

# **Mad River Valley Planning District Director's Report November 2009**

## Mad River Valley Path Association

- MRPA's part time grant writer has submitted two grant requests and has created a timeline of future grants.
- MRPA's \$10k FY2010 grant request to the MRV Recreation District fund to pay for an ED was fully funded.
- Joshua attended a meeting of the Land Owner Committee on 11/4.
- The October MRPA meeting included a Land Owner workshop. David Dion and Liza Walker (VLT) explored the delicate process of working with landowners.
- A work day was held on 10/17 to perform repairs on the Warren Path.
- The Kingsbury Farm License Agreement between MRPA and the Town of Warren has been adopted.
- The Greenway section has been closed for hunting season.
- A VYCC team worked on a spur trail at Mad Meadows on 11/16.
- The Transportation Enhancement Grant to purchase and preserve the Whiteside parcel has been denied.
- The easement between the Path and Sugarbush for the section on the west side of the Sugarbush Snowmaking pond is under review by Sugarbush.

## Mad River Byway

- Joshua submitted a Byway Grant Pre-Application to develop a website and create other promotional material.
- VTrans has approved the ROW agreements. The next step is for VTrans to program construction funds for the fabrication of the panels. This also allows the VTrans sign crew to schedule the installation of the rest of the Trailblazer signs.
- Final edits on all kiosks and interpretive signs are scheduled to be completed by 12/7.
- Joshua attended a site visit and provided comments on the Moss Glen Interpretive Panel.
- A draft brochure has been developed, which includes a map and info about the Byway.
- The next Byway meeting is scheduled for 12/7, 9 am, at the General Wait House.

## Valley Futures Network

- A half-day VFN event entitled Building Neighborly Relations in Tough Times took place on 11/1 at the Waitsfield Church.
- Final presentations of the UVM Service Learning Class, *Local Community Initiatives*, will take place on 12/2 at the Warren School. The 15 UVM students and a variety of Valley residents have been 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 11/13 VFN meeting included discussion of creating an executive committee, a Mad River Transportation/Ride Share website, creating a Mad River Food Producers Group, creating the Mad River Musicians Coop, a discussion of Gross National Happiness, and putting on monthly VFN potlucks.

## 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. A Waitsfield CC/PC/SB meeting focusing on FWC took place on 11/17.
- Joshua and VNRC staff applied for federal funding through the Forest Service's Northeast State & Private Forestry Program.
- Joshua attended the FWC 10/30 meeting, which focused on finalizing a FWC work plan, the Forest Service Grant, and other funding opportunities.
- VT Forest, Parks & Recreation are releasing a pilot project in the MRV that provides information about planning for wildlife conservation to new large lot property owners (25 acre+). The information is

provided in sap buckets delivered by local individuals. The Welcome Wagon Training will take place on 12/2 at Knoll Farm.

#### Mad River Watershed Conservation Partnership

- A VHCB project application was submitted to purchase the development rights on the Harshorn Farm. Local leverage is coming from the Waitsfield SB (\$20k) and the Mad River Fund (\$50k).

#### Housing

- 11/10 MRHC meeting consisted of discussion of policies and procedures on the proposed Land Bank project and discussion on data requirements.
- The next MRHC meeting is set for 12/15.

#### Energy

- Guidelines for the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants (EECBG) Competitive Local Government Sub-Grants were released on 11/13. The deadline for pre-applications is 12/8. Towns and schools are eligible applicants for the 90% grants. Projects fit within 4 categories: Energy Efficiency Retrofits, Financial Incentive Programs for Energy Efficiency, Implementation of Transportation Projects, Renewable Energy Technologies on Government Buildings, and Traffic Signals and Street Lighting. Potential projects include \$10-25k for the *development and promotion of zoning guidelines or requirements that promote energy efficient development*, \$10-250k for the development of a Clean Energy Assessment District (CEAD), and \$10-75k to implement and install Geothermal Heat Pumps, Biomass Boilers, and Combined Heat and Power Systems.
- MRVPD is hosting a grant workshop meeting on 11/23, 6 PM at Waitsfield Town Offices, to go over the grants with eligible entities (schools and towns).
- 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.

#### Kingsbury Community Farm

- The VT Foodbank has received a dozen serious inquiries about the farm lease opportunity. The finalists are all from VT, one of which is from the Valley. The FB will be performing interviews next week.
- The farm garage renovation is complete. Yestermorrow has begun renovating a room in the farm house.
- A webpage has been launched: [http://www.vtfoodbank.org/about\\_us/kingsbury\\_farm/](http://www.vtfoodbank.org/about_us/kingsbury_farm/).
- Two PV solar trackers will be installed by the end of the year.
- Local resident Ned Kelly is utilizing the farm as a staging and storage area as part of local program for providing affordable firewood to low-income residents.
- The property is now enrolled in a USDA conservation program which will provide funding for planting native species and invasive eradication along the river.
- The FB is applying for a state grant to construct a bridge over the small Mad River tributary to accommodate foot traffic and a farm tractor.

#### Etc

- The MadBus routes have been finalized and the maps will be distributed by the end of the month.
- The fourth annual Tri-Town Selectboard Meeting, held on 10/29, was a success.
- Joshua attended the Vermont Planners Association annual conference, which focused on density and design in the village and countryside.
- Joshua met with a group of nursing students from Norwich University that are performing a health assessment in Warren.
- Joshua provided assistance to the Warren ZA on zoning issues and their town plan update.
- The Steering Committee's Data Sub-Committee met twice to discuss the final version of the 2009 Data Report and provide recommendations on the collection of data points as listed in the MOU.
- Joshua attended Friends of the Mad River's annual meeting.
- On 11/11 Joshua attended a Smart Growth Vermont reception at the home of Jim Sanford and Ellen Strauss.