

# Mad River Valley Planning District Director's Report February 2009

## Mad River Valley Path Association

- A reception was held for new MRPA ED Autumn Foushee on 2/11. Autumn begins on 2/15.
- The MRPA Board now meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of every month - 6 PM at the Gen. Wait House.
- The Path's part time grant writer, Laura Arnesen, will be providing support to MRPA during its partnership with Sugarbush for the 2010 Sugarbush Triathlon/Adventure Games.
- Targeting re-launch of newsletter in 2010 once ED is up to speed.

## Mad River Byway

- Final draft review of the kiosks, interpretive sign content, and brochure was had on 2/16 meeting.
- Proposed MR Byway *supplemental guide sign* on I-89 is being shopped through the legislature.
- 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.
- MR Byway Committee expects to apply for a Byway Grant to fund promotional material and a website.
- New Vermont Byway z-cards and posters are available at the Visitor Center.

## Valley Futures Network

- A Rootwork sub-committee met to organize the Mad River Timebank pilot project. The Time Bank is an organized system of exchanging services akin to Montpelier's Onion River Exchange. It is proposed to be released this fall.
- VFN is hosting the second in a series of monthly MRV Community Potlucks on 2/28 at the Waitsfield Church, 5:30 PM.
- Joshua and Jared have been participating in a 10 member VFN Next Stage Steering Team 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.
- Andrew Meyer, President of VT Soy and VT Natural Coatings, spoke to 70 folks at the Big Picture on 2/10 about Hardwick's Center for an Agricultural Economy. The talk created a lot of energy and discussion about creating a local entrepreneurial food and agricultural business initiative economic development model for the MRV. Andrew's talk is the beginning of a series of similar explorations. A steering team is looking to create a MRV map/analysis of Valley attributes in the realm of agriculture/innovation and designing a prototype of what this model might look like for farmers / entrepreneurs / non-profits / responsible banking, etc.

## Kingsbury Community Farm

- Joshua has been invited to sit on a local advisory board for the Food Bank's Kingsbury Farm. The board's focus is on local communication, education, and collaboration.
- In addition to the agricultural operations being run by Aaron Locker, Susanne Slomin will be running a bakery and farm stand on the property.

#### Transportation

- CVRPC is updating Fayston's Road Surface Management Surveys.

#### Energy

- All three towns and two schools are hard at work attempting to meet the 2/23 final application deadline for the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants (EECBG) Competitive Local Government Sub-Grant program. Final determination is anticipated by early April.
- CVRPC recently signed the agreement with the Department of Energy for ARRA stimulus funding for municipal building audits. CVRPC will now prepare a RFP for energy audit firms and will keep the municipalities informed of the status. It is anticipated that the selected firm(s) will contact municipal officials directly to arrange for energy audits of your municipal (not school) buildings. CVRPC will soon be emailing local officials a project description and participation form for joining the Central Vermont Energy Program.
- Joshua has been working with the Waitsfield Energy Committee, VT Community Biomass Project, LocalVolts, and SunWood Systems 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. If supported by the Waitsfield Selectboard, funds will be sought for a preliminary feasibility study through the VT Clean Energy Development Fund's Municipal Technical Assistance Grant program

#### Housing

- Joshua attended the 2/9 meeting of the Mad River Valley Housing Coalition, which consisted of furthering the Land Bank project.

#### Etc

- Organizing a Mad River Valley Trail Summit on 3/10, 4-6 at Warren Town Hall, to gather trail organizations with the MRV watershed. Topics of discussion include trail map project, funding, and opportunities for collaboration. Contact Joshua for more info.
- MRVPD provided a letter of support to Friends of the Mad River's for a grant request to the Vermont Community Foundation's Community Fund. If funded, VCF would provide funds for organizational support.
- Joshua is assisting in writing a grant to fund a community orchard on Waitsfield's recently obtained Flemmer Green property. If funded, the grant would cover the cost of planting approximately 100 fruit trees. The project is a collaboration between the Town of Waitsfield, Waitsfield School, U32's VYCC, Whole Systems Designs, MRVPD, and the Garden Center.
- Providing support to Warren PC through their ZA on housing section updates to their Town Plan.
- Assisting Waitsfield Telecom in applying for \$30 million in funding from the ARRA Broadband Initiatives Program. If funded, the project will result in extensive upgrades in their broadband network (Ethernet capability beyond 100 MB).