




Table 4-1		<u>Unique Natural Features in Bennington</u>	
1	Whipstock Hill	Exposure of the rock type Wildflysch Conglomerate, illustrating the development of the Taconic Mountains.	
2	Everett Cave	Solution cave with dripstone formations in Mt. Anthony.	
3	Jewett Brook Marsh	Scenic pen water marsh providing important habitat for many plants and animal species.	
4	Tuliptrees	Large two-stemmed tuliptree and several smaller ones on Mt. Anthony.	
5	Mount Anthony	Scenic landmark whose synclinal nature is well-exposed around its northern end.	
6	Silk Road Alluvial Forest	Canopy of elm, sycamore, and eastern cottonwood, also containing a shrub swamp.	
7	Silk Road Woods	Wooded area containing uncommon species.	
8	Pit of Misery	Open pit on the lower slopes of Mt. Anthony	
9	Stratton Brook Falls	Scenic falls along Stratton Brook descending from Bald Mountain.	
10	Wetland Plant Community	A rare sedge, <i>Carex schweinitzii</i> , growing in this wetland is found in fewer than 10 sites statewide.	
11	Serendipity Fen	Rich fen within a 100+ acre wetland.	
12	McCullough Woods	Mixed northern hardwoods forest of old growth white pine, sugar maple, beech, elm, and red oak.	
13	Bald Mountain	Boreal outcrop community with areas of talus.	
14	Cemetery Meadows	Meadow containing the rare plant, arrow-leaved aster (<i>Aster sagittifolius</i>).	

Whipstock Hill Exposure

Jewett Brook Marsh

Talus slope on Bald Mountain

and unique natural communities in the area. Information on other significant natural areas, including geologic features such as caves, waterfalls, and rock outcroppings has been separately compiled by the Vermont Natural Resources Council and the Bennington Country Regional Commission. These areas and the lands immediately around them must be protected from incompatible development. The locations of the resources identified in Table 4-1 are displayed on Map 4-3.

In addition to these natural areas, a number of important individual tree specimens are found in Bennington. The Department of Natural Sciences at Castleton State College compiled a registry of Vermont's largest trees and five of those state champion trees are in Bennington. All of these trees are in residential areas and the owners have been made aware of their presence. Special efforts should be made to protect these trees and other attractive mature trees in the community. Site plans for new developments shall identify and preserve these important trees.

4.3 Scenic Resources

The scenic quality of the landscape is one of Bennington's most important assets. The visual appearance of the Town's natural and built environment, and the quality of life that it represents, is important to residents, tourists, businesses, and to future economic development.

Bennington is characterized by its expansive valley that has been able to support a rich variety of rural and urban development. That development has occurred in close proximity to

distinctive upland features which have themselves limited and channeled the direction of such growth. The varied nature of the valley landforms and built environment juxtaposed with wild and abrupt mountainsides gives Bennington its unique sense of place.

Many individual factors come together to create Bennington's special visual landscapes. These "scenic elements" reflect both characteristics that are unique to Bennington and certain features that are widely recognized as adding visual interest to a landscape. The Bennington Planning Commission recently completed a Scenic Resource Inventory (December 2004) that discusses each of these elements in detail: open fields, mountains, water, distant views, gateways, scenic roads and public places, historic sites and districts, and the Bennington Battle Monument.



Bennington's natural and built environment combine to create a truly unique sense of place with outstanding scenic qualities.

The Scenic Resource Inventory also discusses how those features are organized in the landscape to create pleasing views. The "visual qualities" of landscape contrast, order and harmony, focal points, spatial quality, and intactness that make a particular view special and unique to the community must be protected to retain the integrity of the resource.

The scenic quality of a landscape can be affected, positively or negatively, by change. A number of landscape features are particularly sensitive to change, among them: views across open fields, prominent ridgelines or hillsides, historic buildings and districts and gateways to those districts, and scenes that include important contrasting elements such as water.

The Town's land use plan and regulations are designed to reinforce the scenic quality of the landscape by focusing development in historic village centers and preserving the rural character of the outlying countryside. Special regulations also have been adopted that preserve scenic resources by requiring aesthetically sensitive design of subdivisions and commercial buildings. In addition, zoning regulations establish very specific standards and review procedures for new and altered buildings in the Town's designated historic design review district.

Nonregulatory tools also can be used to protect identified scenic resources. The Town should work with conservation organizations such as the Vermont Land Trust to acquire properties, or conservation or scenic easements to properties, that have particular scenic significance to the community. Local and state designated scenic roads, such as Route 9, the "Molly Stark Trail Scenic Byway" can help provide funding and impetus for preserving and promoting scenic roadway corridors.

Special attention should be given to visual gateways: points of transition along a public highway where it is evident that the traveler is arriving at a unique place. Gateways are located at entry points to the historic downtown and at places along rural highways where significant visual elements of the Town's landscape first appear. These features can be improved through effective planning of adjacent land uses and integration of site features such as landscaping and careful placement of historic district signs.