

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

### Mad River Valley Path Association

- MRPA has hired Autumn Foushee as their new Executive Director. Autumn begins on 2/15, but will attend the 2/11 MRPA Board meeting. Joshua provided assistance to the MRPA Search Committee throughout the ED search process.
- Starting in February, the MRPA Board will change their meeting date from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of every month. These will still take place at 6 PM at the Gen. Wait House.
- MRPA submitted a grant request to the VT Recreation Trails Program to construct a bridge over the Clay Brook along the Path's Kingsbury Bridge Segment. This project will provide connection between Riverside Park and property owned by the Golden Lion Inn.
- The Path's part time grant writer, Laura Arnesen, will continue to be employed through the winter months. Laura provided suggestions on how MRPA could utilize grants to fulfill its mission at their 12/15 meeting.
- MRPA's grant request to the Vermont Community Foundation was denied.
- MRPA Board is exploring the opportunity to partner with Sugarbush for the 2010 Sugarbush Triathlon/Adventure Games.
- The Landowner Committee is sending letters to existing and prospective landowners in order to maintain positive relationships.
- The Membership Committee is exploring options in light of the case study report completed by UVM's Local Community Initiatives class.
- The Sign Committee is in the process of updating the paper "All Valley" and individual trail maps. Joshua has provided feedback on this endeavor. New maps are expected in the spring.

### Mad River Byway

- Kiosks and interpretive sign content and design are nearly complete. Final designs should be adopted at the February 8<sup>th</sup> Byway meeting.
- Support from MRVPD, MR Byway Committee, and towns have been forwarded to VTrans via the Central VT Chamber for the installation of a MR Byway *supplemental guide sign* on I-89.
- A draft brochure has been developed, which includes a map and info about the Byway.
- 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

- Rootswork is undertaking a Mad River Timebank pilot project. The Time Bank is an organized system of exchanging services akin to Montpelier's Onion River Exchange.
- VFN is hosting the first in a series of monthly MRV Community Potlucks on 1/24 at the Waitsfield Church, 6 PM.
- A 10 member VFN Next Stage Steering Team has been amassed to set direction and organization for the Valley Futures Network. The Steering Team was developed in response to the final report developed as part of the UVM course *Local Community Initiatives*.
- Work has beginning to replicate the successful MRV focused UVM Service Learning Class entitled *Local Community Initiatives* that took place in the fall. Joshua is working with the UVM instructor to viable projects for the course to take place fall 2010.
- A task team is being created to explore if a local entrepreneurial food and agricultural business initiative is an appropriate economic development model for the MRV. The team is looking to create a MRV map/analysis of Valley attributes in the realm of agriculture/innovation, invite other communities to share models of success, and design a

prototype of what this model might look like for farmers / entrepreneurs / non-profits / responsible banking, etc. A kick-off event is being scheduled for 2/10 at the Big Picture and will feature Don Mayer of Hardwick's Center for an Agricultural Economy.

#### Forests Wildlife Communities Project Steering Committee

- The \$93,515 grant request through the Forest Service's Northeast State & Private Forestry Program has been recommended for funding. *Reducing Forest Fragmentation Through Land Use Planning* is VNRC led two-year project whose first year focuses entirely on funding work of the FWC Project. The application was rated number 8 out of 87 applications in a nationwide competition.
- Meetings have recently taken place with each town's CC, PC, and DRB to present the findings of the Arrowwood Studies and provide education on the Valley's wildlife habitat.
- MRVPD and VNRC applied to the Community Assistance Program through the National Forest Foundation. The \$15,000 grant request will further the FWC Project through the production of maps, outreach tools, video, a website, landowner education and workshop materials. This is a reapplication, as a similar application was denied in the summer.

#### Kingsbury Community Farm

- The VT Foodbank has selected Aaron Locker and Susanne Slomin to farm the property.
- Yestermorrow is working with VLT to move the currently erected sun-tracker solar panels.

#### Energy

- Seven of the eight MRV pre-applications to the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants (EECBG) Competitive Local Government Sub-Grant program have made it to the second round (Fayston School was the only application that didn't make the cut). Deadline for the final applications is February 23<sup>rd</sup>. The list of 90% grants have made it to the second round are:
  - Waitsfield Town
    - Financial Incentives, \$18,900
      - Development of a Clean Energy Assessment District
    - Energy Efficiency Retrofits, \$72,093
  - Waitsfield School
    - Energy Efficiency Retrofits, \$55,000
  - Warren Town
    - Energy Efficiency Retrofits, \$57,780
  - Warren School
    - Energy Efficiency Retrofits, \$18,000
  - Fayston Town
    - Energy Efficiency Retrofits, \$20,000
    - Renewable Energy Technologies on Government Buildings, \$55,000

#### Etc

- Database meeting with UVM CRS's Chip Sawyer. A handful of updated data points have been made available since finalizing the Data Report.
- Providing support to Warren PC through their ZA on housing section updates to their Town Plan.
- Will be providing assistance to the Waitsfield PC to review material in preparation for their updated Town Plan.
- Met with Fayston and Waitsfield Selectboards on 12/14 to present the 2009 Data Report and request funding for FY11. Joshua presented the Data Report to the Warren Planning Commission on 1/10.

- Updated [www.mrvpd.org](http://www.mrvpd.org) with new sections, including a document library