

**Mad River Valley Planning District
Director's Report
January 2009**

Mad River Valley Path Association

- Joshua attended a Strategic Planning work session on 12/18. This is the first of two meetings to develop priorities and next steps for the organization.
- MRPA has created an online survey for the general public as a piece of the Strategic Planning process.
- MRPA has deferred hiring a new Director until after their Strategic Planning process.
- The Town of Warren, MRPA, and MRVDP's VTrans Transportation Enhancement Grant for the purchase of the 3 acre Whiteside parcel has been put on hold. The Downtown Committee has deferred its award meeting until late-January, when it is hoped the State budgetary picture will be clearer, so no decision will be made until that time or after.

Housing

- Joshua will be attending the 1/13 meeting of the MRVHC.
- Karen Winchell has made progress on the Mad River Valley Housing Coalition's (MRVHC) accessory apartment project.
- MRVHC is developing a brochure on bargain sales/land bank donations.

Mad River Byway

- Joshua is re-applying to the Byway Grant Program for the Mad River Byway Welcome Center project. This includes the purchase of a 51.5 acre site in Warren (the old Top Gas) and developing a welcome center kiosk. This project was unsuccessful in getting funding during the FY08 round.
- State permit requests have been made for all Byway kiosk and interpretive sign locations.
- Joshua is leading the committee in a thematic exercise, resulting in a MR Byway theme in January.
- The January meeting will also include finalizing Byway maps/items of interest and identifying projects for the soon to be announced FY09 [National Scenic Byways grant program](#).
- The concrete pad for the Wait House kiosk has been poured and the zoning permit has been issued.

Valley Futures Network

- Joshua attended the 1/9 meeting of the Steering Group. Various work groups have been meeting.
- Joshua and Jared attended a working group meeting to discuss the group's overall structure and future viability on December 16th.

Transportation

- Joshua attended the 1/8 meeting of the VFN Transportation Group, Valley Moves.
- The State's online carpooling program, GoVT, is being pushed back to a March release.
- Planning has begun for the Walk 'n Roll festival during the month of May.
- A regional trails group encompassing Central Vermont is applying for trail funds to create an online trail network database. Joshua is coordinating local groups in this effort and submitted a letter of support for the application.

Energy

- Joshua has applied for a grant through Efficiency Vermont for the Vermont Community Energy Mobilization Pilot Project on behalf of LocalVolts and Carbon Shredders. The project organizes community volunteers to directly install low-cost energy saving measures in residences and provide education on ways to home reduce energy costs.
- Joshua met with Ben Falk of Whole System Designs in Moretown on 1/7 to discuss the potential of creating projects that demonstrate the utilization of underutilized, in-between spaces for the growing of food and fuel. The discussion also included potential planning projects that focus on reestablishing the valley's commons.

Data

- Joshua has been in talks with UVM's Center for Rural Studies to analyze and assist in updating MRVPD's data and trends book, required by the MOU. A proposed scope of work and identification of deliverables will be discussed on 1/16.

Friends of the Mad River

- Joshua finalized a timeline and objectives for FMR's Project Implementation grant through the Center for Clean and Clear. This project will address priority projects identified in the upper Mad River Corridor Plan, including working with Waitsfield and Warren to further fluvial erosion hazard work.

Forests Wildlife Communities Project Steering Committee

- The FWCP Steering Committee is scheduled to meet on January 29th.
- Joshua will be facilitating a tri-town meeting of Conservation Commissions to discuss shared objectives in March.

Waitsfield

- Joshua will be meeting with PC member Brian Fleisher to discuss a proposed "green enterprise hamlet" zoning designation.

Grants

- In response to the budget shortfalls facing the state, the Administration and Legislature's Joint Fiscal Committee have agreed to \$19.7 million in cuts. Chief among these are a reduction of FY09 municipal planning grants by 50% (\$408,700). It is expected that projects will be funded at half the requested amounts.