

Mad River Valley Planning District Director's Report September 2010

Mad River Valley Path Association

- New staircase behind the Golden Lion has been completed.
- Owners of the Golden Lion Inn (Carr's) have signed an easement with the Path.
- Summer 2010 Pathways newsletter has been distributed.
- Siptemberfest (9/26) at Mad River Glen will once again donate profits to the Path.
- Mad Dash is scheduled for 9/19.
- One of the three UVM Service Learning Initiatives course projects is focusing on historical/interpretive signage along the Path.
- MRPA will be requesting funding from the Mad River Recreation District.
- Town of Waitsfield SB has expressed interest in considering MRPA easements on town-owned land. MRPA will be providing easement language for their review.
- MRPA is continuing to discuss the possibility of an open space agreement with the Town of Waitsfield.
- Applied for a Vermont Community Foundation Grant to augment operating funds. MRVPD provided a letter of support.
- Applying for a New England Grassroots Fund grant.

Housing

- MRV Housing Coalition is actively exploring a potential affordable housing site on German Flats Road, owned by Sugarbush, to be part of the upcoming Valley Affordable Land Initiative.

Mad River Byway

- The Moss Glen interpretive sign and sign structure have been installed.
- The remaining Byway 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 receives a final coat of stain (expected by the beginning of next week). Warren is responsible to install its signage.
- 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

- VFN's Network Resource Group has been meeting to support the network in areas of systems, resources, communications, policies, and protocols.
- For the second year in a row the MRV is partnering with UVM in a service learning course in their Community Development Applied Economics Department entitled *Local Community Initiatives*. Through the UVM course students take an active role in local projects addressing a variety of essential community issues in the MRV. 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 the community envisions its future. The students have broken into groups to focus on the following projects throughout the semester: Mad River Path Interpretive Materials, Mad Bikes Research, & MRV Local Food Market Study. The kick-off event took place on 9/15 at Knoll Farm.

Transportation

- Joshua will develop a letter to MRV business owners in an attempt to garner additional

financial support for the Mad Bus.

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 submitted a grant request through the Vermont Community to help develop the MRV Energy Vision project detailed at previous MRVPC meetings. In addition, Joshua has been developing relationships with other potential partners and exploring additional funding opportunities.
- The USDA has released a grant program to conduct feasibility studies for renewable energy systems for agriculture producers and rural small businesses. More information is available by visiting http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/BCP_ReapGrants.html. Grants are limited to \$50,000 per study and the application deadline is October 5, 2010.
- Joshua is exploring a funding opportunity through the American Institute of Architects' Sustainable Design Assessment Team providing a multidisciplinary team of professionals from across the country to convene on a community with the goal of creating a road map towards sustainability. The proposed MRV project would be to assist the community identify in identifying methods and design guidelines for appropriately sited, screened, and attractive renewable energy installations. The MRV apparently has an appetite for such installations, but their prevalence is limited by aesthetic and related concerns.

Rural Resource Commission

- The Rural Resource Commission is assisting Mad River Glen in applying for Historic District status.
- Joshua has provided direction to an intern interested in historic preservation. Julie Senk is working with Ellen Strauss about potential improvements at Waitsfield's Masonic Lodge.
- Joshua provided grant-funding opportunities to the Rural Resource Commission and the Waitsfield Church.

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 survey has been distributed to ascertain the status of existing wastewater systems within the villages of Waitsfield and Irasville.

- 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

- MRVDP'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 November. The Fed/State funded project will permit 24 projects across the state. Rob Williams is serving as primary contact on behalf of MRVDP.
- Joshua continues to coordinate with ANR water quality on a low impact development master planning and bank stabilization/stormwater mitigation project 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. The draft PDM Plan is expected to be reviewed by submitted to FEMA by the end of the month
- Joshua attended the annual Meeting of the MRV Chamber of Commerce, which included include reports from chamber committees, a financial report, and a marketing presentation.
- Joshua attended a seminar on the 2007 Economic Census and related statistics, conducted by Census Bureau experts at the VT Statehouse.