

# Town of Monmouth Comprehensive Plan

*Adopted June 12, 2007*



# Monmouth Comprehensive Plan 2007 Update

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## Chapter 1: Monmouth's Historic and Cultural Context

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Monmouth today is the outcome of centuries of growth and change. A sense of our history and culture is essential to an understanding of our present and future. This chapter summarizes these aspects of the town.

*The following "Thumbnail History" of Monmouth was taken from the Rootsweb Internet site. Its origin and author are unknown:*

Located at the southern end of Kennebec County in lush agricultural land that has become noted for the production of high quality apples, the town of Monmouth encompasses an area of almost twenty-five [actually, thirty-eight – ed.] square miles. Initially part of the English Plymouth Company's grant, the town was incorporated as a plantation and included the territory that is now the town of Wales in Androscoggin County.

The first white settlers came from New Meadows (near Brunswick) and the first cabin was built in the town in 1775 by Thomas Gray, an old hunter and trapper, and his son James. Other settlers followed from New Meadows in the next several months and their cabins adorned the many, choice meadows of the growing community.

The land on which they settled, and called Freetown, was the lawful property of a Tory, William Vassal, of Boston, who returned after the Revolution to claim his land and to demand outrageous prices for the improvements the settlers had made on "his" lands. The settlers united in the defense of their properties, but were eventually forced into settlement of two or three dollars per acre for titles to the land.

Henry Dearborn, who made the trip to Quebec with the Arnold expedition in 1775, became a general in the Continental Army during the Revolution, served in a similar capacity in the War of 1812, and was later Secretary of War, exchanged some land in his native New Hampshire for 5,000 acres of "wild land" in Maine, and found the early settlers "squatting" on his property here. After agreeing to a fair price for the improvements done to his land, Dearborn built the first [permanent] house in the settlement. Two of his brothers and six neighbors came from Epping, New Hampshire, to settle on Dearborn's land about 1782. Among the Epping men was John Chandler, who built a frame house across from the present Academy. He was prominent in local, county and state affairs, and was elected one of Maine's two United States senators when statehood was gained in 1820.

Probably the first Town Meeting was held sometime in 1780 and the town had become known as Bloomingboro. At a town meeting held at Ichabod Baker's house on Friday, August 24, 1781, it was voted "that the Destrict wherin we now reside shall be known by the name of Wales . . ." and so the plantation was named out of respect for settler John Welch, whose ancestors had come from Wales.

During the Revolution, General Dearborn firmly established his brilliance and skill as a military leader at the Battle of Monmouth, New Jersey. Out of respect to the general, a Town Meeting held on December 21, 1789, voted to petition for an act of incorporation as a town and to name it Monmouth. The general's brother, Simon, was chosen to forward the request to the Massachusetts General Court. The act of incorporation passed January 20, 1792.

From its founding, Monmouth has been governed by an assembly of citizens who gather annually to determine expenditures and other major legislation affecting the town for the coming fiscal year, in the tradition of the New England Town Meeting. On occasion, special town meetings are called for some specific legislative purpose.

At early town meetings, citizens delegated the authority for the daily operation of town government to elected selectmen, charged with conducting the functions of the executive branch of town government. Since 1948, Monmouth has employed a full-time town manager, who serves in a daily executive capacity, is town clerk, tax collector, and fulfills such other duties as the selectmen and Town Meeting shall direct.

The judicial function of the community was served by trial justices and justices of the peace throughout the colonial period of the town's growth and into the Nineteenth Century. Presently, the judicial needs of the town have been assumed by the state through its district and superior court systems.

Two school districts were established and a school built in the plantation about 1790. By 1797, there were four districts in the town. By the time Maine became a state in 1820 there were 14 districts in the community.

In 1801, ten citizens petitioned the general court for a grant of land in the undeveloped portion of Maine to support a free grammar school. From sources including the Plymouth Company, Lady Elizabeth Temple, John Chandler, and General Dearborn, more than \$1,500 was raised, and the General Court passed the act of incorporation in 1803 along with a grant of 1500 acres of wild land, later increased to 10,020 acres. From this beginning came Monmouth Academy and its reputation as one of the oldest and best college preparatory schools in the state.

The first settlers established themselves on the low lands near the present Wales line, but by the beginning of the Nineteenth Century there was a substantial settlement on the hill where Monmouth Academy stands today. When the railroad came through Monmouth in 1849 following the level lands abutting the lakes, the center of population shifted to Monmouth Center. As the population grew, settlements at the north, east and south parts of town were established.

At the Center, early businesses included Daniel Witherell's and John Hawes' blacksmith shops, Captain Judkins' tavern, Captain Judkins' tannery, General Chandler's potash factory, Ard Macomber's tannery and bark mill, and John Welch, Jr.'s brickyard. Other businesses at the Center have been a moccasin shop, clothing factory, blanket mill, makers of dowels, barrels, packing cases, and stencils, and a corn shop, all since gone.

Businesses likewise developed around the waterpower in the north and east parts of the town. Joseph Chandler opened a store at the East in 1807 and about the same time in the

North village. Lumber was the earliest industry in the East and in all parts of the town where waterpower permitted, lumber and grist mills flourished. A fulling mill went into operation at North Monmouth in 1808, and in 1829, four years after the damming of Wilson Pond, a woolen mill was established there. This community boasted such diverse operations as a peg factory, a horse-power factory, tape weaving, heel-iron factory, brickyard, starch factory, grist mill, axe and shovel factory, among others.

Monmouth's Matthew Blossom took a contract to carry mail between Portland and Augusta in 1795, and before the middle of the nineteenth century all four sections of the Monmouth community supported post offices.

The first cheese factory, in Monmouth was established in 1881, burned in 1889, it was rebuilt. It made 2800 lbs. of cheese and 1400 lbs. of butter a week in 1891. The Monmouth Packing Co., established prior to 1892, provided a market for local agricultural products through preservation and shipping techniques.

The industrial community of North Monmouth was virtually wiped out by the disastrous fire of 1841, and a similar disaster occurred in the Center in 1888.

Beginning at the turn of the century, Monmouth's population dropped and the community's ability to attract and maintain employment opportunities waned as well. Within the past few decades, the population has again grown to nearly the level of the 1890 census [actually, the 2000 population is more than double the Nineteenth Century peak of 1,925, which occurred in 1850. See Chapter 2 – ed.] and a resurgence of jobs in the community has meant more job opportunity for local people.

**AGRICULTURE:** The Monmouth Farmers' and Mechanics' Club was organized in the winter of 1871-72, and sponsored town fairs for a number of years. A trotting park was built in 1871 in Monmouth. The Cochnewagan Agricultural Society was formed at a meeting at the Grange Hall, August 31, 1907, and held its first Monmouth Fair that year at the newly acquired Cumston Park, a bequest to the town by Dr. Charles M. Cumston.

Highmoor Farm was one of the leading horse-breeding farms in the county prior to the turn of the century. It was established by Rev. James R. Day, chancellor of Syracuse University. Today, Highmoor Farm conducts extensive research into apple development and other agricultural crops as the State Experimental Farm.

The Woolworth Farm at East Monmouth for many years has been raising and racing fine horses. Clemeadow Farm, currently operated by the third and fourth generation Smiths, on South Main Street, is the community's leading milk producer.

Monmouth's apple industry can be traced to 1795 when Isaac Smith settled here from Middleborough, Mass., and started a nursery with some of the hardiest and best fruit. Smith is credited with originating the variety Smith's Favorite. In 1876, Smith and son, of Monmouth, cultivated 3,000 trees. In 1892, leading orchardists were D. M. Marston, 1,200 trees; Rev. J. R. Day, 2,600 trees; George W. Waugh, 1,200 trees; George W. Fogg, 1,000 trees.

**CHURCHES:** The first recorded series of religious meetings were held in 1783. In 1787 a committee was formed to see about establishing a settled minister in the community.

The evangelist Jesse Lee began his work in Maine in 1793 and the first Methodist class in Maine was held here in 1794.

Presently the community is served by the East Monmouth United Methodist Church, North Monmouth Community Church, North Monmouth Pentecostal Assembly, St. Francis Xavier Church of Winthrop, South Monmouth Free Will Baptist Church, United Church of Monmouth, and Victory Baptist Church.

**ORGANIZATIONS:** The Monmouth Grange was organized October 10, 1874, and occupied the hall on Main Street in the Center until recently. Monmouth Lodge, No. 110 A.F. & A.M., was chartered by the Grand Lodge of Maine May 21, 1861. Its first meetings were held over the chapel of the Christian Church in North Monmouth. In 1882 the lodge removed to Monmouth Center and met in the Grange Hall until quarters were completed in the upper story of that building. The lodge later moved to the former Congregational Church building just south of the Center, where it continues to prosper.

Among the other community organizations are the PTC Club, for parents of elementary school students; the Knights of Pythias, Lions Club, the Monmouth Museum and the Monmouth Historical Society. Cumston Hall presently houses the Theater at Monmouth repertory company.

### **Archeological and Historic Resources:**

Despite frequent fires and the ravages of time, Monmouth has several preserved links to its past history. Formal identification and protection for historic structures is embodied in listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register currently lists three properties in Monmouth:

- **Cumston Hall:** A public building of imposing architectural standard, Cumston Hall has been on the National Register listing for over 30 years. The hall was built and dedicated to the town in 1900 by Dr. Charles Cumston. It has served as the town hall and is now the cultural center of town. (Photo, page 6)

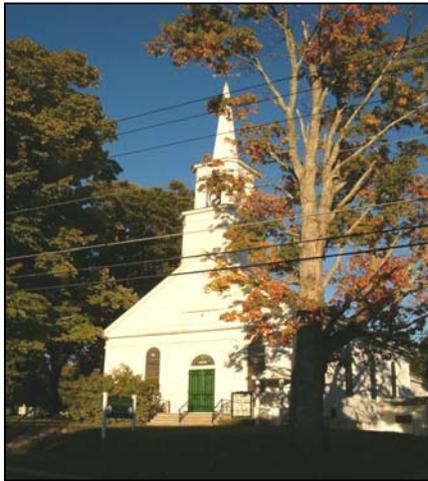


The recent Centennial Project has added many improvements to this grand, old building. Life safety improvements include fire detection and sprinkler equipment, a complete electrical upgrade, a state-of-the-art HVAC system, and an elevator that makes three floors handicapped-accessible. Restoration of the extraordinary architecture still continues, including restoration of all stained-glass windows and wall and ceiling decorations. All restoration has been done following strict guidelines of the Maine Historic Preservation Commission. Additional information on the hall is below, under Cultural Resources.

- The Blossom House, a privately-owned building, is one of the oldest homes in Monmouth. Built prior 1825, Blossom House is an example of Federal-style architecture. It is currently part of the Monmouth Museum complex.
- Monmouth Academy. The original Academy, across from the current high school, is now the middle school. Monmouth Academy was established in 1803, though not in this building.



Other structures in town are known to exhibit historic qualities, but for a variety of reasons, are not listed on the National Register. Such buildings as East Monmouth Methodist Church, the United Church (Monmouth Center), the Masonic Hall, the North Monmouth Community Building, the Shorey House, the blacksmith shop, the Carriage House, and the stencil-maker's shop must be considered as part of Monmouth's architectural heritage.



The Monmouth Museum, a private non-profit organization, owns and manages many of the historic structures, as well as artifacts from Monmouth's past. The museum was founded in 1970 by Earle Flanders, who originally opened the blacksmith shop to public viewing. The museum now owns nine buildings, six of which are open to the public. Some of the collection of artifacts is housed in a fireproof vault in Cumston Hall. The museum serves primarily as an educational tool for local school

groups, entertaining 300-400 visitors a year. In recent years, it has also handled a large number of genealogical inquiries.

The Maine Historic Preservation Commission records information on historic and prehistoric archeological sites in the state. Though sketchy, archeological records for Monmouth indicate at least 19 pre-historic campsites in town. Lakeshores, including islands, and river shores are the most probable sites for archeological resources. Most discovery is done in conjunction with development projects, such as dams, bridges, or new construction. Archeological sites are, however, generally kept unpublished, to avoid contamination or treasure hunting.



Monmouth's heritage is also reflected in its landscape. The fairgrounds (part of the original Cumston Park) are a good link with Monmouth's heritage. Local cemeteries are also important areas to explore our heritage. Prominent local cemeteries include Monmouth Center, North Monmouth, and Lyons Cemeteries.

### **Cultural Resources:**

Indisputably the foremost cultural facility in Monmouth, and one of the finest in the state as well, the aforementioned Cumston Hall dominates Monmouth Center. The Hall's primary function is to house the Theater at Monmouth, a summer theater company, though it also accommodates the Cumston Free Public Library. The building is owned by the Town and managed by a Board of Trustees. In addition to the Monmouth Community Players, other organizations that use the hall regularly include three school drama companies, the boy scouts, girl scouts, non-profit, and for-profit groups.

Cumston Hall's stated mission is to expand and provide a civic and business meeting center, as well as an entertainment and cultural center, for the people of Monmouth and the region. The Hall estimates that over 40,000 people per year utilize the building or attend events there. Theater nights draw crowds to Monmouth Center from far and wide, and provide a definite economic as well as cultural boost to the town.

The Cumston Free Public Library is one of two libraries in the town. The library area has been recently consolidated and renovated, and now provides a range of services including Internet access areas, children, and young adult areas, and added stacks. The library has more than 18,000 volumes and 3,000 patrons, with a circulation of between 23,000 and 27,000 annually. A separate Board of Trustees oversees the library. Staff include a Director, a Children's Assistant, three part time aides, and several volunteers. The library is open 25 hours a week, including two evenings and Saturdays.



The North Monmouth Library is operated and financed by an independent Library Association. There have been recent discussions concerning the fate of the library, particularly its funding from the Town and the status of the building. The library has 3,000 volumes, and is open about eight hours per week.

The Monmouth Museum is the other major cultural entity in Monmouth. It has been described previously in the Historic Resources section.

### **Historic and Cultural Resources – Issues and Findings:**

Monmouth’s “built” heritage is preserved through the efforts of the Town, the Cumston Hall Trustees, and Monmouth Museum. Though preservation of these resources has required expenditure of considerable public and private funds over the past few years, they are currently in very good condition. There is also potential for identification of many of Monmouth’s private structures as having historic significance, if not for the federal Register, than as examples of Monmouth’s agrarian and small-town heritage.

Potential archeological resources in shoreland areas may be identified during development by provisions of the Town’s Shoreland Zoning Ordinance, but the Town has no systematic way of identifying them, nor any way of protecting possible archeological sites (such as cellar holes) outside of shoreland areas.

The Town has access to many fine cultural resources through Cumston Hall, the libraries, the museum, and Monmouth Academy and the other Monmouth Schools. These cultural and historic resources are not only important to our community identity but are an economic resource as well.

### **Goals and Policies for Historic and Cultural Resources:**

Monmouth’s goal is to **identify and provide appropriate protection for Monmouth’s archeological, historic, and cultural resources.**

To promote this goal, the plan proposes the following policies and actions:

- 1.1 Continue to provide adequate protection and funding (if necessary) for identified historic resources.
  - Provide continuing support for Cumston Hall maintenance and preservation.  
*Responsible Party:* Selectmen and Town meeting  
*Partner(s):* Trustees of Cumston Hall and Library  
*Timing:* Ongoing
  - Support the collection and display of historic papers and other artifacts.  
*Responsible Party:* Town meeting  
*Partner(s):* Trustees of Cumston Hall, Monmouth Museum  
*Timing:* Ongoing
  - Investigate the procedure for designation of the Cumston Hall block (area to be determined) as a local Historic District, including design review standards and/or a potential TIF district.  
*Responsible Party:* Ad hoc Committee appointed by selectmen  
*Partner(s):* Trustees of Cumston Hall, Monmouth Museum  
*Timing:* 2009-2011

- 1.2 Encourage the identification and protection of previously-unidentified historic and archeological resources.
- Encourage local residents with potentially-historic homes to work with the town to develop suitable recognition of these assets.  
*Responsible Party:* Town manager, planning board through word-of-mouth and flyer.  
*Partner(s):* Trustees of Cumston Hall, Maine Historic Preservation Commission  
*Timing:* Immediate and ongoing
  - Develop a performance standard that requires developers to assess impacts on potential archeological or historic resources, and propose actions to identify and preserve those resources.  
*Responsible Party:* Planning Board  
*Timing:* Ordinance revisions in 2008
- 1.3 Continue to support the enjoyment of the cultural resources of Monmouth.
- Assist the various historic, cultural, and educational entities in town to coordinate their efforts and programs.  
*Responsible Party:* Town office staff  
*Partner(s):* Trustees of Cumston Hall, Monmouth Museum, School System  
*Timing:* Ongoing

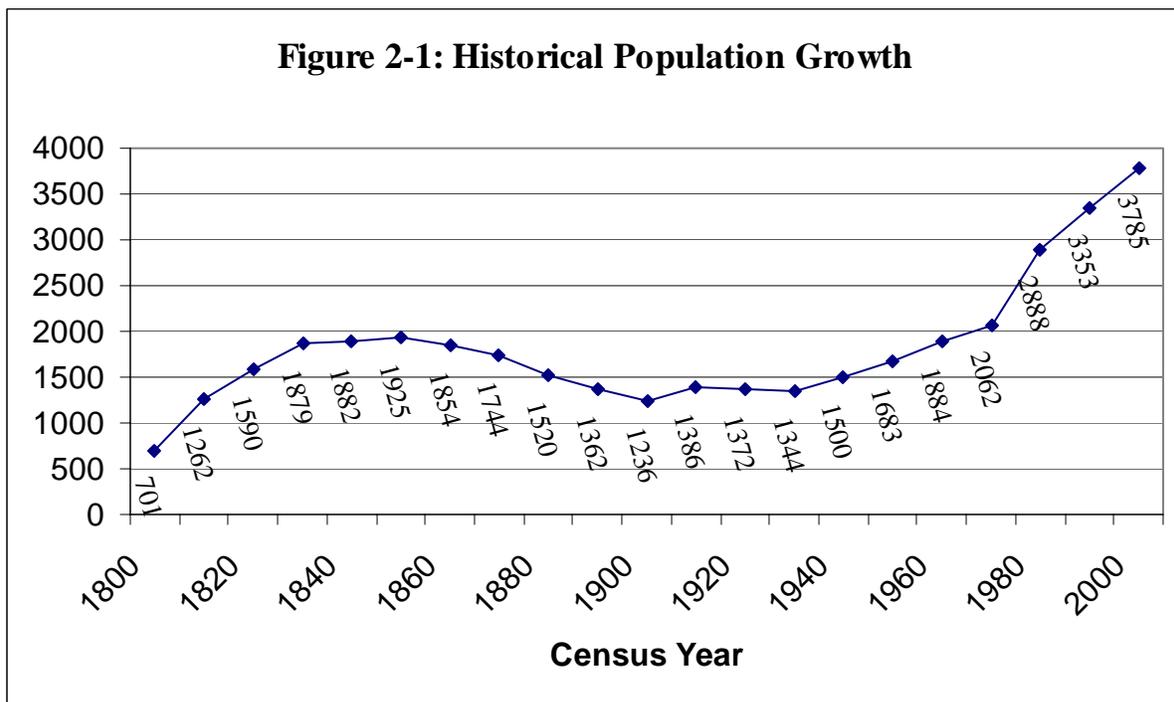
## Chapter 2: The Community – Present and Future

The essence of a community is its people, and people come in all shapes and sizes. Our community is growing. That means it's changing – not just increasing in numbers, but changing in age, family size, and other characteristics. Community planners have devised ways of measuring these changes.

This chapter uses information from the US Census Bureau, Maine Department of Labor, Health and Human Services, Maine Revenue Services, Kennebec Valley Council of Governments, and Monmouth's 1991 Comprehensive Plan. It contains information about Monmouth as it is now and how it is likely to grow into the future.

### Population Characteristics:

In most peoples' eyes, population size is the first measure of a town. Monmouth is no exception. Historical population trends, shown on Figure 2-1, below, illustrate the factors that have influenced Monmouth over the past 200 years.



Like many rural towns in Maine, Monmouth enjoyed a period of rapid growth from before 1800 up until about the Civil War, then a period of decline coinciding with the growth of the West and industrial cities. Monmouth actually started growing again around 1930. Growth accelerated substantially in the current era of automobile-induced sprawl.

The Census brings us up to 2000. But, we can now estimate five years further, to 2005. Population growth is based on housing, and between 2000 and 2005, the town reported 143 new housing units. Kennebec Valley Council of Governments uses these figures, assuming a constant vacancy rate and diminishing household size (see below) to *estimate our 2005 population at 4,044*.

This means that in five years, Monmouth has grown by 259 people. This is a bit faster than the rate in the 1990's, when we grew by 432 over ten years, and the 1980's, when we grew by 465. Average growth during the past quarter century has been 46 people per year.

Monmouth enjoys its current growth as a result of its geographical location and supply of buildable land. The regional comparison at right shows how Monmouth's growth stacks up against our neighbors'. Monmouth perhaps most closely resembles Greene, with Litchfield adding more people and Leeds growing at a faster rate. By comparison, Kennebec County grew only 1 percent in population during the 1990's, Maine as a whole less than 4 percent.

<b>Regional Perspective: Population</b>		
Town	2000 Population	90-00 Growth
Greene	4,076	415 (11 %)
Leeds	2,001	332 (20 %)
<b>Monmouth</b>	<b>3,785</b>	<b>432 (13 %)</b>
Litchfield	3,110	460 (17 %)
Wales	1,322	99 ( 8 %)
Winthrop	6,232	264 ( 4 %)

*Community Changes: Migration, Births, and Deaths:*

Population changes can be broken down into two elements: "Natural Change," which is the difference between births and deaths, and "Migration," which is the difference between those moving into town and those moving out.

Natural change tends not to fluctuate wildly, being based on trends in life expectancy and child-bearing. Between 1981 and 1990, Monmouth recorded 443 births and 191 deaths, for a net increase of 252. Between 1991 and 2000, we had 415 births and 210 deaths, for an increase of 205. The increase in deaths is consistent with the increase of population overall, but the decline in births is not. One could speculate that it is due to the maturing of "Baby Boom" women out of prime child-bearing years.

"Natural change" is more a measure of the health of a community (older population vs. younger one), whereas migration is more a measure of economics. People will choose to move from town to town based on factors such as availability of employment, cost of housing, and perceptions of "quality of life". Migration is calculated as the difference between overall population change and natural change. Therefore, in the 1980's, Monmouth experienced a net migration gain of 213 persons, while in the 90's, we had a gain of 227. Not much difference, indicating that Monmouth has been relatively stable, economically, for the past 20 years.

*Seasonal Population:*

All population figures cited above refer to year-round population, or, more accurately, population as counted by the Census on April 1. In Monmouth, there is significant population fluctuation when seasonal homes and camps are active. Seasonal population consists of two elements: full-season residents -- such as camp owners/renters -- and visitors, which may include anyone from summer camp enrollees to day-trippers.

There are no good measures of seasonal population. We do know from the census how many seasonal homes are in town (310, as of 2000). If we take the 310 seasonal units and assume an average household size of 2.38 (the average for Kennebec County), we come up with 740 seasonal occupants. That assumes full occupancy and the household size is just a guess. Camp Kippewa for Girls is the only commercial accommodation for seasonal residents.

*Families and Households:*

People seldom function independently (at least from the perspective of the Census Bureau), and are more often classified into “Households” and “Families.” Households consist of everyone living in a housing unit, including families and unrelated individuals. There are occasionally persons who do not live in a “household,” (for example, group homes) but none have been recorded in Monmouth.

Table 2-1, below, illustrates the household profile and changes in Monmouth. The number of households in town has increased by 21 percent in ten years. A larger-than-21-percent increase in any other category indicates growth relative to the whole.

The table demonstrates conventional wisdom – that traditional families with two parents and children are becoming less dominant. Even though they still make up 60 percent of all households, every other category of household is growing faster than the norm.

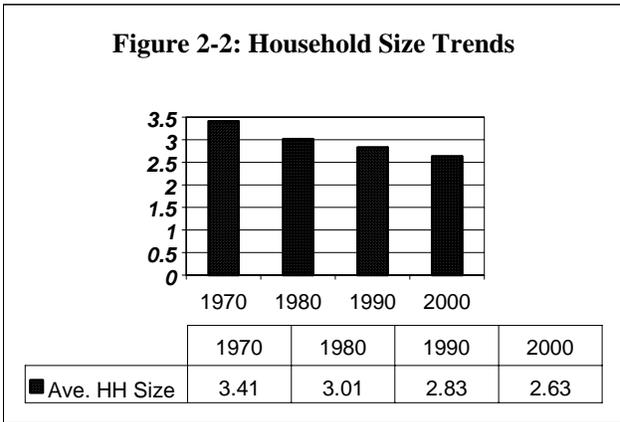
Table 2-1  
Household Characteristics, 1990 and 2000

<u>Household Type:</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>% increase</u>
<b>All Households</b>	<b>1,185</b>	<b>1,435</b>	<b>21</b>
Single-person Households	200	287	44
Single-person “over 65”	88	114	30
Married-couple families	790	875	11
Male-headed families	41	59	44
Female-headed families	100	143	43

Source: US Census

From the perspective of analysis, “Households” is actually a better measure than “population.” Households occupy housing units, generate a predictable number of workers and school children, and so on. Figure 2-2 (inset, following page) shows another attribute of households. They have become smaller.

It's a fact of modern society that the average number of persons per household has been in decline. Trends include fewer children, single-parent or other "non-traditional" family units, more independent living among the elderly, and delayed marriage among younger adults. Clearly, those trends are mirrored in Monmouth. The average number of persons per household in 2000 is only 3/4 of what it was in 1970.



The shrinkage of household size drives demand for housing as much as the influx of new residents. Consider that in the 90's, only 227 people moved in to town, yet we built 250 housing units. Mathematically, it works out as follows: for every 1,000 people, we needed about 300 housing units when we had 3.4 persons per household in 1970. We need 380 units for the same number of people in 2000, in households averaging only 2.6.

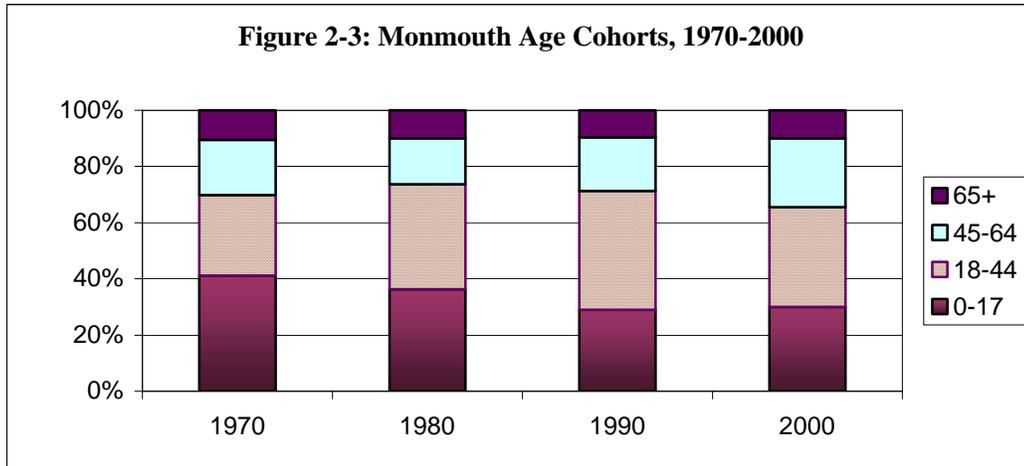
<b>Regional Perspective: Household Size</b>		
<u>Town</u>	<u>1990 HH Size</u>	<u>2000 HH Size</u>
Greene	2.94	2.73
Leeds	2.96	2.72
Litchfield	2.86	2.61
<b>Monmouth</b>	<b>2.83</b>	<b>2.63</b>
Wales	2.86	2.82
Winthrop	2.61	2.42

Practically, it works this way: children grow up and build a house on the parent's property, or a couple gets divorced and move into separate homes. In this sense, household size drives the type of housing, as well as the quantity. Shrinking household sizes require us to think about the size and style of housing that the future will demand. When housing demand is driven by these kinds of social factors, land use regulation can do little to affect location choices.

*Population Features:*

Other physical features of the population are highlighted in the census. For Monmouth, the most important of these is age. The age profile of a community can tell us whether we need to start planning for new schools -- or new senior citizen centers. The significant feature of the age issue is the Baby Boom. These are persons born between 1945 and 1965. There were so many that the impact was felt first in schools, then, in starter homes, now in premium and vacation homes, and soon in retirement centers.

Figure 2-3 shows the impact of age group shifts on the town. Each bar represents the total population, with the segments representing the proportion in that age group. In 1970, the Baby Boom was primarily under age 17 (segment at the bottom of the bar). As the Baby Boom ages, the segments in the middle swell. In 2000, the Boom is split between the 18-44 and 45-64. In 2020, it will be well into the 65+ segment.



In terms of real numbers, Monmouth had 1,046 children (under age 18) in 2000, 8 percent more than in 1990, yet a smaller percentage of total population. Seniors numbered 379 in 2000, up 18 percent from 1990. The over-65 class is already growing as a percentage of the total, and will do so dramatically in the next 20 years.

A more general measure of an aging community is its “Median Age.” A median is a point at which exactly half the population is above and half below, and is not the same as “average.” Monmouth’s median age in 2000 was 37.5. In 1990, it was 32.6. Now, while most of us, as individuals, age ten years in a decade, it is not the same with a population. If the median age of a population rises, it means that more people are being added to the “old” side of the equation than the “young” side.

The five-year advance in Monmouth’s median age is just a little above what is typical in the area. Kennebec County aged by about 4.5 years in the 90’s. Kennebec County, in 2000, had a median age of 38.7, and Maine 38.6.

<b>Regional Perspective: Median Age</b>		
Town	1990 age	2000 age
Greene	32.0	36.9
Leeds	31.8	35.9
Litchfield	32.4	38.5
<b>Monmouth</b>	<b>32.6</b>	<b>37.5</b>
Wales	31.1	34.9
Winthrop	36.3	41.9

Because it is an issue in many parts of the country, the census also tallies race and national origin. This is not a big issue in Monmouth. Only one percent of Monmouth (35 people) are “non-white” including mixed-race. In Kennebec County, just 2.5 percent are classified “non-white,” and in Maine, the figure is 3.1 percent.

The ancestry of the community may be of some interest, though not necessarily from a planning standpoint. In Monmouth, over 1/4 of the population are French or French-Canadian. Other than Anglo-Saxon, no other ancestry group has a significant number.

## Community Futures:

A lot of the data in this chapter is useful because it shows us changes over time. But its highest value comes when we can use it to assess the future. With a good idea of how Monmouth is changing, we can make informed planning choices; these choices will allow us to create our own future.

The conventional mechanism of forecasting the future is to project past trends, using population as the measure. A typical forecast would draw on the growth rate from the past decade, and assumes that it will continue into the next. KVCOG's growth forecast is based on such a formula. KVCOG's mathematical forecast range for Monmouth in the year 2020 is 4,738 to 4,950.

The State Planning Office uses a more sophisticated formula that takes into account the survival rate of different age groups in town, migration rates, and other factors. SPO's forecast for Monmouth in 2020 is 4,819. This is about in the same range, and reflects Monmouth's current rate of growth over 15 years. (The same forecast for neighboring towns is in the box, with calculated growth rates in parentheses.) SPO forecasts Monmouth's growth rate to be about on a par with Greene, and a little slower than Leeds and Litchfield.

Whatever the number, we should view formula forecasts with a suspicious eye; Monmouth's 1991 plan projected a 2001 population of 4,100, a figure we may get to in 2006 or 2007.

The remainder of this section takes forecasting one step further by establishing a set of "what if" scenarios. These scenarios estimate the impact on the town in three critical areas: population, housing, and employment (Housing and employment impacts will be looked at in more detail in Chapters 3 and 9.). By looking at the physical impact of three alternatives, the town can make critical choices, which will lead it down its preferred path.

<b>Regional Perspective: The Future</b>	
<u>Town</u>	<u>2020 Pop. Forecasts from SPO</u>
Greene	5,580 (37 %)
Leeds	2,620 (31 %)
Litchfield	4,403 (42 %)
<b>Monmouth</b>	<b>4,819 (29 %)</b>
Wales	1,853 (40%)
Winthrop	7,088 (14%)

### *Scenario 1: Current Growth Rate*

Monmouth's estimated 2005 population is 4,044. According to KVCOG projections, the town's population will grow to somewhere in the vicinity of 4,900 in the next 15 years (by 2020). This translates to a growth rate of 1.36 percent per year. This is almost exactly the rate of growth the town has experienced since 1980, which has included both good and bad economic times, so it is pretty likely to continue as the "status quo."

What kind of impact would this population growth have on the community? In order to understand, we first should convert it into homes, and here we have to make an assumption about

<b>Scenario 1:</b>	
<b>Total Pop:</b>	<b>4,900</b>
New Residents:	856
New Housing:	508
New Jobs:	600

household sizes in the future. We are going to assume that they will continue to shrink. However, the rate of shrinkage will decrease – Monmouth already has slightly smaller households than average for the region. Over the past three decades, the decline has been 0.4, 0.18, and 0.2. Let’s assume that the average number of persons in a household in 15 years will be 2.38 – a decline of 0.25.

Using these figures, the estimated population of 4,900 in 2020 will yield 2,060 households. As of 2005, we have 1,552 occupied housing units, so we would see an additional 508 homes, which equates to 34 new homes per year. This exceeds the housing rate during the 90’s (25 per year) but just slightly above our average for 2000-2005 (30 per year).

We can also calculate the number of new jobs that will come with these households. The current ratio of workers to households is 1.42, but since that figure is also higher than the regional average, we may legitimately assume that it will decrease. Also, the first of the baby boomers will begin to retire. So, let’s assume that in 2020, we will have an average of 1.35 workers per household. Our 2,060 households must be supported by 2,780 workers. The most recent estimate of workforce we have is for 2003 (2,076 workers), so that would mean an increase in workers of 704 over 17 years, or 41 new workers per year. Unfortunately, some of those workers will be unemployed, so about 40 new jobs per year will be required to support Monmouth’s growth.

Monmouth need not expect to create all of these jobs within our borders. In 2000, Monmouth held 989 jobs, less than half the total number of residents with jobs. Therefore, as long as the regional economy remains roughly the same, we can reasonably expect to create only about 19 new jobs per year *in Monmouth*.

The need for public services based on growth is not as easy a mathematical exercise. For some services, a 20 percent growth rate just means a 20 percent increase in public services. That might work for recreation, general office, and solid waste. But for others, like transportation, the impact may be higher – Route 132 traffic has been growing at about twice the rate of population growth over the past ten years. For still others, the impact may be more erratic. Enrollment in Monmouth schools is likely to rise. In 2000, we averaged 0.5 students per household, but chances are we would not see another 225 students (25 percent increase) in 15 years – an aging population means fewer school-aged people per household.

*Scenario 2: Accelerated Growth:*

In Scenario 2, we are going to accelerate the rate of housing development. Additional development pressure as a result of the Sabattus Interchange, or just from gradual expanding urban centers, could stimulate more development in Monmouth. In fact, one significant new subdivision could easily make up the difference between Scenario 1 and this one.

In this scenario, we ask: what if the annual rate of housing development increased to 40? This is not beyond the realm of imagination. We saw 39 new homes in 2001, and neighboring

<b>Scenario 2:</b>	
<b>Total Pop:</b>	<b>5,100</b>
New Residents:	1,056
New Housing:	600
New Jobs:	705

Litchfield hit 40 in 2003 and 2004. Back in the 70's, Monmouth averaged 36 per year. Forty per year means 600 over 15 years.

Using 600 new households as the starting point, we can work backwards to the population. At 2.38 people per household, 600 new units would yield 2,152 new people total. The result would be a population of 5,100, with a growth rate of 1.47 percent per year.

2,152 households would yield a total of 2,905 workers, compared to the 2003 total of 2,076, about 49 per year. Of the 829 new workers, 33 would be unemployed (at current rates). Based on the 2000 ratio, we would have to see 23 new jobs every year in Monmouth.

In addition to the Sabattus Interchange, several factors could increase the rate of housing development in Monmouth and put us on the path to this growth rate. New land might become available from the sale of a farm, a major employer could locate in Monmouth, or even such a small thing as improvements to Route 202 making the commute to Augusta easier. An increase in business growth in Lewiston-Auburn or Augusta could easily create enough regional demand to increase development pressures in Monmouth.

### *Scenario 3: Growth Limits*

In Scenario 3, we are going to change the rules. While the town grew pretty steadily at 25 houses per year during the 90's, there are signs that it is accelerating. But, what if we could keep our growth rate at 25 houses per year?

In this scenario, 25 per year equates to 375 over 15 years. The total number of homes would rise to 1,927, an increase of 24 percent over current housing stock. With an average household size of 2.38, our total population would reach 4,600. Our population growth would average only 37 people, or 0.9 percent, per year.

<b>Scenario 3:</b>
<b>Total Pop:</b> 4,600
New Residents: 556
New Housing: 375
New Jobs: 450

The demand for jobs would drop proportionately. We would have a total of 2,600 workers, compared to the 2,076 we had in 2003. We would have to create jobs at the rate of 30 per year, 450 over 15 years. The number of jobs within Monmouth would have to increase at the rate of 14 per year.

This scenario is less plausible than the previous two, based on our current trends. But, if we choose to "control" growth, this might be the most likely scenario. The most effective way to average 25 new homes per year is to set that as a limit. Several communities in southern Maine have set "building caps" -- limits on the number of new homes allowed per year. But, shy of government intervention, other factors could come into play. A regional downturn in the economy could return us to the growth rate of the 90's. Gas prices could continue to rise, to the point where people rethink those long commutes.

In summary, these three "what if" scenarios offer not just numerical estimates, but also a perspective on how growth responds to social and economic environments. The community can choose to respond to growth as it happens (which could be any of the three scenarios) or

plan for the growth rate it feels comfortable with, and take the appropriate action to make it happen.

## **Community and its Future – Findings and Issues:**

Monmouth appears to be in a well-established growth pattern. Monmouth is viewed as having many attractive qualities: relatively low prices for land and housing, an attractive community with top schools, and easy access to job centers. It is easy to see why Monmouth is poised for more growth.

Like many of its neighbors, Monmouth is the object of demographic facts of life. Households are growing smaller, driving the need for more and different housing. The population is also getting older. This may result in a decrease in school populations, but may also hint of demands in the future for more senior services, such as more senior-centered recreation and transportation programs.

Monmouth's likely growth will result in or drive demand for more housing and jobs, as well as more and different town services. Where will this development occur? And, how will it affect demand for town services? The extent to which we choose to manage our growth will have a significant impact on the future of Monmouth.

## **Goals and Policies for Community Growth:**

Monmouth's Goal is to **maintain a constant growth rate at about the same level as the past two decades.**

To promote this goal, the plan proposes the following policies and actions:

- 2.1 Monitor and respond to development trends that may affect growth in the community.
  - Establish a system of annual reports to the planning board (town meeting) describing the location, quantity, and nature of development in the preceding year.  
*Responsible Party:* Code enforcement officer and planning board  
*Timing:* Immediate and ongoing

## Chapter 3: Economic Development

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The vitality of a community is often measured by its economic activity. Income and employment characteristics help us to predict demand for housing, recreation, social, and cultural services. This chapter begins with demographic information, and moves on to evaluation of local businesses and economic activity.

### Statistical Profile

#### *Individual and Household Income:*

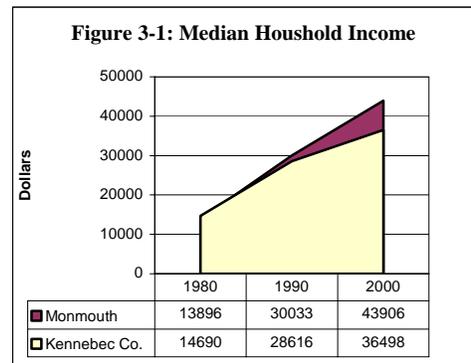
The most conventional measure of the economic health of a community is the income of its individuals and families. The census reports two basic types of income measures: “per-capita income,” which is simply the aggregate income of the town divided by its population, and “Household Income,” which is the income (usually the median) of the households within the town. The latter is more helpful from a planning perspective.

<b>Regional Perspective: Per Capita Income</b>			
<u>Town</u>	<u>1990 PCI</u>	<u>2000 PCI</u>	<u>% change</u>
Greene	\$ 12,677	\$ 19,452	53 %
Leeds	\$ 10,652	\$ 15,602	47 %
Litchfield	\$ 11,770	\$ 17,835	52 %
<b>Monmouth</b>	<b>\$ 11,412</b>	<b>\$ 17,551</b>	<b>54 %</b>
Wales	\$ 11,496	\$ 16,963	48 %
Winthrop	\$ 15,413	\$ 19,447	26 %

One thing for which per capita income is useful: comparison among towns. Monmouth had a 2000 PCI (technically, income received the year before the census, or 1999) of \$17,551. Compared to its neighbors, it is pretty close to the middle; Leeds and Wales are lower, Greene and Winthrop are higher.

Monmouth has faster growth than average, though – at 54 percent we are outperforming neighboring towns, and the rate of inflation, which was 32 percent. Kennebec County, in 2000, had a PCI of \$18,520, while Maine overall had a PCI of \$19,533, so Monmouth is a little behind in the larger picture.

Household income is a much less theoretical figure. It represents the actual budget that most families have to draw from. Two factors make it perform differently from per capita income: 1) decreasing household size over time, and 2) changes in the number of members of the household getting income. How Monmouth’s income has changed over time is



illustrated in Figure 3-1, right, with the actual breakdown of income levels in Table 3-1.

Table 3-1  
Household Income by Category, 2000

<u>Range</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Less than \$10,000	86	8.0
\$10 – 25,000	91	8.4
\$25 – 50,000	413	38.4
\$50 – 100,000	426	39.5
\$100,000 and over	61	5.7

Source: US Census

Median household income in 2000 (1999 income) was \$43,906. This is half again the amount reported in 1990, (\$30,033) though only about 10 percent higher after inflation. But Monmouth’s income levels are rising faster than Kennebec County, as seen on Figure 3-1.

Median household income does not equate to “average salary.” In fact, not all household income is from wages. One-quarter of Monmouth’s households receive social security income – a total of 350. Another 39 households had Supplemental Security income, and 86 had public assistance. The closest the census comes to reporting salaries is a category called “median earnings.” It reports that the average male, full-time, year-round worker received \$32,000 in earnings, while a female, full-time, year-round worker received \$23,000.

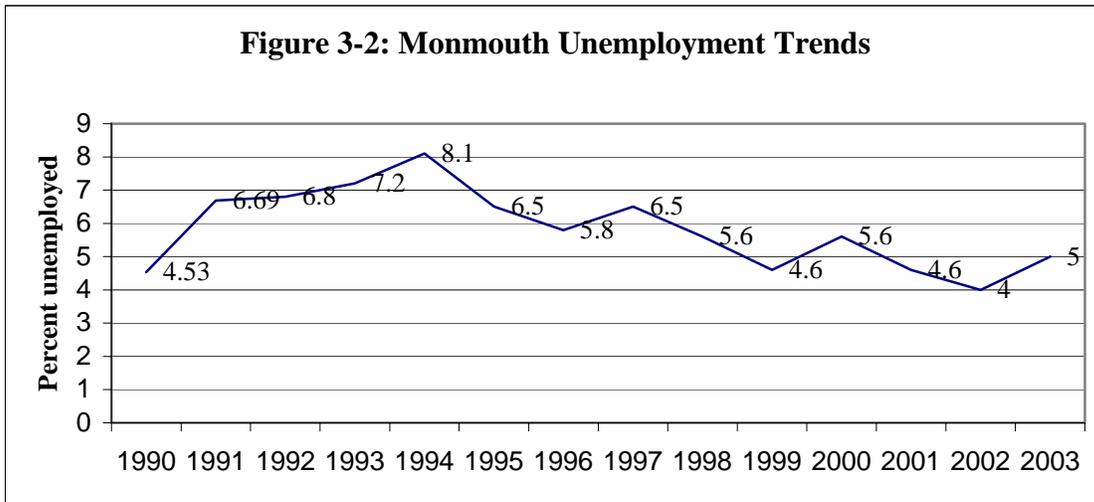
*Labor Force Levels:*

“Labor Force” refers to the number of people either working or available to work within the working-age population. For the purpose of the census, the working-age population is everyone over age 16, including those of retirement age.

In Monmouth, the 2000 labor force consisted of 2,042 people, 71 percent of the working-age population. That included 1,037 women and 1,005 men. There are 1,439 households in Monmouth, so that means an average of 1.42 workers per household. Put more practically, every second household in Monmouth is a two-worker family. This is somewhat higher than the Kennebec County average of 1.26 workers per household, which may in some way explain Monmouth’s higher median income levels.

Being in the workforce is not the same as being employed. According to the 2000 Census, 74 people in Monmouth were unemployed (27 women), for an unemployment rate of 2.6 percent. However, unemployment is better reported by the Maine Department of Labor, which takes monthly surveys, than the census, which asks only once every ten years. Figure 3-2 shows the annual employment trend in Monmouth over the past decade.

As can be seen from the chart, Monmouth’s unemployment rate peaked around 1994, consistent with the state as a whole. Since then, we have made fairly steady progress.



Monmouth is one, relatively small player in a regional economy and that must be considered in any economic development strategy. Monmouth is part of the Augusta Labor Market Area. The Augusta LMA has a labor force (in 2003) of 46,340; Monmouth’s workers make up only 4.5 percent of that. Nearly as many Monmouth residents work in the Lewiston-Auburn metropolitan area, which has a total labor force of 54,900. The Augusta LMA had an unemployment rate of five percent in 2003, and the L-A area 4.7, so Monmouth is about on average. Kennebec County – Augusta and Waterville Labor Market Areas combined – had an unemployment rate of 5.3 percent. Local unemployment rates ranged from 4.3 percent in Wales to 5.3 percent in Leeds.

Monmouth is a net contributor of workers to the regional economy, as are all small towns in this area. Monmouth workers can easily commute to Augusta, Lewiston-Auburn, or even Portland with the new interchange. As of 2000, 420 residents commuted to Augusta, 160 to Auburn, and 214 to Lewiston. Only 110 commuted to Cumberland County, though we can expect that number to climb. Monmouth has 478 residents who also work in town (83 who work at home). That is about half of the total 989 persons who worked in Monmouth as of 2000. And that is a little improvement: In 1990, 447 of the 867 people who worked in Monmouth were residents. Overall, though, the average commuting time for Monmouth workers in 2000 was 27.9 minutes per day, up from 24.3 minutes in 1990.

*Worker Profiles:*

Table 3-2, on the following page, lists the occupational categories of Monmouth workers in 1990 and 2000. Not all occupations are listed. Unfortunately, as the economy changes, so do job descriptions, and many occupations today weren’t even in existence a decade ago. For this reason, the census is constantly changing the way it classifies the thousands of different occupations it must cope with, making the categories difficult to compare one decade to another.

Table 3-2  
Occupational Profile of Monmouth Workers, 1990 and 2000

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>Percent of total</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>Percent of total</u>
Executive and Managerial	144	8.3	601	30.8
Professional	261	15.0	*	
Sales	95	5.5	506	25.9
Administration and Support	369	21.3	*	
Service	224	12.9	211	10.8
Farm and Forestry	62	3.6	45	2.3
Skilled Labor	430	24.8	339	17.4

\* Category eliminated and combined with others in 2000

Source: US Census

The percentage of workers who are professionals and managers has grown since 1990, at the expense of all other groups. That indicates that Monmouth is becoming more of a white collar town, typical when towns evolve from a rural town to a suburb.

The census also classifies workers by the industry of employment. This is not as good as describing a person's actual job, because a factory, for instance, may have secretaries, managers, sales staff and skilled machinists all together, but has the advantage of gauging which sectors of the economy are doing well, and the added advantage that the Maine DOL uses this classification for its annual updates.

Table 3-3, below, identifies the major industrial categories (a few minor categories have been excluded). The table illustrates what we may already know empirically – that the major growth industry is the service industry, with 46 percent of all jobs. The town gained over 100 jobs in health and educational services alone, another 129 in other services. It lost numbers in construction and manufacturing. These figures are fairly consistent with the rest of the region, showing a broad trend.

Table 3-3  
Industrial Classification of Monmouth Workers, 1990 and 2000

<u>Industry of Employment</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>Percent of total</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>Percent of total</u>
Construction	187	10.8	158	8.1
Manufacturing	367	21.2	292	15.0
Wholesale and Retail	303	17.5	347	17.8
Services, exc. Health and education	270	15.6	499	25.6
Health and education services	277	15.8	392	20.1
Agriculture and Forestry	70	4.0	57	2.9
Public Administration	128	7.4	138	7.1

Source: US Census

These figures help to explain, develop, or support local or regional economic growth. Manufacturing, for example, grabs the headlines when another plant shuts down. Yet, it is

clear from the figures that manufacturing is only 15 percent of our economic strength. Monmouth’s strength now is in the health and education industry; job growth in that sector is what we should be focusing on.

The changing economy also requires that our workforce be educated differently. If Monmouth is becoming a white collar town, you would also expect to see the educational level – years of schooling – on the rise. College is a basic requirement for many professional, managerial, and educational professions. And jobs that require mastery of math, science and technical skill are more likely to flow to areas with higher educational levels. Income levels can also be expected to be higher for jobs requiring more education.

Monmouth is indeed increasing its educational levels. In 1990, 83 percent of the adult population had a high school education, but only 14 percent had a college education. Of the 300 college graduates, 71 had advanced degrees. In 2000, the town increased the high school graduation rate a little, to 85.5 percent, and our college graduation to 18.6 percent. It now has 465 adults with college degrees, of which 170 have advanced degrees.

<b>Regional Perspective: Graduates – 2000</b>		
<u>Town</u>	<u>High School</u>	<u>College</u>
Greene	85.6	11.2
Leeds	83.8	12.8
Litchfield	86.4	20.6
<b>Monmouth</b>	<b>85.5</b>	<b>18.6</b>
Wales	85.4	12.6
Winthrop	85.0	26.7

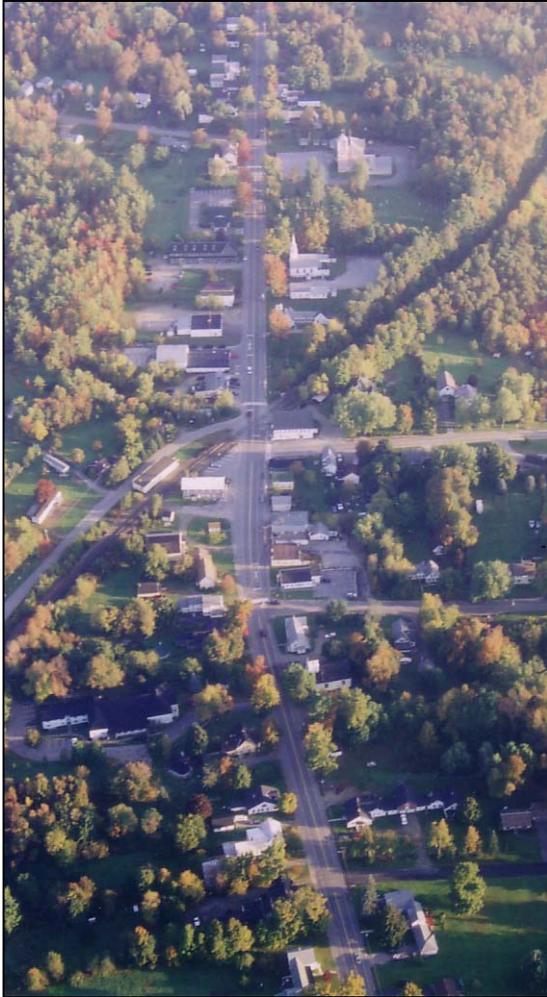
Monmouth compares fairly well within the region. The high school graduation rate is about average, and our college graduation rate is a little above average. Monmouth is still a little below the average college graduation rate for Kennebec County (20.7 percent) and Maine (22.9 percent).

Nevertheless, the shift in local job opportunities has the potential to leave some people behind. The progress in educational attainment does not address those individuals that have already been in the workforce and now need more education to change with the times. To do this, we need to ensure access to educational and training opportunities in the region, ranging from community and technical colleges to adult education programs at the Academy.

## **Local and Regional Perspective**

The strength and trends of the regional economy has a significant impact upon growth locally. Though Monmouth is part of the Augusta Labor Market Area, it is close enough that the Lewiston/Auburn Metropolitan Area significantly influences the Town. The L-A area has a different market profile. While Augusta is dominated by state government, Lewiston-Auburn has a more traditional service-and-manufacturing economy. With the opening of the Sabattus Interchange, the vigorous and complex Portland labor market comes into play, too.

A regional perspective is most valuable when it comes to economic development efforts. Marketing and business solicitation on a regional level is far more cost-effective than when done by individual towns, and the impacts of economic development seldom are confined inside a town’s boundary. In Monmouth, for example, fewer than 500 residents work in town, another 500 from out of town work here, and about 800 from Monmouth work in Augusta, Lewiston, or Auburn.



The figures demonstrate the importance of the regional economic development picture to the residents of the Town. It is significant, and somewhat unusual on the modern economic scene, that a town as small as Monmouth offers the opportunities that it does. The situation suggests that an expanded local economic base would attract even more resident workers. On the other hand, one major employer (and its fortunes and decisions) has a tremendous impact on the local scene. That illustrates the desirability of expanding and diversifying the local economic base and participating in regional development efforts. Then the impacts of individual companies and employers upon local economic fortunes will be lessened.

Local interest in promoting economic growth led to the formation in 1998 of the Monmouth Economic Development Commission (EDC). One of the first tasks that the commission engaged in was planning for the downtown area. This resulted in the publication, in 2003, of a Downtown Revitalization Plan. The Plan was not adopted until 2005, and its many recommendations, engaging both public and private entities, have yet to be implemented in large part. The Plan took a good strategic

look at issues and opportunities in the downtown area, including public opinion, physical constraints (including the impact of development on lake water quality), and smart growth initiatives. The Plan recommended, among other things, that the town's comprehensive plan be updated to incorporate its economic development recommendations, strengthen rural and farmland protections, revise land use ordinances, and support an historic district downtown.

The focus of the Plan was the historic commercial center of Monmouth, straddling Route 132 in roughly the geographic center of town. In addition to storefronts and service buildings, Monmouth Center also encompasses many public buildings, such as the Town Office, Cumston Hall, and the Health Center. In aggregate, Monmouth Center provides more jobs than any other location in town, though no single employer stands out. It has great opportunities for growth, both within existing buildings and on new land. Traffic growth on Route 132 resulting from the Sabattus Interchange may feed into commercial opportunities downtown, but may also have negative impacts on the "small-town village" feel. Creating a Downtown Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District could, along with other strategies, be an asset to growing businesses in Monmouth Center.

Monmouth's largest single employer is located in the historic industrial village of North Monmouth. TexTech Industries employs 200, about 1/5 of Monmouth's total job base; Tex Tech is currently in a Pine Tree Zone, as is the former Dumont Industries building on Main Street in Monmouth Center. North Monmouth has always been the site of local industry, due to the convenience of water power, but contributes very little else to the local economy. The same is true of the other historic villages of East Monmouth and South Monmouth.



Monmouth's other significant employer is the school system, employing 138 in 2005. The three schools are in relatively close proximity, just north of Monmouth Center.

Perhaps the most attractive location for new business is along Route 202, cutting through northern Monmouth. It is a major highway, and much of the area is accessible to public water and sewer service. There is also a lot of undeveloped and underutilized land. Encouraging new business in this area would be a risky strategy, however. Route 202 is a major commercial corridor, and the MDOT would object to anything resembling a commercial strip, which would slow traffic down and create safety hazards.

Sometimes, a town's economic health is measured by the level of retail sales. Monmouth has relatively few retail outlets, and its taxable sales in 2003, according to reports of the Maine Revenue service, was just \$5,657,300. By comparison, Winthrop's taxable sales in 2003 was almost \$44 million. Between 1996 and 2003, Monmouth's taxable sales rose by about \$1.5 million, an increase of about 4.5 percent per year, a little beyond the rate of inflation. This indicates a growth in the retail sales sector, but not enough to be significant.

Sometimes overlooked in the analysis of the local job base is the traditional income and employment that comes from the rural part of town. The census in 2000 reported only 45 persons earned their income from farming or forestry, which refers only to *principal jobs*. Many more residents earn a part-time income from their land, enabling them to keep it open and undeveloped. Many more that live in rural areas support their land with small, home-oriented businesses. These range from auto repair shops to day-care businesses. While we have no census of how many home-based businesses there are in Monmouth, the 2000 Census reported that 83 residents "worked at home."

Any improvement of the local economic situation would have to be based on a reasoned analysis of our strengths and weaknesses as a community. In other words, what does Monmouth have to offer potential employers? This is one of the recent activities of the Economic Development Commission, having tried such strategies as marketing of the Dumont Industrial building and filling vacant spaces in Monmouth Center.

As part of this plan, we again polled residents about attitudes towards local economic development. Survey respondents are in favor of greater efforts towards economic development. Of particular interest would be new retail or service businesses, restaurants, and professional offices. Residents favor the recommendation that some types of commercial development be directed towards growth areas (especially those served by public sewer,) and limited in residential areas.

### **The Local Economy – Findings and Issues:**

Monmouth’s local economy is closely tied to the regional economy, as about three out of four Monmouth workers leave town to find work. Evidently, they must range further afield to find it, as commuting times are going up, and more job seekers are looking to the Portland area. Monmouth’s small businesses continue to be an important part of the community and local economy. There is significant potential for local job growth, however, with available and underused infrastructure, and the opening of the Sabattus Interchange. State programs and economic development tools such as creating a Downtown TIF District would serve the town well.

Monmouth incomes are, on average, going up faster than the average for Kennebec County, even though our employment rate is about the same. This indicates a shift in jobs from lower-paying sectors to higher-paying ones (though on a townwide scale – not necessarily for individuals.) Over the long term, this will mean more local money for businesses and public improvements.

### **Goals and Policies for the Local Economy:**

Monmouth’s goal is to **promote an economic climate which creates and retains local and regional job opportunities and increased tax revenues, while maintaining quality of life.**

To promote this goal, the plan proposes the following policies and actions:

#### 3.1 Support and build existing small business within current resources.

- Develop a program, or partner with an existing program/organization, for small business entrepreneur assistance, including business development, financial planning, and access to capital.  
*Responsible Party:* Monmouth EDC and town office  
*Partner(s):* KVCOG, Maine Small Business Development Center  
*Timing:* 2008
- Retain and expand local continuing education and worker training opportunities.  
*Responsible Party:* Town manager  
*Partner(s):* Monmouth Schools, Monmouth-Winthrop Adult Education.  
*Timing:* Ongoing
- Minimize regulation of home businesses in development ordinance.  
*Responsible Party:* Planning Board

*Timing:* Criteria in 2008 ordinance revisions

- Evaluate local regulations affecting small businesses to reduce any local restrictions that unreasonably impede small businesses.

*Responsible Party:* Planning Board

*Timing:* Criteria in 2008 ordinance revisions

3.2 Utilize Monmouth's existing assets to expand our local economic base.

- Begin a program to take advantage of economic opportunities offered by Cumston Hall and its events, as well as other cultural resources in town.

*Responsible Party:* Monmouth EDC

*Partner(s):* Trustees of Cumston Hall

*Timing:* 2007

- Promote local agriculture through state programs and local initiatives such as Monmouth Grows and Monmouth Fair.

*Responsible Party:* Town meeting and town office

*Partner(s):* Monmouth Grows, Maine Food and Farms, Fair Association

*Timing:* Ongoing

- Pursue commercial growth within the Monmouth Center village area through the Monmouth Economic Development Corporation (*or* Commission) and/or a village business organization.

*Responsible Party:* Selectmen/town meeting, Monmouth EDC

*Partner(s):* local businesses

*Timing:* 2008

- Pursue the establishment of a Downtown TIF District for Monmouth Center.

*Responsible Party:* Town manager, selectmen

*Partner(s):* Monmouth EDC, Maine DECD

*Timing:* 2008

- Develop a plan to take advantage of the commercial recreation potential of the lakes region.

*Responsible Party:* Monmouth EDC

*Partner(s):* Winthrop Chamber of Commerce, lake associations

*Timing:* 2010

3.3 Support regional economic development efforts.

- Participate in regional development organizations and efforts.

*Responsible Party:* Town manager, Monmouth EDC

*Timing:* Ongoing

## Chapter 4: Rural Economic Resources

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Monmouth's traditional landscape and economy is really thanks to our rural resources – agriculture, forest management, gravel extraction, and other resource-based activity. Though we have passed the era when most of the population owned a farm or worked in the woods, rural and suburbanizing towns like Monmouth still value the traditional land uses that keep our community healthy and productive.

There is another good reason for maintaining farm, forest, and other open space land – they are good for the tax base. Some towns, particularly fast-developing ones, conclude that, in order to get on top of rising taxes and service demands, they have to add to their tax base, in the form of more development. But case after case shows that in more undeveloped towns, taxes are lower. The simple fact is that, though open land pays very little in taxes, it costs less than it pays because it makes few demands on public services. The same cannot be said of commercial, residential, or any other type of development. New development is not the cure for rising taxes; it is the cause.



### **Agriculture:**

The American Farmland Trust, a national agricultural advocacy organization, has documented the value of farming to a community in dozens of “Cost of Community Services” studies across the country, including Maine. Their findings: the average commercial property requires about \$1 worth of services for every \$1 in taxes it pays. The average home requires about \$1.15. The average farm requires only \$0.27. That means a community takes three out of every four dollars that farmland owners pay in taxes to provide services to their new tax base. It might make sense, therefore, to keep as much land in farming as possible.



Farming in Monmouth is a vital and continuing part of the community. Agriculture formed the backbone of its economy until very recently. A combination of changes in the nature of farming, competition, demand for suburban land, improvements in transporting food and other factors have contributed to a tremendous drop-off in local agriculture. There are, however, signs of a transition in farming, putting Monmouth in the spotlight as a progressive agricultural community.



It was big news when Chick Orchards went out of business, and when another of the many dairy farms closed. But farming in Monmouth, as in most of New England, has moved from being commodity oriented and land-intensive to being labor-intensive and value-added, from being all about volume to looking for niches, and most importantly from being full-time businesses to part-time operations.



To illustrate: between 1977 and 1997, Kennebec County went from 379 full-time farmers to only 248, and the number of farms went from 605 to 494. Total farm acreage dropped by 27 percent. Yet, the value of crop sales doubled in that same 20-year period. Livestock and poultry product sales declined about 14 percent (before inflation), yet sales from nursery and greenhouse products increased 600 percent. In the five years between 1992 and 1997, average income per farm increased from \$74,000 to \$99,000, and the number of farms rose even as acreage continued to decline. Farms have become smaller, but more profitable.

The same trends are notable in Monmouth. As of 2005, very few of Monmouth's farms cater to the traditional commodities of dairy, potatoes, or apples. Several have found niches that contribute to household income and are compatible with small-scale living. Principal farms in Monmouth include:

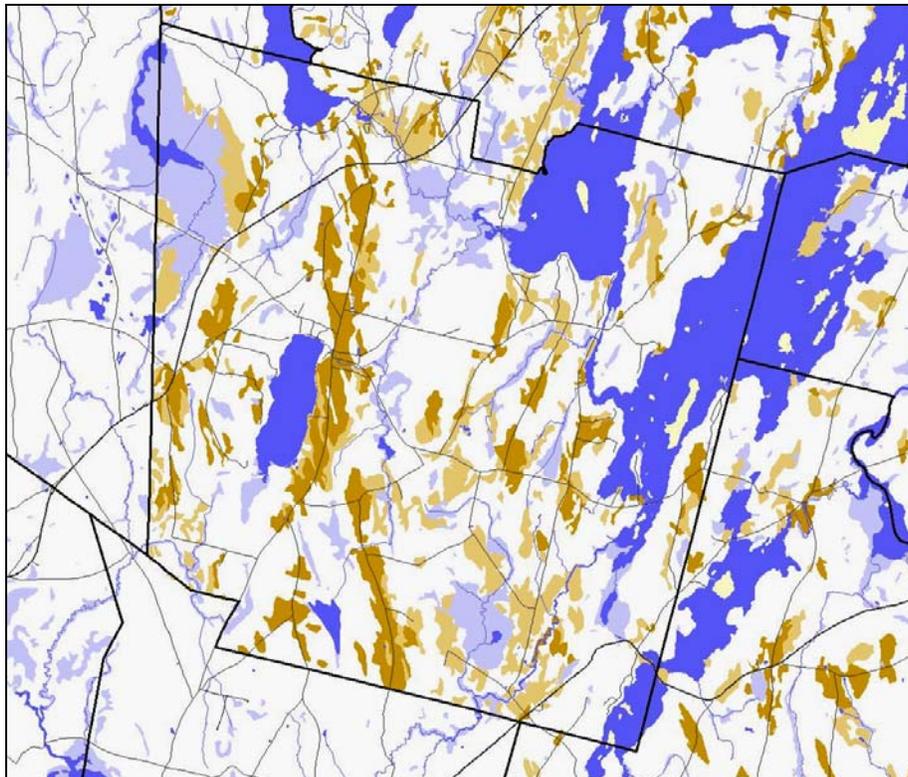
- Beautiful Day Farm. Eggs, vegetables, herbs. Tillson Road
- Friends' Folly Farm. Wool and fleece. Norris Hill Road
- Kelley Farm and Greenhouse. Bedding plants, produce, flowers. Route 132.
- Packard Heritage Farm. Blueberries, eggs, fleece. Packard Road
- Phoenix Farm. Vegetables, herbs, flowers. South Monmouth Road
- Snafu Acres Dairy Farm. Dairy, meat, eggs. Tillson Road

- Elm Crest Farm. Apples, produce. Norris Hill Road
- Evergreen Acres Tree Farm. Christmas trees. Black Street
- Clemedow Farm. Dairy. Route 132.
- O'Donnell's Farm. Natural & Organic Grassfed Beef. South Monmouth Road.

Highmoor Farm, the University of Maine Agricultural Experiment Station, is also located in Monmouth. This farm specializes in research and technical support for apple, fruit, and vegetable sectors of agriculture.

Monmouth possesses fairly extensive areas of prime agricultural soils within its boundaries. Paxton, Paxton-Charlton and Woodbridge soils occur extensively along the Town's many ridgelines while Buxton soils lie in lower areas. The active farms and fields in town exist in many of those areas. However, in this era of more intensive farming, the quality of the land may be just as important to successful agriculture as the quality of support systems. Farmers need the support of infrastructure, from useable roads to equipment dealers to marketing assistance. This is particularly true for the new generation of farmers, who are looking for niche markets and local sales to sustain them.

### Prime Agricultural Soils



*Prime agricultural soils (brown) and agricultural soils of statewide significance (light brown).*

The Maine Department of Agriculture is beginning to provide this kind of support with publicity, events, and marketing strategies for small farms. Other organizations, such as the University Extension Service, also provide assistance. Monmouth is unique in having its own

support system, *Monmouth Grows*. This organization was formed in 2001, and serves to promote local agriculture through such activities as a Farm Day at the Cottrell School, gateway signage, a newsletter, farm directory, and displays at the fair and Apple Fest.



The Town provides support to farming through the state Farm and Open Space Program. A total of 30 farm parcels in Monmouth (2003) benefit from this program, reducing property valuations (and thus, taxes) on 1,108 acres of farmland. This gives Monmouth the third-highest enrollment in Kennebec County, behind only Benton (1,660 acres) and Winslow (1,138 acres.)

The decline in farmland and overall activity is a national trend. Development pressure has certainly contributed to the situation. Development impacts farming in many ways. It drives up land values in competition with farmers, increases service demands and taxes, fragments land ownership into small parcels difficult to lease and use, drives out farm-supporting businesses, and increases nuisance complaints for standard farming practices.

## **Forest Land:**

Forests contribute to the community in many ways. They provide a source of pleasure and income to landowners and residents. Trees collect water into the landscape and aquifer by intercepting precipitation, reducing the rate of runoff, soil erosion, and phosphorus loading. Forests also bind up soil moisture in an area that may otherwise be subject to seasonal flooding or drought. In addition, they provide outdoor recreation and habitat for wildlife.

Small-scale forestry activities are the norm in Monmouth. While forestland comprises about 2/3 of the land cover in Monmouth, only a small portion of that is commercial forest. State-Certified Tree Farms and forestland registered under the Tree Growth Program make up what is generally recognized as working forests. However, the State allows all parcels of land over ten acres with commercial tree species to be classified. That definition increases Monmouth's commercial inventory considerably, even though there are no large forestry concerns operating in town.



Land enrolled in Tree Growth in Monmouth (2003) includes 23 parcels: 749 acres of mixed species, 297 acres of hardwood,

and 70 acres of softwood. The total of just over 1,100 acres is far below the roughly 12,000 acres of forest cover in town. While the smaller wood lots may not qualify for Tree Growth classification, some forest owners find the Tree Growth Program to be too onerous, in the form of its penalties or requirements for management plans. To address this, landowner outreach is needed. The Town gets reimbursed for most of the property tax reduction from this program.

Because wooded land is so extensive, not just in Monmouth but also throughout the State, people tend to take its presence for granted and not to think about its gradual disappearance as development continues throughout the area. But forests add another dimension to the local economy. The clearest example is in the harvesting of timber. According to Maine Forest Service records, between 1991 and 2002 – a 12-year period – Monmouth landowners averaged more than 12 timber harvest operations per year. Each operation averaged about 42 acres. Most harvests were a selection of individual or small groups of trees; less than ten percent were clear cuts. And most of the land was left to grow back into forest; “Change in land use” was the reason for cutting in only four percent of cases.



### **Mineral Resources:**

Mineral extraction in the town of Monmouth generally means gravel extraction. Monmouth, however, is not heavily dependent on its gravel resource. The 1990 “Land Cover Map” depicted only half a dozen small gravel pits in Monmouth, most of them clustered on glacial terrain south of Annabessocook Lake.

The occurrence of gravel pits is limited to areas of gravel-bearing soils. These soils are usually either glacial formations or outwash plains. These occur in few location in Monmouth, south of Annabessocook and east of Ridge Road. Because of the lack of significant gravel-bearing soils, gravel pits are a relatively small issue in Monmouth. Nevertheless, due to the potential for impact on groundwater aquifers and lake watersheds, the town must be sensitive to any future development of open pits, for gravel, topsoil, or other resources.

### **Rural Economic Resources – Findings and Issues:**



Agriculture in Monmouth is a traditional pillar of the community. The traditional agricultural landscapes of Monmouth, including larger farms and extensive orchards, continue to disappear. Though this is a state-wide trend, it is also the trend that farming is not entirely disappearing, but transitioning into smaller farms and niche operations. Some farms in Monmouth demonstrate

this movement towards small, alternative, specialized, and more labor-intensive farming, consistent with the trends emerging for the industry in Maine. Despite that Monmouth is postured to be in the vanguard of the new wave in farming, the loss of critical agricultural and forest infrastructure, particularly land consumed by residential development, continues to be a threat to Monmouth's farming and forestry future.

In addition to strong support from the community, Monmouth farmers enjoy good infrastructure (including prime farmland soils), good visibility (Monmouth Fair and *Monmouth Grows*), and emerging niche markets. If these conditions continue, Monmouth is likely to continue to enjoy a sustainable agricultural sector.



Forestry is less significant to the Monmouth economy than agriculture, though it continues to provide some income and employment to landowners, with nearly 500 acres per year harvested. Relatively little land is in Tree Growth. As with farming, the forest land base is threatened by continuing land consumption for development.

## **Goals and Policies for Rural Economic Resources:**

Monmouth's goal is to **encourage the promotion, conservation, and sound management of forest and agricultural activities and resources within the Town.**

To promote this goal, the plan proposes the following policies and actions:

- 4.1 Continue to support the preservation of the land base, infrastructure, and market opportunities for farming and forest operations in Monmouth.
  - Encourage owners of farmland, significant open space, and forest lands to participate in the farm, open space, and tree growth tax programs.  
*Responsible Party:* Town assessor, town office  
*Partner(s):* Monmouth Grows  
*Timing:* Ongoing
  - Inform forest land holders of opportunities for professional management planning.  
*Responsible Party:* Town office distributes literature. Selectmen and town meeting consider subsidizing forest management assistance.  
*Partner:* Monmouth Grows  
*Timing:* 2009
  - Encourage the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) in farm and forest operations.  
*Responsible Party:* Town office, code enforcement officer  
*Partner(s):* Monmouth Grows, Kennebec Soil & Water Conservation District, Cooperative Extension

*Timing:* Ongoing

- The Town should review assessment practices for open lands to assure that farm and forest are being fairly assessed.

*Responsible Party:* Selectmen, town manager, assessor

*Timing:* Immediate

- Clearly define farming and related activities within development ordinances, to minimize regulation of legitimate agriculture. Farm-related development, such as farmstands and agricultural buildings, should be exempt from development fees.

*Responsible Party:* Planning Board

*Partner(s):* Monmouth Grows

*Timing:* Ordinance Revisions in 2008

- Promote the purchasing of local produce and farm goods by businesses, institutions, and residents of Monmouth, through media and face-to-face discussions.

*Responsible Party:* Monmouth EDC, town manager

*Partner:* Monmouth Grows

*Timing:* Beginning in 2008

4.2 Discourage types of development and land uses that are incompatible with farm, forest, and mineral extraction operations in rural areas of the community.

- Encourage open space-style subdivision design or other options where there are opportunities to continue farming or forestry while developing land.

*Responsible Party:* Planning Board

*Timing:* Ordinance revision in 2008 and continuing reviews

- Assure that the Town's regulations allow reasonable economic use of forest resources.

*Responsible Party:* Planning Board, selectmen

*Timing:* Criteria in overall review of regulatory code in 2007

- Include “right-to-farm” standards (buffer areas) in development ordinances, so that development design can be compatible with routine farming operations.

*Responsible Party:* Planning Board

*Timing:* Ordinance revisions in 2008

- Assist landowners whenever requested to investigate use of conservation easements, sale of development rights, and other methods of preserving undeveloped land.

*Responsible Party:* Town manager, planning board

*Partner(s):* Monmouth Grows, land trusts

*Timing:* Immediate and on-going

- Amend development ordinance to include current standards for mineral extraction.

*Responsible Party:* Planning board

*Timing:* Ordinance revisions in 2008

- Educate new rural residents on the reality and impacts of living near farms.

*Responsible Party:* Town office

*Partner(s):* Monmouth Grows, cooperative extension

*Timing:* 2007 and ongoing.

## Chapter 5: Community Services

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The growth of a community is based on the provision of public services, programs, and facilities. The healthy community can rely on a broad range of public services, efficiently provided. Public services range from public works and utilities to recreation programs to dog licenses. Primarily, these services are provided by the municipality and paid for by taxes, but there are many variations and options for service providers. In recent years, more services are being provided by regional groups, as a means to provide more “bang for the buck.”

Monmouth can be proud of the many services that it provides to its citizens for the cost. As this chapter will show, the Town provides excellent educational, recreational, public safety, public works, and other services, conducts long-range financial planning, and cooperates with neighbors when possible for the most efficient use of tax dollars.

### General Government

Monmouth’s is a Town Manager Form of government, where the town manager is the chief executive official, with five selectmen and a legislative town meeting. Under recent changes, the budgetary part of town meeting and all voting is done by ballot vote rather than in open meeting.



The town manager also acts as town clerk, treasurer, tax collector, road commissioner, and registrar of voters. He (or she) is assisted by town office staff who engages in the everyday administration of the town and its services. The offices of the town are located in the Monmouth Town Office, a modern building just north of Monmouth

Center. Though the town office has a meeting room, town meetings are still held in Cumston Hall, and larger public meetings often take place at Monmouth Academy.

The range of public services offered by the Town is such that no small group of officials could manage them all. In addition to the Board of Selectmen, Budget Committee, School Committee, Planning Board, and Board of Appeals, Monmouth citizens can participate on the Parks and Recreation Commission, Economic Development Commission, Public Safety Facilities Committee, Monmouth Sanitary District, Cumston Hall Trustees, Cobbossee Watershed District, or Comprehensive Plan Review Committee.

## Public Safety Services

Monmouth provides comprehensive public safety and health services, including local police, fire protection, and emergency services. The Town also engages in regional planning for emergency dispatch (Kennebec County), hazard mitigation and disaster response.

### *Police Protection:*

The Monmouth Police Department consists of a chief, four full-time officers and four part-time officers. The department provides 24-hour coverage seven days a week. Since 1999, calls for service have doubled. The department responds to an average of fourteen calls for service per day. Almost half of these (and the largest increase) are traffic-related. The Department also carries on several community service programs, including school programs. The annual budget for police service is roughly \$260,000. This does not include Kennebec County Sheriff services.

Like all town departments, cruisers and other capital improvements for the police force are included in the Town's Capital Improvements Program. The police station is located in Monmouth Center, and is considered adequate for the time being. According to the public opinion survey for this plan, residents are generally "Somewhat Satisfied" with the service, and significant restructuring and improvements have been made to the department since the survey was taken.



### *Fire Protection:*

The Monmouth Fire Department celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2004. The department consists of 44 members, most of who are certified in the whole range of department activities. Department members receive an hourly wage for their service.

The Department operates out of a three-bay station in Monmouth Center, built in 1962, and a single-bay station in North Monmouth. Both facilities are somewhat undersized for modern vehicles and technology that is the standard today. The Department's vehicle and equipment needs are met through the Town's Capital Improvements Program, though we have been the beneficiaries of federal grants recently to upgrade equipment and gear. The newest vehicle is a 2,000 gallon tanker truck, built in 2004.

The department responds to an average of 100 calls per year, a large percentage of which are car accidents. The number of calls has been increasing gradually over the years. The 1991 Comprehensive Plan noted an average of 79 calls per year in the late 80's.

The availability of water in the areas served by the public water system is generally not an issue. Tankers are available for rural areas, where there are also scattered water sources. The largest single hazard in town is the Tex-tech plant. Tex-tech uses its own reservoir for water needs, but needs to make improvements for fire protection.

Response time is an issue in the South Monmouth area, though the town has mutual aid agreements with Litchfield, Wales, and other neighbors. Residents expressed a high level of satisfaction with the town's fire protection service in the public opinion survey.

*Emergency Response:*

The Monmouth Rescue Association is a private service partially funded by the Town, providing emergency medical service and transport. Its single ambulance is housed in a facility on the north side of Monmouth Center. The association is staffed by eight EMT's in town, and another four from neighboring towns who can respond when needed. Transport can either be to Central Maine Medical Center in Lewiston or Maine General in Augusta. In 2005, rescue responded to 244 calls.

The building and equipment for the rescue association are both in need of upgrading. Because it is a private organization, it is not included in the Capital Improvement Plan, but it has its own funding plan and grant writing in process.

All emergency dispatching is handled through the E-911 dispatch center at the Winthrop Police Department. This arrangement seems to be working out well. The town does not yet have final certification of its street addressing project, but is in the final stages.

The Town is required to develop a hazard mitigation plan, consistent with federal, state, and county guidelines.

**Public Works**

The Public Works Department is responsible for maintenance of local roads and other town facilities, operation of the solid waste system, and issuance of driveway permits onto local roads. The Department is centered in the highway garage, located on Academy Road just north of Monmouth Center. This garage was built in 1963, at approximately 3,000 square feet with room for four trucks. An 1,800 square foot addition for a fifth bay and staff work space was approved by town meeting in 2005, and is now complete.

The Public Works Director is assisted by full- and part-time crew on the equipment and at the transfer station.



### *Road Maintenance:*

The Public Works Department is responsible for maintaining the 58 miles of town ways, including plowing, summer maintenance and road improvement projects. Each year, the Department takes on several miles of hot top overlay, reconstruction, and culvert replacements. Total annual expenditures are about \$360,000, plus special projects which come out of the Capital Improvements Fund. About 2/3 of summer maintenance and almost all of winter maintenance is funded by the local excise tax, with additional funding coming from the DOT. (Capital improvements are funded by separate appropriation.) Additional information on the local road system may be found in Chapter 6.

The Town owns a variety of highway maintenance equipment and does much of its own maintenance. Equipment is scheduled for replacement on a 10-15 year rotation, funded by the Capital Improvements Reserve. Though there is some concern over both the rate of replacement and the size of new equipment, the system is working well for the present. The Town still has no facility for winter storage of salt.

In the public opinion survey conducted in 2005, residents expressed a high degree of satisfaction with both road maintenance and winter plowing.

### *Solid Waste:*

Monmouth operates its own transfer station, located on Route 135 east of the Center. The transfer station also serves the Town of Wales. Wales pays approximately 1/4 of the total operating costs of \$240,000/year. The major expense in the solid waste budget is the tipping fee (incinerator disposal fee). The Town is fortunate in being a member of the Mid-Maine Waste Action Corp. (MMWAC) and its waste-to-energy facility in Auburn. As members, the Town enjoys a tipping fee of less than half of the posted fee – also less than half of what we paid 15 years ago.

Waste disposal costs are lowered even further through an active recycling program. In 2003, the Town posted a 60 percent recycling rate, well above the state average. This included 328 tons of sorted recyclables (paper, glass, etc.) and 1,300 tons of bulky waste (metals, yard waste, tire, etc.) recycled or composted.

The transfer station and recycling center are well-staffed, with regular hours and no issues with DEP. Residents indicated an average degree of satisfaction with the solid waste program overall, and a high degree of satisfaction with the recycling program.

### **Utilities:**

Portions of Monmouth Center, North Monmouth, and a Route 202 are served by public water and sewer systems. The systems overlap to some degree, and where available, serve as an incentive and locus for new development. A map of the extent of the systems is included with this report.

*Public Water System:*

The Monmouth Water Association is a private entity serving approximately 200 customers in the town. It was formed initially in the mid-60's in response to groundwater pollution problems in the Center. It has now expanded and serves a broader area. Water supply and quality are not an issue in the service area. The water system does not, however, extend into North Monmouth. The town's largest industrial water user, Tex-tech Industries, uses its own surface water supply for industrial and fire protection purposes.

The initial supply for the MWA system was a series of bedrock wells north of the village. In the late-90's, the association began to experience supply problems and decreasing yields. Tests showed high levels of Arsenic. After an unsuccessful search for alternate sources of water near the village, the association agreed to purchase and pipe water from the Winthrop Utility District. The District has agreed to supply up to 150,000 gallons per day of water (more than twice Monmouth's current daily usage) through a supply line running down Route 202. The WUD supply is treated surface water.

As a private association, the MWA has limited planning and expansion capability, and limited eligibility for grants. The prospect of merging it with the Monmouth Sanitary District to form a public entity has been discussed, as has the possibility of forming a regional district including Augusta. While any consolidation would probably yield long-term benefits, there would be many hurdles to overcome.

The most likely areas for extension of the water system include North Monmouth and along Blue Road and Academy Road north of the Center. Both of these areas could enjoy greater development opportunities if served by public water.

*Public Sewer:*

The Monmouth Sanitary District (MSD) was organized in 1971, and began operations in 1976. It is part of a regional system, including Winthrop, Manchester, and Hallowell, all of which pump their waste via a trunkline into the Augusta Treatment Plant. Together, the "trunkline group" owns 20 percent of the treatment capacity of the Augusta facility.

Monmouth is allocated 18 percent of the trunkline, coming to about 470,000 gpd, under the current formula. It currently uses 23.5 percent, but this is not a problem because much of the original capacity was allocated to the defunct Carleton Woolen Mills. Monmouth's pipes, especially in the Center area, would actually benefit from increased flow rates.

The sewer system serves approximately 1/3 of the households and more than half the businesses in Monmouth. The service area is larger than the water system, and includes much of North Monmouth, including Tex-tech. In fact, Tex-tech accounts for 55 to 65 percent of the total yearly flow.

MSD is responsible for the system of collector sewers in town as well as three pump stations. MSD is also liable for a percentage of any capital costs on the trunkline.

Current issues for the MSD include the age of the facilities and low flows from Monmouth Center. Much of the system is over 30 years old; several of the pumps will need replacement soon. Low flows from Monmouth Center have created anaerobic conditions in the pipes and must be addressed by expensive chemical treatment.

The Town requires new development within 500 feet of an existing sewer line to connect to the system but has no systematic plan for expansion of the collectors.

**Education:**

Monmouth has a K-12 public school system that operates as a town department. Though there are some day-care and pre-schools in the town, there are no other general education facilities nor post-secondary schools in town.

It is not in the scope of this plan to do educational facilities planning. The school department has done an adequate job of identifying needs for buildings and programs. The only reason for looking at the educational system is to identify the relationships between school facilities and the town’s growth.

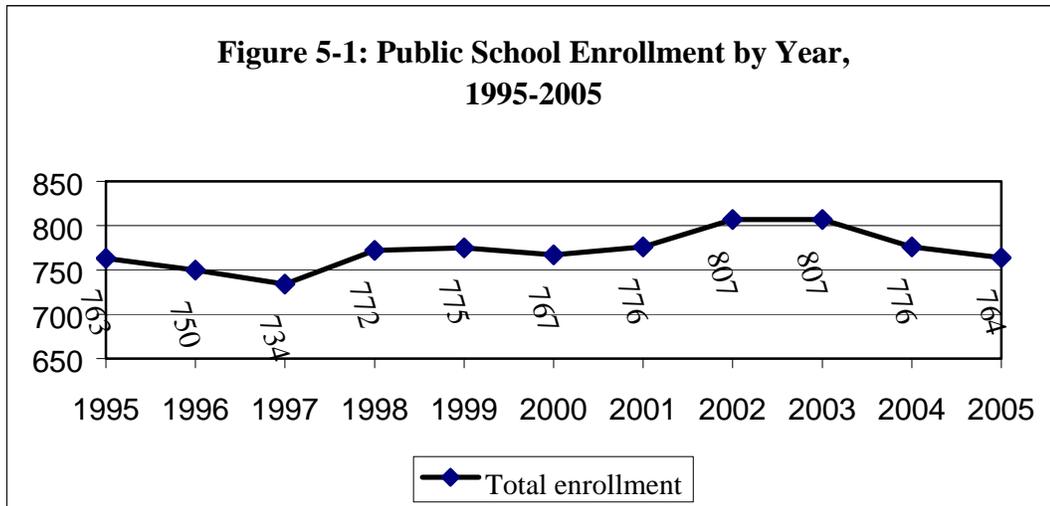
The school system consists of the Cottrell Elementary School, Monmouth Middle School, and Monmouth Academy (high school). Overall, the quality of the facilities and the instruction is very high. Monmouth has been recognized as a top-tier school system through various state measures of educational quality. Locally, respondents to the public opinion survey were well-satisfied with the educational system. In fact, 161 of 362 respondents said that the school system “very much” influenced their decision to live here.



The quality of schools is a function of the quality of staff and facilities, and stability of finance and administration. Expenditures for education in 03-04 totaled \$5,480,000, an increase of \$783,000 from the 97-98 year, an average increase of just 2.6 percent per year. That is below the rate of inflation for that period. Per-pupil costs in Monmouth are just \$6,536, the lowest among neighboring towns. Monmouth’s rate of increase in per-pupil costs is also the lowest in the region since 93-94, when we were just average in costs. For the state, 03-04 per-pupil costs averaged \$7,331, and increase of 66 percent over ten years. This raises the basic question: how can Monmouth offer a better education at lower price than anyone else?

<b>Regional Perspective: Per Pupil Costs</b>		
Town	03-04 cost	ten-year change
<b>Monmouth</b>	<b>6,356</b>	<b>42 %</b>
Litchfield	9,144	99 %
Wales	6,903	51 %
Winthrop	7,230	72 %
SAD 52(Leeds)	6,752	76 %

As demonstrated in Figure 5-1, below, student enrollment has fluctuated over the years, but stayed fairly even overall. The ratio between elementary and secondary students has also stayed fairly even. This is despite the increase in population of close to 500 people over that decade, many of them young families. This demonstrates the impact on schools of decreasing household sizes and older households. Young families have balanced the aging population to some degree. Lowered enrollment might have cut school costs a little, but the school's per-pupil expenditure would have gone up. Most other school systems with aging populations are losing enrollment, which may explain to some degree their increased costs.



With decreased enrollment, we would also have lost state subsidy. In 03-04, State Aid to Education in Monmouth was over \$3 million, amounting to 61 percent of the total school costs. The subsidy is partly based on enrollment levels, so reduced enrollment would mean reduced dollars from the state.

Monmouth's school system functions as an integral part of the community. Schools are used regularly for community meetings and functions, and school grounds are used for recreation. The school complex is located very close to Monmouth Center, though transportation connections could be improved. Sidewalks or bike paths would greatly enhance the school's relationship to the main commercial/service center of the town.

The schools are in an area that would be suitable for more intensive development; however, proximity to a school without good pedestrian or bicycle access is not a big consideration. Nearly all students are currently bussed to school, primarily for safety and security reasons. While students who live across town from the schools may create a few more bus miles, directing development nearer to the schools is not likely to result in a significant reduction of needs for busses or labor.

## Other Community Services

The Town of Monmouth and its partners offer many services that are not considered essential, but which enhance the quality of the town. Among these are recreation and cultural facilities highlighted in other chapters.

### *Recreation Programs and Facilities:*

The town, state, and private organizations provide land and facilities for public recreation. Among them are fields for active recreational pursuits, such as baseball (Chick Fields) and field sports (school grounds). The Trustees of Cumston Hall own the fairgrounds, which is used both for organized events, such as the fair (run by the Cochnewagon Agricultural Association), and for informal recreation. Private and semi-public facilities include:

- The Cobbossee Colony Golf Course is a private golf club open to the public,
- the Cochnewagon Trail Blazers Snowmobile Club maintains the snowmobile trails,
- The Monmouth Fish and Game owns a building and shooting range,
- The Cumston Trustees are responsible for Cumston Park and fairgrounds,
- The 160 acre Woodbury Sanctuary is available for hiking and outdoor enjoyment,
- Camp Kippewa, a private girls summer camp, and Camp Cobbossee, also a private summer camp, are both on Cobbosseecontee Lake.

Access to Monmouth's lakes is provided in several places. The Town owns and manages the beach in Monmouth Center (Cochnewagon), and a beach in North Monmouth (Wilson Pond) is also open to the public. There are public boat launches and recreation areas on Cochnewagon, Wilson Pond, Annabessacook, and Cobbosseecontee.

Taken together, these facilities provide an excellent array of recreational opportunities for Monmouth residents. People may partake in sports and games, passive recreation, events, and water sports. Facilities provided exceed state standards for towns of Monmouth's size.

The Town's recreation programs are managed by the Parks and Recreation Commission. They highlight programs for children and families. Organized programs include swimming lessons, summer soccer camp, basketball camp, youth soccer and basketball leagues, cheerleading, and a ski club. The commission works closely with the school department for use of school facilities. The commission also provides lifeguards and staff for the two town beaches. The recreation program costs about \$46,000 per year.

While recreation programs and facilities are in good shape for the present, the Town should be considering how future



demographic changes would affect demand for recreation. Population growth over the next couple of decades will probably increase demand for beach use and adult recreation, including walking paths. Because the student population is holding steady, there may be no increased demand for youth programs, but there will be great demand for senior programs as baby boomers begin to retire. Monmouth currently has a shortage of senior recreation opportunities.

Additional information on outdoor recreation opportunities and issues is reported in Chapter 7, Outdoor Recreation.

#### *Cultural Facilities:*

The town is served by two public libraries. The Cumston Public Library is managed by a Board of Trustees and is located in Cumston Hall. It is the primary town library, offering over 18,000 volumes and open 25 hours a week. The North Monmouth Library is managed by the North Monmouth Library Association and receives no town funds. This library serves a much smaller patronage, and there have been proposals to close it and consolidate with Cumston.

Cumston Hall is the town's principal cultural facility. In addition to housing the library, the hall has a large theater area used for live productions and events. After years of municipal investments and outside funding, under the guidance of its Trustees, Cumston Hall is in good condition.

Additional information on cultural facilities can be found in Chapter 1, History and Culture.

### **Fiscal Operation**

Community facilities and services, with some exceptions, are dependent on municipal revenues. The quality of services depends on a town's capacity to support them with dollars. Dollars come from taxes and other revenues. As costs increase through inflation or the provision of higher service levels, revenues must go up accordingly. "Fiscal capacity" is our ability to do this without serious financial impact.

According to Monmouth's audit report for FY 05, it costs about \$9.4 million to run the Town of Monmouth for a year. Of that amount, \$5.8 million went to education, not including the portion of debt service for school buildings. Of the remaining amount, the largest expenditures are in the categories of general administration, public works (about half for roads, half for solid waste) and debt service. These three categories accounted for about 59 percent of the total non-school expenses.

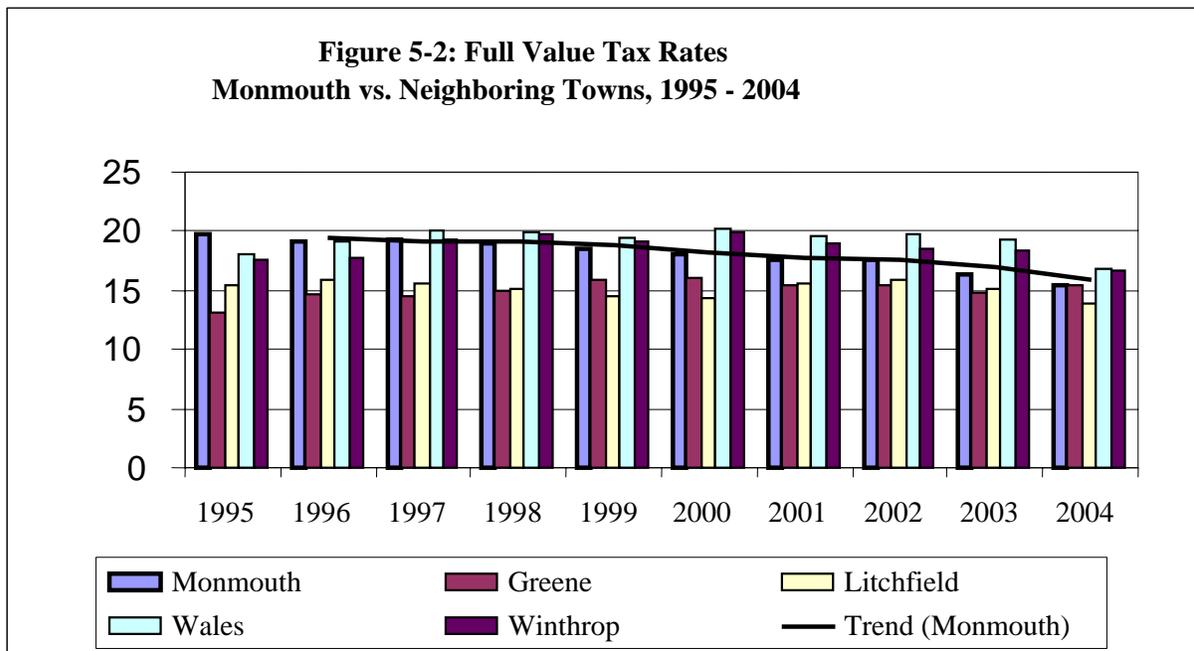
By contrast, in FY 99, the Town spent \$6.8 million, about \$4.7 million of which was for schools. The three largest non-school expenditure categories were general administration, public works, and "unclassified," (which included both county tax and a special flood mitigation expenditure.) Over the six-year period, the largest increase is in debt service, as \$400,000 in principal and \$100,000 in interest payments were added. General administration

went up appreciably, but partly because employee benefits (health insurance and retirement) more than doubled and partly because some items were moved from “unclassified” by auditors.

The real test of fiscal capacity, though, is not how much more we spent, but in whether we were able to do that without an undue burden on taxpayers. Taxes (in FY 05) account for only one-half of our total budget. The other large chunk is state aid to education, which accounts for 38 percent. The remainder is covered by intergovernmental revenues (revenue sharing, homestead exemption reimbursement, grants, etc.), permit fees, and other income.

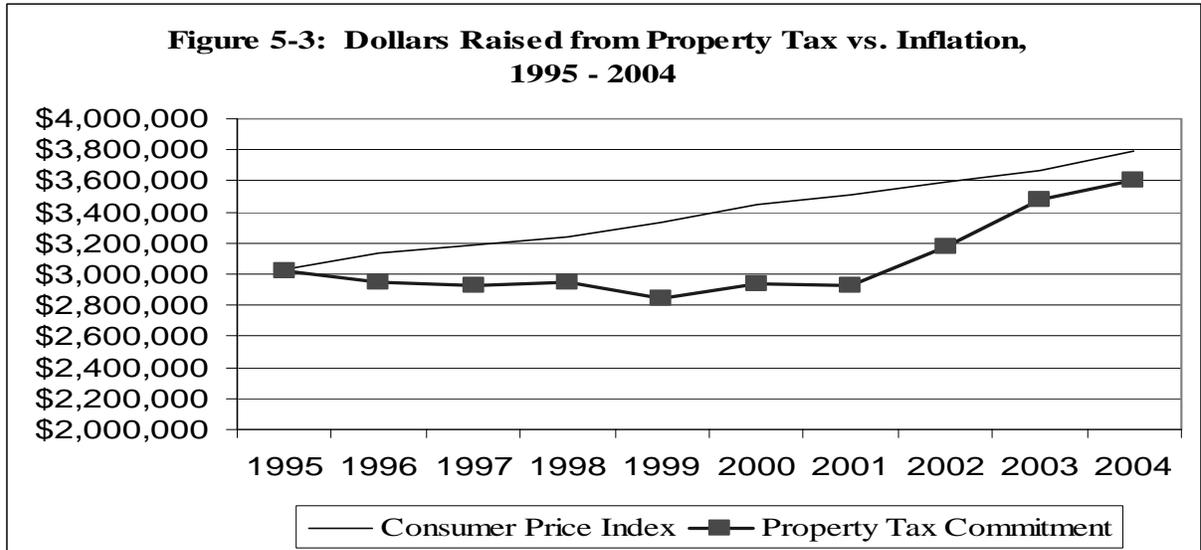
Of local taxes, in FY 05 \$600,000 came from excise taxes and \$3,758,000 came from property taxes. That is about a 30 percent increase from FY 99, when \$428,000 came from excise and \$2,960,000 from property taxes.

The fact that tax collections went up by 30 percent does not mean that tax bills went up by the same amount. Property tax increases come not only from raises in the mill rate but increases in the total property valuation in town. In his report in the 2004 Town Report, the town manager observes that the mill rate had only been raised five times in eleven years. This is notably conservative, especially since the town has not been revalued lately (see below). Figure 5-2, below, shows, Monmouth’s mill rate in relation to our neighboring towns.



The chart shows that Monmouth’s “Full Value Mill Rate” – indicated by the trend line – has been declining steadily for the past decade. (A “Full Value” rate is the tax rate based on the state’s estimate of property value, which must be used to compare years and towns, because towns use different valuation techniques and base years.) In fact, Monmouth, which had the highest mill rate in 1995 and 1996, now has one of the lowest, second only to Litchfield. In “Full Value” terms, the tax rate has declined by almost ¼.

It has also declined in comparison to the overall inflation rate. Figure 5-3, below, shows the line for total dollars raised from property taxes versus the consumer price index. As the town manager also said in his 2004 report, taxes have increased 12.6 % in eleven years, while the rate of inflation has increased 27.7 %.

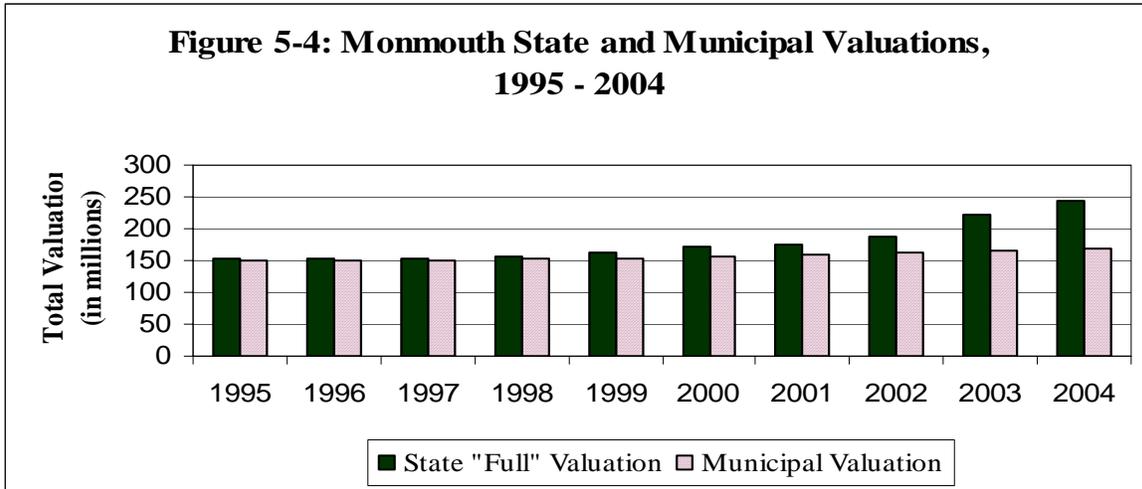


While this shows good fiscal management within the town, it also shows that Monmouth is benefiting from increases in property values. Property valuation increases come from two sources: new construction and real estate prices. Since the town has not done a comprehensive revaluation in several years, tax rates do not adequately reflect real estate prices, and most of Monmouth’s valuation increase stems from new construction. Between 1999 and 2004, Monmouth’s local valuation went from \$154 million to \$168 million, an average of \$2.8 million per year. At the 2004 tax rate, that means an additional \$63,000 per year. That means, if other revenues were unchanged, we could afford an increase of \$63,000 per year in the local budget without raising taxes.

After many years of discussion, Monmouth commenced the process of revaluation in 2006. The lack of a recent revaluation meant that Monmouth did not tax property at its actual market value. This is not just a matter of setting the mill rate. As property values change, certain types of property, such as commercial or shorefront, become relatively more or less valuable. A revaluation, as mandated by the state Constitution, forces us to correct the inequity where people pay less even though they own more valuable property. Monmouth’s revaluation will probably mean that lakefront property, which has really inflated in value recently, would increase in valuation.

Figure 5-4 shows graphically how the municipal valuation levels compare with the state’s in the years prior to the revaluation. The state takes a sampling of local real estate prices to estimate the overall value of the town. While the town’s municipal valuation has been almost unchanged since 1998, actual values have gone up almost 60 percent.

**Figure 5-4: Monmouth State and Municipal Valuations, 1995 - 2004**



Monmouth practices Capital Improvements Planning, which is an essential tool in keeping tax rates stable and reasonable. The CIP fills two roles: it allows a town to program large expenditures into one account, so that we may purchase without borrowing and paying interest. And, it allows a town to look at its long-term needs and space them out, rather than reacting when it is too late to save money. CIP's also allow us to target certain improvements for grants or alternate funding.

Monmouth's CIP covers all town departments, though school construction needs are sometimes planned separately. In 2004, the CIP funded fire equipment, a police cruiser, road reconstruction, a photocopier for the town office, public works equipment, and a school bus. The Town spent about \$360,000 and will pay no interest on any of those purchases. In 2005, the CIP funded fire equipment, road reconstruction, a new furnace, software, and renovations and expansion of Cumston Hall, spending \$354,000 and paying no interest. The CIP allows us to program in costs that we anticipate as a result of changes in the community, such as road improvements, additional sidewalks, downtown improvements, or new police, fire, or school vehicles.

The Town also leverages its resources by participating in regional cooperation for better services. The Town receives \$70,000 per year from Wales for sharing our solid waste facility. The Town participates in regional dispatching of emergency services. The Sanitary District and Water Association both save ratepayers by being part of a regional utility. And the Town is part of Cobbossee Watershed District, seeking to maintain the high quality of lakes throughout the Cobbossee complex.

### **Community Services – Findings and Issues:**

Monmouth residents generally enjoy a high level and broad range of community services, and are satisfied with what they receive. Services range from public works and public safety to cultural and recreational programs. Good financial oversight and long-range planning keep these services available at a reasonable cost.

In order to keep these services at their current levels, the Town will have to continue planning for changes in population and service demands. The Town will also need to examine the benefits of spending public funds to guide new growth. For example, investments to improve the village areas will encourage more private investment there, whereas road improvements in a rural section of town make land more desirable for development.

Planning for change is not limited to increases in raw numbers. As population ages and the town becomes more suburbanized, people will demand different services. More passive recreation, senior services, public transit, and other services found in more urban towns may be in Monmouth's long-term future.

Public sewer and water service attracts growth, and is often essential for large commercial development. How these utilities are managed, including policies for extension of service and connections will have a significant effect on future growth and costs. Improved management through regional consolidation and other cost efficiencies will help keep costs down.

The Town should continue its long-range capital improvements planning. Items for inclusion in the plan should be identified well in advance. The Town should take into account the changes in service demands necessitated by community growth. Several growth-related additions to the CIP are recommended in policies, below.

Public safety services will require attention in the near future. Demands for police, fire, and rescue are all increasing, technology and certification standards are adding to the burden and space needs, and facilities are just barely adequate as it is. A comprehensive look at public safety needs is due.

Monmouth has a history of cooperation with neighboring towns on community services. Regional cooperation will become even more of an issue as everyone gets squeezed. The Town can take an active role in organizing and participating in opportunities to provide more cost-effective services regionally.

## **Goals and Policies for Community Services**

Monmouth's community service goal is to **plan for and develop a range of public services and facilities that will meet the needs of present and future community residents in a cost-effective manner.**

To promote this goal, the plan proposes the following policies and actions:

- 5.1 Protect public drinking water sources and supplies
  - Encourage the continuation of cooperative arrangement between the Monmouth Water Association and Winthrop for adequate water supply.  
*Responsible Party:* Selectmen as a negotiating partner.  
*Partner(s):* Monmouth Water Association  
*Timing:* Ongoing

- Require new public water supplies to incorporate wellhead protection plans.  
*Responsible Party:* Planning Board, through development ordinance  
*Partner(s):* Maine Drinking Water Program (DHS)  
*Timing:* Include in ordinance revisions in 2008
- 5.2 Plan for expansion of growth-related public utilities.
- Require new subdivisions and commercial development in growth area to tie in to the public water supply if feasible and approved by Monmouth Water Association.  
*Responsible Party:* Planning board through development review ordinance  
*Partner(s):* Monmouth Water Association  
*Timing:* ordinance revisions in 2008, and continuing enforcement
  - Extend the requirement for new development to tie in to the sanitary sewer system from 500' to 1,000'.  
*Responsible Party:* Town meeting, Sanitary District trustees  
*Timing:* Sewer ordinance change in 2008
  - Increase allowable development densities (reduce lot size and frontage) within the growth area for land on public water and sewer service.  
*Responsible Party:* Planning board  
*Timing:* ordinance revisions in 2008
  - Continue to investigate costs and benefits of utility district consolidation, which would include the current MWA and Sanitary District.  
*Responsible Party:* Selectmen, Sanitary District trustees  
*Partner(s):* Monmouth Water Association  
*Timing:* Ongoing
- 5.3 Make strategic investments in public facilities to encourage and accommodate growth.
- Work with the Monmouth Water Association to extend and improve its system within the designated growth area and into North Monmouth.  
*Responsible Party:* Selectmen, planning board  
*Partner(s):* Monmouth Water Association  
*Timing:* Ongoing
  - Improve the stormwater management facilities in Monmouth Center, to absorb new development while not increasing phosphorous export.  
*Responsible Party:* Town manager, public works  
*Partner(s):* Cobbossee Watershed District  
*Timing:* 2009-11
  - Fund a study of operation and facility needs for public safety.  
*Responsible Party:* Town manager, town meeting, police chief, fire chief  
*Partner(s):* Monmouth Rescue Association  
*Timing:* Place study cost in CIP for funding in 2008 or 2009
  - Evaluate the operation and layout of the solid waste transfer station and recycling to better utilize existing space.  
*Responsible Party:* Town manager, public works  
*Partner(s):* KVCOG  
*Timing:* 2007

- Make infrastructure and amenities improvements in Monmouth Center and North Monmouth, for safety and to attract business and development.  
*Responsible Party:* Town Manager, public works  
*Timing:* Fund through CIP or grants, begin process immediately.

5.4 Expand recreational and cultural facilities.

- Improve Veteran’s Park (Monmouth Center), beach access (Wilson and Cochnewagon), and other small green spaces within the village areas.  
*Responsible Party:* Town manager, public works, Parks and Recreation  
*Partner:* North Monmouth Community Club  
*Timing:* Add to CIP in 2007, work as needed
- Develop an inventory of town-owned or other public open space areas and plan for acquisition/improvement/maintenance with funding from new development.  
*Responsible Party:* proposed “Conservation Commission” (see 7.2)  
*Timing:* Open space plan, 2008
- Continue the restoration of Cumston Hall and expansion of its use and support by the community.  
*Responsible Party:* Town meeting, selectmen  
*Partner(s):* Trustees of Cumston Hall  
*Timing:* Ongoing

5.5 Continue strong commitment to planning for capital investments, with emphasis on anticipating growth needs and savings through regional cooperation.

- Incorporate identified investment needs from this plan into the CIP. Expand CIP to include investments potentially funded through other sources, such as grants.  
*Responsible Party:* Town manager, selectmen  
*Timing:* Immediate
- Continue to seek out opportunities for regional cooperation on public service delivery.  
*Responsible Party:* Town manager, selectmen  
*Partner(s):* neighboring towns  
*Timing:* Ongoing
- Re-establish a process to require department heads, including school superintendent, to comment on fiscal and service impacts of new development proposals.  
*Responsible Party:* Planning Board  
*Partner(s):* School superintendent, public works, police, fire, sanitary district, water association.  
*Timing:* Begin practice immediately, include requirement in 2008 ordinance revisions

## Chapter 6: Monmouth's Transportation System

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Monmouth depends heavily on its transportation system, both for local travel and to access jobs and services throughout the region. This chapter of the plan describes Monmouth's transportation assets and deficiencies, and provides general recommendations for meeting the existing and future transportation needs of the town.

### The Highway System

#### *Classification and Condition:*

The public highway system is the primary – almost exclusive – carrier of transportation in Monmouth. At over \$1 million per mile for major roads, the highway system represents a major asset. It is essential that we plan to preserve this asset. The asset can be wasted not just from lack of maintenance, but by management that permits too much traffic and safety hazards.



Good planning will prolong the life of the existing system.

There are approximately 82 miles of public roadway in Monmouth. This excludes private roads, which, though open for public use, are owned and maintained by individuals or homeowners associations. The Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) classifies roads by the role they serve in the overall transportation network. The principal classifications are:

**Arterials:** These are the most important travel routes in the State. Arterial Roads are designated for their capacity to carry large volumes of traffic efficiently between commercial or service centers. The MDOT has restrictive access standards on arterial roads, to preserve this mobility function. These highways generally carry a federal route number designation, such as US 202. Route 9/126 through South Monmouth is also an Arterial.

**Collectors:** These are the roads that collect and distribute traffic from areas of lower population density onto arterials and service centers. Collectors are further divided into “major” and “minor,” which affects the proportions of federal and state money available for improvements. Many collectors are also known as “state aid” roads, because the state helps pay for maintenance on these roads. In Monmouth, Route 132 is a Major Collector; Route 135, Maple Street, and Cobbossecontee Road are Minor Collectors.

**Local Roads:** These are the roads that serve primarily for access to adjacent land areas and usually carry low volumes of traffic. In Maine, these roads are the municipalities' responsibility, and are generally referred to as "town roads." Table 6-1 has a breakdown of the 49 miles of local roads and their conditions.

Table 6-1: Town Ways (Year-Round Only)

<u>Name</u>	<u>Length</u>	<u>Surface</u>	<u>Condition</u>	<u>Needs/Defects</u>
Sanborn Road	1.75 mi.	paved	excellent	
Waugan Road	1.86	paved	good	
Macomber Road	1.09	paved	very good	
South Monmouth Road	2.7	paved	fair	poor base, heavy loads
Ridge Road	2.78	paved	very good	
Warren Road	1.69	paved	good	
Anderson Road	.66	paved	very good	
Perkins Road	.54	gravel	fair	
Town Farm Road	.75	paved	good	
Gray Mill Road	.10	paved	good	
Academy Road	1.75	paved	good	
Fish Hatchery Road	1.78	paved	good	heavy truck traffic
Country Acres	.20	paved	good	
Blue Road	1.58	paved	fair	
Pine Hill Road	.69	paved	good	
Berry Road	.64	paved	good	
Ward Road	.30	gravel	good	
Packard Road	1.53	gravel	fair	needs reconstruction
Annabessacook Road	1.12	paved	good	
New Street	.30	paved	fair	needs curbs/drains
Blaisdell Road	.52	paved	good	
Prescott Hill Road	1.35	paved	good	
Tillson Road	1.76	paved	fair/good	poor drainage
Gilman Road	1.03	gravel	fair	
Murdock Road	.14	gravel	fair	
Norris Hill Road	2.00	paved	very good	
Back Road	1.29	paved	fair	poor drainage
Old Lewiston Road	1.03	paved	good	
Welch Ave.	.42	paved	good	
Bonin Road	.81	paved	good	
Beach Road	.15	paved	very good	
Blake Road	.56	gravel	fair	
Blue Rock Road	.31	paved	good	
Bog Road	.77	paved	good	
Carver Road	.95	gravel	poor	
Cemetery Road	1.22	gravel/paved	fair	
Cressey Road	1.85	gravel	fair	
Hanson Wood Road	.57	paved	good	poor alignment

Highland Terrace	0.37	paved	very good
Launch Drive	.47	gravel	fair
Morse Road	.19	paved	good
Oak Hill Road	.14	paved	very good
Oak Hill Acres	.41	paved	very good
Old Town Road	.22	gravel	fair
Painter Road	.33	gravel	fair
Pease Hill Road	1.35	gravel	fair
Pine hill Road	.69	paved	good
Pisgah Road	.16	paved	good
Sampson Road	.07	gravel	fair
Sanborn Road	1.75	paved	excellent
Thurston Road	.12	paved	fair
Wilson Pond Road	3.69	gravel/paved	fair/good
Main Street North	.85	paved	very good

*Source: Public Works Director*

Route 9/126 has two miles within Monmouth and Route 202 has 5.2 miles. The MDOT plows and maintains these two Arterials. Both are classified as “Mobility Corridors,” which means they are subject to very restrictive access management rules, and as “Retrograde Arterials,” which means that they have higher-than-average, driveway-related crash rates. While Route 202 is a well-constructed highway, Route 126 is deficient on several segments.

Route 132 – a Major Collector – is 5.1 miles long in Monmouth. The Town is responsible for plowing, but the MDOT must maintain and improve the road, subject to funding. Only minor pavement maintenance has been done over the past several years, including 2006.



Route 135 is 5.7 miles, Cobbossecontee Road is 4.7 miles, and Maple Street is 0.3 miles. As Minor Collectors, they are plowed by the Town. Improvements may be made by MDOT, but Monmouth must contribute matching funds. While Cobbossecontee Road is in good condition, portions of Route 135 are in fair to poor shape.

MDOT road improvements are scheduled as part of the biennial budget adopted by the legislature, and are listed in a document known as the Biennial Transportation Investment Plan (BTIP). The BTIP for 2006-07 includes five projects on state roads:

- Route 126: A reconstruction of 3/4 mile of the roadway had been scheduled for this biennium, but has been dropped for lack of funding.
- Route 132: Maintenance paving (thin coat of asphalt) for 2.3 miles north from Wales.

- Route 132: Maintenance paving (thin coat of asphalt) for 1.74 miles from Academy Street to the Route 202 intersection.
- Route 135: Maintenance paving (thin coat of asphalt) from Route 132 junction 3.7 miles northeast to 1/2 mile north of Sanborn Road.
- Route 135: Maintenance paving (thin coat of asphalt) beginning just north of Route 132 intersection and extending 3.17 miles northerly (*appears to duplicate earlier listing.*)



Of the remaining 59 miles of public road, 10.7 miles are classified seasonal town roads, meaning that they are not maintained during the winter. 48.68 miles are town roads maintained year-round. Local roads are maintained by the Monmouth Public Works Department. (Information on the Department is in Chapter 5.)

37.9 miles of town roads are paved, and 10.8 miles are graveled. The town has a policy to repave roads on a 7-year rotation,

but over the past few years has only been able to average about 5 miles a year. Rather than borrow money to reconstruct roads, the Town has road improvements under its capital improvement funding plan.

An essential part of the highway system is its bridges. Because of the deteriorating state of local bridges in Maine, a few years ago, the legislature changed bridge maintenance responsibility to the MDOT. In general now, all bridges over 10 feet long are inspected and maintained by MDOT. If major work is necessary, the Town must contribute matching funds.

There are 11 bridges in Monmouth that fall into this category, including five in North Monmouth. This does not include the bridge on Carver Road, which has been closed for several years. Additional information on these bridges is available from MDOT.



*Traffic Counts and Considerations:*

Historic traffic count data is recorded and provided by MDOT for a number of locations throughout Monmouth. Traffic counts are expressed in Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT), which is the average number of vehicles to pass over a counting point in a day. It does not differentiate between cars and trucks.

The most heavily used public road is Route 202, which transits the northwest portion of Town. At its highest counting point (east of the intersection with Route 132), the 2003 traffic

volume was 8,760 vehicles per day. Just west of the intersection, traffic drops off to 6,560 per day. The AADT on Route 126 at the Wales town line was 4,430. Other points of significance include Route 132: at Route 202, 3,280 AADT; at Monmouth Center, 2,240 AADT; at the Wales town line, 1,400. The highest count on Route 135 was at Sanborn Road: 1,050 AADT.

Highway capacity is usually expressed in terms of traffic volume; capacity can range from around 12,000 AADT (minor collectors) to over 21,000 AADT, on an arterial. Traffic volumes in Monmouth are not an issue of capacity; however, traffic counts are also a measure of the comfort level of a road and of growth. For example, Route 202 carried an average of 7,650 AADT in 1993. That traffic has been increasing, on average, 1.4 percent per year.

Traffic on Route 132 between 1993 and 2003 grew by 2.4 percent per year. At that rate, in 30 years traffic will double in volume. However, changing conditions must always be taken into account, and in this case, the Maine Turnpike Interchange opening in Sabattus in 2004 requires completely new assumptions. In fact, a report prepared by AVCOG and KVCOG in 2003, the *Corridor Study of the Sabattus Turnpike Interchange*, projects new traffic patterns resulting in a 324 percent increase in traffic on Route 132 at the Wales town line by 2025 – more than quadrupling in 20 years.



This is a significant increase in traffic over a stretch of roadway that is now very rural and in poor condition. This is projected to be “through traffic,” meaning that vehicles will be coming directly from the interchange through to Route 202. This will impact safety and pedestrian circulation in Monmouth Center as well as making land along Route 132 more accessible for development. Large trucks are expected to make up much of the increase.



The *Corridor Study* suggests that Route 132 be rebuilt to accommodate the additional traffic, and that signage be used to divert some through traffic (such as truck traffic) onto Leeds Junction Road. The impact will still be significant, though if planned for appropriately, increased traffic could enhance local economic opportunities. The study also found that currently 28 percent of the traffic along this stretch exceeds 60 MPH, making speed enforcement an issue.

*Safety:*

The MDOT tracks accident data on the highway system. It uses the data to identify high crash locations (HCL). MDOT defines an HCL as a roadway intersection or segment which experiences 8 or more accidents in a 3-year period and a Critical Rate Factor (CRF) in excess of 1.00. (The CRF is a measure of the actual number of accidents compared to the theoretical accident experience that would normally be expected in that situation.)

The MDOT has identified only one intersection in town as an HCL – the intersection of Route 202 with 132. This same intersection was identified in the town’s 1991 plan as both a MDOT and local problem area, so conditions have not changed. MDOT, however, is very reluctant to put any traffic control devices, such as warning lights, on its mobility arterials. Another problem area identified by the Public Works Commissioner is the intersection of Route 126 with the South Monmouth Road.

Since a major cause of traffic accidents is slowing and turning into, or exiting, driveways and business entrances, control over these access points (sometimes called “curb cuts”) is viewed as a major step towards increasing traffic safety. Access control must be balanced against the right to develop roadside properties. MDOT has a requirement for access permits onto all state roads (arterials and collectors). The primary purpose of these permits is to assure that driveways are located with adequate sight distance; on Routes 126 and 202, MDOT is also trying to prevent strip development which would slow traffic speeds.

Monmouth may have several roads whose dimensions (right-of-way) or ownership status is unclear. The status of these roads has implications for local access, development standards, and town maintenance responsibilities in the future. The 1991 Plan identified uncertainty over these roads as an issue.

## **Non-Highway Transportation Options**

*Railroad:*

The Guilford Railroad’s “Springfield Terminal” (formerly Maine Central) main line passes north/south through the central portion of Monmouth. Railroad crossing warning signals are located where the tracks cross the highway in Monmouth Center. The tracks also cross several camp roads in Town with no signal lights.

Rail service is limited to freight through Monmouth. Though there is a short spur in Monmouth Center, there



are no local rail users shipping or receiving freight in Town. Trains run through Monmouth on average six times daily on weekdays (three eastbound, three westbound). Fewer trains run on the weekends.

The Maine Central Railroad ended passenger service in Monmouth in 1949. There is a possibility that passenger service will be restored on this line in the next 20 years, though a stop in Monmouth would be unlikely. Monmouth's train depot lives on only in the memories of the Town's older citizens.

#### *Public Transportation:*

There are no local public transportation services. The Kennebec Valley Community Action Program has a demand-response service and volunteer drivers to pick up and deliver people with special needs. There are no regularly scheduled routes or pick-ups.

#### *Pedestrian and Bicycle Network:*

Currently, sidewalks are available in a limited area in Monmouth Center and North Monmouth only. There are no separate bike paths in town, though Route 135 and Cobbosseecontee Road are identified by MDOT as part of a recommended bicycle route connecting to Hallowell and Manchester.

Monmouth has a history of concern with pedestrian safety, and has an active program of sidewalk and crosswalk maintenance in the Monmouth Center and school areas. Residents in the opinion survey were generally satisfied with sidewalks and crosswalks in town.

Sidewalks and bike routes are an important step in alleviating traffic congestion, solving parking problems in downtown, providing access to schools and recreation areas, improving safety, and promoting physical fitness and a walkable community. Monmouth's adopted *Downtown Revitalization Plan* includes recommendations to expand the pedestrian and bicycle network in Monmouth, in particular connecting schools, recreation areas, public facilities and places of employment. The *Downtown Revitalization Plan* makes several recommendations for improvements to sidewalks and crosswalks, including connecting the high school with the village, as well as for traffic calming in the Center.



## Transportation System – Findings and Issues:

Perhaps the biggest issue facing management of the transportation system is the response to the Sabattus Turnpike Interchange. The *Corridor Study* identified two objectives and made the following recommendations, directed at both MDOT and the Town:

### Objectives:

- 1) Reduce the impacts of traffic increases on Route 132 (volume, weight, speeds).
- 2) Improve the capacity of the town to manage impacts of the traffic growth.

### The Town of Monmouth should:

- Pursue downtown public facility improvements aimed at traffic calming, including street trees, sidewalk upgrades, pedestrian and bicycle improvements, and village gateways. Seek CDBG or MDOT Transportation Enhancement funding.
- Prepare a corridor management plan for Routes 132 and 202, including designation of future access points.
- Revise its comprehensive plan to address individual lot development and access to state highways. Review lot size, frontage, and other requirements which could be affected by state access management standards.
- Revise land use regulations to add access management standards that complement those of the state and traffic impact standards for large developments.

### Maine Department of Transportation should:

- Designate Leeds Junction Road as the preferred route for through traffic between Route 202 and the Sabattus turnpike interchange. Add signage directing Route 202 traffic to use Leeds Junction Road as connector to Route 132 and the Sabattus interchange.
- Schedule Leeds Junction Road for improvements to make it the preferred route over Route 132 in Monmouth. Particular attention should be paid to the geometrics at the intersection with Route 132 and the rough railroad crossing, and improvements sufficient to avoid the need to post it in the Spring.
- Reclassify Leeds Junction Road and Sawyer Road as major collector highways.
- Implement mechanisms to get freight traffic to favor Leeds Junction Road as an alternative to Route 132 (road adds 1.3 miles to north-south distance but bypasses village and residential neighborhoods) through signage, contacts with carriers, etc.
- Schedule Route 132 for full reconstruction so this road can safely accommodate increased traffic flows from the Sabattus interchange.
- Consider funding traffic calming improvements in Monmouth Village.
- Division traffic engineer should review intersection problems along Route 132 and suggest safety improvements for implementation.

Although this study suggests reducing traffic volume on Main Street (by rerouting traffic onto Leeds Junction Road), a concern for Monmouth is the economic impact of this recommendation. Businesses on Main Street would benefit from an increase in traffic, and new businesses would be more likely to locate in the village. That said, truck traffic is a growing concern along Main Street. The volume of trucks coming through the village has significantly increased (according to local, anecdotal information) since the opening of the Interchange. The speeds of these vehicles coming through the village and the long-term impacts on Route 132 in terms of future road work are primary concerns. Designating Leeds

Junction Road as a *truck* route is a much preferred solution to rerouting all traffic. It is recognized that traffic calming and other Main Street improvements in the village will still need to be planned for.



Another issue for the Town is its maintenance of local roads. Though the Town is currently working to improve its capital improvement policy, it is currently under-funded and will lead to increased costs in the future. The town needs to return to its program of re-paving local roads every seven years. The Town should also determine which of its roads are discontinued or abandoned.

The preservation of the safety and traffic carrying capacity of Routes 126 and 202 is an important issue regionally, one which touches on land use planning as well as transportation. With public sewer available to almost all the land on Route 202 from the Route 132 intersection east, it is very tempting to make this part of the growth area. New development, however, will take away from the mobility of this important artery. Possible development at collector crossroads along Route 202 must be carefully considered and planned for.

There are few alternatives or options for transportation to and around Monmouth. Continued reliance on automobiles, together with sprawl, will eventually make travel on Monmouth's rural roads more uncomfortable. While public transit and passenger rail service are clearly not in the short-term picture, Monmouth can advocate for greater investments in bicycle and pedestrian facilities, carpooling, and other creative solutions.

## **Goals and Policies for the Transportation System:**

Monmouth's goal is to **preserve the safety and traffic bearing capacity of the Town's transportation system in a cost-effective manner.**

To promote this goal, the plan proposes the following policies and actions:

- 6.1 Improve the safe flow of traffic along state highways and major town roads.
  - Establish an ordinance standard for minimum sight distance for town driveway permits.  
*Responsible Party:* Planning board, public works director  
*Timing:* Ordinance revisions in 2008
  - Establish a line in the CIP for local matching funds to improve minor collectors (e.g. Route 135, Maple Street) Respond to MDOT with interest in participation.  
*Responsible Party:* Town manager, selectmen

- Timing:* Place in CIP in 2008, priority to be determined
  - Upgrade development ordinance standards for parking and access.  
*Responsible Party:* Planning Board  
*Timing:* Ordinance revisions in 2008
  - Establish a distinct design standard for road construction more appropriate to village streets, to use when building or rebuilding within growth areas.  
*Responsible Party:* Planning board, public works director  
*Timing:* Revise road standards in 2008.
  - Play a more active role in promoting local transportation projects to the MDOT. Participate in public involvement opportunities and respond to MDOT project solicitations.  
*Responsible Party:* Town manager, selectmen  
*Partner(s):* MDOT  
*Timing:* Immediate and ongoing
  
- 6.2 Prepare for increased traffic volumes along Route 132.
  - Include traffic calming measures in infrastructure planning for Main Street. Advocate to MDOT for funding for improvements.  
*Responsible Party:* Town manager, police chief, selectmen  
*Partner(s):* MDOT  
*Timing:* Immediate
  - Advocate to MDOT for reconstruction of Route 132 in response to increased use, including curbs and a closed drainage system from the Lou-Lyn Trailer Park through to the south side of the village.  
*Responsible Party:* Town manager, selectmen  
*Partner(s):* MDOT  
*Timing:* Immediate and ongoing
  - Advocate to MDOT for the designation of Leeds Junction Road as a truck route between the Sabattus Interchange and Route 202, to reduce truck volumes through the village center.  
*Responsible Party:* Town manager, selectmen  
*Partner(s):* MDOT  
*Timing:* Immediate
  - Improve sidewalks in the North Monmouth and Monmouth Center villages and add new sidewalk along Academy Street between the schools and the downtown.  
*Responsible Party:* Selectmen, public works director  
*Partner(s):* MDOT  
*Timing:* Include in CIP with high priority. Apply for DOT enhancement or Safe Routes to School funding.
  
- 6.3 Minimize the fiscal impacts of development on the road system.
  - Evaluate the town's practice for accepting new roads in rural portions of town, to ensure that it does not promote sprawl nor become a financial burden on the town.  
*Responsible Party:* Town manager, planning board, public works director  
*Timing:* 2009
  - Research and document public right-of-way issues along existing roads.

*Responsible Party:* Town manager, code enforcement officer

*Partner(s):* local surveyors and engineers

*Timing:* 2010

- Amend street standards in the development ordinance to limit public road access (curb cuts for roads/drives) in rural areas and reduce cost and environmental impacts of street design.

*Responsible Party:* Planning board, public works director

*Timing:* Development ordinance in 2008

- Maintain the seven-year repaving cycle for town roads.

*Responsible Party:* Town manager, public works director

*Timing:* Ongoing

- 6.4 Begin to explore bicycle routes & infrastructure in future planning as a long-term, future transportation enhancement for the town.

## Chapter 7: Community Recreation

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Recreational opportunities are an important part of the quality of life in Monmouth. In fact, 43 percent of our survey respondents said that the availability of recreational and scenic amenities very much influenced their choice to live in Monmouth.

These opportunities are not limited to the ballfields and rec. programs run by the Town. Our lakes provide residents with abundant opportunities for swimming, boating, and fishing. Fields and forests provide areas for hunting, hiking, and nature observation. During the winter, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, and ice fishing are popular. Even our rural roads provide opportunity for people who simply want a Sunday drive or stroll through scenic country.

Developed outdoor recreational facilities in Monmouth are pretty much confined to boat landings/beaches, school playgrounds and the little league field. The Town runs a recreation program aimed primarily at children and families. These opportunities are described in Chapter 6, Community Services.



Since Monmouth has only a small amount of publicly owned land, most dispersed outdoor activities such as hunting and snowmobiling take place on private land, relying on the good will of landowners. In southern and central Maine there has been an increasing trend toward posting of land limiting public access for traditional outdoor recreational pursuits. Development in rural areas and expanded posting of land could potentially limit future outdoor recreational opportunities in the community.

### Water-Based Recreation

Lakes have long shaped the character of Monmouth. Portions of five major lakes are located within the town (Cochnewagon, Cobbosseecontee, Annabessacook, Wilson Pond, and Sand Pond). These lakes provide significant recreational opportunities.

*Swimming Access:*

Monmouth owns and operates the public beach at the north end of Cochnewagon, just west of Monmouth Center. The beach area is 115 feet long. There are 25 parking spaces and area available for picnicking and a small basketball court. The North Monmouth Community Club owns and manages the second public beach, on Wilson Pond, where it contacts Wilson Pond Road. This is a much smaller beach area, with only 70 feet of frontage, and 15 parking spaces. It, too, has picnic facilities. Since both beaches are also used for public boat access, facilities and room for expansion are limited. Just recently, the Town had to limit use of the Monmouth Center Beach to town residents, with passes at no charge.



The Recreation Commission maintains the Center beach, including providing lifeguards and running the swim programs. It also supervises the picnic areas.

Camp Kippewa Girls Camp on Cobbossecontee Lake provides swimming access to campers but not to the general public. A limited number of privately owned beach sites also exist on lake shores. These

areas are highly sought after for shorefront development and their value continues to escalate. Opportunities to acquire an additional beach area(s) for public use are likely to diminish rapidly in the coming years.

*Boating Access:*

Residents are fortunate to have public boat access on four of the five ponds in town (Sand Pond has no public access). They are as follows:

- Cochnewagon, adjacent to beach, paved ramp with 25 parking spaces,
- Wilson Pond, (privately owned) adjacent to the beach, paved ramp with two parking spaces,
- Annabessacook, on Waughan Road at Wilson Stream, undeveloped facility,
- Cobbossecontee, on access road off of Route 135 in East Monmouth, paved ramp with 10 parking spaces, 1,650 feet of frontage. Picnic facilities.



In addition, there are public boat access points on several of these lakes in neighboring towns. All of these lakes are heavily-used for boating and concern has been expressed from time to time about the need to limit horsepower or types of watercraft in the future.

## **Land-Based Recreation**

Active recreation facilities have been profiled in Chapter 6. This section deals with more passive forms of outdoor recreation: hiking, hunting, nature appreciation, snowmobiling, and other non-organized pursuits.

### *Open Space for Recreational Access:*

Monmouth has a few parcels of land which may be considered conservation or recreational land. Some are privately owned and their use is restricted.

- Cumston Park, town-owned, adjacent to Cumston Hall, provides a small area in Monmouth Center for nature and exercise.
- The Monmouth Fairgrounds on Academy Road provides space for many forms of passive recreation when no events are going on.
- Woodbury Bird Sanctuary is a 160 acre parcel of land on Town Farm Road, near South Monmouth. It is owned by Bates College and is open to hiking, birdwatching, and other forms of nature recreation.
- Cobbossee Colony Golf Course, located on Cobbosseecontee Road, at the town line with Litchfield. In the off-season, the course may be used for walking, cross-country skiing, and other non-motorized pursuits.
- The Monmouth Fish and Game Club parcel on Route 202, mostly used for a shooting range and other hunting-related activities.
- Highmoor Farm, the Maine Agricultural Experiment Station, located on Route 202 and Cressey Road. Like private farms in Monmouth, access may be granted on a case-by-case basis to judicious users.
- The Town also owns scattered parcels, which have not been identified as open space, but which are available to the public in some form.

With the exception of Cumston Park, little concerted effort has been put into building a trail system or improving public access to open space.

### *Snowmobile Trail Network:*

For the past 30 years, there has been a formal system of snowmobile trails in Monmouth. Currently, there are about 40 miles of groomed trails which are maintained by the local snowmobile club, the Cochnewagon Trail Blazers. Maintenance of the trail system is supported by local fund-raising and snowmobile registration fees collected by the state.



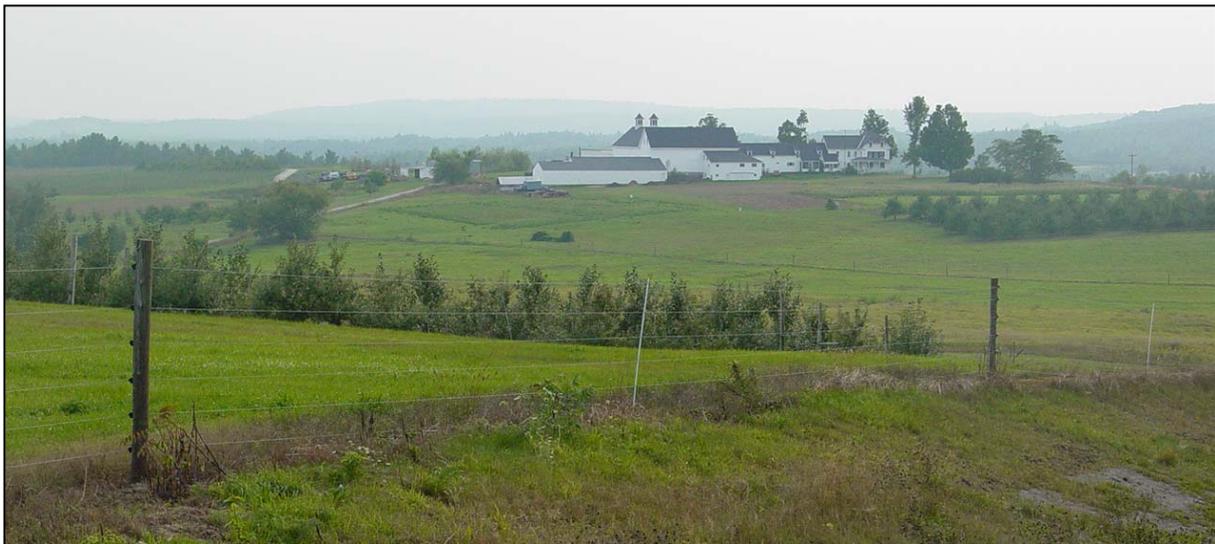
Local trails connect up with those in adjacent towns and are part of the Interconnected Trail System (ITS). An ITS-numbered trail (ITS 87) loops through southern and western Monmouth and into Monmouth Center. The trails are also used by cross-country skiers, and in the summer, bikes and ATV's.

Snowmobile trails run across private lands. Each year, the club must obtain permission from landowners to use the trails.

## Scenic Resources

For many, recreation is simply a matter of driving around to look at the scenery. In fact, “the scenery” is what anchors most of the major resort areas of the country, so scenic resources can be an economic as well as recreational asset. Many people drive to Monmouth simply to view the scenery and patronize the local farms and village businesses. However, it is also recognized that the public benefit of scenic views is gained from the landscapes of privately owned land.

Scenic areas are also equated with natural resource conservation. “Protecting unique scenic and natural areas” was the most strongly supported natural resource strategy in Monmouth’s recent public opinion survey.



Part of Monmouth’s attraction for new residents and tourists is its mixture of water views, fields and forests, and village appearance. The Town did an extensive Visual Resources Inventory for its 1991 Plan. However, those results have begun to change over the years with new development on the landscape; existing local regulations have not been enough to maintain scenic views. Four roads were singled out as particularly scenic: Prescott Hill Road, Pease Hill Road, Macomber Road, and Route 135 from East Monmouth eastward. These roads are characterized by elevations and a mix of woods and open land.

Many other scenic views were noted in the inventory. Among them were views from Ridge Road, Norris Hill Road, Wilson Pond Road, and Cobbosseecontee Road. Primarily, these views are of lakes or wide open spaces.

While some may consider scenic resources to be perpetual, they can easily be degraded to the point where they are no longer a drawing point. Scenic resources in Monmouth continue to be impacted by new development or other changes in the landscape. Changes at the *viewpoint* tend to have a greater effect on the value of scenic views than changes in the more distant scenery – new buildings or vegetation that grows up over time blocks viewsheds, eliminating the view, while changes in the distance simply alter the scenic subject

In many cases, preserving a scenic view along a road can be as simple as requiring additional setbacks. But there are other ways to lose the view. If a corridor is not maintained as open, i.e. if it is allowed to grow from field to woodland, it may seal off the view even more effectively. This is a good argument for keeping farmland open and viable. Landowners can be offered incentives to enter into a voluntary scenic view protection and maintenance agreement, or conservation easements can be established with maintenance plans (for vegetation).

### **Community Recreation – Findings and Issues:**

Building a good base for outdoor recreation is good for the community and also for the economy. More people want to live and work in an area with abundant outdoor recreation, making it a major quality of life indicator. Monmouth has a good start on its assets; we need to work on making them more accessible.

The town has good access to water on its four primary lakes. In some cases, such as Wilson Pond and Annabesacook Lake, existing facilities could be enlarged to provide more capacity. The only issues could be overuse of the lakes.

Much of the available passive recreation area is owned by private parties, and subject to policy decisions over which we have little control. Very little land can be said to be permanently available for recreation through deed or easement. Monmouth should take a more coordinated approach to acquiring rights to open space for recreation and conservation purposes. We should also consider planning and budgeting to make the areas we have more accessible. As our population grows and ages, open space will become more important -- not just for recreation, but as a hedge against overdevelopment.

We have an abundance of scenic resource, and in most cases very little to threaten it. The town can look at case-by-case situations for acquisition of view corridors or open space, as part of an overall open space plan.

### **Goals and Policies for Community Recreation**

Monmouth's goal is to **increase the number and variety of outdoor recreational opportunities available to Monmouth residents.**

To promote this goal, the plan proposes the following policies and actions:

- 7.1 Maintain and expand facilities for sports and organized recreation.
- Plan for establishment of public facilities on Annabeesacook Lake and Wilson Pond.  
*Responsible Party:* Town manager, selectmen, parks and recreation  
*Timing:* Planning and acquisition in CIP for development over next five years
  - Support current funding for municipal recreation program.  
*Responsible Party:* Selectmen and town meeting, parks and recreation  
*Timing:* Ongoing
  - Support grants and other funding for improvements to snowmobile and ATV trails.  
*Responsible Party:* Selectmen, town meeting  
*Partner(s):* Cochnewagon Trail Blazers  
*Timing:* Ongoing
- 7.2 Develop a plan for increased opportunity and access to open space in the town. The planning process should include:
- Create a Conservation Commission or other town committee to oversee open space planning.  
*Responsible Party:* Selectmen (Selectmen appoint, CC to oversee other steps in this plan)  
*Partner(s):* Planning Board, Kennebec Land Trust  
*Timing:* Immediate & ongoing
  - Inventory lands currently owned by the public or with public access rights for recreation.  
*Responsible Party:* Selectmen, Planning Board  
*Timing:* 2009
  - Evaluate the impacts of new development in Monmouth on open space and resultant need for open space.  
*Responsible Party:* Planning Board, proposed Conservation Commission  
*Timing:* 2007
  - Develop strategies for acquisition of land or access rights.  
*Responsible Party:* Proposed Conservation Commission  
*Partner(s):* Kennebec Land Trust, Planning Board  
*Timing:* Ongoing
  - Initiate a process whereby subdividers in the rural area and certain cluster-style developments would contribute to a fund for acquisition of and access to additional open space.  
*Responsible Party:* Planning Board  
*Timing:* 2009
  - Work with landowners interested in conservation easements or trails for public access.  
*Responsible Party:* Selectmen appoint Conservation Commission, CC oversee other steps in plan.

*Partner(s):* Parks and recreation, planning board  
*Timing:* Place in CIP for funding plan in 2008

7.3 Protect scenic resources in town.

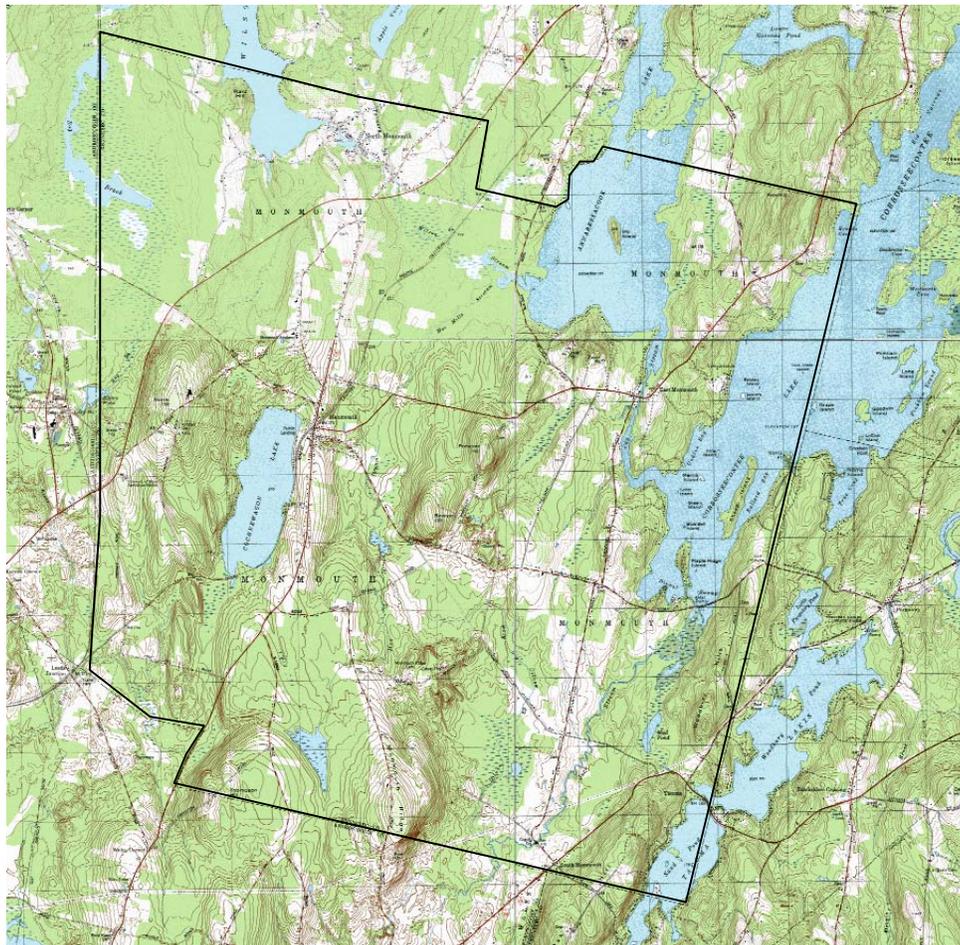
- Update the 1991 visual resources/scenic views study and map to better inform planning and open space decisions.  
*Responsible Party:* Proposed Conservation Commission  
*Partner(s):* Kennebec Land Trust, Planning Board  
*Timing:* 2008
- Continue to development standards that would protect significant scenic vistas.  
*Responsible Party:* Planning board, proposed Conservation Commission  
*Timing:* Ordinance revisions in 2008
- Pursue non-regulatory options for scenic view protection (such as conservation easements).  
*Responsible Party:* Proposed Conservation Commission  
*Partner(s):* Kennebec Land Trust  
*Timing:* 2008 and ongoing

## Chapter 8: Natural Resources

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The 1986 Comprehensive Plan describes the town of Monmouth thus: “The village areas, lakes, rolling hills, distant views, open fields and forested areas combine to create a visual character that is appealing in its diversity.” The resources that make up the natural setting of the town provide much of that visual diversity. People’s actions on the land, development, the use and transformation of the Town’s natural resources can enhance Monmouth’s appeal -- and can also destroy it.

This chapter profiles natural resources that have a significant influence on development decisions in Monmouth. It addresses the relationship between natural resources, environmental preservation, and development. Much of the natural resource data is illustrated on the maps attached to this report.



## Overview

The “lay of the land” provides the physical framework within which people live, affecting development decision in various ways. People tend to settle and build structures and roads most frequently on lowlands, moderate hillsides and level ridges, while steep hills often remain forested, or at least less densely developed, such is the case in Monmouth.

Numerous hills and extensive ridgelines, scattered throughout town, characterize Monmouth’s topography. Several offer spectacular views of the Presidential Range in New Hampshire and of Mt. Blue and the mountains near it in western Maine. Many more provide expansive views of the town itself and neighboring communities, as well as making striking sights themselves from lower vantage points.

A long, narrow, relatively level, lowland area lies in east central Monmouth, bounded by both lakes and hills. It contains several small, boggy ponds and streams and fairly extensive wetlands in its lowest elevations. The Bog Brook marsh occupies most of another extensive level area in the northwest corner of Town.

## Critical Land and Water Resources

Critical resources are those for which special protection is warranted to maintain their quality. In many cases, some form of federal or state protection already exists; in almost all cases, there is opportunity to improve protection at the local level. Protection of these resources must be based on a thorough understanding of their extent in town.

### *Surface Waters*

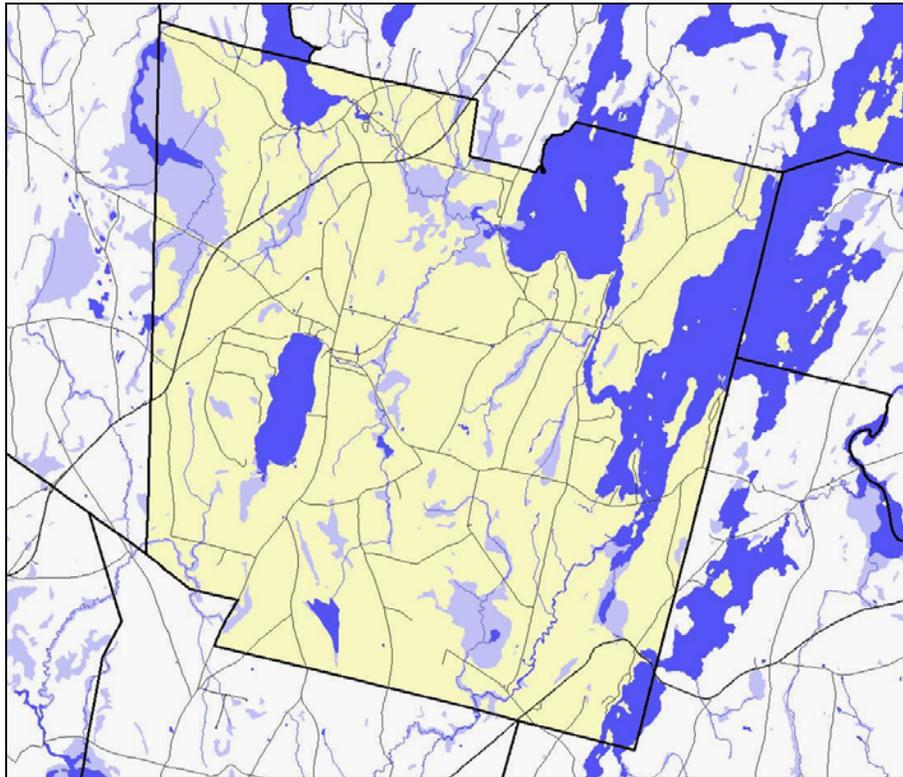
Since clean water is one of our greatest needs, good water quality is a priority in Monmouth. In addition to drinking water, good water quality supports property values, recreation, the local economy, and fish and wildlife populations. Monmouth’s most visible water resource is the lakes that dot the landscape. The discussion here will focus upon current water quality and possible protection strategies.

Most of Monmouth lies within the Cobbossee Lakes watershed complex. A portion of the northwest side of town drains into Bonny Pond and Bog Brook



and then flows into Androscoggin Lake, while the southwest corner of town drains into the Dead River, which flows into Sabattus Pond. The remainder of land in Monmouth falls within the watersheds of five lakes in the Cobbosee chain: Annabessacook Lake, Cochnewagon Lake, Cobbossee (Cobboseecontee) Lake, Sand Pond and Wilson Pond.

### **Streams, Wetlands & Water Bodies**



The State enacted a new Water Classification Program in 1987 that required, among other things, that lakes must exhibit a stable or decreasing (improving) trophic state. No change of land use in the watershed, by itself or in combination with other activities, may cause water quality degradation. Trophic state is a measure of biological productivity. DEP defines changes in trophic state in part by phosphorus concentrations in the water, with a one part per billion increase indicating a decrease in water quality.

Phosphorus is a nutrient present in most Maine lakes in small amounts, essential for aquatic plant growth. Certain land uses, specifically agriculture and development, can increase phosphorus levels. Practices such as exposing soils, covering land with pavement and removing vegetation along waterways increases the amount of phosphorus reaching lakes. This is not an issue limited to lakeshores; any of these practices which result in surface runoff reaching ditches and streams will increase the flow of phosphorous into lakes.

Green algae begin to multiply in profusion when phosphorus concentrations reach a certain level, usually around 15 parts per billion (ppb). Such algal blooms color lakes green and rob the water of vital oxygen. The excessive growth of algae can cause odor, taste, and treatment problems in water supplies, deplete cold water fisheries, lessen people's interest in

using lakes for recreation, tend to depress property values, and overall, diminish a valuable community asset.

Descriptions of the current status of each lake in Monmouth follow. The Cobbossee Watershed District (CWD) and the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) maintain detailed records pertaining to water quality and have contributed much of the information for this section. Additionally, Annabessacook Lake, Cobbossee Lake, and Sabattus Pond have all had Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) reports<sup>1</sup> completed; these reports are a good source of information regarding the health of the watershed.

Annabessacook Lake lies in the northeastern corner of town. It is the second largest water body in Monmouth, and has a watershed area of more than 6,000 acres – draining most of the center of Monmouth (including the village area) as well as Wilson Pond and Cochnewagon Lake. The shoreline is well-developed on the southern and western shores, but largely undeveloped on the east. Annabessacook was in 1991 described as having “clearly the worst water quality of the lakes in Monmouth,” but has responded in recent years to aggressive treatment with substantially lower phosphorus concentrations, increased clarity, and decreased algal biomass, and now exhibits good water quality, according to the Cobbossee Watershed District. The DEP, however, still classifies the water quality as “Poor,” listing the lake as impaired due to not fully attaining its water quality standards and having persistent blooms. DEP recommends a moderate level of protection, resulting in permissible phosphorous levels from new development of only 0.034 pounds per acre per year.



Cobbosseecontee (Cobbossee) Lake is the other major lake located in Monmouth, covering the most acreage and lying along the eastern boundary of town. The lake drains Annabessacook, and the watershed within Monmouth covers 7,300 acres. A considerable fraction of Winthrop, Manchester, West Gardiner, and Litchfield also drain into the lake. Both the shore frontage and the larger watershed of Cobbossee are moderately well-developed, making it very sensitive to additional development.

<sup>1</sup> TMDL reports can be viewed at [www.maine.gov/dep/blwq/docmonitoring/tmdl2.htm](http://www.maine.gov/dep/blwq/docmonitoring/tmdl2.htm)

The lake has also been known for serious water quality problems in the past. Phosphorus loading was nearly cut in half following the 1978 restoration project and the lake has not experienced any mid-summer algae blooms since. Algae blooms still happen in Cobbossee, but they often do not occur until September. The CWD has focused lake protection efforts since the restoration on agricultural animal waste management in this watershed, as well as on preventing phosphorus loading from new development. DEP has removed the lake from the impaired list due to its steady water quality improvement, the result of years of work in this watershed. However, DEP still recommends a “high” level of protection for the lake, which would result in allowable phosphorous runoff of 0.043 pounds per acre per year.

Cochnewagon Lake is a relatively shallow, slow flushing lake located in the center of town, just outside of Monmouth Center. It, too, has experienced shorefront development around almost the entire perimeter of the lake. Due to its small size, shallow depth, slow flushing rate and steep watershed, Cochnewagon is sensitive to phosphorus loading. Though rated “moderate” in water quality by DEP, the lake rates a high level of protection, equating to 0.045 pounds of phosphorous per acre per year. Recent monitoring indicates that Cochnewagon is beginning to slide into a deteriorating condition, and it has been placed on the state’s “watch list”. Much of the Monmouth Center village lies within Cochnewagon’s sensitive watershed, an issue that has been identified as a major obstacle to the increased density of development generally desired for the downtown.

Wilson Pond lies upstream from Annabessacook, partly in northern Monmouth and mostly in Wayne. The watershed of Wilson Pond covers 1,828 acres in Monmouth, extending down past Blue Road. The pond has had good water quality in the past, but has declined steadily, exhibiting its worst water quality on record in 2004. In 2005, water quality improved somewhat, but this may have been due to higher rainfall totals or the closure of a dairy farm near the lake in Wayne. The CWD surveyed the watershed in 2005-06, identifying locations of existing and potential phosphorous runoff. DEP assigned a high probability of development to this watershed (even though it is relatively isolated) and the CWD concluded that of all the lakes in Monmouth, Wilson is the most likely to decline. DEP lists this pond as impaired due to the low dissolved oxygen and nutrient loading issues. DEP’s recommended phosphorous allocation is 0.041 pounds per acre per year.



The CWD surveyed the watershed in 2005-06, identifying locations of existing and potential phosphorous runoff. DEP assigned a high probability of development to this watershed (even though it is relatively isolated) and the CWD concluded that of all the lakes in Monmouth, Wilson is the most likely to decline. DEP lists this pond as impaired due to the low dissolved oxygen and nutrient loading issues. DEP’s recommended phosphorous allocation is 0.041 pounds per acre per year.

Sand Pond and Woodbury Pond are part of the Tacoma lakes chain, extending into Litchfield. Most of Sand Pond is in Monmouth, while only a finger of Woodbury Pond is. Both ponds exhibit moderate water quality. Woodbury Pond has been removed from the state’s “watch list”. The Tacoma lakes are small, deep lakes with a moderate flushing rate. The watershed of Tacoma lakes, including Little Purgatory, which is entirely in Litchfield,

covers 443 acres in Monmouth. Because all three lakes are rated with moderate water quality, phosphorous allocation numbers are relatively high, ranging from 0.038 for Little Purgatory to 0.069 for Woodbury Pond. The CWD predicts the ponds will be able to withstand development without undergoing degradation if phosphorus runoff from existing land uses and new development are managed.

Portions of Monmouth fall within the watersheds of two lakes that lie outside of town. Both Androscoggin Lake in Wayne and Sabattus Pond in Sabattus are ranked poor for water quality by DEP, and Androscoggin remains on the state's "watch list". Since neither of them fall within the Cobbossee Watershed, the extensive water quality data available for the other lakes in Monmouth does not exist for them. However, DEP's recommended phosphorous allocations for new development are 0.042 and 0.025 pounds per acre per year for Androscoggin and Sabattus, respectively.

Annabessacook Lake, Cobbossee Lake, Cochnewagon Lake, Wilson Pond, and Sand Pond are all currently on the state's NPS Priority Watershed List, which indicates that they have significant value from a regional or statewide perspective, and have water quality that is either impaired or threatened to some degree from nonpoint source water pollution. This list, which was adopted by the Land & Water Resources Council in October 1998, helps identify watersheds where state and federal agency resources for NPS water pollution prevention or restoration should be targeted.

Every lake in Monmouth is on the DEP's list of lakes most at risk from development (Appendix A from *DEP Rules Chapter 502, Stormwater Management*). The Town of Monmouth, in cooperation with CWD (of which it is an active member) and DEP, is part of several programs to maintain and improve water quality in our lakes. The Town has participated in restoration work and phosphorous mitigation projects. The most difficult hurdle, however, has been limitations on new development. Town officials have tried several times to implement phosphorous limits on development, but have failed at the ballot box.

### *Streams and Rivers*

Streams are an integral part of Monmouth's lake watersheds, impacting the health of Monmouth's lakes and ponds. They are also an important ecological resource, providing habitat for a variety of aquatic organisms as well as animals that use streamside areas. Many streams are also associated with wetlands or forested wetlands, another important component of Monmouth's watersheds and significant wildlife habitat.

All streams in Monmouth are classified by the state as "Class B" waters, meaning they are general-purpose waters that must be managed to attain good water quality. Discharges to these streams shall not cause adverse impact to aquatic life, and water quality



should be good enough to support indigenous aquatic species without change to the resident biological community.

Jock Stream is listed by the state as an impaired “303d” stream since it does not meet its Class B standards. Mud Mills Stream is currently listed as Category 3, which means there is insufficient data to determine if its designated uses are attained.

As with the town’s lakes and ponds, streams are at risk from the impacts of development, such as pollutants in increased stormwater runoff. Streams that run through the village areas are subject to increased pollutants from denser development and little or no buffers. Riparian (streamside) buffer areas must be well protected from development to preserve habitat and water quality, including maintaining the natural streamside vegetation.



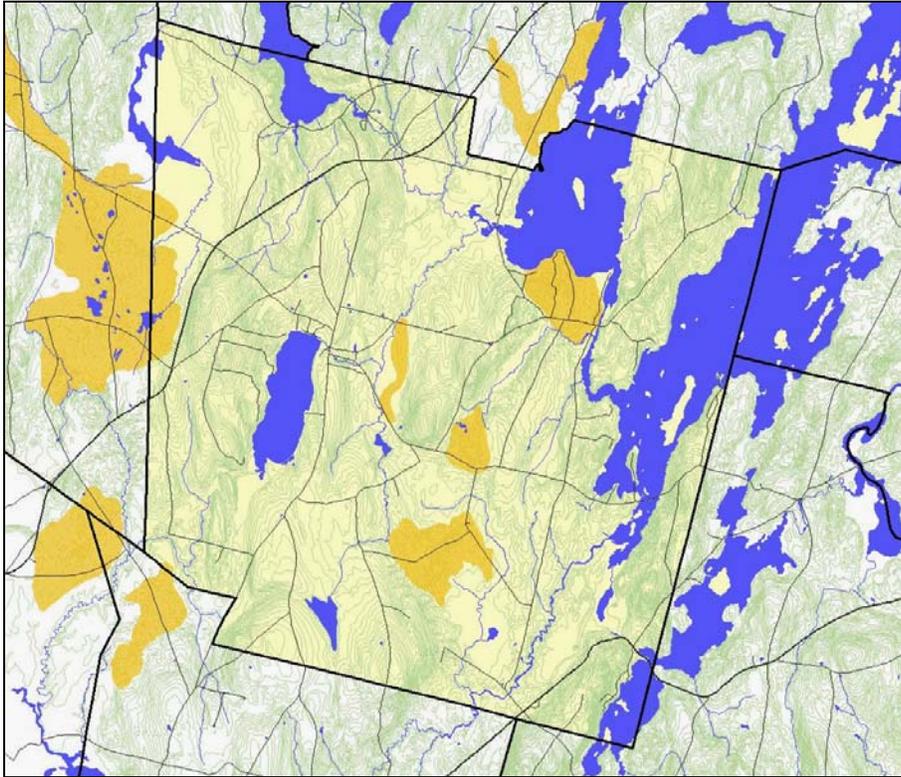
### *Ground Water*

Ground water is commonly accessible in quantities throughout Monmouth, either in bedrock aquifers or sand and gravel aquifers. In Maine, we generally do not worry about the availability or quantity of groundwater; more often, the problem is with its quality or the quantity available for commercial or public water supplies. Groundwater pollution is the principal reason for major public investments in public water systems these days.

Aquifers are water-bearing geologic formations capable of storing and providing water on a sustained basis. Sand and gravel aquifers are more accessible than bedrock aquifers, and are well-delineated in Maine. Information about bedrock aquifers in Monmouth is limited. No known prime sites are indicated by the Maine Geological Survey or other public agencies. MGS did map known yields of bedrock wells in 1977 for the Southern Kennebec Region. The data for Monmouth shows most well locations yielding less than 10 gallons per minute (gpm), insufficient for anything more than ordinary residential use.

Two large areas of sand and gravel aquifer straddle Monmouth’s boundaries -- with Leeds in the west and Wales to the south. Smaller aquifers exist along Mud Mills Stream, just north of the gravel pits near the Prescott Hill Road, on the southern end of Annabessacook, and in the southwestern corner of Town. Only one of the areas, the one west of Rt. 202 along Bog Brook, shows potential for yielding 50 or more gallons of water per minute. Gravel pits exist in or near four of the six aquifer sites. The long-closed municipal landfill sits on another.

## Aquifers



Threats to groundwater can come from residential or industrial development. Residential septic systems do not remove soluble nitrates, which may leach into the water table and cause health problems. However, sand and gravel aquifers are characterized by very porous surface layers, and nitrates are diluted by rainwater, which permeates better in these soils. Therefore, residential densities over sandy soil types can be higher than over till or silt without excessive impacts. These densities are well within current minimum lot sizes.

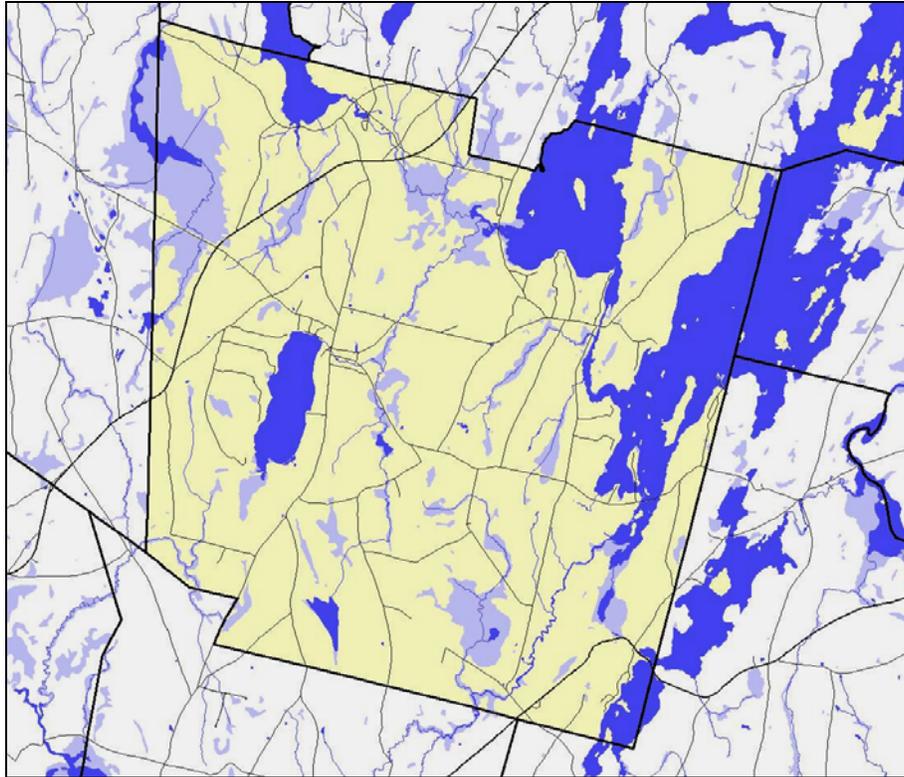
A far greater potential for groundwater contamination exists from industrial wastes or chemicals. While the list of potential chemical threats is endless (and growing), there are certain, identifiable business types (e.g. service stations) which pose greater risk by virtue of their use of these contaminants. While there is no high-risk commercial use over any existing sand and gravel aquifer in Monmouth now, that is no reason not to be vigilant. Monmouth knows first hand the costs of unsafe ground water, as it had to restrict use of its well field outside of the Center due to high levels of Arsenic (among other reasons.)

### *Wetlands*

Ground water at or near the surface creates a wetland. Wetlands are sufficiently saturated to support the growth of aquatic and moist soil vegetation and limit the construction of foundations and septic systems. Wetlands are often viewed as a waste of land and filled in order to accommodate development. However, wetlands perform significant natural functions. They provide habitat for a diversity of wildlife, temporarily store floodwaters to moderate

floods, create clean water by filtering sediments and pollutants, and recharge aquifers. Since these functions are not readily apparent, wetlands are too often misused.

### Water Bodies & Wetlands



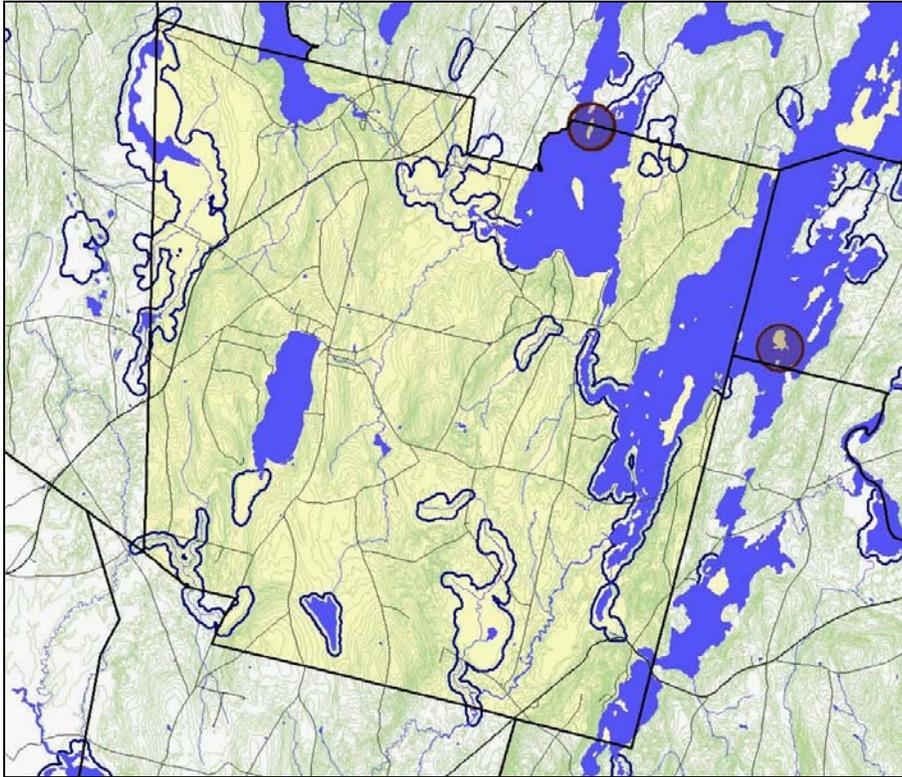
*Water bodies and streams are shown in blue, and wetlands shown in light blue.*

Extensive wetlands exist in Monmouth, as shown on the above map. The largest are along Bog Brook, Dilnow Brook, Jock Stream and Wilson Stream, and around Frost Pond and Mud Pond. Others, smaller in size yet still significant, lie at the south end of Cochnewagon Lake and along Mud Mills Stream and tributaries of Annabessacook Lake, Cobbossee Lake and Wilson Pond.



One of the most essential functions of wetlands is wildlife habitat, and the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IF&W) has rated wetlands for waterfowl habitat. Wetlands which are identified as “high” or “moderate” value are depicted on the Monmouth Shoreland Zoning map. These wetlands are protected in Monmouth by the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance.

## Waterfowl & Wading Bird Habitat



Waterfowl & wading bird habitat associated with wetlands and other water bodies is outlined in dark blue. Eagle nesting sites are also shown in dark brown (circles).

### *Critical Natural Areas:*

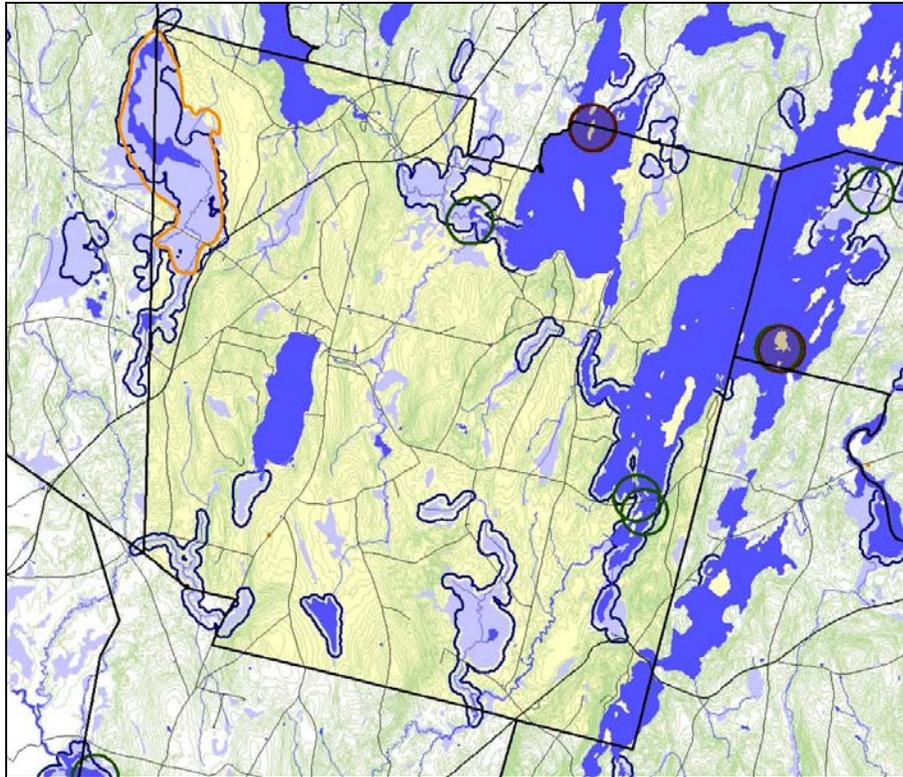
Critical natural areas are at the heart of natural resource protection. The state defines critical areas as those containing plant and animal life or geological and ecological features worthy of preservation in their natural condition or of significant scenic, scientific, or historical value. Maine's *Beginning with Habitat* program, a part of the Natural Areas Program at the Department of Conservation, provides information and presentations to towns on local critical areas. Much of the BWH information is reflected in this report.

High on the list of critical natural areas are locations of endangered species. The Maine Endangered Species Act authorizes the IFW to designate and protect *Essential Habitat for Endangered and Threatened Species*. One site was identified in the Monmouth/Winthrop



area as of 2000. A part of the Annabessacook Lake shore was identified as habitat for bald eagles. Undeveloped shorelines of Cobbosseecontee Lake also offer suitable nesting sites for eagles, as well as perching and feeding opportunities, though none have been observed lately.

### **Waterfowl & Wading Bird Habitat and Rare & Endangered Species**



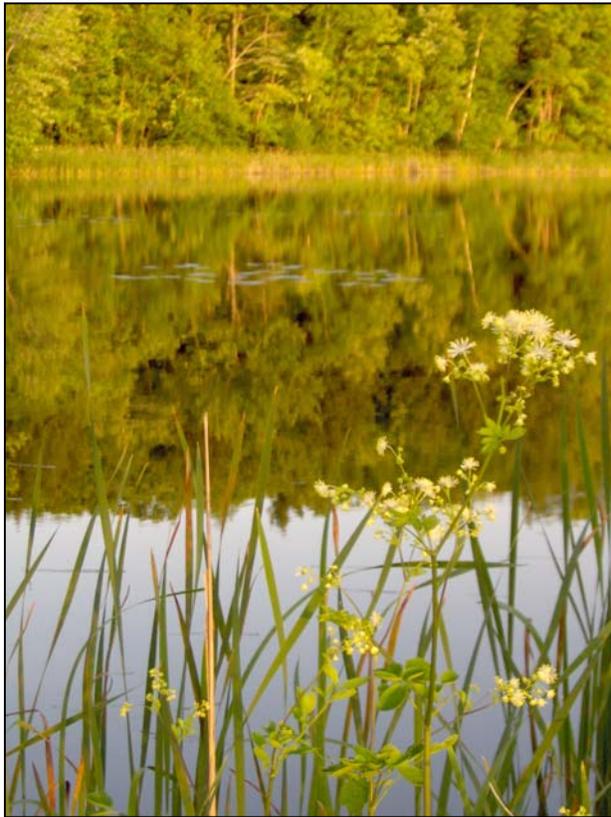
*This map shows wetlands in light blue, waterfowl and wading bird habitat outlined in dark blue, eagle nesting sites in brown (circles), and other rare or endangered species in dark green (circles). The Androscoggin Lake Focus Area of Statewide Ecological Significance is also outlined in orange.*

Breeding activities by Least Bitterns was documented in wetlands along Wilson Stream and in Dismal Swamp during 1990, and a Ribbon Snake was documented along the south shore of Cobbosseecontee near Maple Ridge Island. Neither of these species is endangered but both are listed as of “special concern” in Maine.

Barren Strawberry grows in an area along both sides of Route 132 between Sabattus and Monmouth. The site occupies just over one acre. It sustains a vigorous and sizable growth, located in wooded areas. The Barren Strawberry is rare throughout its range and there is only one other reported growth in Maine.

Perhaps highest on the state’s list of natural areas in Monmouth is the stream-wetland complex surrounding Bog Brook, and extending into Leeds. This 900 acre peatland is considered a classic example of “unpatterned fen ecosystem,” with high-value fisheries and waterfowl habitat. This habitat block, unbroken by roads or development, is also critical to the water quality of Androscoggin Lake.

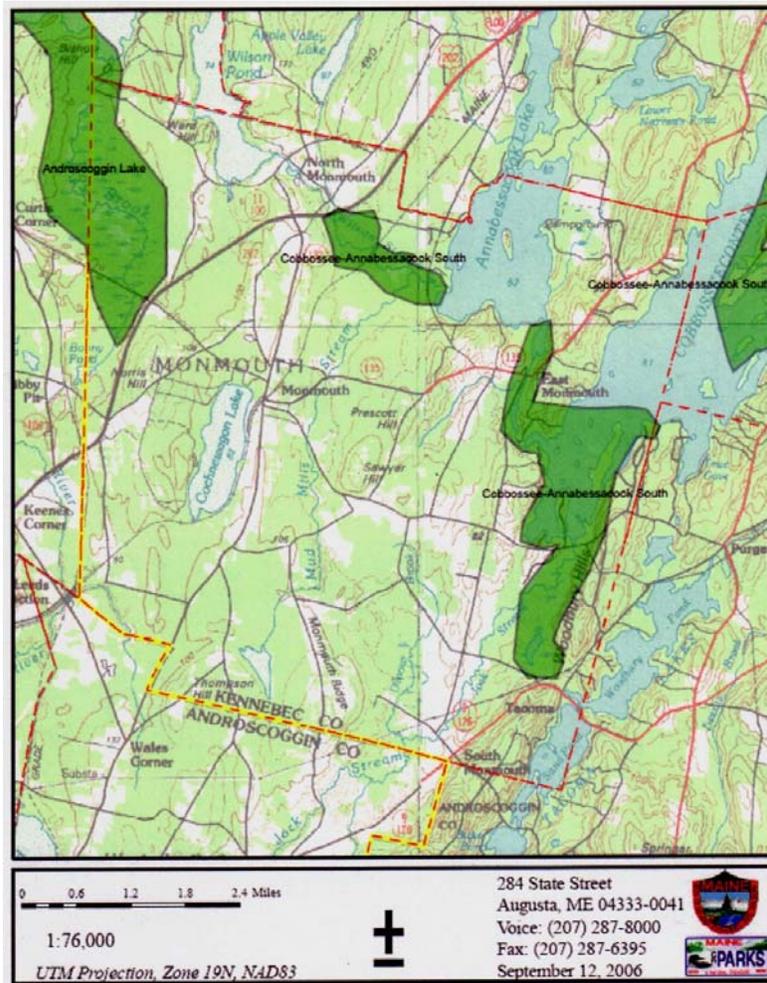
An Old Growth White Pine Stand exists on the eastern shore of Cobbossee Lake, near its southern end. The site covers approximately 11 acres. Eleven huge, widely scattered pines overtop the surrounding hardwoods. The pines are at least 200 years old and of excellent form. Despite damage during the 1998 ice storm, they appear healthy and are expected to persist for many more years. The area is an excellent illustration of an original white pine area that has naturally given way to hardwoods.



Cobbossee Lake itself is being considered for inclusion in the Register of Critical Areas. The lake presents a highly configured shoreline and many islands. It hosts outstanding warmwater fisheries. Among the species are brown trout, largemouth and smallmouth bass, white and yellow perch, pickerel, brown bullhead, and panfish. It also hosts other outstanding wildlife resources, exhibiting excellent species abundance and diversity. The lake hosts one of the highest breeding populations of common loons in southern Maine and a great blue heron rookery. Osprey are common sights on all parts of the lake.

Another area suitable for attention locally is the large, undeveloped block of land between Vaughan Road and Route 132 along Wilson Stream and Mud Mill Stream. Although there are no critical ecosystems there, the wetlands have high value for waterfowl habitat, and there is an extensive deer wintering area. It is perhaps the largest block of land unbroken by a road in Monmouth, which encourages many of the rarer forms of non-game wildlife.

## IF&W Focus Areas of Statewide Ecological Significance



Old planning documents mention that the Nature Conservancy recommended Mud Pond Bog for protection, though nothing seems to have come of it. Bates College owns Woodbury Bird Sanctuary adjacent to the bog.

### Wildlife Habitat

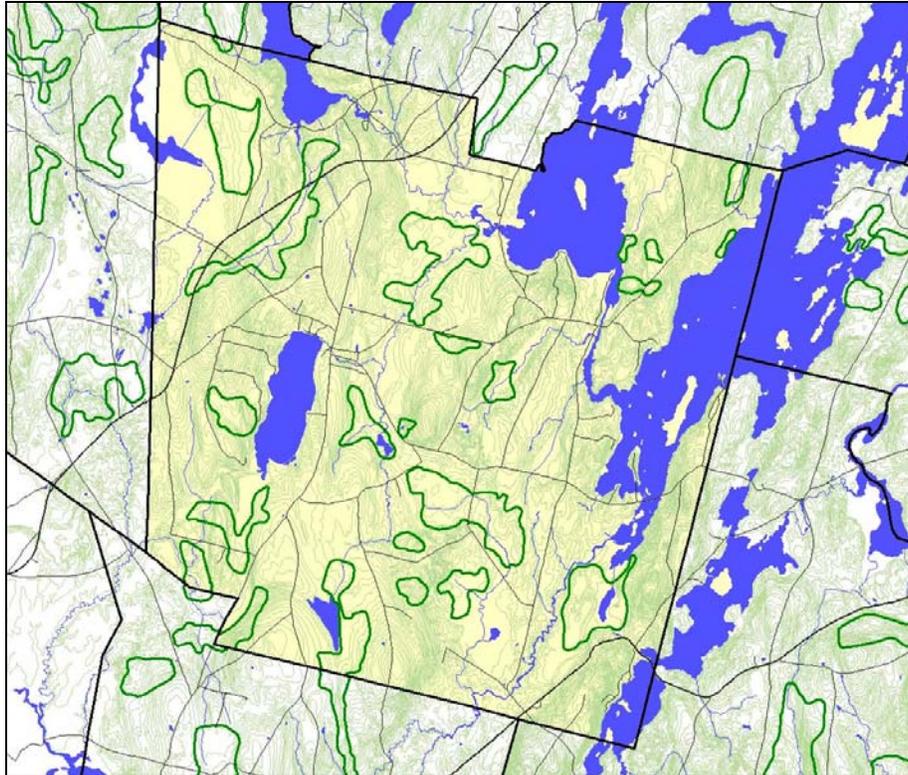
Although wildlife in general can be found in almost all of the undeveloped land in Monmouth (and some developed areas as well), there are certain areas that have particularly high value because they serve crucial niches in the ecosystem.

Waterfowl and wading bird habitat has been noted in the previous discussion of wetlands. These areas serve the breeding functions of many species. To the extent that the town protects wetlands from development, these areas are automatically included.

Critical habitat for endangered or threatened species has been discussed as well. Development should be limited or regulated in the Bog Brook wetland area, and near eagle nesting sites and other identified habitat.

Deer wintering areas are sites characterized by shelter and access to winter browse. They are usually, but not always, stands of evergreens in low-lying areas. The IF&W has identified many such areas in Monmouth, illustrated on the *Beginning with Habitat* maps. The IF&W has standards for timber cutting in deeryards, and often works collaboratively with landowners to minimize disturbances and limit fragmentation; for subdivisions, IF&W would likely require habitat mitigation if no alternative pattern of development is feasible.

### Deer Wintering Areas



*Deer wintering sites are outlined in green.*

## Natural Resource Constraints to Development

Some natural resources, though they are not critical or in short supply, nevertheless constitute an impediment to development. These impediments are not necessarily physical – with modern engineering techniques we can build a house almost anywhere. They are mostly economic, meaning that development there would require higher construction costs and risks.

### *Soils and Slopes*

The *Soil Survey of Kennebec County*, a set of maps published by the U.S. Soil Conservation Service (now Natural Resource Conservation Service), delineates the soils found throughout Monmouth, and describes their attributes and limitations.

For the purpose of development planning, we do not need to know the technical details of soils. We are concerned with the limitations that soils may impose on development. Soils may be too saturated or too erodible for construction of foundations, septic systems, or roads. Or the topography (also reflected in soil types) may be too steep for construction. In general, septic systems, for example, are prohibited on slopes in excess of 20 percent. The accompanying map shows soils which have been rated to have “very low potential for low density development.” This includes both poorly drained soils and steep or erodible soils.

Poorly drained soils and soils with seasonally high water tables (marine sediments and wetlands) pose problems for road construction, structures with basements, and subsurface waste disposal systems. Such soils occur most extensively in wetlands and along streams and ponds in Monmouth. Even in areas served by town sewer, poorly drained soils pose problems for roads and basements. By avoiding such high-cost soils, developers also avoid wetlands.

Soils on steep or erodible slopes are also mapped. However, isolated steep areas tend not to show up on maps, so the best way to regulate development on steep slopes is on a case-by-case basis. The most likely areas in town to encounter slopes of greater than 20 percent are in the Woodbury hills, in the southeast of town, or near Sawyer Hill or Monmouth Ridge. Also, some slopes leading down to lakeshores will have areas in excess of 20 percent.



Just as there are soils very difficult and expensive to develop, other soils are very easy. These are not a constraint on development; they are an opportunity. On these soils, we are much less likely to create environmental problems or raise housing costs. These soils, too, are depicted on the map. To the extent possible, we should encourage growth on the best soils.

Prime farmland soils occur throughout Monmouth, in many cases with active, viable farms located upon them. (See map in Rural Economic Resources, chapter 4.) The most extensive are gently sloping Buxton, Paxton, Paxton-Charlton, and Woodbridge soils. Prime farmland soils are among those best suited and easiest to develop, placing competing values upon a limited resource. Such soils are *both* an opportunity, if we want to encourage rural development, and an asset, if we want to preserve farmland.

### *Groundwater and Public Water Supplies*

The relationship between development and groundwater quality was discussed in a previous section. In general, you want to avoid many forms of commercial development and high density residential development over sand and gravel aquifers. More specifically, though,

we need to be aware of public water supplies in the community, and protect them from contamination.

A public water supply is not necessarily limited to the wells of the town's water system. The Maine Department of Human Services, Bureau of Health, Drinking Water Program (DWP), which regulates public water supplies, defines it as one that serves 15 or more individual hookups or 25 or more persons from a single source. Public water supplies are further classified based on whether they serve the general community or individual populations.

There are four public water supplies in Monmouth:

- The first is a pair of bedrock wells serving Tex-tech Industries in North Monmouth. One of these wells is 185' deep, the other 203' deep. While these supplies show no current water quality problems, the DWP classifies them as having a high risk of future chronic contamination. This is because of the nature of the business and the fact that Tex-tech does not control the land uses within a radius of the wells.
- The second is a pair of deep bedrock wells serving Cobbossee Colony Golf Course. The quality of these wells is good. Because the golf course owns all the land within 300' of these wells, the DWP regards the risk of future contamination as low.
- The third is a well serving the West Village Mobile Home Park on Route 202. This, too, is a bedrock well. Because of the proximity to Route 202 and the lack of landowner control over the area surrounding the well, the DWP rates this as being high risk of future contamination.
- The fourth water supply is not from groundwater. It is an intake on Cobbossee Lake serving Camp Kippewa. This water is filtered and used only seasonally. Because of the size of the lake and conditions surrounding the intake, the DWP rates the susceptibility of this water source as low.

The Drinking Water Program promotes the establishment of wellhead protection plans for public water supplies. The Rule of Thumb is that all wells should maintain a minimum 300' radius of restricted land uses around their wellhead (more for larger systems). The location of these wellheads, particularly at the mobile home park and Tex-tech, becomes a constraint on development in the immediate vicinities.

### *Floodplains*

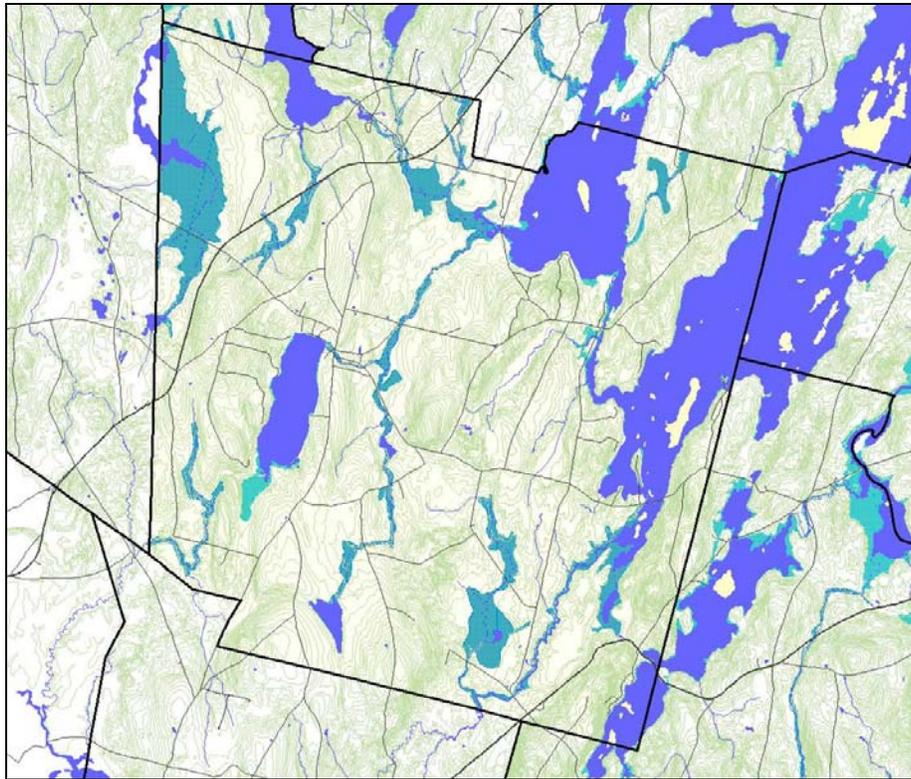
The land adjacent to lakes, rivers, and streams subject to inundation by floodwaters are floodplains. Floodplains carry and store floodwaters during peak runoff seasons. They attract development because of level ground, fertile soils and waterfront locale. Development in the floodplain, with filling and construction, constricts the flow of water, increasing floodwater velocities and increasing the likelihood of damage to both the property and downstream.



Floodplains are a definite constraint to development, though not one that is always visible. In fact, the risk of damage from development is so great that the federal government has taken on the responsibility for insuring flood prone property. The National Flood Insurance Program requires communities to regulate and restrict development in 100-year floodplains in order for their residents to participate. The Town of Monmouth cooperates by establishing a local flood management program and ordinance.

Flood hazard areas occur around the Town's many lakes and ponds and along the various brooks. The most extensive floodplains incorporate the wetlands and lowlands along Bog Brook, Dilnow Brook and Jock Stream and also lie along Jug Stream. These are mostly low-risk for development, however, as they are remote from existing developed areas.

### **FIRM Floodplain Mapping**



### **Natural Resources – Findings and Issues:**

The lakes of Monmouth are perhaps the town's most significant natural resource. They are threatened chiefly by the nutrient phosphorous, generated by runoff from new development and old land use practices, and the loss or degradation of adequate natural buffers. An overabundance of phosphorous will turn lakes green, putting a damper on recreation, the economy, and property values. Phosphorous is an issue throughout the watershed of a lake, and Monmouth is entirely covered with lake watersheds. Several of the lakes are more susceptible to phosphorous than others.

Phosphorous can be controlled in a number of ways, and the town has been active over the years in supporting mitigation and cleanup efforts. However, it is much more expensive to remove the phosphorous after the fact than it is to do new development right in the first place. We need to focus more on preventing phosphorous runoff at the source when possible. However, in densely-developed areas like Monmouth Center, it may make more sense from a cost perspective to have an area-wide mitigation strategy.

A more recent threat to lakes comes in the form of invasive water plants. Milfoil and other invasive plants are being found more frequently in Maine, and can ruin a lake in short order. We need an active program of monitoring and response to this emerging threat.

Groundwater resources (aquifers) provide drinking water to the majority of Monmouth residents – those not on the public water supply. The greatest threat to groundwater in Monmouth comes from industrial or commercial development. Though this threat has fortunately not materialized, it should be taken seriously, because contaminated groundwater is very costly and time-consuming to clean up.

Several locations in Monmouth have been recognized locally and statewide as critical natural areas, places with multiple environmental assets. Protection of these areas is a priority, but the degree of protection we now offer is erratic. Monmouth should make an effort to involve private conservation organizations and raise funds to do a better job of protecting these critical areas, perhaps through the development of an open space plan. Such efforts would also improve recreation opportunities for the community. Townspeople already support efforts to help protect natural resources through land trusts and public-private conservation initiatives.



Though modern engineering practices have demonstrated that we can build almost anything, anywhere, we still need to be sensitive to the constraints put on development by our resource base. Building on poor soils, steep slopes, over aquifers or floodplains just raises the cost of already-expensive housing. We should find ways of encouraging more development in the service area of public water and sewer, and away from sensitive natural areas. Throughout town, we must make a better effort to control phosphorous-containing runoff from development.

## **Goals and Policies for Natural Resources**

Monmouth's natural resource goal is to **protect critical land and water resources from development which may threaten those resources.**

To promote this goal, the following policies and strategies are recommended:

- 8.1 Continue a multi-pronged approach to control of stormwater runoff into lakes.

- Review and update stormwater management and phosphorous mitigation standards in current ordinances, with preference for low-cost mitigation techniques.  
*Responsible Party:* Planning board  
*Partner(s):* Cobbossee Watershed District (CWD), Maine DEP  
*Timing:* Ordinance revision in 2007
- Establish a local phosphorous mitigation fee, to be used for remediation projects within the watershed areas of the respective lakes. The fee must be used to complement those of the CWD and DEP, and not be redundant.  
*Responsible Party:* Planning Board  
*Partner(s):* CWD, Maine DEP  
*Timing:* 2009
- Continue to participate in monitoring and mitigation projects with the Cobbossee Watershed District.  
*Responsible Party:* Town meeting, selectmen  
*Partner(s):* CWD, neighboring towns  
*Timing:* Ongoing
- Initiate strategies to assure long-term maintenance of mitigation measures, including ordinance requirements and landowner education.  
*Responsible Party:* Planning board, town manager, CEO  
*Partner(s):* CWD, Maine DEP, KCS&WCD  
*Timing:* Ordinance revision in 2008
- Cooperate with neighboring towns on protection levels and measures for shared lake watersheds.  
*Responsible Party:* Selectmen, planning board  
*Partner(s):* neighboring towns, CWD, KCS&WCD  
*Timing:* Ongoing
- Establish performance standards for earth-moving activities that do not already fall under development ordinances.  
*Responsible Party:* Planning board, code enforcement officer  
*Timing:* New standards to be incorporated by 2010
- Ensure that the state's standards for erosion control are enforced.  
*Responsible Party:* Code enforcement officer  
*Timing:* Ongoing

## 8.2 Improve stream protection and conservation efforts.

- Upgrade the town's Shoreland Zoning Ordinance to include protection of streamside areas along first order streams.  
*Responsible Party:* Planning Board  
*Timing:* Ordinance revision in 2008
- Identify objectives for stream buffers within the growth area, including minimum vegetation widths and/or mitigation or remediation for areas where buffers are eliminated.  
*Responsible Party:* Planning Board, proposed Conservation Commission



- Establish an open space acquisition strategy with a priority for protection of identified critical natural areas. (open space plan)  
*Responsible Party:* Selectmen, proposed Conservation Commission  
*Partner(s):* Land trusts, conservation groups, Maine DOC  
*Timing:* Open space plan, see policy 7.2
- Establish the Resource Protection District protections around isolated wetlands five acres and larger and associated critical natural areas, especially in the Bog Brook, Delano Brook, and Wilson Stream areas.  
*Responsible Party:* Planning board  
*Timing:* Amendments to shoreland zoning, 2007
- Continue to enforce performance standards requiring developers to avoid endangered or threatened plant and animal habitats.  
*Responsible Party:* Planning board, CEO  
*Timing:* Ordinance revision in 2008

8.7 Limit development in areas which present environmental challenges or conflicts.

- Incorporate performance standards for vernal pools (seasonal wetlands) if available.  
*Responsible Party:* Planning board  
*Timing:* Ordinance revision in 2008
- Require proposed development and timber-cutting activity in identified deer wintering areas to consult with Maine IFW in planning clearing activities.  
*Responsible Party:* Planning board, code enforcement officer  
*Timing:* Ordinance revision in 2008
- Improve landowner awareness of “overlooked” natural resources.  
*Responsible Party:* Town office, code enforcement officer, proposed “conservation commission”  
*Partner(s):* lake associations, conservation groups, CWD  
*Timing:* Literature collected and distributed beginning 2008

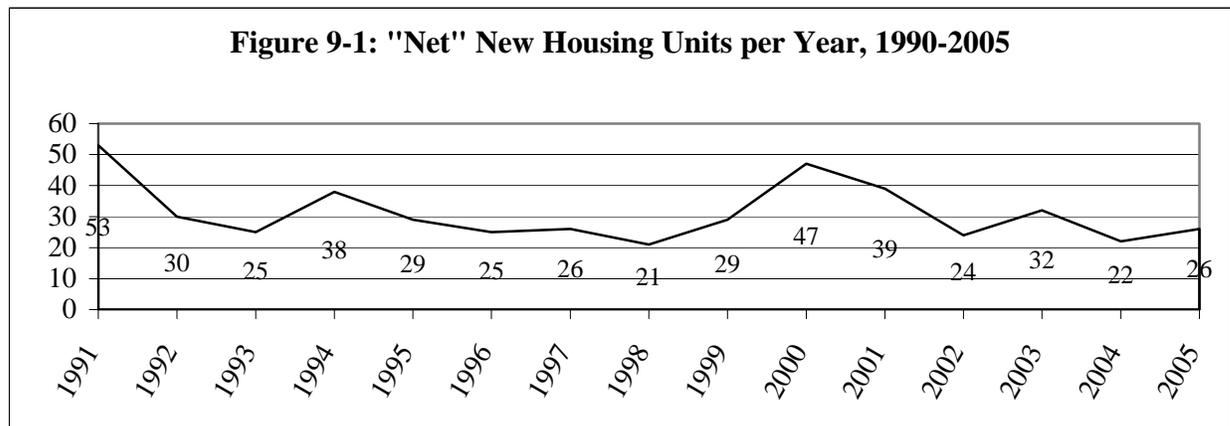
## Chapter 9: Housing in Monmouth

Homes are part of the landscape and the community, and often as indicative of a town's character as the population. While people come and go, the houses stay. Without them, there is no population. In fact, population estimates are quite often based on housing counts, because the rate of home-building reflects population growth or decline.

### Housing Numbers and Variety

From a development perspective, the most telling fact is that housing development will continue, even if there is no population growth. The reason for this is the declining household size. In Monmouth, housing numbers are growing faster than the population. In 1970, Monmouth had 978 housing units. In 2000, the count had risen to 1,801, an increase of 85 percent. With another 143 added since 2000, the housing count has now almost exactly doubled in 35 years.

Figure 9-1 below gives us a year-by-year perspective on housing growth in Monmouth over 15 years. The figures are taken from the Municipal Valuation Report sent into the State by the Town Assessor, and indicate the number of homes added to the tax rolls. New construction is seen to be fairly consistent with economic conditions: In the early 90's, the town was still winding down from the 80's. Then, housing construction went into a slump for five or six years. We saw a little burst around 2000.



#### *Housing by Type:*

Table 9-1, on the next page, indicates the type of housing stock available in Monmouth. Clearly, the overwhelming majority of housing is of the traditional site-built type, 77 percent of

the total. However, traditional housing is gradually losing “market share.” In 1980, site-built (also known as “stick-built”) homes made up 80 percent of the total housing stock; their percentage dropped to 77 percent in 2000.



Mobile homes have been gaining in popularity in Monmouth. This may be because they are quicker and easier to construct; it is certainly because they are more affordable than other new homes. During the 80’s when home prices were more than doubling, Monmouth gained 123 mobile homes and only 88 stick-built. Then, in the 90’s when there was less pressure on housing prices (and mobile homes got pricier), the numbers flipped, with stick-built gaining over 176 and mobile homes only 30. Since 2000, Monmouth has added 112 stick-built homes and 31 mobile homes.

Mobile homes constituted 15.4 percent of Monmouth’s housing in 2000. While that may seem high, it is well below several neighboring towns. Wales has 23 percent mobile homes. To some extent, the number of mobile homes is affected by the presence of mobile home parks. Monmouth has two, both with over 20 hookups. And there is the potential for several more.

Table 9-1  
Year-Round Housing by Structural Type, 1980-2000

<u>Housing Type</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>
Site-built single-family (stick-built)	813	901	1,077
Multi-Family	86	123	136
Mobile Home	125	248	278

Source: US Census

Multi-family buildings are not a large part of Monmouth’s housing stock, as they are in more urbanized towns. Monmouth’s Multifamily Ordinance is also seen as a barrier to new multifamily development in town. According to the Census, Monmouth had 52 units in duplexes (or add-on apartments), 33 units in three- or four-unit buildings, and 51 units in building of five or more. Accessory apartments (including garage apartments and “granny flats”) are not common in Monmouth, but with the number of large homes on public sewer and the need for affordable housing, there is potential for many more. Some homes in Monmouth are now divided entirely into apartments; that probably accounts for many in the category. The only buildings built specifically as multi-family are the Orchard View Apartments and the Academy Park complex.

As Monmouth’s population changes, the town is likely to see more demand for multi-family units. They serve two important purposes: they accommodate young people just

starting out, which form the backbone of Monmouth’s future workforce. And, they serve seniors who are looking for economical, low-maintenance housing . Without the kind of housing these people want and can afford, they will go elsewhere, and Monmouth will lose its diversity.

Seasonal homes have long been part of the housing stock in Monmouth. There are 311 camps in town, located mostly on the shores of Cochnewagon, Cobbosseecontee, and Anabessacook Lakes. Very few new seasonal camps are being built, at least identified as such. Records indicate 13 new camps during the 90’s, and only one since 2000. New shorefront homes are now built for year-round occupancy, and existing camps have been converted to year-round. Camp conversions, besides increasing impacts on the lakes, can increase public service demands without new tax base to support it.

*Housing Occupancy and Vacancy:*

In 2000, 84 percent of occupied housing units were owner-occupied, with 16 percent renter-occupied. This is a slight shift from 1980, when 86 percent were owner-occupied. Monmouth’s percentage of owner-occupied homes is lower than other neighboring towns – meaning more rentals – except for Winthrop, which has a much larger built-up area and more multi-family units.

<b>Regional Perspective: Occupancy</b>	
<u>Town</u>	<u>2000 Owner-occupied Percentage</u>
Greene	87.9 %
Leeds	84.9 %
Litchfield	88.7 %
Monmouth	84.3 %
Wales	89.5 %
Winthrop	75.9 %

About 3.8 percent of year-round housing units were vacant in 2000. That combines a vacancy rate of 1.4 percent for owner homes and 4.2 percent for rentals. This is an extremely low rate compared to normal vacancy rates. Kennebec County’s rental vacancy rate is 9 percent, for example, and Monmouth’s rental vacancy rate in 1990 was 7 percent. This indicates a strong demand for rental housing, reinforcing prior comments about the potential for more multi-family housing.

*Housing Age and Condition:*

The 2000 Census contains information on housing age in Monmouth. As may be deduced from the dramatic growth rate, the majority of houses have been built since 1970. According to ages reported by their owners, 57 percent of their homes were built from 1970 to 2000. However, older homes make up a generous proportion as well: 393 homes were built before the Second World War, more than one in five. This makes them potentially historic structures, on the one hand, and potential maintenance problems on the other.



Some homes in town are not as high a quality of construction as others. However, all year-round homes now have standard plumbing and kitchen facilities (according to the census). Ten percent of year-round homes use wood as their primary heating source, though some may be more of choice than by necessity. Forty-eight homes contain only one or two rooms; whereas 148 have more than nine rooms. Only 11 homes contain more than one occupant per room, which is a standard definition of an overcrowded housing situation.

## Property Values and Affordability

Monmouth homeowners, like many in Maine, have seen erratic increases in property values over the past twenty years. Between 1980 and 1990, the value of a “specified” (stick-built, on less than ten acres) owner-occupied home rose from \$36,800 to 80,800, more than double. Between 1990 and 2000, however, home values rose only 12 percent, to \$90,800. Inflation over that period was 32 percent, so homeowners actually lost ground. But in this decade so far, we have picked up the pace again. The Maine State Housing Authority (MSHA) reported that for 2003, the median sale price of 43 single family homes was \$109,900, and spot checks of 77 listings in February and September, 2006 showed no homes at all listed for less than \$125,000. It looks as if prices are on a pace to almost double again.

<b>Regional Perspective: Home Values</b>	
<u>Town</u>	<u>2000 Home Value</u>
Greene	\$100,200
Leeds	\$ 89,300
Litchfield	\$ 97,000
Monmouth	\$ 90,800
Wales	\$ 99,400
Winthrop	\$ 97,300

Property values, though they seem high, are well below some of our neighboring towns. As the box on the left shows, Leeds and Monmouth were – in 2000 – an oasis of lower housing prices. The average home value for Kennebec County is \$87,200, for Androscoggin, \$89,900, and for Maine, \$98,700.

Affordability – the ratio of housing cost and income – is a major issue in many areas, and required to be addressed by local comprehensive plans in Maine. The law requires that each community plan for at least ten percent of new housing to be affordable to households making less than 80 percent of the norm.

For example, MSHA reports that an affordable home for the median income household in Monmouth (using 2003 figures) would be approximately \$130,000. Since the median home in 2003 sold for \$105,000, this would seem to indicate that affordability is not a major issue at this time. But this conclusion overlooks two other questions: 1) is there any housing available for low and very-low income groups? And, 2) Will the new housing being built continue to be affordable? With regard to



the second question, we need only look at the asking prices of some of the new homes in town to see that this is not the case.

The census provides information on housing costs as a percentage of incomes for Monmouth. This enables us to answer the first question – is our housing affordable to a range of incomes? The accepted “threshold” for affordability is that no more than 30 percent of income should go towards housing costs. Table 9-2, below, shows those figures for 1990 and 2000.

Table 9-2  
Housing Costs as a Percentage of Income, 1990 and 2000

<u>Percentage of Monthly Income</u>	<u>1990 #</u>	<u>1990 %</u>	<u>2000 #</u>	<u>2000 %</u>
Owner – ownership costs				
Less than 20 percent	263	47 %	406	51 %
20 to 30 percent	199	36 %	233	29 %
More than 30 percent	92	17 %	146	20 %
Renter – gross rent				
Less than 20 percent	47	31 %	91	42 %
20 to 30 percent	19	12 %	42	19 %
More than 30 percent	88	57 %	69	32 %

The table shows that Monmouth made progress towards affordability during the 90’s (when housing values did not keep up with inflation), as the percentage of households paying more than 30 percent declined. Still, one out of every five homeowners, and almost one of three renters, is paying more for housing than is acceptable.

Renters generally have more trouble with housing costs than owners, reflected in this table by the higher percentage paying more than 30 percent. An affordable rental for the median income household in Monmouth would be approximately \$1,200, whereas the median rent paid in 2000 was \$500. While this appears more than adequate, it obscures a couple of facts: first, that the average renter is not generally making the average income in Monmouth (\$47,000, by the way); second, that the acute shortage of rentals is likely to drive rents up at a much faster rate than owner housing.

Monmouth is part of a regional housing market. That matters, because people tend to migrate to more affordable communities. The box at right indicates that Monmouth does not stand out from its immediate neighbors. It has been, however, one of the more affordable communities in the larger region. In Kennebec County, over one-quarter of all households pay more than 30 percent of their income for housing costs.

<b>Regional Perspective: Affordability</b>	
<u>Town</u>	<u>2000: Paying more than 30% Of Income on Housing</u>
Greene	19.2 %
Leeds	21.7 %
Litchfield	20.8 %
Monmouth	21.2 %
Wales	27.3 %
Winthrop	21.6 %

MSHA has developed what it calls an “affordability index,” the ratio between what a median income household can afford and what the median home price is. In Monmouth, the affordability index is 1.24 (we can afford \$130,000, but homes sell for only \$105,000.) The average for the State of Maine is 0.81 – an affordability problem that prompted the concern in the first place. But closer to home, it is less of a problem. The index for Kennebec County is 1.14, and for the Augusta Housing Market is 1.09. In the Augusta market area, the price of the median house is about the same as Monmouth, but average incomes are \$6,000 less.

That still leaves the conclusion that certain segments of our population, particularly the elderly and young, will continue to have problems finding a place to live in Monmouth, particularly with the relatively few rental units and mobile homes. These groups are typically lower incomes. For example, 147 out of 268 senior households in Monmouth make less than half of the median, and 61 more make below 80 percent. Among a group of 121 “potential homeowners,” (renters between the ages of 25 and 44) MSHA has estimated that 71 earn less than 80 percent of median. At the 50 percent “very-low” income, an affordable house is \$64,000 and an affordable rent is \$585. At 80 percent, an affordable house is \$104,000 and an affordable rent is \$935.

MSHA has developed several programs at the state level to address specific needs. The most well-known is the first-time homebuyer program. From 1999 through 2003, 35 families in Monmouth bought houses through this program. State and federal direct-subsidy programs are broken down into “project-based” – housing units that are subsidized – and “non-project-based” – vouchers for families that may be applied to rent in any units. In Monmouth, USDA Rural Development Agency currently has 36 project-based subsidized units, and MSHA has 18 non-project-based subsidies.

It should be noted that all these programs were in effect in 2000, and we still had more than 200 families unable to afford their current home, as indicated on Table 9-2 (p.76).

## **Housing in Monmouth – Findings and Issues:**

The growth in the number of homes in Monmouth has been notable. With a trend of about 28 new homes per year, most are going onto individual lots rather than subdivisions. Most are also going onto substantially larger lots than our minimum lot size ordinance requires. Partly due to these factors, the size and price of new homes is escalating rapidly.

There is a large potential demand for a variety of multi-family housing. We have very few places for young people to live, and efficient homes for the elderly will soon be a booming market. Multi-family housing could range from apartments and senior housing complexes to conversion of existing large homes, and would reduce some of the demand for mobile homes.



An affordability problem is not apparent from Monmouth's statistics, but that may be because many of our newer families have larger household incomes. Our concern should be for lower income groups, such as young adults and seniors. In both cases, the 3- and 4-bedroom houses being built now do not serve their needs. If we do not do something to encourage more affordable housing, we will either lose this part of the community altogether, or they will turn to older mobile homes and other problematic housing choices.

It may help to visualize some of the housing choices that individuals have to make based on incomes. For instance, the minimum wage in Maine is \$7 an hour. Not many people can run a household on \$7 an hour, but if they could, it would have to include less than \$350 per month in rent. (According to MSHA, there are at least 210 households with income less than this, about half of which are seniors). Another example: the average teacher in the Monmouth school system earns \$38,000 a year (2005). He or she could afford a home priced at \$108,000 or a rental of around \$950 a month. If we want our town to include its teachers – as well as its small business owners and other service workers – we need to continue to provide the kind of housing (“workforce housing”) they can afford.

Based on housing projections developed in Chapter 2, we can expect to see between 500 and 600 new homes in Monmouth by 2020. Under the state's target of ten percent of new housing to be affordable, Monmouth's target should be 50 to 60 housing units by 2020 under that affordability threshold. That means about three or four per year, on average, and preferably in a diverse affordability range (not just all precisely at that target price.)

Over the past couple of years, it hasn't just been housing prices that have gone up, but interest rates as well. The new rates put some of the affordability targets into doubt, just as new prices remove a lot of homes from the “affordable” category. This shows just how fluid the affordable housing situation is, and how we need to address it at all levels.

## Goals and Policies for Housing

Monmouth's goal for our housing is to **encourage a diversity of housing types and choice, including at least ten percent of new housing units created to be of decent quality and affordable to households making no more than 80 percent of Monmouth's median income.**

To promote this goal, the plan proposes the following policies and actions:

- 9.1 Encourage the development of housing choices other than single-family homes on large lots.
  - Reduce lot area requirements for multi-family development in the growth area.  
*Responsible Party:* Planning board  
*Timing:* Ordinance revision in 2008
  - Reduce lot size and setback requirements in the growth area.  
*Responsible Party:* Planning board  
*Timing:* Ordinance revision in 2008
  - Form a local housing committee, or partner with a regional entity, to address options for increasing housing diversity and affordable housing opportunities.  
*Responsible Party:* Planning board

*Timing:* 2009

- The town should develop a proposal for senior or workforce housing in one of the village areas.

*Responsible Party:* Selectmen, town manager

*Timing:* Form study committee in 2009, present proposal in 2011

- Review development ordinances to reduce development costs on new housing in the growth area.

*Responsible Party:* Planning board

*Timing:* Criteria for ordinance revision in 2008

- Locally promote the availability of MSHA programs, especially owner-occupied multi-family housing.

*Responsible Party:* town office, code enforcement officer, town manager

*Partner(s):* Maine State Housing Authority

*Timing:* Ongoing

9.2 Improve the quality of construction on new and existing homes.

- Adopt the International Building Code as a criteria for issuance of local building permit.

*Responsible Party:* Planning board, code enforcement officer

*Partner(s):* local contractors, Maine DHS

*Timing:* 2008

- Provide access or links on building techniques to owner-builders.

*Responsible Party:* Town office, code enforcement officer

*Timing:* Access and list websites and other resources on handout, 2007

- Develop and distribute an information sheet on building techniques for owner-builders.

*Responsible Party:* Town office, code enforcement officer

*Timing:* 2009

## Chapter 10: Land Use and Development

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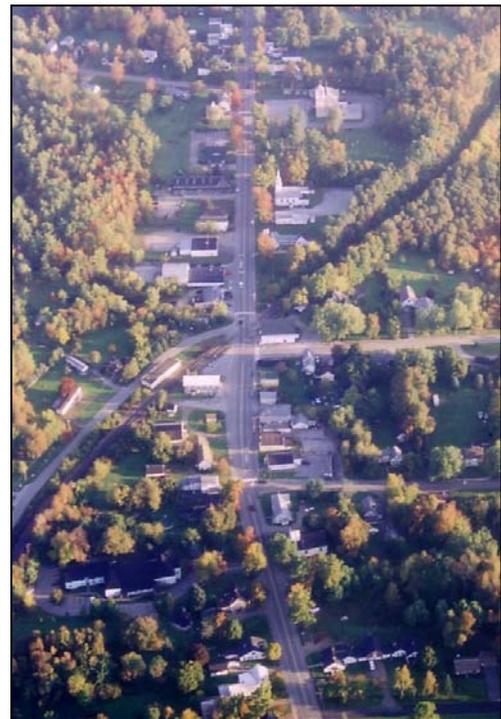
As has been illustrated in previous chapters, Monmouth has been experiencing dramatic growth in population ever since the 1970's. Most of the growth is in single family homes, almost doubling the town's housing stock in 35 years. At the same time, commercial buildings are springing up throughout town.

Not unexpectedly, the development occurring within Monmouth is having significant impacts upon the landscape and community. Local residents express awareness, and often concern, over the pace of change taking place in town. This chapter describes existing land uses, and prospects for the future – housing trends and future development – and proposes a vision and direction for managing future development in Monmouth.

### Development Patterns: Historic and Contemporary

The pattern (location) of development helps to define a community. One hundred homes spread across the landscape will look a lot different – and have greater impact on the cost of public services and natural resources – than one hundred houses clustered in a village.

Development patterns respond to economic influences. The settlers of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century “sprawled” into the landscape looking for isolation and good farmland. But, they needed commerce – a pattern of small, commercial villages began to evolve. North Monmouth grew into an industrial center, based on its access to waterpower, and Monmouth Center developed around its railroad station. Many of the homes and other buildings in these villages date to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. There has been some replacement and infill since then; however, very little has been done over the years to expand the village limits.



Monmouth's lakes have long been one of its best assets. Scattered camps and cottages evolved into virtual lakefront communities in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. That form of development has eased a bit lately, partly due to the shortage of available waterfront. Most new shorefront development has been year-round rather than seasonal. Year-round homes have greater impact on public services than camps.

The more recent trend in development has been towards suburbanization. Suburban sprawl has been the dominant development pattern in America ever since the advent of paved roads and reliable cars. Since the 1960's, nearly all growth in Monmouth has been roadside development. It doesn't really matter where the roads are. Homes and small subdivisions are all across the town. Routes 202 and 132 are well-maintained and may see slightly more, but local roads from the South Monmouth Road to Back Street are becoming filled as well. The Comprehensive Planning Committee has mapped subdivisions and new development and observed no perceptible pattern of location.

The current way of developing is costing the town more money to provide services. New development is going into areas that are more remote and harder to serve with snow plows, fire equipment, and school busses. Sewer and water service is available between North Monmouth and Monmouth Center, but does not seem to be attracting growth any more than other locations. Commercial development seems to be migrating towards Route 202 – an attractive location for roadside business, but a vital arterial for regional mobility.



Nearly as significant as the developed areas are those that have remained undeveloped. Monmouth has managed to retain a natural pattern of field and forest, but it is far from secure. Much of south central Monmouth, from Cressey Road past Route 132 south of the village, along Cobboseecontee and Fish Hatchery Roads, to Pease Hill and Town Farm Roads, still exhibits largely undeveloped road frontage. But the former Chick orchards, covering much of northwestern Monmouth, have largely been sold off and are no longer viable. It has prime development potential. From Clemedow Farm south along Route 132 lies a lot of development potential, too – recently made more valuable by the opening of the Sabattus Interchange. These are now some of the town's largest undeveloped tracts near that interchange.

## **Residential Development**

Single-family home construction and mobile home placement have overwhelmingly dominated new building activity in Town since the 1991 plan. Over 15 years, Monmouth has

seen over 450 new homes. That is about 1/3 growth over our entire housing stock in 1990. How has that changed the town?

Residential lots can be as small as 30,000 sq. ft. on public sewer, but the vast majority of new construction has been off the sewer. The Minimum Lot Size Ordinance requires at least one acre lots, but most new homes are in rural areas where new lot sizes have been averaging two to three acres. If we assume that the average new home occupies two acres, 450 of them consumed 900 acres – 1.4 square miles, or approximately four percent of the total land area of Monmouth. That took just 15 years.

What is likely to happen over the next 15? Chapter 2 forecasted growth scenarios out to 2020. Another 450 new homes would be a conservative estimate. Because Monmouth is directly in the path of growth, an estimate between 508 and 600 new homes is more likely. If new homes average the same lot size, the town is likely to see another five percent of our land occupied by housing before too long.

While 1,000 acres of developed land may be difficult to visualize, there is a more visible way to imagine new development. The Minimum Lot Size Ordinance specifies the minimum road frontage required per lot. On public roads, each lot must have 200 feet of frontage. 450 house lots occupy at least 90,000 feet of road frontage – the equivalent of 8.5 miles of road. In other words, fifteen years of new homes has resulted in 8 1/2 miles of roadway going from uninhabited to a house on every 200 feet both sides of the road. Fifteen more years is likely to add another 11 to 14 miles.

Subdivisions are a form of land development that concentrates housing units onto a small area. Though they have a more visible impact on the landscape, they actually have a more manageable impact than the same number of lots scattered randomly through town.

None of the subdivisions approved to date have taken advantage of the clustered housing provisions of Monmouth’s ordinance. Clustered housing (the positioning of development on only a portion of a parcel, to conserve some undeveloped land, rather than evenly distributed development throughout) sounds threatening, but is actually a model of the traditional form of development in Monmouth (villages and open land). A more practical form of clustered



housing – multi-family homes and apartments – has also been rare in Monmouth. Other than Orchard View apartments, there has been little in the way of multi-family buildings in town for many years. Monmouth’s current ordinances are seen as the primary obstacle to both cluster and multi-family developments. In particular, the cluster subdivision provisions and the multi-family housing ordinance are too restrictive or a disincentive to these types of development.

Perhaps the densest form of development in Monmouth is in lakefront developments and mobile home parks. Some camp lots are on very small acreages and packed together to maximize shore frontage. This is particularly evident on Sand Pond and portions of Cobbossee Lake. Two mobile home parks exist in Monmouth: West Village on Route 202 near the Wales town line and Lou-Lyn on Route 132 north of Monmouth Center.

## Commercial Development

Commercial and industrial development has traditionally been confined to the village areas. In past years, the motivation had been to draw on the concentration of people in the village for employment and commerce; this is no longer the case. While Tex-tech is the industrial anchor of North Monmouth, and the town’s retail center is in Monmouth Center, it is no longer the practice to build new commercial buildings in the villages.

Monmouth’s largest commercial building after Tex-tech is the former Dumont Plant. It is located on Route 132 about ½ mile north of Monmouth Center, on water and sewer, and in a Pine Tree Zone. But even with these amenities, the town has had trouble finding and keeping a tenant in the building. Some of the newer commercial development has looked to Route 202; the new Mormon Church and Credit Union are just below the Route 132 crossroads, and



Route 202 has service stations, a roadside restaurant, boat storage, and lumberyard. Though it is reasonable for business to be interested in the access and marketing possibilities of this arterial road, the town needs to be vigilant about the visual and traffic impacts of new highway development.

Apart from the highways, however, new businesses in Monmouth’s rural areas generally fall into two categories: resource-based businesses, such as farm stands, and small home businesses, such as contractors or mechanics. With respect to the latter, these businesses support existing rural landowners, helping them to keep their land in its existing state while not placing new burdens on roads or other public services. It only becomes a concern if these businesses begin to expand or cater to a higher traffic (number of vehicle trips) customer base.

## **Local Regulation of Development**

The Town of Monmouth has power to affect individual land use decisions. This power is expressed primarily in several ordinances, enacted under the town's home rule authority or under state mandate.

The Town regulates the construction of individual buildings under its Building Permit and Minimum Lot Size Ordinance, last updated in 1993. The ordinance requires a building permit for any new structure worth more than \$1,500. The ordinance provides a set of dimensional standards to be met for new lots and buildings, which vary depending on whether the lot has access to public sewer. On sewer, one- and two-family dwelling lots must be at least 30,000 square feet (except for clustered subdivisions), with an additional 10,000 square feet per dwelling unit over two. Minimum road frontage for sewered lots is 150' on public roads, 100' on subdivision roads. Buildings can cover no more than 50 percent of the lot.

Without public sewer, one- and two-family dwelling lots must be at least 40,000 square feet (except for clustered subdivisions), with an additional 20,000 square feet per dwelling unit if more than two on a lot. Road frontage on unsewered lots is 200' on public roads, 150' on subdivision roads. Buildings can cover no more than 20 percent of the lot. On all lots, the front setback is 50', except on Route 202, where it is 70', side setbacks are 20', and the maximum height is two stories for homes, 35' for other buildings.

The Town has a Site Plan Review Ordinance, requiring approval of all non-residential construction. This ordinance was adopted in 1997. In addition to a review process (planning board review for buildings over 2,000 sq. ft.), the ordinance contains a fairly comprehensive set of development standards, including regulation of phosphorous export, environmental impacts, construction of roads and parking, and landscaping. The Town has a separate ordinance (1987) for regulation of multi-family housing.

In conformance with state mandates, the Town also has ordinances governing subdivisions, development in floodplains, and shoreland zoning. None of these ordinances vary in great detail from the state mandates; both subdivision and shoreland zoning must be updated in the next couple of years.

Since adoption of the 1991 plan, the Town has made several other efforts to manage development, among them the Downtown Revitalization Plan, and a Smart Growth Plan. Some of the recommendations outlined in those plans are repeated here.

## **Land Use and Development – Findings and Issues**

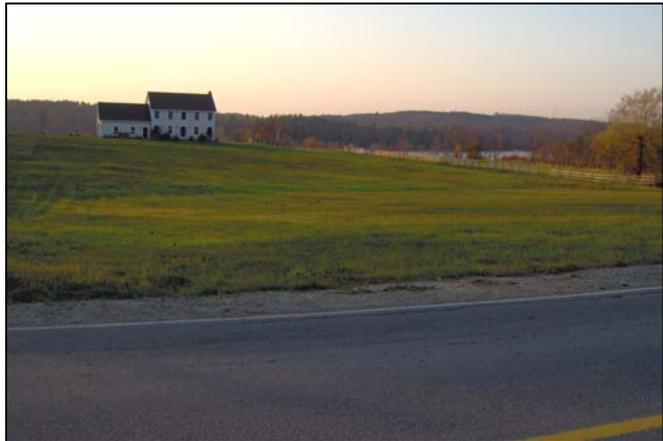
The greatest issue facing Monmouth today is the trend of new residential development towards sprawling across the town. This dilutes the traditional village-rural character of Monmouth and results in higher costs for public services and subsequent pressure on taxes. Sprawl development means more money spent on road maintenance, more school bus routes, greater response time for fire, police, and emergency vehicles, less open space, and more

environmental impacts. Development in the villages or nearby would improve the efficiency of public water and sewer, reduce traffic, and provide more opportunity for local commerce and community functions.

Monmouth identified this issue and provided recommendations for addressing it in its 1991 plan. These recommendations were either never implemented or had little effect, as there has been no noticeable change in the residential development pattern. This suggests that the town should look more closely at options other than those recommended in 1991.

A specific issue likely to arise in town over the next decade is development associated with the new Sabattus Interchange. This may result in added demand for homes throughout Monmouth, or it may actually accelerate subdivision along Routes 132 and 9/126. Either way, however, it is likely to create traffic and service demands in the *south side* of town, a location exactly opposite where growth pressures have traditionally come from.

The majority of new residential development is not in subdivisions or mobile home parks. It is in single homes built on lots created one-at-a-time. These lots commonly the result of intra-family transfer (e.g. for a child to build their home) or a landowner selling some but not all of his property to sustain the rest. While these are both meritorious reasons, the overall impact is a further scattering of development.



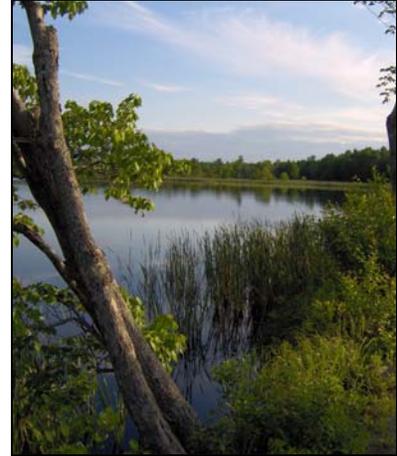
Sprawl is happening to a limited degree with commercial development. The major highways are an attractive location for many forms of business, while Monmouth Center has vacant buildings. To some extent, this is the result of economic trends over which the town has little control. The town should seek out innovative ways to encourage businesses to come back to the villages (or in close proximity) and avoid Route 202. Increases in through traffic on Route 132 due to the Sabattus Interchange is likely to be an economic enhancement for existing businesses in the Monmouth Center village, but new commercial development along Route 132 will need strong encouragement or requirements to locate in the village rather than outlying areas.

## **Monmouth's Goals for Managing Development**

The Town of Monmouth has the power in its home rule authority and the power of the purse to encourage or discourage development. Managing new development is the single greatest tool that the town has to realize its preferred future as a community. By planning for the impact and location of development, the town can maintain the lifestyles and sense of community of its residents and limit the costs of public services.

In order to do this, the town must have a vision of the future that it wants to work for. Monmouth may be a great small town now, but we must realize that you don't stay the way you are by doing nothing; doing nothing only allows others to define your future for you. In developing the Land Use Plan, we have used the following to guide us:

- The Town of Monmouth wants to perpetuate its small town character, derived in part from the distinctive village and rural landscape of our community. We wish to retain our connection with rural values, through the preservation of sustainable farms, forest, and open space.



- The Town wishes to promote growth which will be of benefit to its citizens, including commercial and employment opportunities, but which will enhance rather than detract from the current pattern of village and rural areas and will provide for more efficient public services rather than becoming a tax burden.
- The Town wishes to preserve its environmental assets -- the quality of its lakes, streams, and groundwater, its scenic rural spaces, and its diversity of wildlife.
- The Town recognizes the rights and inclinations of residents to live in ways they see fit, while at the same time respecting the property values and peace of mind of neighbors and the community as a whole.
- Whatever development rules the Town establishes to carry out these principles should be the minimum necessary to protect the well-being of the community, should be clear and easy to understand, and should ensure that development itself is economical, both in its costs to the developer and its impact on future taxpayers.

#### *A Vision for New Development*

- ♦ New development in the villages (Monmouth Center and North Monmouth), particularly regarding commercial development, should be in keeping with the existing village scale and character. Retail, office, service, food and entertainment businesses are generally most appropriate in scale and impact for Monmouth's villages.

Residential and/or commercial infill development will be encouraged where density and natural resources impacts allow in the villages.

- ◆ Routes 202 and 126 are appropriate for well-sited highway commercial development of a scale larger than in the villages. Industrial or manufacturing uses are best located along the Route 202 corridor, a road most suited to handle the trucking and other traffic. Encouraging development at the crossroads on Routes 202 or 126, with proper access management, is a preferred alternative to sprawling highway strip development.
- ◆ Excepting large commercial developments or high-impact commercial uses, most types of new commercial development will continue to be allowed throughout the town; improved performance standards and possible impact fees, rather than use restrictions, will serve to maintain town character and address impacts on town services.
- ◆ In the rural areas, new small businesses and home-based businesses (including agricultural operations) will continue to be allowed and supported; these uses have long been an important to the town's character.

The implementation of this vision for development is expressed in the Land Use Plan, described over the next few pages.

## **Land Use Plan**

Monmouth's Land Use Plan was developed by the Comprehensive Planning Committee based on findings and issues, public comment from local forums and questionnaires (*see* Appendix A), and the vision stated above. The Land Use Plan consists of a map (Appendix B) and narrative describing Monmouth's growth and rural areas, and recommended changes to both regulatory and non-regulatory strategies to guide development.

### *Designation of Growth Areas:*

Maine's Growth Management Law requires towns preparing comprehensive plans to designate areas preferred for new development, termed "growth areas," and areas where existing land uses should prevail, termed "rural areas." This approach can be viewed as the perpetuation of villages and countryside, or as the identification of portions of town with amenities and capacity for growth versus areas with environmental or other constraints. The law only says that growth areas must be "suitable for orderly residential, commercial, or industrial development."

The town may choose to create subareas out of that initial designation, such as industrial districts exclusively for large scale industry, resource districts for protecting the environment, or transitional districts, where development may create a transition from rural to growth. Monmouth's 1991 Plan created several such districts, such as Village Residential, Village Business, Commercial/Industrial, and Resource Conservation Overlay. These were never implemented, however, and this plan opts instead for the simpler designations and

achieving goals such as village enhancement or resource conservation through performance standards and other techniques.

The town cannot create a growth area so large that it would make the designation meaningless, so a growth area must be limited in size. In Monmouth, the size is dictated by its expected growth. The following procedure set the optimum size of the growth area.

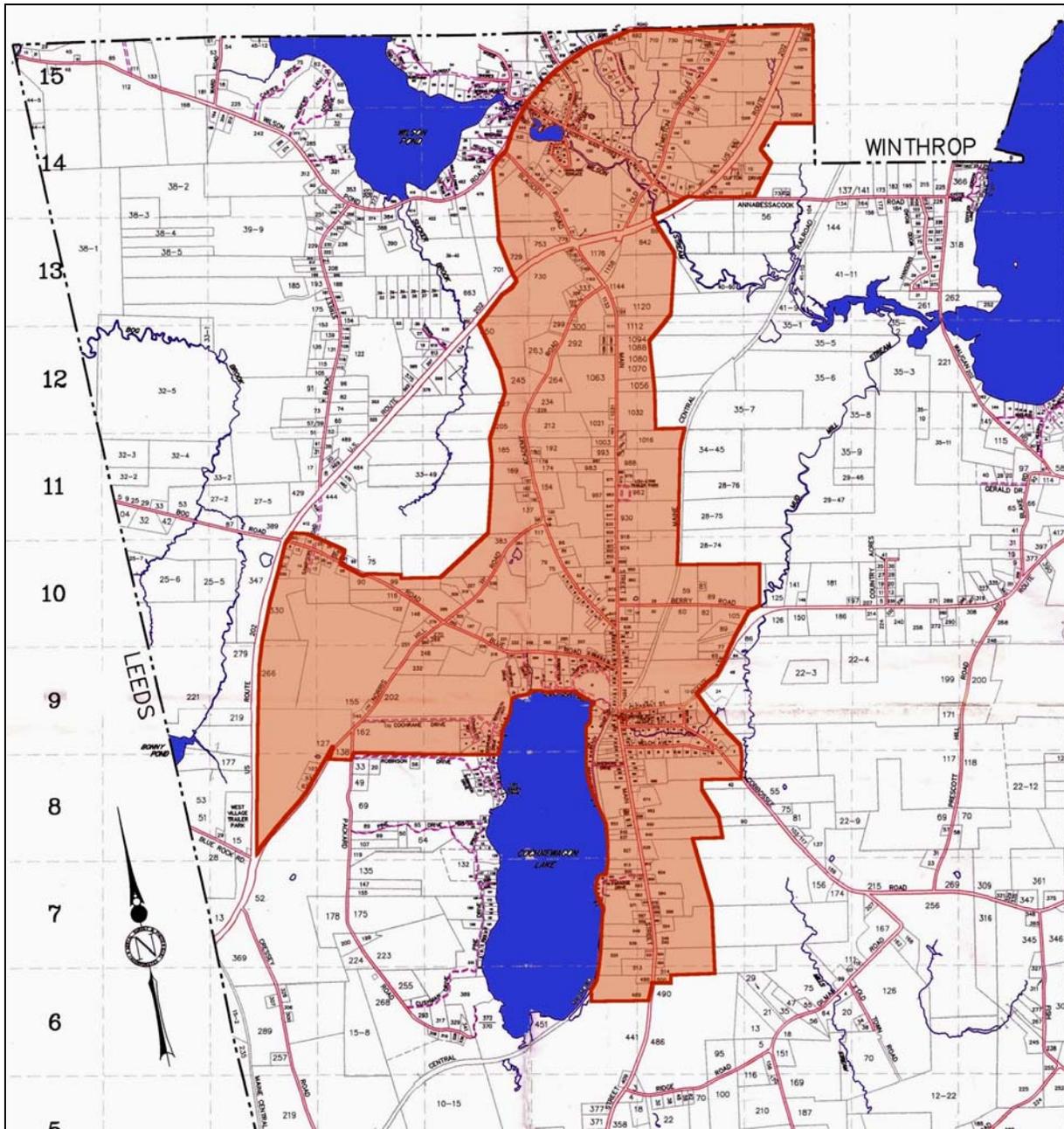
- According to plan projections, Monmouth can expect 500 to 600 units of new housing growth by 2020. A growth area should accommodate at least 2/3 of projected growth. That means there must be room for between 330 and 400 new units in the growth area.
- Translating housing units to acreage requires substantial assumptions. At Monmouth's minimum lot size, 330 to 400 new units would occupy at least 250 to 300 acres of land if on public sewer (presuming sewer is available throughout the growth area). However, as a practical matter, new homes are seldom built on the minimum lot size, and additional land is necessary to allow for roads, drainage, etc. The rule of thumb is to triple the minimum to arrive at an "average land per housing unit." For Monmouth, this figure would be 750 to 900 acres. On the other hand, reducing the required land per unit in the growth area (and therefore land cost), results in more homes on fewer acres, and less total consumption.
- Additional land requirement must be assumed for commercial growth. Where there is no separate district designated, about the best we can do is assume that 10 percent of new development will be commercial. That would mean around 30 acres (at ordinance minimums) to 90 acres (at "averages"). If projections showed the town were about to be overrun by strip development, we would bump that number up substantially.
- All of this must be taken with a grain of salt, as it is market forces which result in land development, far more than projections and lot size ordinances. Therefore, the growth area must be far larger than the actual need – accommodating not only existing development, unbuildable land, and growth beyond the 15-year planning window, but enough so that land prices are not inflated by an artificial supply shortage. This means multiplying everything by a factor of two or three, depending on the amount of existing development in the area. Monmouth's target growth area could be anywhere between 1,200 and 3,000 acres.

The next step is to find a place for the growth area. The Growth Management Act specifies only that a growth area must be "suitable for orderly residential, commercial, or industrial development." Suitability may be subjective, but we can generally assume that means no major environmental constraints, such as steep slopes or wetlands.

From a more practical perspective, we want to identify a growth area that makes sense for public services. Some services are directly location-sensitive -- public water and sewer service, and road access. Others are a little less so – proximity to a fire station, recreation area, or school. Development that is accessible to public water, sewer, and good roads, and preferably near schools and existing service centers will cost the taxpayers less. There are

secondary considerations as well, such as what's happening across town boundaries, or the location of lake watersheds.

### MONMOUTH GROWTH AREA



Monmouth's Land Use Plan identifies its growth area as the land easily reached by the public sewer system or a reasonable extension. The Land Use Map (Appendix B) indicates that this is approximately 2,819 acres, including most of North Monmouth, a portion of Route 202, all of Monmouth Center, and approximately 500 acres in the general vicinity of Norris Hill and Blue Roads. The Norris Hill/Blue Road area is included because it has good development potential close to the village, and could, in the future, be easily reached by public

sewer and water. Since it includes a lot of existing development, 2,819 acres is well within the size requirement for the growth projection. Besides public sewer, the growth area includes the public water system, the schools, and nearly all public service facilities.

The remainder of the town is the rural area. This does not include (nor do the plan recommendations affect) property already zoned under the state mandate for shoreland zoning.

### *The Growth Area – Encouraging Villages and Neighborhoods*

It is not enough to designate a growth area and hope that 2/3 of our growth occurs there. We need to adopt town policies that will draw development into the growth area. At the same time, we must recognize that, short of the government actually building the houses, we cannot guarantee that our policies will provide sufficient motivation.

The *visual* distinction between growth and rural areas tends to be the density of development. A growth area will eventually be filled with development, so its design and density have much to do with how “livable” it is and how efficiently we can provide services. Options that meet both efficiency criteria and affordability (more economical to build if they are closer together) should be favored.

Because we are trying to *attract* development, our primary objective should be to work within the free market structure – creating financial motivation for private developers to build in our growth area than rural area. (This is a challenge, because much of the development in Monmouth is still family-based, i.e. the choice to build is based on family land or proximity – therefore, relatively unaffected by economics.) This should be worth some public investment, since the objective is to save dollars in the long run.

This plan recommends the following set of strategies designed to encourage growth in Monmouth’s growth area.

- The plan recommends *reducing lot size and frontage requirements* from the current 30,000 sewer/40,000 unsewered standard to a size closer to what is currently on the ground in the village -- 15,000 to 20,000 square feet per house lot.
- The plan recommends a housing *density incentive* (higher densities) if a developer contributes to open space or designs a development for affordable housing. Creative subdivision design (e.g. clustered housing) will be an option with incentives but will not be required in the growth area.
- The plan recommends that town officials be more pro-active in working with developers to achieve good development in the growth area. This means more than just reviewing subdivision applications:
  - The town should *work directly with developers* on a case-by-case basis on effective site design, with design assistance, written guidelines and other tools.

- The town can *plan out roads and utilities* in an efficient manner, making an offer of town acceptance or cost-share if developers construct the facilities to our specifications.
  - The town can take the lead in building *workforce housing* forming a non-profit for the purpose or engaging other housing groups (This is a long-term strategy).
  - The town, through its Economic Development Commission, should establish a marketing and incentive program directed at *increasing commercial occupancy* rates in the villages.
- The plan recommends that the town design and build *phosphorous control* improvements on a village-wide basis (carried forward from the *Downtown Revitalization Plan*), using impact fees for financing.
  - The plan recommends an *Historic District* be established in the area of Cumston Hall. This district, whose boundaries will be defined upon closer examination, will ensure that new development is not completely out of character with the Hall.
  - The town must make *public investments in the growth areas*, as follows:
    - priority for road improvements,
    - expansion of sidewalk system and rehabilitation of existing sidewalks,
    - new or expanded recreation areas, and
    - village beautification.

These public investments will appear in the CIP. The town will actively seek funding from grants or other out-of-town sources.

- The plan recommends a close review of *design measures to limit strip development* along Route 202. These would include new criteria for the design of buildings and signs, adjustments in setbacks, and parking and circulation standards beyond what is already in the site plan ordinance. Development could be clustered on Route 202 at certain crossroad locations, with proper access management, as a preferred alternative to sprawling highway strip development.

### *The Rural Area – Sustaining Traditional Uses and the Rural Landscape*

The rural area has been referred to as just “the rest of town” – pretty accurate for small towns but not really reflective of the reasons we are trying to keep it that way. Assets worthy of saving in rural Monmouth include natural resources (wetlands, natural areas, habitat, steep hillsides) and economic resources (productive farm and timber land). At the same time, we want to discourage sprawl to minimize the cost of distance-sensitive public services.

The impact of one-by-one single family home development (residential sprawl) in the rural areas of town must be addressed not only through strategies to encourage growth in the villages, but also by proactively increasing open space protection and planning. The town's irreplaceable natural, scenic, cultural, and recreational resources in the rural areas are at increasing risk from sprawl, and equal efforts in conservation and growth management are needed to best protect them. Monmouth's rural economic resources – farmland and woodlots – are included in this dual approach.

Some portions of the rural area need different strategies because of particular resources to be protected. For example, some of the lakes have higher protection levels than others. (Monmouth has chosen to address these through performance standards.) More restrictive strategies are needed for special conservation areas such as the Bog Brook area. Many of these are listed in the Natural Resources, Chapter 8.

Policies for protecting areas or resources are always more regulatory in nature. Although this plan tries to emphasize motivation rather than regulation as a means to manage development, this is often hard to accomplish. That is partly because the attractiveness and tradition of rural development in Monmouth is a strong motivator in itself, and a weak incentive like smaller lot sizes is not likely to make a difference. Strategies for sustaining working lands that are *not* the object of some special protection (state mandates and protections) are more problematic. While regulations and limits are more effective, financial disincentives are more acceptable under our Vision.

The plan recommends the following individual strategies to protect our rural landscape and encourage land uses that provide an economic alternative to development.

- Because the town now has only rudimentary information on the impact of development in the rural area, this plan recommends the town set up *a monitoring and reporting system* for new construction. This will also be used to determine the rate of commercial development in the rural area. The code enforcement officer and planning board will be responsible for monitoring development and preparing annual assessments.
- *No changes are recommended in the lot size or dimensional requirements now in place.*

*(Existing lot size and dimensional standards – minimum lot size: 40,000 square feet; maximum lot coverage: 20%; minimum street frontage: 200 feet on public road, 150 feet on subdivision road; minimum setbacks: 50 feet front, 20 feet side and rear)*

- The plan recommends the following strategies for *limiting new rural subdivisions*:
  - Limit the rate of development (lots built per year) for any new rural subdivision.
  - *New mobile home parks should not be permitted* in the rural area.
- The plan also recommends additional strategies for rural subdivisions:

- New subdivisions in the rural area would be given two options – either design as a *clustered-style subdivision* or pay an impact fee to the town’s open space fund.
- In major subdivisions, only two access points would be permitted (This requires the construction of *internal subdivision roads or shared driveways*.)
- The plan recommends adoption of the following policies:
  - *Public sewer and water will not be extended* beyond the boundaries of the growth areas (because water service is private, the town will negotiate with the association to establish this policy.)
  - New subdivision roads will be kept private (not accepted by town) except under extraordinary circumstances.
- The plan recommends that all new rural lots, when created, must pay an *impact fee for phosphorous mitigation*. The fee will be calculated based on which watershed the lots are located, and must be used for mitigation in that watershed. Credit will be allowed for phosphorous mitigation charges by the Cobbossee Watershed District or DEP.
- The plan will support local working landscapes by minimizing future *regulatory burdens* on farm development and commerce.
- The town will encourage more landowners to sign up for the Tree Growth and Farm and Open Space property valuation.
- The plan recommends that we protect farmers from neighboring development with *trespass and setback protections*. These must be spelled out, for example: a required setback for principal buildings of 100 feet from active farmland.
- The plan recommends that we provide *support for local woodlot owners*, for example by holding woodlot management courses or retaining a “town forester.”

*Implementation of Land Use Strategies:*

Implementation of the Land Use Plan will be the responsibility of the Town Manager and selectmen, but most of the activity will be delegated. Implementation strategies can be divided into *regulatory* and *non-regulatory* actions.

Non-regulatory strategies consist of *policy changes* and *public investments*. Policy changes must be initiated for the most part by selectmen or town meeting vote. Public investments should be channeled through the CIP, though many of them are suitable for funding outside of the general revenue stream of the town.

One of those non-traditional forms of revenue is the *impact fee*. The plan recommends two sets of impact fees. The first will be developed and applied based on the Open Space Plan, according to recommendation 7.2. The second is identified as a phosphorous mitigation fee, and is intended to take the place of “fine” fees now collected by Cobbossee Watershed District. In both cases, the use of impact fees is limited to projects directly tied to the purpose of the fee.

Regulatory strategies consist principally of changes to ordinances under the jurisdiction of the planning board. The planning board should take the lead in making revisions to these ordinances, though it is recommended that the board be inclusive in seeking out community participation and consensus for revisions.

An overhaul of the town’s land use ordinances can achieve many objectives, but there are two in particular worth considering: 1) revisions should make the ordinances easier for both town officials and developers to use and 2) ordinances should reflect the most up-to-date technical standards and approaches, benefiting both the town and the developer.

- This plan recommends that the town combine the subdivision, building permit, site plan review, mobile home, and multi-family ordinances into a single ordinance or code. This will ensure that we are not requiring multiple permits, using different definitions, and applying conflicting standards to development. A single ordinance will contain generally the same level of regulation, but the permitting, appeals, administrative, definitions, and other sections would be combined into a single process. This plan recommends that the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance be kept separate.
- Regardless of whether the separate ordinances are consolidated or not, several changes have been recommended by the Land Use Plan and elsewhere in this plan. A summary:
  - The dimensional requirements in the building permit ordinance will be changed. The plan recommends reducing both frontage and lot size for lots in the growth area. (The only state requirement is a minimum of 20,000 s.f. for lots on septic.) It also recommends an increase in densities (reduced lot area per unit) for clustered and possibly multi-family housing.
  - The subdivision ordinance will establish any limitations on the rate of development of rural subdivisions. A new performance standard would stipulate, for example, “no subdivision in the rural area may exceed ten lots per year, not to exceed twenty lots in any five-year period.”
  - The limitation on mobile home parks must be placed in the performance standard or ordinance for mobile home parks, and just say “the establishment of new mobile home parks in the rural area is not allowed.”
  - When the town implements its policies to pre-plan roads or utility locations, or large scale phosphorous measures, appropriate ordinances must be revised to motivate developers to build these locations into their plans or provide a

suitable alternative. These would be located in the road, sewage disposal, or phosphorous mitigation standards.

- When the town adopts an impact fee system for open space and/or phosphorous mitigation, the ordinance will have to include provisions. Since impact fees will apply to some – not all – development, by location, it will have to be spelled out.
- The performance standard for roads will change in many respects. New standards will be in effect for village roads, private roads will have to serve new lots in rural areas, and interconnections and other design measures are necessary for commercial along Route 202.
- There are several performance standards that should be updated either because technology or science has changed (e.g. new information on wildlife habitat) or based on plan recommendations (e.g. simplified but more specific phosphorous controls.)

It is the recommendation of this plan that all revisions of development ordinances that have been recommended will be included in a revision of the ordinances within a year of adoption of this plan, for possible enactment at the general election in 2008. Other revisions to ordinances that are contingent on studies or other activities (e.g. designation of Cumston Hall Historic District) will, of course, wait until a proper basis has been put in place.