

**Mad River Valley Planning District
Director's Report
March 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.
- Joshua provided support to the Post-Doc student at UVM who is undertaking 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. The student will be meeting with the Waitsfield PC in the near future.
- VT Emergency Mgmt and FEMA are conducting a comprehensive Local Mitigation Planning Workshop in Waterbury on 3/23. Representatives from CVRPC will be in attendance.

Energy

- Joshua attended a Vermont Interactive Television workshop entitled *Public Service Board Proceedings and The Municipal Role* along with the ZAs from Waitsfield and Warren.
- 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.
- Legislative amendments have been proposed to update the Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) program in order to address issues regarding the hierarchy of property liens in the event of foreclosure as recently raised by the feds. 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*.
- CVRPC recently received approval to spend its federal weatherization funds awarded in 2010. The initial work in this grant was the energy audits of municipal buildings enrolled in the program. CVRPC can now provide funds for the cost of materials for weatherization to the municipalities enrolled in the program. MRV allocation:
 - Waitsfield Town Garage - \$5,979

- Warren Town Hall & Fire Station - \$7,062
- Fayston Town Hall - \$1,038

Mad River Valley Path Association

- MRPA continues to work with Elwin Neill to discuss various Greenway issues. A new agreement is under discussion by the parties.
- MRPA is undertaking a campaign of showing appreciation for the Greenway. Numerous cards have been distributed throughout the towns and letters are being received daily.
- Undertaking a campaign to purchase dog waste stations. Exploring funding options.
- MRPA annual meeting and appreciation dinner is scheduled for 5/27.
- is gearing up planning for the SB Adventure Games, to take place on April 3rd. Harwood students will be volunteering on PR for the games.
- Current number of path membership for 2011 is 150+.

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 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 gave a talk to the group on 1/28.

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.

- The FWC Steering Committee met on 3/11. The next meeting is scheduled for 5/6.
- A sap bucket welcome wagon kit training (for new large land owners) took place on 3/15.
- Joshua attended a conservation mapping webinar entitled *Using GIS & Google Maps for Community Conservation Projects*.
- Joshua organized three meetings to discuss developing a FWC web presence on the existing MRVPD website and related online mapping products.

Rural Resource Commission

- The MRV received funding for all three of its recent grant requests through the Community Local Government Grant Program, totaling \$17,016: Mad River Glen for Historic District nomination (\$7,920), Warren Blair Barn restoration/preservation project (\$7,116), and update Warren's Historic District Register to include the Timber Crib dam (\$1,980). A total of \$57k between 9 grants was awarded this round. Since its certification, the Mad River Valley Rural Resource Commission has received \$165,029 in CLG funds through the VT Division for Historic Preservation. These funds have proved crucial in identifying, protecting, and promoting the Mad River Valley's historic resources.

Waitsfield Infrastructure

- The Waitsfield Planning Commission's Wastewater Committee presented the results of the DHCA funded Decentralized Wastewater committee study on February 1st at the Big Picture Theater, entitled *Assessment of Decentralized Wastewater Options: A survey of needs, capacity and solutions for Historic Waitsfield Village and Irasville, Vermont*. The study evaluates the needs and capacity for "small pipe" decentralized wastewater treatment options in Irasville and historic Waitsfield Village. The effort was initiated by the Town of Waitsfield Select Board as a method to evaluate viable alternatives to the "big pipe" taxpayer-supported centralized wastewater system, which was voted down in spring, 2008. Launched last August, the study was prepared by Stone Environmental Inc. of Montpelier, and was overseen by a volunteer subcommittee of the Waitsfield Planning Commission. The study updates the existing 2001 survey of water supply and wastewater treatment infrastructure in the Town; re-evaluates wastewater treatment and dispersal capacity and needs in light of the municipal water project now under construction; and evaluates wastewater management options. The final report and executive summary, both of which will be available at the meeting, incorporates results from a homeowner/landowner survey of the study area, detailed maps which spotlight capacity and need, and recommended next steps.
- Joshua is exploring appropriateness of applying distributive wastewater beyond Waitsfield (i.e.: Alpine Village).
- 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 second meeting of the MRV Trail Collaborative Steering Committee took place on 3/14. 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.

Housing

- Joshua submitted the MRV Housing Coalition's *Nonprofit Bi-Annual Report Form* to the Office of Secretary of State.

Valley Futures Network

- VFN has overhauled its website to reinforce its recent shift from a project generation to networking organization. <http://valleyfutures.net/>
- 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 overhauled the MRVDPD website, which now includes the 2010 Data Report.
- The MRV Data Report has been distributed electronically to all of SBs and PCs. Joshua has offered to present the data at future meetings.
- Printed and bound copies of the data report will be distributed at the next SC meeting.
- Numerous articles highlighting MRVDPD's work have run in the Valley Reporter in the month.