

**Mad River Valley Planning District  
Director's Report  
October 2010**

Mad River Valley Path Association

- MRPA requested \$15,200 in funding from the Mad River Recreation District to cover administrative costs.
- Siptemberfest at Mad River Glen was a big success (sold out 500 tickets) and raised \$1200 in donations to the Path.
- Mad Dash 2010 was a big success – more sponsors than the previous year (total 35), 200 participants, and netted \$4,000.
- UVM Service Learning Initiatives project focusing on historical/interpretive signage along the Path is moving forward.
- Town of Waitsfield SB has expressed interest in considering MRPA easements on town-owned land. MRPA will be providing easement language for their review.
- MRPA is continuing to discuss the possibility of an open space agreement with the Town of Waitsfield.
- Holding off on New England Grassroots Fund grant until spring.
- In discussion with the Warren Conservation Commission about Alderburgh Roe parcel for a potential Dog Park. Autumn and Warren CC rep will be meeting with Warren SB on 10/26.
- MRPA is partnering with CVRPC and Friends of the Mad River on a Clean & Clear grant to ANR that would fund an assessment of trail impacts to water quality and provide funds to create a sustainable trails training program for the MRV.
- MRPA is exploring the option of applying for VHCB feasibility funds for site design and land use planning on Dave Sellers' recently purchased property next to the Waitsfield Covered Bridge. Future use of the property includes accommodation for a Path segment and potential canoe access point.

Housing

- MRV Housing Coalition is actively exploring a potential affordable housing site on German Flats Road, owned by Sugarbush, to be part of the upcoming Valley Affordable Land Initiative.

Mad River Byway

- The Gen. Wait House interpretive signage and kiosk have been installed. Awaiting word for installation of the remaining kiosks, interpretive panels, and printing of brochure.
- The MR Byway Committee is communicating with Green Mtn. Power in regards to the development of the Taplin School for a Byway grant funded restoration project.

Valley Futures Network

- VFN's Network Resource Group has been meeting to support the network in areas of systems, resources, communications, policies, and protocols.
- The MRV + UVM service learning course kick-off event (9/15) for the *Local Community Initiatives* course was a great success. Joshua provided context for the work of MRVPD and the student projects. The students are currently hard at work in three groups focusing on the following throughout the semester: Mad River Path Interpretive Materials, Mad Bikes Research, & MRV Local Food Market Study.
- Joshua is working directly on the MRV Local Food Market Study, focused on better understanding the local market for locally produced food, identifying potential new market opportunities, and exploring innovative market mechanisms. The students have

interviewed 6 Valley farmers and are in the process of developing an community intercept survey to be carried out in November.

### Energy

- Waitsfield, Warren, and Fayston are in the process of receiving building audits and related weatherization improvements through the Central VT Energy Program. The program has reimbursed towns for municipal building audits that were performed in the winter as part of the CDBG application process. MRV municipal buildings are among 33 municipal buildings receiving energy audits in central VT.
- Joshua has been working with the Waitsfield PC in regards to the variety of energy projects currently in process and in debate. This work is related to specific project proposals and incorporation of energy issues in Municipal Plan construction.
- Joshua submitted a grant request through the Vermont Community Foundation to help develop the MRV Energy Vision project detailed at previous MRVPD meetings.
- Approximately 200 people attended the 9/22 presentation by Dr. Ben Luce about renewable energy options and the pluses and minuses of solar and wind installations in Vermont, presented by Friends of the Northfield Ridge. Joshua has followed up with meetings with Peter Boynton, Pres. of FNR, to discuss coordination and future meetings. FNR is actively exploring the concept of a co-op solar project.
- Joshua attended a 9/14 presentation on the VT Renewable Energy Atlas to the Waitsfield PC by Mike Brouillette of VCGI, including analysis of energy consumption. Planning is ongoing for a similar presentation on renewable options to FNR and the broader community.
- Joshua is exploring a funding opportunity through the American Institute of Architects' Sustainable Design Assessment Team providing a multidisciplinary team of professionals from across the country to convene on a community with the goal of creating a road map towards sustainability. The proposed MRV project would be to assist the community identify in identifying methods and design guidelines for appropriately sited, screened, and attractive renewable energy installations. The MRV apparently has an appetite for such installations, but their prevalence is limited by aesthetic and related concerns.

### Rural Resource Commission

- The Rural Resource Commission is assisting Mad River Glen in applying for Historic District status.
- Joshua has provided direction to an intern interested in historic preservation. Julie Senk is working with Ellen Strauss about potential improvements at Waitsfield's Masonic Lodge.
- Participating in discussions with the Mad River Rural Resource Commission in regards to upcoming work on the Waitsfield Covered Bridge.

### Waitsfield Infrastructure

- The Waitsfield Planning Commission's Wastewater Committee, of which Joshua is a member, has been making progress on exploring decentralized wastewater options for the villages of Waitsfield and Irasville.
- A Municipal Planning Grant has funded the hiring of Stone Environmental for this project, which includes updating an existing systems survey, evaluating area wastewater needs, evaluating wastewater dispersal capacity, and evaluating wastewater options.
- A survey has been distributed to ascertain the status of existing wastewater systems within the villages of Waitsfield and Irasville. Results are currently being tallied.
- Joshua is exploring appropriateness of applying distributive wastewater beyond Waitsfield (i.e.: Alpine Village).

## Recreation

- Joshua submitted technical assistance grant application through the National Parks Service Rivers & Trails Program to develop a MRV trail collaborative. Final determination is expected by late October.

## Etc

- MRVDPD's application to the E-Vermont Community Broadband Project to develop an MRV specific version of Front Porch Forum (Burlington based online community network) was denied in the first round of funding. Application for the second round are due November 17th. The Fed/State funded project will permit 24 projects across the state. Rob Williams is serving as primary contact on behalf of MRVDPD.
- Joshua continues to coordinate with ANR water quality on a low impact development master planning and bank stabilization/stormwater mitigation project in Waitsfield Village.
- Joshua is assisting in the update of Waitsfield's Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan (or Annex) prior to the expiration of the current version on 10/24/10. The draft PDM Plan is expected to be reviewed by submitted to FEMA by the end of the month
- Joshua is providing comment on various sections of Waitsfield's draft town plan.
- Assisting the Warren ZA and PC on its town plan rewrite in regards to transportation, energy, and housing.
- The next MRV ZA Brown Bag Lunch is set for 11/3.
- Provided letter of support to a Friends of the Mad River grant request to the Lake Champlain Basin Program for the development of a fundraising plan.
- The Forest Wildlife Community Project is moving in high gear, with progress on MRV maps identifying ecological priorities, development of build out models, creation of a land use planning manual, formation of engineer and realtor trainings, exploration of additional conservation funding, and development of outreach tools (including sap bucket kits to new large land owners, elementary school curriculum development, and a website).
- Joshua attended a Form-Based Planning presentation at UVM (9/21).
- Joshua attended the Northern New England Chapter of the American Planning Association (NNECAPA) Conference (10/7-8) and attended sessions focusing on agricultural and local sustainable economies.
- Waitsfield Elementary students have undertaken additional work at the MRV Community Orchard in coordination with VYCC Harwood students, including tree labeling, mapping of the orchard, and distributing additional wood chips at the base of the trees.
- Efficiency VT is undertaking a new initiative entitled Business Energy Ambassadors, which provides trained volunteers to conduct on-site "business energy visits" to identify opportunities for saving energy for small businesses in Central VT. The primary focus is on lighting, where Efficiency VT has limited-time enhanced rebates for replacing inefficient T12 fluorescent lighting via their newLIGHT program. Those interested in a site visit should contact Chris Badger at [csbadger@gmail.com](mailto:csbadger@gmail.com).