

# NATURAL FEATURES AND RESOURCES

## Topography

The major land forms in Dryden are distinct and clearly defined. Running roughly east and west across the center of the town is the divide between the Erie-Ontario Plain to the north and the Allegheny Plateau to the south. This divide is most clearly noticeable in the north escarpment of Turkey Hill which stretches east of Varna and parallels Routes 366 and 13. On both its east and west side the plateau is deeply penetrated by the valleys of Virgil Creek, Cascadilla Creek and Six Mile Creek. Other smaller valleys and narrow ravines cut into the plateau and these have formed the route for the principal roads through the hills.

Dryden contains parts of six watersheds: Fall Creek, Virgil Creek, Cascadilla Creek, Owasco Inlet, Six Mile Creek and Owego Creek, and is the source of the latter three. Most of the town drains into Fall Creek and Virgil Creek, the two joining in the vicinity of Freeville. An area north of Freeville falls slightly to the north and is the source of Owasco Inlet. In the southeastern corner of the town is an area which drains to the south and is the source of Owego Creek. Six Mile Creek begins in the uplands in the vicinity of Irish Settlement and Yellow Barn Roads. It flows south into the town of Caroline then bends to the northwest and cuts across the southwest corner of Dryden. Most of the Ellis Hollow area is in the Cascadilla Creek watershed and drains to the west. All of the creeks in Dryden are dendritic, or branching, in pattern and have numerous large and small tributaries.

Elevations in the town vary from a maximum of 2014 feet above sea level just south of Star Stanton Hill in the southeast corner of town to a minimum of 750 feet in

the Six Mile Creek valley. Most of the existing development is located between the 1000 and 1200 foot elevations, however, and there has been little competition for development of the higher and steeper land areas. For the most part land having a 15 percent or greater slope is located south of Route 13. There is a hill west of Route 38 and north of Freeville with an abrupt escarpment sloping down to the road. In several other places in the northeast quadrant there are occasional 15 percent slopes.

Most of the numerous ridges in the southern half of town are broad and smooth with relatively mild topography which slopes gently to within a half mile or so from the valley floor. At that point the slopes steepen noticeably and are almost precipitous in some places. Approximately 14,250 acres or 23.5 percent of the total land area in the town have slopes of 15 percent or greater. This land is not extensively developed and because of drainage, septic field and foundation problems is not expected to develop beyond the occasional house. It is also too steep for agriculture and its best use is for recreation or open space, forest land or as a habitat for game.

Wet and swampy flat land can be found in virtually all sections of town. The large Fall Creek tributary of Mill Creek passes through a shallow valley in the poorly drained West Dryden area and causes large stretches of wet and swampy land in this section. Two other marshy areas of substantial proportions are located in the northern half of the town. One is created by the headwaters of Owasco Inlet and stretches from the north side of Freeville to the town line. The other roughly parallels Fall Creek in the northeast corner of town and is fed by another large tributary known as Beaver Creek. This area contains several thick bogs rich in organic plant material and is considered a valuable conservation resource.