

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

Mad River Valley Path Association

- MRPA's \$15,200 request for funding from the Mad River Recreation District to cover administrative costs has been approved.
- MRPA met its 2010 membership goal of 400 members on 11/1.
- The Trail Committee has spent a lot of time cleaning up from the recent flood event. The flood also resulted in gouges on the greenway and debris on the Austin Walk parcel.
- UVM Service Learning Initiatives project focusing on historical/interpretive signage along the Path is moving forward. The students will present their findings on 12/8 at 6 PM.
- MRPA ED attended a Warren SB mtg on 10/26 with the Warren CC to discuss the Alderburgh Roe parcel and the idea of a dog park.
- MRPA is continuing to discuss the possibility of an open space agreement with the Town of Waitsfield. Currently researching examples across the state.
- MRPA sent proposed easement language for town-owned land to the Waitsfield SB for their review.
- Will be partnering with Harwood Students on service projects starting in 2011.
- A winter newsletter will be produced in December.
- MRPA partnered 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 submitted request for VHCB feasibility funds for site design and land use planning for the proposed Madsonian Museum 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.

Transportation

- The MR Byway interpretive signage and kiosk have been installed at the Gen. Wait House. Interpretive panels have been installed at App Gap and Moss Glen Falls. Warren has their interpretive signage and will install in the spring. Awaiting word for installation of the remaining kiosk, 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.
- Attended a public forum on 11/8 regarding a proposed sidewalk on the west side of Main St. in Waitsfield. Scheduling a meeting with VTrans ROW Chief, Adam Greshin, and the town to explore issues related to requirements to remove historic structures (and signage) within the State's ROW.
- 2010-11 Mad Bus schedule completed. Service commences December 4th.

Valley Futures Network

- VFN's Network Resource Group has been meeting to support the network in areas of systems, resources, communications, policies, and web protocols.
- The three groups involved in the MRV + UVM service learning course, *Local Community Initiatives*, are hard at work. Final presentations will take place at 6 PM. The 15 UVM students and a variety of Valley residents have been working on the following projects throughout the fall: Local Food Market Study, Mad River Path Association Interpretive Materials, and Mad Bikes program.
- 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 carrying out a community intercept survey.

Energy

- Waitsfield, Warren, and Fayston are in the process of finalizing 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 submitted a grant request through the Vermont Community Foundation to help develop the MRV Energy Vision project detailed at previous MRVDP meetings.
- VFN presents *Energizing our Valley's Future: Taking Stock of Local Renewable Energy Resources*, an evening to understand the MRV's energy consumption and explore the role that clean energy could play. Joshua will set the stage by characterizing our current energy status. Mike Brouillette of VCGI will demonstrate the Renewable Energy Atlas of VT.
- Due to issues related to identifying sufficient financial match, Joshua has decided not to apply for funding opportunity through the American Institute of Architects' Sustainable Design Assessment Team to identify design guidelines for appropriately sited, screened, and attractive renewable energy installations.
- Solar Communities – VPIRG Project – MRV in 2011. Focused effort on installer discounts, bundling gvt incentives, and attractive private financing.

Agriculture

- MRVDP is seeking funding for a *MRV Food System Mapping Project Proposal* which will identify the MRV's assets, gaps in its current food system, illustrate relationships, and provide a structure for enhancing the MRV's agricultural economy. The funding is being sought through *UVM CRS' Vermont Mini-Grant Program for Community-Campus Partnerships Working on Research, Implementation, and Outreach in Food Systems*.
- Joshua attended a UVM Food System Symposium on 11/1 focused on transdisciplinary research within the university and collaboration with communities. Many connections were made with potential UVM partners to implement a variety of MRV projects.
- Joshua attended the VT Planning Association's Annual Conference on 11/6 entitled *Planning for 21st Century Farming in VT*.

Forests, Wildlife, Communities Project

- 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 presented at the Environmental Action Conference (11/13) on *Partnering for Protection: Strategies for Safeguarding Wildlife Habitat*.
- Joshua is working with FWC partners to develop build-out models for each of the Valley towns. The build-out models of the towns will show future development patterns based on existing land use policies. Through GIS and spatial analysis, the build-out will demonstrate how future housing development will impact the viability of working forests and ecosystem functions, such as impacts to identified wildlife corridors and connectivity between large forest blocks. The current funding limits the build-out analysis from looking at specific development patterns in the towns' growth centers and won't include scenarios based on proposed land use policies. The Town of Warren is seeking MPG funds to build upon this existing work and incorporate the growth center and proposed land use scenario elements into the build-out analysis and their current municipal plan update process.

Rural Resource Commission

- The Rural Resource Commission is assisting Mad River Glen in applying for Historic District status.
- 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 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, with a few last minute surveys coming in.
- Final results will be presented in January.
- Joshua is exploring appropriateness of applying distributive wastewater beyond Waitsfield (i.e.: Alpine Village).
- Exploring options to utilize SRF (State Revolving Funds) and \$1 million in EPA State & Tribal Assistance Grants) STAG to fund the creation of a decentralized wastewater system, develop a Wastewater Management District, and start demonstration program. Moving forward via conversations with VT DEC (Roger Thompson), EPA Reg. 1 (Rob Adler - septic), and DHCA (Joss Besse).

Recreation

- MRVPD received its request to the National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Technical Assistance program for 2011. MRPA partnered with MRVPD to request assistance for establishing a Mad River Valley Trails Collaborative, designed to enhance networking and connections between MRV trail organizations. We have been awarded the assistance, but cannot publish an announcement until we hear directly from our NPS representative.

Etc

- MRVPD's submitted a second application to the E-Vermont Community Broadband Project on behalf of the Town of Waitsfield. The Fed/State funded project will permit 24 projects across the state. The proposal focuses on creating an online forum and other broadband tools to increase civic involvement and enhance dialogue.
- Assisted the Mad River Valley Health Center in securing \$17.5k to fund renovations through the VT Dept. of B&GS Human Services & Educational Facilities Grant Program.
- Joshua continues to coordinate with ANR water quality on a low impact development master planning and bank stabilization/stormwater mitigation project in Waitsfield Village. ANR's Clean & Clear grant portion of the project has been funded at \$67k. The PDM-C grant will be submitted this week.
- Joshua has assisted in the update of Waitsfield's Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan (or Annex) in the face of the expiration of the current version. Currently the group is responding to initial comments from FEMA on the draft PDM Plan.
- 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.
- A MRV ZA Brown Bag Lunch took place on 11/3 with discussion surrounding statutory conformance and an opportunity for future build-out analysis.
- Waitsfield Elementary students are continuing 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.
- Hosted the 5th annual tri-town selectboard meeting on 11/17. Organizations requesting funding included: MRV Solid Waste Alliance (John Malter), MRV Health Center (Chuck Martell), MRV Recreation District (Ken Felderman), MRV Seniors (Carole Crossman), Central VT Community Land Trust (Martha Englert), Central VT Home Health & Hospice (Judy Peterson), & GMTA (Tawnya Kristen & Meredith Birkett).
- Warren is putting in a HMGP grant for bridge abutment work, but PDM plan approval isn't an issue for this grant.
- MRVPD Budget-Sub Committee met on 11/17.