

Mad River Valley Planning District Director's Report September 2009

Mad River Valley Path Association

- New permissions have been secured through the following landowners: Brothers, Chris Pierson, Waitsfield Historical Condo Association, Maclay Architects, Shaws (verbal for mowing), and Sugarbush Pond – East Side.
- The Land Owner Committee, including Joshua, met on 9/3 and identified numerous action items for a variety of trail segments, including creating a Land Owner Outreach training session for Board members and continue formalizing a handful of agreements (Neil, Carnwright, etc).
- Friends of the Mad River have finalized construction of a rain garden and general re-grading project in the Bridge Street Marketplace parking lot in Waitsfield. MRPA is developing 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.
- MRPA is continuing 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.
- The Kingsbury Farm License Agreement between MRPA and the Town of Warren is being reviewed by Warren's attorney.
- The easement between the Path and Sugarbush for the section on the west side of the Sugarbush Snowmaking pond is being reviewed by Sugarbush.
- The Mad Dash fundraising event is scheduled for 9/19.

Mad River Byway

- Final draft versions of panels for all kiosks and interpretive signs have been completed and are awaiting final edits.
- 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

- A kick-off event for the fall UVM Service Learning Class, *Local Community Initiatives*, is scheduled for 9/16 6:45-9 PM, at the Knoll Farm.
- The 14 UVM students will take an active role in local projects addressing a variety of essential community issues in the Mad River Valley with local partners the Mad River Valley Planning District and the Valley Futures Network. Through local project work, case studies, course texts, student research and class discussions, the students will learn about the different ways that community members work together to identify challenges, resources and solutions and how they envision their future.
- The students will break into groups to focus on three projects throughout the semester: Structure of the Valley Futures Network, Mad River Path Association and Members, and an Inventory of Renewable Energy Projects.
- A VFN retreat is being scheduled for 11/1 to discuss leadership and ways that members can move projects forward.

Housing

- The accessory apartment brochure and related appendices have been completed. The brochures are currently being distributed.

Transportation

- A Waitsfield multi-modal meeting took place on 8/25 and covered 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. The meeting created a variety of action items.

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_546cfgn3jgr&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. One of the UVM class projects will contribute to the Study.

- The MRV Energy wiki, www.mrvenergy.org, has had its “soft-release.” The project is ongoing, with a full release scheduled in early October.
- 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 scheduled for 11/23 at Yestermorrow. Last year’s two Button-Up workshops were very successful in providing easy to use tips on home based energy efficiency.

Forests Wildlife Communities Project Steering Committee

- 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.
- Members of FWC and each town’s CC have presented the Arrowwood maps to the public at the Farmers’ Market.
- 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 met on 8/18 and 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. The group also discussed Mad River Glen’s interest in applying for status as one of the State’s Historic Places.

Municipal Support

- The Natural Resources Board issued a hearing recess order in regards to the Waitsfield Water Project’s Act 250 process.
- The Mad River Valley Conservation Partnership will be discussing its long-term priorities for land conservation with the Mad River Path Association on 9/14.
- The Mad River Valley Chamber’s Annual Meeting is scheduled for 9/16, 5:30-7 at the Warren Town Hall.