

Mad River Valley Planning District Director's Report August 2009

Mad River Valley Path Association

- The Board added two new members at its 7/21 meeting: Dori Ross & Dinsmore Fulton.
- In response to the June MRPA/MRVPD discussion, and due in parts to an ongoing MRVPD facilitated discussion, the Mad River Valley Recreation District has changed its rules allowing MRPA to be eligible for administrative funds (vs. just project funds).
- MRPA has begun the process of identifying path alignment and permits for the Lareau Swim Hole to Mill Brook section. The Mill Brook to Fiddler's Green section is in the path alignment stage.
- MRPA has cleaned up and resigned the Riverside Park to Rt. 100 section.
- Friends of the Mad River is about to begin construction of a rain garden and general re-grading project in the Bridge Street Marketplace parking lot in Waitsfield. MRPA is formalizing a path section from Bridge Street, along the river in the parking lot near the rain garden, along the historic dam, and out to Rt. 100 alongside the Maclay Architecture building.
- The Kingsbury Farm License Agreement between MRPA and the Town of Warren is being reviewed by Warren's attorney.
- Joshua met with members of the MRPA Strategic Planning committee and discussed trail easement options.
- As a result of discussions, MRPA will be providing a proposal on how municipalities can support MRPA.

Mad River Byway

- Joshua met with the designers to review all panels and present Warren's concept.
- Final draft versions of panels for all kiosks and interpretive signs have been completed and are under review by the appropriate parties.
- Ownership agreements have been signed by all the towns Selectboards. The only outstanding signatures are from Forests & Parks and Mad River Glen.
- The next Byway meeting is scheduled for 9/28, 9 am, at the General Wait House.

Valley Futures Network

- Joshua is working with local members to develop potential projects for Chip Sawyer's Fall UVM Service Learning Class, *Local Community Initiatives*. Groups of students will work on a variety projects to further the work of the various VFN working groups, from agriculture to energy. A kick-off event will take place in September, with final presentations in late Nov-early Dec.

Housing

- Joshua attended the 8/11 meeting of the MRVHC, which focused on the accessory apartment and land bank projects. The group reviewed a draft of a proposed Policy and Procedure document for the land bank project.
- The accessory apartment brochure and related appendices have been completed. The brochures will be distributed within the next few weeks.

eVermont Pre-Application

- Joshua submitted a pre-application to the Vermont Community Broadband Project (eVermont). eVermont is the Vermont stimulus program to help rural communities and businesses advance their goals and realize the opportunities of the Internet for civic engagement, community betterment, economic development, job creation and e-commerce. Partners in eVermont include the Vermont Council on Rural Development, the Snelling Center, the VT Department of Public Service, and others. If selected, eVermont will provide facilitation, technical assistance and funding to selected rural communities to systematically answer their needs and stimulate broadband usage in a variety of ways determined by local leadership. The MRV proposal focuses on the Chittenden County based Front Porch Forum in an attempt to create and enhance dialogue across municipal boundaries.

Transportation

- A Waitsfield multi-modal meeting is scheduled for 8/25 to discuss crosswalks, the sidewalk project, safe routes to School initiatives, Mad Bikes, Mad River Path initiatives, etc. VTrans' Bicycle and Pedestrian

Coordinator and Town's Safe Routes to School consultant will be present in an addition to reps from MRPA, the Health Center, Waitsfield School, the Town of Waitsfield, and MRVPD.

Energy

- The VFN Energy Group, Localvolts, is developing the Mad River Energy Study. The project will create the go-to reference for energy information in the Mad River Valley. The Study is envisioned as a community "living document" of energy information, based on a Wikipedia model, with content contributions provided by members of the community. An outline of the project can be found here: http://docs.google.com/Doc?docid=dhc5hfk7_546cfn3jgr&hl=en. To date the study includes descriptions of various projects (past and present) and an analysis of Electrical Electric Energy Usage in the Mad River Valley towns of Fayston, Moretown, Waitsfield and Warren for 2006, 2007 and 2008. It is expected that at least one of the UVM class projects will contribute to the Study.
- Localvolts and MRVPD are strategizing around energy related grant opportunities. The group has developed an ongoing list of potential grant funded projects and is tracking numerous grant opportunities. Most of the efforts are focusing on the soon to be released Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants, expected to make \$4 million available for communities in a competitive process.
- Local discussions continue on the creation of a Clean Energy Assessment District (CEAD), as enabled by the Legislature in the past session. The purpose of a CEAD is for "municipalities to finance renewable energy projects and energy efficiency projects..." Expect a meeting on the Conservation Block Grants and CEAD to be announced in the Valley in the near future.
- The Mad River Valley has signed up for another Button-Up weatherization workshop for this fall. Last year's two Button-Up workshops were very successful in providing easy to use tips on home based energy efficiency.

Data

- Joshua has been working with the Data Intern and the Center for Rural Studies to develop an appropriate database, which will be presented at the Steering Committee's September 20th meeting. A first draft has been completed to date. A discussion of further recommendations will be presented at a later meeting.

Forests Wildlife Communities Project Steering Committee

- 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.
- Meetings are currently taking 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.
- The next FWC Project meeting is scheduled for 8/19 at the General Wait House.
- The second tri-town Conservation Commission Meeting will be held at Knoll Farm on 9/17 at 6:30. The meeting will include a presentation on the FWC Projects and the Fish and Wildlife Department's "Welcome Wagon Packages," which are designed to help landowners learn about conservation opportunities afforded to them as new landowners in Vermont.

Rural Resource Commission

- The Rural Resource Commission will meet on 8/18 to discuss the status of a "historic barn" in Waitsfield in light of their Adaptive Reuse of Historic Barns zoning provision and discuss Mad River Glen's interest in applying for status as one of the State's Historic Places.

Municipal Support

- The Valley's consortium Municipal Education Grant funded trainings have been completed and were a great success. Trainings focused on Water Quality Issues through Regulatory and Non-Regulatory Process (Waitsfield), the DRB Review Process (Fayston), and Land Use Q & A (Warren).
- Joshua had breakfast with the Valley Rotary and presented on the work of the Planning District at its 6/24 meeting
- Joshua met with Eric Friedman and discussed Mad River Glen, MRVPD, and opportunities for more Valley-wide collaboration
- Joshua has attended all three of the Act 250 hearings in regards to the Waitsfield Water Project. A letter stating MRVPD's position on the project has been submitted under Criteria 10.
- The Mad River Valley Conservation Partnership met and discussed long-term priorities for land conservation. The next meeting will include the Mad River Path Association.

- Joshua attended the July 20th meeting of the Mad River Valley Chamber's Economic Development Committee. The meeting focused on a discussion with a representative from Peter Welch's office in regards to opportunities for green jobs through the Stimulus.