENIC RESOURCES

History

For much of its history, East Montpelier has been a town of enviable scenic beauty. The town is situated in the broad Winooski River valley, almost completely surrounded by low hills and mountains distant enough to provide long views.

The town has undergone considerable change to its scenic character in the past century; this includes changes in land use, advances in farm management techniques, development, loss of trees such as elms and chestnuts (while gaining overall in forested area), and loss of a number of older structures, including houses, barns, bridges, and stone walls.

Current Status

East Montpelier's gently rolling topography and rich soils have sustained a broad tapestry of fields and meadows that give the town a distinctly open landscape with frequent views toward the surrounding and distant hills and mountains. The town's scenic beauty is the result of a small-scaled and intimate landscape of villages, farmsteads, and homes in the midst of a varied pattern of field and forest. In addition to roadside views, many of the wilder back lots are familiar to residents because of their accessibility by an extensive network of walking and snowmobile trails.



Sparrow Farm (Bob Klein)

The average tourist driving through East Montpelier on US 2, however, may have a quite different impression of the town. While this perspective offers beautiful views of the Winooski River and the opportunity to visit a classic country store, US 2 is becoming increasingly characterized by numerous small commercial businesses organized into strip development patterns. New electrical infrastructure, including commercial solar projects, larger distribution and Phase 3 transmission lines are beginning to change roadsides as well.

East Montpelier Village remains an important focal point of the town with numerous historic buildings. Recent improvements include a town green in front of the Old Brick Church, entry signs, new sidewalks, and bike lanes. North Montpelier and East Montpelier Center are also important scenic focal points.

Subdivisions in town have most often consisted of a few lots. Nevertheless, this incremental development can result in eroding rural character especially when they are poorly planned with houses sprawling across former open meadows with numerous roads and drives that inefficiently cut up the landscape. By contrast, the Sparrow Farm provides an example of accommodating a number of new homes while protecting the most scenic and valuable open space.

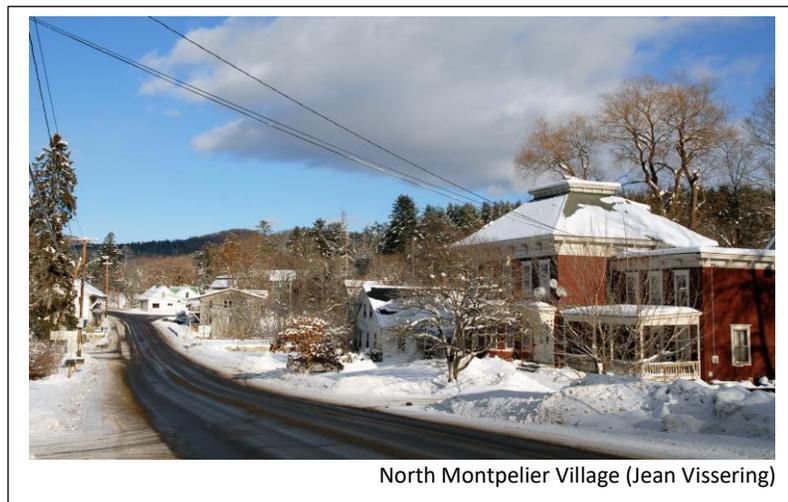
Historically, development in the rural areas of town has been located close to roads, with buildings usually oriented either parallel or perpendicular to the road. Houses and outbuildings oriented randomly in numerous directions, rather than in tight and orderly historic patterns, can create discordant patterns of development that are more suburban than rural in character. Siting development at the edge of valued open agricultural fields or intact woodland blocks, rather than within them, can help retain rural character. Clustering buildings and structures, reducing visibility of parking and other discordant structures, and sharing driveways can also help.

A few significant steps have been taken over the past few decades to protect the scenic and rural character of the town. Perhaps most important has been the conservation of numerous agricultural fields, forest land, wetlands, and other significant landscapes that contribute to the scenic beauty of East Montpelier. The town evaluated the relative value of farm and forest lands using a methodology called the LESA system (Land Evaluation and Site Assessment). Scenic values were part of the evaluation system, although secondary to the agricultural and timber production values of these lands. This systematic approach to evaluating the scenic, recreational, forestry, and agricultural values has helped the town procure funding from the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board to protect a number of valuable farms, forest lands, and trail corridors in town. The town's Conservation Fund is also valuable, providing essential contributions to these acquisitions.

Identifying Scenic Resources

The following six characteristics of rural landscapes were identified in the 2011 Town Survey as highly valuable, and are known to contribute to scenic quality generally.

Village Centers and Hamlets



East Montpelier's village settlements add diversity to the landscape and create cultural focal points. The clear distinction between these concentrated settlements and the surrounding landscape dominated by open space is critical to the scenic character of East Montpelier. All three villages retain historic settlement patterns that include buildings in close proximity, usually oriented at right angles to each other and

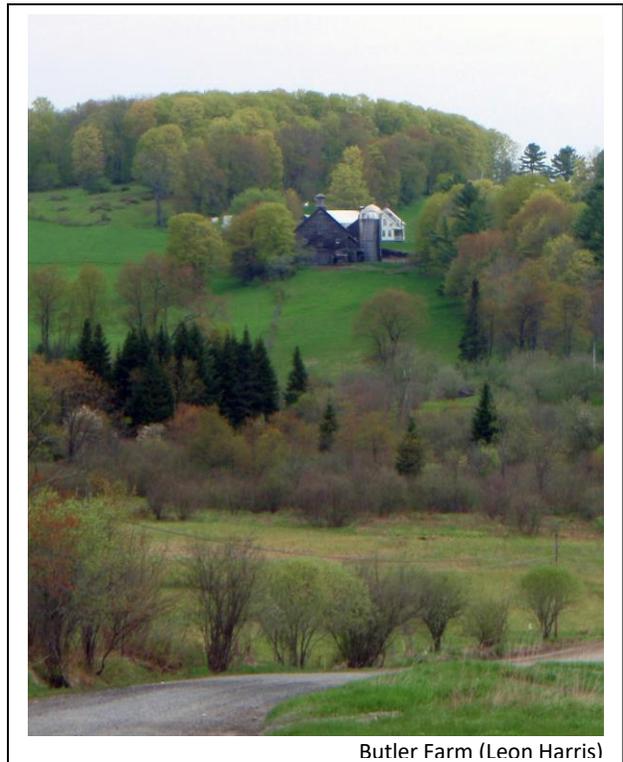
to the road. Development tends to be one lot deep but often a lot includes a cluster of several buildings such as a house, barn, and outbuildings.

Historic and/or natural focal points in East Montpelier Village include the Old Brick Church, C.P. Dudley Store, and the Winooski River. In North Montpelier, scenic resources include historic old mills and residences, the falls, and the pond. Scenic resources in East Montpelier Center include the Old Meetinghouse Church and the historic Parley Davis House.

Each village has a distinct character. East Montpelier Village includes a mix of commercial and institutional uses along with residential and home occupations. North Montpelier has a mix of residential and home occupations but has lost its commercial uses in recent years. Both are located along state highways. East Montpelier Center is quieter and more residential in character and the village is strongly integrated with its agricultural surroundings. The Center Farm is located right in the village.

Rural Agricultural and Open Lands

Outside of the village centers, most of East Montpelier is characterized by farmsteads and residential uses separated by large areas of fields and forestland. The abundance of open meadows distinguishes East Montpelier from other central Vermont towns. It creates diverse patterns of crop fields, hay fields, pasture, sugarbush, wetland, and wildland. Active farms are essential to maintaining these diverse patterns in the landscape. The 2011 Town Survey overwhelmingly identified agricultural uses as vitally important to the town with scenic character. Protecting open agricultural meadows to the greatest extent possible will be critical to retaining East Montpelier's scenic and rural character.



Butler Farm (Leon Harris)

Distant and Middleground Views

The abundance of open meadowland provides numerous opportunities for views around town. Many spectacular views include distant mountains such as the Green Mountains, Worcester Range, Marshfield Cliffs, or Spruce Mountain. Some even include the White Mountains in New Hampshire. Foreground meadows enhance many views. They are the windows to distant views, but they are critical to the quality of the view itself. Middleground views often include patterns of field and forest and sometimes a local natural or cultural focal point such as Sibley Farm as seen along Sibley Road or from Lyle Young Road.

Ponds and River Corridors

Water features nearly always contribute to scenic quality. One of the most important in East Montpelier is the Winooski River which meanders along US 2 until it veers off part way to

Plainfield and winds its way under the old covered bridge on Coburn Road. Views of the river are often enhanced by floodplain meadows, but in a few places, development has impaired the view. There has been recent interest in improving both visual and physical access to the Winooski River. In particular, residents of East Montpelier Village have discussed the possibility of a River Walk along the banks of the Winooski within the village. The Kingsbury Branch through North Montpelier Village offers similar opportunities.

East Montpelier also has several ponds including North Montpelier Pond, Sodom Pond, Horn of the Moon Pond and the 6-acre swimming hole known as Coburn Pond accessed from Coburn Road. North Montpelier and Sodom Ponds also have frontage in the town of Calais.

Roadsides

Narrow gravel roadways are an important part of East Montpelier's scenic and rural character. Some of these roadways are further enhanced by roadside features such as stone walls or old maple trees.

Hilltops and Ridgelines

Ridgelines are particularly important because they are often viewed from many locations and provide a backdrop for other scenic features. East Montpelier has some distinct ridgelines and a number of prominent hilltops. Long Meadow Hill is one of the highest and forms a natural backdrop for much of the western part of town. Other hilltops provide opportunities for distant views, such as the high meadows behind Fairmont Farm along the East Montpelier trail system.

Significant Scenic Resources

The town values its many scenic views. Specific areas in town with exceptional scenic values are identified in the table below. All views are accessible from public roads as shown on Map 12. Other scenic areas exist, including the town's extensive network of trails. ~~but~~ However, roadside views are experienced by the largest number of people. All significant scenic roadways include at least two exemplary examples of the scenic characteristics described above. With the exception of villages, all are intact landscapes with minimal development other than historic homes and barns. All include diverse elements such as fields, meadows, water features, wooded hillsides, distant views, and/or old roadside trees. Historic villages are the focal points of the rural landscape and feature many historic structures.

Development is not prohibited within these scenic areas; however, careful siting, design, and in some cases screening shall be required in order to protect the identified characteristics of these views. Foreground areas (within ½ mile) are particularly sensitive to visual impacts. Their proximity means that we see far more detail than in more distant areas. Larger solar projects designed to serve more than the needs of individual residences, commercial or institutional needs (villages), an individual farm or a small group of residences shall not be permitted in these viewsheds. Screening and careful siting of new development and facilities, including solar projects and communications towers, ~~smaller projects~~ will be critical to protect resource values. ~~(See Energy and Energy Conservation).~~

Significant Scenic Views Along Public Roads in East Montpelier (see Map 12)			
Location	Description	Distance (Miles)	Scenic Resource Type
North Street and Sparrow Farm Road	Distant views to Worcester Range, Camels Hump, and Mount Ellen; foreground meadows, farm structures, large roadside trees	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural Agricultural and Forest Land Distant Views Roadside Features Historic Farm Structures
Cummings Road	Distant views to SW to Camels Hump and Mount Ellen; foreground meadows	.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distant Views Rural Agricultural Land
Horn of the Moon Road, Jacobs Road, and Sanders Circle	Distant Views to Worcester Range and Camels Hump. Foreground views to Long Meadow Hill and Horn of the Moon Pond, meadows, and farm structures	1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distant Views Rural Agricultural and Forest Land Historic Farm Structures Hilltops and Ridgelines Water Feature
County Road south of Haggett Road	Distant view to east toward White Mountains, foreground agricultural field and White Cemetery	.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distant Views Rural Agricultural and Forest Land
Center Road South	Foreground open meadows on both sides of Center Road with views to the Green Mountains and middleground hills. Historic farmstead is on the north side of the road near top of hill.	.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distant Views Rural Agricultural and Forest Land Historic Farm Structures
Center Road North	Scenic road with several historic farms, a large sugarbush, mature roadside maple trees, diverse mix of open meadows and forest land; views to Sodom Pond and surrounding rural landscape	2.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Middleground Views Rural Agricultural and Forest Land Historic Farm Structures Roadside Features Water Feature
Sibley Road/ Putnam Road	Scenic road with three historic farmsteads and barns set in an open agricultural landscape	1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distant Views Rural Agricultural and Forest Land Historic Farm Structures
Intersection of Dodge, Putnam, Snow Hill and Vincent Flats Roads	Views to east along Snow Hill Road to Marshfield cliffs and the Spruce Mountain ranges; foreground pattern of fields and forests in the foreground with some residential structures. Views looking west to the historic Four Corners Schoolhouse.	.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distant Views Rural Agricultural and Forest Land Historic Structures Hilltops and Ridgelines
Clark Road south of East Hill Road	Distant views to west of Camels Hump and Worcester Range, foreground open meadows.	.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distant Views Rural Agricultural and Forest Land
East Montpelier Center (Hamlet)	A cluster of tightly knit homes and a working farm with the Old Meetinghouse Church as a focal point. Open agricultural meadows and forest land surround East Montpelier Center	.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Historic Buildings Rural Agricultural and Forest Land Hamlet
North Montpelier Village	A distinct village with historic homes, old factory buildings, and a former village store. North Montpelier Pond (partially in Calais) and Kingsbury Branch enhance views.	.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Historic Buildings Village Water Features
East Montpelier Village	Historic center of town with numerous historic structures in a traditional village pattern. Old Brick Church, Dudley’s Store, an old Schoolhouse (now municipal offices), along with the Winooski River are important focal points.	.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Historic Buildings Village Water Feature

The Future

To a large extent, the town has benefitted from a relatively slow rate of growth, along with the deliberate conservation efforts by many landowners in town. Many of the town's foreground and distant views are now permanently protected. As numerous people noted in the Town Survey, despite living right next door to our state's capital, East Montpelier enjoys a rural landscape with relatively quiet back roads. However, owners of larger properties including existing farmland may wish to sell or subdivide these properties. Moreover, citizens have expressed a desire to encourage growth, especially within our identified villages and growth areas. Town residents have expressed interest in providing more affordable land and housing within these areas. Renewable energy facilities also have the potential to create aesthetic impacts.

Growth and development does not mean sacrificing the scenic and rural character of our landscape. Planning and regulatory efforts, along with occasional financial investments are needed to guide growth in a positive manner. Implementation of the *East Montpelier Village Master Plan* will enhance the visual character of the village, and planned revisions to the *Land Use and Development Regulations* will discourage strip development and help protect scenic views.

Goals and Actions

➤ **Goal 9.13:** Protect East Montpelier's significant views.

❖ **Policy 9.13:** *Development within identified significant viewsheds shall not unduly detract from the identified scenic values, with particular attention given to development in the foreground (within 1/2 mile) of the viewpoint. All reasonable siting and design techniques shall be used to minimize impacts on views, including but not limited to: siting development at the edge of views; using natural vegetation and/or topography to screen prominent or discordant elements of development, such as parking, storage and private utility structures; limiting the size and scale of structures; and using Planned Unit Development to maintain compact patterns that do not encroach on viewsheds.*

✓ **Action 9.13.1:** Land conservation efforts should include protecting identified scenic viewsheds especially foreground areas.

✓ **Action 9.13.2:** Provide guidance in the *Land Use and Development Regulations* for protecting characteristic scenic resources throughout the town with particular attention to identified scenic views.

✓ **Action 9.13.3:** Review and identify, as needed, updates to the Significant Scenic Views. In addition, consider views from permanently protected publicly accessible town trails for designation as Significant Scenic Views.

- ❖ **Goal 9.14:** Retain the scenic rural character of town roadways.
- ✓ **Action 9.14.1:** Develop and implement road maintenance policies that minimize road widths and retain roadside vegetation particularly along identified scenic roadways.
- ✓ **Action 9.14.2:** Ensure that *Land Use and Development Regulations* encourage compact development that protects scenic and natural resources.



Views of the Worcester Range (Jean Vissering)