

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

Mad River Valley Path Association

- The Valley Dog Summit has been scheduled for June 15th, 6:30-8 PM at the Waitsfield School. Lisa Loomis will serve as moderator. Joshua has been providing organizational support.
- MRPA held a trail workday on May 6th that saw the completion of the newest section of the Mad River Path – the Bridge Street Connector. Volunteers included members of the community, Board Members and students from True North Wilderness Program.
- Updated paper trail maps have been completed and have been distributed to all outside map boxes
- Received 12 new map boxes created by the Harwood HS metal working shop.
- Meadow Road trailhead has new signage.
- Received 7 applicants for the seasonal “Field Worker” position.
- Planning on developing Lareau Leg Path on 5/26 with a GMVS crew.
- Proposed Path route flagged on the Carnwrights property.
- Mad River Path is hosting the May 20th Chamber mixer at the *new* 1824 House.

Housing

- MRV Housing Coalition met on 5/11 and reviewed documents related to the Land Bank project, now renamed Valley Affordable Land Initiative. In addition, John Donaldson reported on discussions he's had with SB and a local env. engineer regarding potential VALI housing sites currently under Sugarbush ownership.

Mad River Byway

- Fabrication of kiosks and interpretive signs has been pushed back a few weeks due to sign quality considerations. Towns will be in charge of installation, expected to start at the end of June.
- Final design of the brochure is nearly complete. Printing is expected to be completed by the beginning of June.
- Proposed MR Byway *supplemental guide sign* on I-89 is currently being reviewed by the Travel Information Council.
- 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

- Joshua facilitated the 5/14 VFN morning meeting. The 14 participants discussed the results of VFN's “Next Stage Steering Team,” community potlucks, summer speaker series, a “mapping the Valley” project, local currency update, a revived Transition Town discussion, the Valley Walk ‘n Roll Festival, Front Porch Forum, UVM's “Local Community Initiatives” fall course, and gleaning at the Waitsfield Farmers' Market.
- The 10 member VFN Next Stage Steering Team presented its results at the 5/14 meeting. The intent of the NSST was to set direction and organization for the Valley Futures Network. One of the final products is the following reformed mission statement: “Valley Futures Network is a network connecting individuals and organizations working towards a healthy and sustainable Mad River Valley community.” A second result is clarified directives. Specifically, VFN is above all a “network” organization that engages the connectivity of individuals and organizations and creates the conditions for

emergence (new ideas, projects, etc). The emergent value of VFN is: providing vision – inspirational fuel for action, fostering dialogue, conduit for communication, math-making/passion-time-talent to projects, resource for community organizing, entry point for people to be involved in the community, and breeding and testing ground for ideas and projects. A “Network Resource Group” will be formed to support the network in areas of systems, resources, communications, policies, and protocols.

- Six project submissions have been received in preparation for the second installment of the MRV focused UVM Service Learning Class entitled *Local Community Initiatives*. Joshua is working with the UVM instructor to identify three viable projects for the course to take place fall 2010.

Transportation

- The MRV TAC will be meeting in June to discuss results of this year’s Mad Bus and re-focus in light of GMTA changes.
- Joshua spoke to representatives from Montpelier and Barre with regard to whether the communities see future involvement on the CCTA Board in the form of holding a seat (requiring municipal vote to permit assessment power to CCTA). Both communities are exploring this option, but are willing to exhibit a Central VT view when CCTA Board decisions are made.
- The 3rd annual Valley Walk ‘n Roll Festival is scheduled for 5/15-22 to coincide with the state’s Way To Go! Commuter Challenge. Various bike rides, walks, Bike or Walk to School / Work Day and others are planned.
- The green Mad Bikes of Waitsfield are out around town newly tuned, with fresh paint, and in newly constructed bike racks. A group of Harwood VYCC students repaired bikes and made 12 new bike racks.

Energy

- Waitsfield, Warren, and Fayston all applied to the Central VT Energy Program for municipal building audits and related weatherization improvements. Joshua worked with all three towns to prepare their applications.
- The Waitsfield Energy Committee and Waitsfield Selectboard have endorsed applying for a grant to explore the feasibility of a small-scale decentralized biomass district heating system to serve Waitsfield School, General Wait House, and the Waitsfield-Fayston Fire Department. It is expected that the initial feasibility grant will be submitted in June to the VT Clean Energy Development Fund’s Municipal Technical Assistance Grant program.
- Local volunteers are following up on last spring’s Vermont Community Energy Mobilization (VCEM) project. All participants who had energy visits (approximately 70 in the MRV) will be interviewed on their satisfaction. Efficiency VT is providing a \$150 coupon on an energy audit for all participants. This results in \$400 in available rebates on an audit.
- Joshua has been working with the Waitsfield PC in regards to the variety of energy projects currently in process and in debate.
- Joshua met with Brian Shupe and Johanna Miller of VNRC to discuss collaborating on discussions regarding renewable energy installations in the MRV.

Rural Resource Commission

- The Rural Resource Commission responded to a request to weigh in on the status of a “historic barn” in Waitsfield in light of the town’s Adaptive Reuse of Historic Barns zoning provision.

- Joshua attended a mandatory RRC training session in Norwich with fellow Rural Resource Commission member Ellen Strauss.

Waitsfield Infrastructure

- Joshua assisted Waitsfield in submitting a Municipal Planning Grant to assist in the exploration of a distributed wastewater system.
- Joshua met with Robin Morris and Julie Beth Hinds on 4/30 to discuss options and how to move forward.
- A Wastewater Committee has been formed, first meeting scheduled for 5/21.
- The Waitsfield SB voted unanimously to plan to proceed ASAP with the water project, maybe some construction in the fall, doing the sidewalk in 2012 followed by the paving.
- Waitsfield Infrastructure Summit is scheduled for May 24th at the Big Picture Theater.

Recreation

- Joshua is leading an effort to apply for a technical assistance grant through the National Parks Service Rivers & Trails Program to explore the development of a MRV recreation trail initiative.
- MRVPD hosted one of three public information meetings to explore trail related management issues with the VT Trails Collaborative Landscape Management Work Group on 4/28 at the Warren Town Hall. The GMNF fueled initiative is focused on fostering communication and facilitate actions with a broad range of stakeholders around GMNF lands that will create a more ecologically and socially sustainable public recreation trail experience.

Etc

- MRVPD MOU Sub-Committee (Jason, Chuck, Jared, Jim H., and Joshua) met on 5/5 and discussed contributing entities, contributions, MRVPD's evolution, and legal obligations. The next meeting will explore scenarios for contributions, historical documents, opportunities for MRVPD to provide more assistance to SB.
- Joshua submitted an application to the E-Vermont Community Broadband Project to develop an MRV specific version of Front Porch Forum (Burlington based online community network). The Fed/State funded project will permit 24 projects across the state. Rob Williams is serving as primary contact on behalf of MRVPD.
- Joshua is leading an effort to apply for a technical assistance grant through the National Parks Service Rivers & Trails Program to explore the development of a MRV recreation trail initiative.
- Joshua has finalized projects for unpaid intern Jeff Guevin to work 20 hrs between the end of May and beginning of August. The agreed upon scope includes reorganizing a master list of MRV organizations, data entry for Data Report's database, assistance on constructing 2010 data report, and research trail easement provisions that have been created through local DRB hearings. Jeff will also be involved on a broader range of topics and participate as appropriate.
- Waitsfield's community orchard proposal for Flemer Green is still in competition with 100 communities across the country through online voting at <http://www.communitiestakeroot.com>. Go to VERMONT, find Waitsfield's proposal, and VOTE! You don't need to be a Waitsfield resident to participate. Votes will carry over month to month until all the grants are awarded. You can vote as often as once a day. Waitsfield's proposal is currently in 5th place!
- Joshua is reviewing Waitsfield's draft Town Plan and providing comment.