

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

Mad River Valley Path Association

- The Valley Dog Summit (6/15) was moderated by Lisa Loomis and covered local dog ordinances, on and off-leash issues, and explored interest in a community-sponsored dog path/park.
- Seasonal "Field Worker" position has been filled by Spencer Bence
- Received a 2010 Recreation Trail Grant to build a bridge across Chase Brook to be constructed this summer.
- Developed the Austin Walk (trailhead at Lareau Park) on 5/26 with a GMVS crew.
- Proposed Path route flagged on the Carnwrights property.
- Kingsbury Farm section is ready for signage and MRPA is discussing access with Mac's Market.
- Mad River Path hosted the May Chamber mixer at the *new* 1824 House.
- Exploring submission of an Act 250 permit for the entirety of the Path.
- The 2010 Adventure Games profited \$3,117.14.
- MRPA and Friends of the Mad River held a combined meeting on 6/16.
- Joshua attended a MRPA Land Owner Committee meeting (6/10) and discussed various ongoing projects.
- Conversations are ongoing regarding purchase/protection of the Whiteside parcel.
- MRPA ED is on SB agendas in June for Waitsfield.
- 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.

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 and financial issues. Towns will be in charge of installation, expected to start in July.
- Final design of the brochure is complete. Printing is expected to be completed by the beginning of July.
- 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 6/11 VFN morning meeting included a presentation on the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund's Vermont Renewable Energy Atlas (<http://www.vtenergyatlas.com/>).
- The 10 member VFN Next Stage Steering Team (NSST) 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" is forming 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 3 to 4 viable projects for the course to take place fall 2010.

Transportation

- The MRV TAC will be meeting in July 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 took place 5/15-22 and coincided with the state's Way To Go! Commuter Challenge. The event included various bike rides, walks, Bike or Walk to School / Work Day.
- MRV schools are receiving recognition for efforts during Way to Go! Commuter Challenge - "2010 School Challenge Award" going to Moretown, Waitsfield and Warren Schools.
- 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 have been accepted into the Central VT Energy Program for municipal building audits and related weatherization improvements. Joshua worked with all three towns to prepare their applications. MRV municipal buildings are among 33 municipal buildings receiving energy audits in central VT.
- 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 July 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. This work is related to specific project proposals and incorporation of energy issues in Municipal Plan construction. Joshua attended the 6/15 PC meeting on this subject.
- 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

- The MRVPD supported Municipal Planning Grant for the Town of Waitsfield has been funded. The funding will assist in the exploration of a distributed wastewater system. Joshua is assisting in developing the RFP.
- Joshua met with Robin Morris and Julie Beth Hinds (4/30) to discuss options and how to move forward.
- A Wastewater Committee has been formed and has met twice (5/21, 6/9).
- 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 took place on May 24th and expressed the Waitsfield SB's unanimous decision to proceed ASAP with the water project, with perhaps some construction in the fall, proceeding with paving from Rt. 17 to Warren line in 2011, installing sidewalk in 2012 followed by the remaining paving.
- Joshua is exploring appropriateness of applying distributive wastewater beyond Waitsfield (i.e.: Alpine Village).

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.
- The Mad River Path Association is in the process of submitting its trail network to the CVRPC Trail Finder initiative (<http://www.localmotion.org/trails/>).

Etc

- MRVPD MOU Sub-Committee (Jason, Chuck, Jared, Jim H., and Joshua) met on 5/5 and 6/10 and discussed contributing entities, contributions, MRVPD's evolution, legal

obligations, historical documents, and opportunities for MRVPD to provide more assistance to SB.

- MRVPD's application to the E-Vermont Community Broadband Project to develop an MRV specific version of Front Porch Forum (Burlington based online community network) was denied in the first round of funding. Application for the second round (fall) is expected. The Fed/State funded project will permit 24 projects across the state. Rob Williams is serving as primary contact on behalf of MRVPD.
- Joshua has been working on one of three projects with unpaid intern Jeff Guevin. Jeff is working 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 has also been involved on a broader range of topics and participated in a variety of community meetings.
- Waitsfield's community orchard proposal won amongst 100 submissions in the Communities Take Route orchard program. Representatives from the Fruit Tree Foundation and Edy's Fruit Bars will be on hand to help plant the trees along with community members and supporting organizations: Town of Waitsfield, Waitsfield School, Localvores, Mad River Garden Center, VFN, Harwood's VYCC, Whole Systems Design, Yestermorrow, and the Central VT Beekeeper's Club.
- Joshua is reviewing Waitsfield's draft Town Plan and providing comment.
- The Waitsfield Selectboard approved Fluvial Erosion Hazard Zoning Overlay District.
- MRV Chamber is hosting a new online community calendar serving the needs of the Chamber, community, municipalities, and visitors. The calendar provides RSS capability and the opportunity to populate municipal calendars.
- Joshua attended a MRV Legislative Breakfast (5/25) hosted by Central VT Economic Development Corporation and highlighted interest regarding municipal wastewater options and heightened debate in the community regarding renewable energy installations.
- Joshua attended a MRV Transition Town talk (6/1) which spurred conversations about building resiliency within the community and incorporated breakout sessions on food processing, renewable energy, transportation, etc.