

**Mad River Valley Planning District
Director's Report
April 2011**

Municipal

- Awaiting word on the FEMA portion of the low impact development master planning and bank stabilization/stormwater mitigation project in Waitsfield Village. ANR's Clean & Clear grant portion of the project was funded at \$67k.
- UVM Post-Doc student, Stephanie Hurley, met with the Waitsfield PC to a research project that will analyze two areas within Waitsfield and identify opportunities for integrating Low Impact Development (LID) stormwater treatment within the existing landscape.
- Waitsfield and Fayston are both hiring for their respective Zoning Administrator positions.
- Provided a tour of the Mad River Valley to Noelle MacKay, Commissioner of the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, Department of Economic, Housing & Community Development. Identified past projects funded through the department and met with a few business owners and local officials. Discussion topics included wastewater infrastructure and food system development in the MRV.

Energy

- Awaiting to hear on MRVPD's application to the Vermont Energy & Climate Action Network's (VECAN) grant program entitled *Building the Power of Vermont Communities to Increase Energy Efficiency and Reduce Climate Change Impacts*. MRVPD requested \$3k to underwrite a series of 5 energy presentations throughout the year on topics such as solar, efficiency, etc.
- The Localvolts are organizing its Energy Monitor Program, recently funded through the Vermont Community Foundation. The project will develop a Localvolt led small business outreach program that will provide three month of monitoring and follow-up energy information visits to 12 local businesses. Contact Chris Badger if you know of a business interested in participating in the project: csbadger@gmail.com.
- PACE/Clean Energy District Bill H.155, an update to the Property Assessed Clean Energy program in order to address issues regarding the hierarchy of property liens in the event of foreclosure as recently raised by the feds, has passed the House and is in committee with the Senate. Waitsfield received funding to set up a PACE program last winter, but is holding off until legislative fixes are put into place. The program was supported at Waitsfield's 2011 Town Meeting.
- VNRC is about to release a tool designed to help communities' harness their town plans to address energy-saving and energy-generation opportunities through the new *Energy Planning & Implementation Guide*.

Mad River Valley Path Association

- The East Side Greenway closed on 4/12 for an undisclosed period of time. MRPA continues to work with Elwin Neill to discuss various Greenway issues.
- Despite the loss of the Greenway, MRPA is committed to the Mad Dash and is looking for alternative locations.
- The Sugarbush Adventure Games was a success.

- Undertaking a campaign to purchase dog waste stations. Exploring funding options.
- Mac Rood has taken the role as Trails Committee Chair.
- A new Trail Worker was hired for the summer.
- MRPA annual meeting and appreciation dinner is scheduled for 5/27.
- Current number of path membership for 2011 is 220+.

Transportation

- CCTA General Manager Chris Cole has taken a position with VT AOT focusing on public transportation policy. Joshua and Jim H. have provided input to the GMTA board regarding this transition.
- The state's Way to Go events are scheduled for 5/16-20. Promotional materials & resources can be found at www.waytogovt.org.
- 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.

Agriculture

- Joshua has provided consultation and support for the development of the Mad River Food Hub, to be officially announced at the 5/10 VSJF Farm to Plate Presentation at the Big Picture. The Food Hub is currently under renovation and is located at Irasville Business Park. The facility will offer a state inspected facility for vegetable, fruit and meat processing and storage. Refrigerator and freezer space as well as a kitchen and butchering area will be rented out on a daily basis. Mad Taco, Gaylord Farm and the Kingsbury Market Garden have already made commitment to use the facility. The facility will be up and running by late summer 2011.
- Joshua is participating in a small working group focused on developing a local food distribution system in the MRV. Initially the group has explored innovative distribution/processing/storage models around VT. The creator of the Brattleboro based Windham Farm & Food Network will be revisiting the MRV to provide a demonstration of its online ordering and billing program for wholesale buyers on 4/28.
- Joshua presented to a Vermont Law School class of 30 students on the topic of food system planning on 3/29.

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).
- MRVPD co-authored a letter with VNRC requesting time at upcoming PC meetings in the MRV regarding build-out models that have been developed for the project. 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. Fayston PC has been scheduled for 6/6. Awaiting scheduling for Warren and Waitsfield PCs.

- The next FWC meeting is scheduled for 5/6.

Waitsfield Infrastructure

- Joshua is providing support to the Town of Waitsfield in identifying next steps to its decentralized wastewater approach. 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 a demonstration program. Continuing conversations with VT DEC, EPA Reg. 1, and DHCA.
- Assisted the Town of Waitsfield in updating its current SRF application.

Recreation

- The next MRV Trail Collaborative Steering Committee meeting will take place on 4/25. The SC is creating a methodology for inventorying current trails and updating the MRV trail map. In addition, the SC is working with the MRV Chamber to update its trail webpage will hold a VYCC/MRV Trails Meeting in the fall.
- Communicating with Map Adventures, Autumn Foushee & Mark Haberle to get map data and begin the process of creating a GIS for the updated map.

Valley Futures Network

- Joshua is working on setting up a third installment of the *Local Community Initiatives* course this fall. Project solicitation has commenced – deadline is May 15th.

Etc

- Joshua continued making improvements to the MRVPD website.
- The MRV Data Report has been distributed electronically to all of SBs and PCs. Joshua has offered to present the data at future meetings.
- Friends of the Mad River are submitting a co-application with WNRCD for a watershed grant (VT 2012 Pollution Control Projects) to undertake watershed planning for Folsom Brook. MRVPD will be providing a letter of support.
- Joshua attended the American Planning Association's annual conference in Boston. Topics ranged from best practices for regional planning to food system work to community engagement techniques.
- Joshua, Jim H., and Bob Ackland attended the VT Community Development Association's Winter meeting, which focused on 2010 census information.
- Joshua presented the MRVPD Data Report to the MRV Chamber's Economic Development Committee.