

Mad River Valley Planning District Director's Report August 2010

Mad River Valley Path Association

- MRPA recently developed a Dog Committee out of the Valley Dog Summit (6/15) to investigate, identify, and execute solutions to dog-related challenges for the Mad River Path and the community at large. It's group of pro-active volunteers with a Mad River Path board member as the chair. Specific tasks are the development of official off-leash paths/parks, reduce dog waste, education community about dog owner responsibilities, foster an ownership mentality within the dog-owner community, and create a vehicle to handle future challenges. A Valley Dog Network has been created and results have just been received from a Dog Owner Survey.
- MRPA Executive Director, Autumn Foushee, has been meeting with the Waitsfield Selectboard on two issues: One, discussing the potential of developing an Open Space Tax Stabilization. Autumn will be coming back to the board in September to further discuss this issue. Second, MRPA has proposed revamped easement language for Path sections on town property.
- Autumn has been meeting with the Warren Selectboard to discuss two issues: One, the potential for establishing the Sugarbush Snowmaking Pond as an off leash area for dogs. The SB said they would be open to the option if Sugarbush makes an agreement with MRPA; Second, securing temporary easements for the construction of Path's new bridge across Clay Brook.
- MRPA received a one-time \$9,000 grant through the Alice Schwendler CLAT.
- Autumn is updating their land owner database.
- Re-established newsletter has been completed and will be sent out next week.
- MRPA trail maps are currently up on CVRPC's Trail Finder website (<http://www.localmotion.org/trails/>).
- Website has been revamped.
- MRPA is averaging two articles in the Valley Reporter per week.
- Mad Dash 2010 will be held on 9/19.
- Applying for a Vermont Community Foundation Grant to augment operating funds. MRVPD has been approached to provide a letter of support.
- Kingsbury Farm section has received signage and MRPA is discussing access with Mac's Market.

Housing

- MRV Housing Coalition is has explored potential affordable housing sites through the soon to be established Valley Affordable Land Initiative. John Donaldson and a wastewater engineer explored septic capacity on one site on German Flats Road, owned by Sugarbush.

Mad River Byway

- The remaining MRV trailblazer road signs have been erected by VTrans.
- The Moss Glen interpretive sign and sign structure have been installed.
- The remaining kiosks and interpretive signs will be available for installation by the end of the week. Signage at the Waitsfield kiosk will be installed after the structure recives a fresh coat of stain (expected by the beginning of next week). Warren is responsible to install its signage. The App Gap signage has been put on hold due to financial restraints.
- The Mad River Byway brochure is expected to be printed within the month.
- 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 recent VFN morning meetings. The next VFN morning meeting is planned for 9/26 and will include a presentation from Tara Hamilton on the MRV Biomass Project and Chip Sawyer will talk about the second installment of the MRV focused UVM Service Learning Class entitled *Local Community Initiatives*.
- VFN's Network Resource Group has been meeting to support the network in areas of systems, resources, communications, policies, and protocols.

Transportation

- The MRV TAC meet in July and discussed results of this year's Mad Bus as well as re-focus in light of GMTA changes.
- Mad Bus ridership for FY10 was down 5% from FY09 and down 1.3% from FY08. The biggest decreases were the Access Road and Mountain Condos routes, while the Warren Shuttle and Saturday Evening Service saw substantial increases.
- Joshua is working on a letter to MRV business owners in an attempt to garner additional financial support for the Mad Bus.
- MRV schools are receiving recognition for efforts during Way to Go! Commuter Challenge - "2010 School Challenge Award" going to Moretown, Waitsfield and Warren Schools.

Energy

- Waitsfield, Warren, and Fayston are in the process of receiving building audits and related weatherization improvements through the Central VT Energy Program. The program has reimbursed towns for municipal building audits that were performed in the winter as part of the CDBG application process. MRV municipal buildings are among 33 municipal buildings receiving energy audits in central VT.
- The proposed 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 has been postponed due to a lack of funding through the VT Clean Energy Development Fund's Municipal Technical Assistance Grant program.
- 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 has explored potential partnerships and funding sources to develop the MRV Energy Vision project detailed at the June MRVPCD meeting.

Rural Resource Commission

- The Rural Resource Commission is attempting to apply for Historic Site status for Mad River Glen.
- Joshua has provided direction to a intern interested in historic preservation. Julie Senk is working with Ellen Strauss about the Mad River Glen historic preservation status and potential improvements at Waitsfield's Masonic Lodge.

Waitsfield Infrastructure

- The Waitsfield Planning Commission's Wastewater Committee, of which Joshua is a member, has been making progress on exploring decentralized wastewater options for the villages of Waitsfield and Irasville.
- A Municipal Planning Grant has funded the hiring of Stone Environmental for this project, which includes updating an existing systems survey, evaluating area wastewater needs, evaluating wastewater dispersal capacity, and evaluating wastewater options.

- A draft survey has been developed to ascertain the status of existing wastewater systems within the villages of Waitsfield and Irasville. It is expected that the survey will be distributed in mid-September.
- The Town of Waitsfield has hired a project manager for the Water Project. The project is currently out to bid – a construction firm is expected to be selected by the second week of September.
- Joshua is exploring appropriateness of applying distributive wastewater beyond Waitsfield (i.e.: Alpine Village).

Recreation

- Joshua submitted technical assistance grant application through the National Parks Service Rivers & Trails Program to develop a MRV trail collaborative. Final determination is expected by early October.

Etc

- MRVPD MOU Sub-Committee (Jason, Chuck, Jared, Jim H., and Joshua) met on 7/1 and 8/5 and discussed contributing entities, contributions, and potential MOU amendments.
- 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 anticipated in October. The Fed/State funded project will permit 24 projects across the state. Rob Williams is serving as primary contact on behalf of MRVPD.
- Summer intern Jeff Guevin completed his work at MRVPD. Jeff developed a master database of MRV organizations, worked extensively on data entry for the Data Report's database, and research trail easement provisions that have been created through local DRB hearings. Jeff was also involved on a broader range of topics and participated in a variety of community meetings.
- 50 trees were planted in the MRV Community Orchard on 8/18 thanks to 60 volunteers.
- Joshua is reviewing Waitsfield's draft Town Plan and providing comment.
- 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 participated in an ANR water quality meeting focusing on low impact development master planning and bank stabilization/stormwater mitigation in Waitsfield Village.
- Joshua is assisting in the update of Waitsfield's Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan (or Annex) prior to the expiration of the current version on 10/24/10. Up until last month it was understood that the Town's current PDM Annex wasn't set to expire until January 2011. This new deadline was news to the State, CVRPC, and the Town. PDM Plans are designed to identify hazards, assess vulnerability and develop strategies and objectives to eliminate and/or minimize the effects of these hazards. Such plans are developed at the State, Regional, and local levels. A locally adopted and FEMA approved PDM Plan (or Annex to an approved Regional Plan) is required for a town to receive federal disaster assistance following a Presidentially Disaster Declaration and to be eligible for the Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) Program (\$\$\$). This new deadline relates to all MRV communities.
- Joshua has been in conversation with Green Mountain Power in regards to what data is included in MRVPD's Annual Data Report.