

# Mad River Valley Planning District Director's Report October 2009

## Mad River Valley Path Association

- MRPA has hired a part time grant writer, who has so far submitted two grant requests.
- MRPA has filed a FY2010 grant request to the MRV Recreation District fund
- MRPA held a work day on 10/8 to fell trees along the Bridge Street Connection section under construction. The wood was donated to the Valley Community Fund to provide firewood for underserved families.
- Staymat has been completed along the Waitsfield Pond, funded by the MRV Recreation District.
- The Warren Path is scheduled for repair before the snow flies, consisting of new culverts and a stone bridge.
- MRPA reps met with the Mad River Valley Conservation Partnership on 9/14 to discuss long-term priorities for land conservation.
- 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 under review by Sugarbush.
- The Mad Dash event took place on 9/19 and was considered a great success. Nearly 300 participants took place in the event.
- The 9/26 SIPtemberfest event at Mad River Glen grossed \$600 for MRPA.

## Mad River Byway

- On 10/2 Joshua assisted members of the Byway Committee in erecting 7 of the 11 Byway Trailblazer signs.
- Final edits on all kiosks and interpretive signs are scheduled to be completed by 10/16.
- A draft brochure has been developed, which includes a map and info about the Byway.
- A website sub-committee has been formed.
- All ownership agreements have been signed. The agreements have been sent to VTrans for their review.
- The next Byway meeting is scheduled for 10/26, 9 am, at the General Wait House.

## Valley Futures Network

- A kick-off event for the fall UVM Service Learning Class, *Local Community Initiatives*, took place 9/16 at the Knoll Farm. The 15 UVM students and 15 Valley residents broken into three groups working on the following projects: Structure of the Valley Futures Network, Mad River Path Association and Members, and an Inventory of Renewable Energy Projects.
- The three groups are making progress on their projects. A capstone event is being scheduled for early December.
- A half-day VFN event is scheduled for 11/1 at the Waitsfield Church entitled Building Neighborly Relations in Tough Times.

## Housing

- The accessory apartment brochure and related appendices have been distributed.
- 10/13 MRHC meeting consisted of approval of Bylaw changes and work on the Land Bank project.

## Energy

- The MRV Energy wiki, [www.mrvenergy.org](http://www.mrvenergy.org), has been fully released.
- 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](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. 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 \$5 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 two Button-Up weatherization workshops, 10/22 at Moretown Town Hall and 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.
- Tri-Town Conservation Commission meeting took place on 9/17 and focused on regional efforts, including the work of the FWC Project and Dept. of Fish & Wildlife’s landowner outreach program.
- Joshua and VNRC staff are applying for federal funding through the Forest Service’s Northeast State & Private Forestry Program.

#### Etc

- Joshua met with a variety of local partners and the Vermont Food Bank on 9/22 to provide feedback on the development of Kingsbury Community Farm. An RFQ announcement for a farmer lease program has been released. A website is expected to be up and running by the end of the week. Renovations of the agricultural operations building is nearing completion and a Yestermorrow class will be doing some remodeling in late Oct. In addition, a group from Harwood and VYCC will be helping with field prep and a group from Middlebury College will be studying the development of the farm for a class project.
- Joshua attended the opening reception of a land use exhibit at The Big Picture. Through the month of October Moretown’s Whole Systems Designs is exploring land use “for the long haul” with “Vermont’s Future Past: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Land Use & the New Commons.
- The Mad River Valley Transportation Advisory Committee met on 9/22 with reps from GMTA to plan for the 2010 MadBus routes. Ridership was up in ‘09.
- Joshua and Valerie Capels attended a meeting on Tax Increment Financing and Special Assessment Districts put on by the Divisions of Community Planning & Revitalization.