

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

Mad River Valley Path Association

- MRPA's application to the ANR Recreation Trail Program has officially been approved for the building of the Clay Brook Bridge, totaling \$18,671.
- The UVM Service Learning Initiatives project focused on historical/interpretive signage along the Path. The findings and mock-ups of signage have been delivered to MRPA.
- MRPA is continuing to discuss the possibility of an open space agreement with the Town of Waitsfield. Currently developing a draft open space agreement.
- Vermont Community Fund grant request for \$10k was not funded. However, MRPA did receive \$1k from a VCF program.
- Repairs have been made to the east side of the Greenway in the wake of the November flooding event.
- MRPA sent proposed easement language for town-owned land to the Waitsfield SB for their review. Language currently being reviewed by the Town Attorney.
- Exploring other town-owned parcels for potential leash-free dog path sections.
- Will be partnering with Harwood Students on service projects starting in 2011.
- A winter newsletter will be sent out in January.
- Bobbi Rood resigned from the MRPA Board. Mac Rood was elected as her replacement.
- Exploring the submission of a RTP grant to help secure the Whiteside parcel.

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. Septic suitability is ongoing.

Transportation

- Met with the VTrans ROW Chief along with Adam Greshin, Valerie Capels, and Steve Gladczuk to explore issues related to requirements to remove historic structures (and signage) within the State's ROW. Exploring the option of developing language to provide appropriate exemptions for such structures, to be brought up this legislative session.
- 2010-11 Mad Bus service commenced on 12/4.
- 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.
- Next Byway meeting scheduled for 12/17 to discuss the next Byway grant round.

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. New webpage layout and content to be up and running in January.
- Fifteen UVM students presented the findings of their semester-long partnership with the Mad River Valley on 12/8 at the Big Picture Theater, attended by more than 60

people. For the second year in a row, the Mad River Valley has served as the focus of a University of Vermont course within its Community Development & Applied Economics Department. The service-learning course, titled *Local Community Initiatives*, had the students working closely with a handful of the Valley's community organizations and taking an active role in local projects. The class focused on the different ways that community-members work together to identify challenges, resources and solutions and how they envision their future. The presentations and final reports for the three projects (Local Food Market Study, Mad River Path Association Interpretive Materials, and Mad Bikes program) are available on the VFN blog. The event was taped by MRV TV and will be shown on Channel 44 next week. Joshua is working on setting up a third installment of this course – project solicitation will commence in the spring.

### Energy

- MRVPCD's grant request through the Vermont Community Foundation to help develop the MRV Energy Vision project was not funded.
- Joshua and Mike Brouillette presented on MRV Energy issues, entitled *Energizing Our Valley's Future: What Do We Know?*, on 12/7. The 45 people in attendance gained a broader understanding of the MRV's energy consumption and learned about a tool developed specifically for VT focused on exploring our renewable energy options. The slideshows presented by myself and Mike Brouillette of VCGI are available on the [VFN Blog](#). The event was taped by MRV TV and is currently being shown on Channel 44.
- Solar Communities – VPIRG Project – MRV in 2011. Focused effort on installer discounts, bundling gvt incentives, and attractive private financing.
- The Vermont Energy & Climate Action Network (VECAN) has announced a new grant program called *Building the Power of Vermont Communities to Increase Energy Efficiency and Reduce Climate Change Impacts*. The program provides grants ranging \$1-3k to support Vermont groups working on energy efficiency and renewable energy projects in their communities that support local sustainability. Goals of the initiative are: To build Vermont's leadership fostering and supporting energy and climate change strategies at the community level; to decrease community carbon footprints; and to increase carbon-free energy independence by supporting the implementation of community based energy projects. Joshua is exploring the appropriateness of this funding source to implement the MRV Energy Vision project. More info at [www.vecan.net](http://www.vecan.net).
- The Vermont Community Foundation is looking for community energy groups to implement one of 14 [TED 5000© energy monitors](#). The energy monitors are a simple piece of equipment installed in a building's electrical panel that allows its owner to see his or her electricity usage in real-time. This up-to-the-second information can be displayed in both dollars and kilowatts on a portable, easy-to-read LCD screen and/or personal computer. Each monitor has a retail value of \$240. Studies show that instantaneous feedback on energy use can lead to 5-15% savings. Localvolts are exploring this opportunity.

### Agriculture

- MRVPD applied for a \$12k grant to implement a *MRV Food System Mapping Project*, which would 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*.
- The UVM project focusing on the MRV's Local Food Market provided great results. The students did what none of us who are members of the community could do – unbiased research without any preconceived notions.
- The second version of the MRV Farms Map has been finalized and can be found inside the newly released *Four Season Guide*.

### 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 met with the Waitsfield Conservation Commission along with Jamey Fidel of VNRC on 12/9 to provide an update on the project and receive direction/input.
- 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.
- Participating in discussions with the Town of Waitsfield in regards to proposed sidewalk improvements on the west side of Main St.

### 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.
- Results of the existing systems survey have been received and are being analyzed. 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

- MRVDP's request to the National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Technical Assistance program for 2011 has been FUNDED. MRPA partnered with MRVDP to request assistance for establishing a Mad River Valley Trails Collaborative, designed to enhance networking and connections between MRV trail organizations. Currently scheduling a kick-off meeting for mid-January; to create a project steering committee and establish objectives.

### Etc

- MRVDP is awaiting word on its 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.
- 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. Awaiting word on the PDM-C grant that was submitted in November. Working on creating a partnership between this project and a rain garden course to be taught at Yestermorrow in August.
- Waitsfield's Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan has been accepted by FEMA.
- Assisting the Warren ZA and PC on its town plan rewrite in regards to transportation, energy, and housing.
- Warren submitted a Municipal Planning Grant request to DHCA to fund town plan map creation and development of a robust build-out analysis.
- 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).
- Joshua attended Sugarbush's ribbon-cutting ceremony on 12/10 for their two latest buildings. Win publicly recognized the MRVDP's efforts through the process.