

**Mad River Valley Planning District  
Director's Report  
December 1, 2011**

Municipal

- MRVPD hosted the 6th annual Tri-Town Selectboard Meeting on 11/3, which served its purpose of increasing communication between the municipal entities and minimize the number of presentations required of local organizations. Eight organizations updated the selectboards on their status and submitted financial requests for the upcoming year.
- Joshua met with Waitsfield's Zoning Administrator Susan Senning on a few occasions to provide technical support.
- Participated in a 11/4 meeting regarding Waitsfield's Conservation Fund – priorities and future funding needs.
- Joshua spoke to Harwood's 7<sup>th</sup> grader class on 10/27. They have been engaged in a river study unit, focusing on present planning initiatives in the watershed and answering a wide variety of great questions. The students held a science fair style poster presentation prior to the 11/10 *It's a Mad River* event, most of whom stayed for the talk.

Flood Recovery

- The Mad River Watershed Conservation Partnership (MRVPD, FMR, & VLT) hosted *It's a Mad River* on 11/10 - an evening looking at flooding in the MRV and exploring the evolution of river management. Joshua presented in collaboration with Caitrin Noel, Mary Gow, Liza Walker & Gretchen Alexander from VT ANR. More than 140 people were in attendance. The presentations are available for download at <http://mrvpd.org/DocumentsLibrary.php>.
- The MRV, including Moretown, served as the first community in the State of VT's Community Recovery Partnership program. These are community listening sessions identifying short and long term needs focusing on developing a framework to help communities emerge from this disaster stronger and more resilient. The 11/17 visit included a cross-agency team from the Agencies of Commerce & Community Development, Transportation, and Natural Resources, as well as representatives from the Regional Planning Commissions and Regional Development Corporations. An afternoon stakeholder meeting preceded an evening community discussion. MRVPD coordinated the event locally.
- MRVPD submitted a request for technical assistance in partnership with VT Dept of Economic, Housing & Community Affairs, Agency of Transportation, and Agency of Natural Resources to EPA's Smart Growth Implementation Assistance (SGIA) program. The project focuses on community resilience to disasters in the MRV. The intent is to utilize EPA's technical assistance to further develop the relationships, skills and institutional structures in order to provide inter-agency assistance to the broader state. The project also sets the stage for greater integration of hazard mitigation with sound land use planning. Award announcement is expected in January.
- Joshua has continued to provide communication and support with MRV HQ. MRV HQ is moving into its next stage, Mad River Long Term Recovery Committee. This FEMA structured organization is designed to be an inclusive, coordinated effort to best help those affected, efficiently employ the wealth of expertise and volunteer spirit within our

community, build a more broad network for organizations already established in the community, and develop a template that can be efficiently re-employed when another disaster occurs.

- Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) grant funding has been released for communities effected by the flood. This is 75% funding for projects of less than \$250k. Typical hazard mitigation projects would include: home acquisitions (buy-out), structural elevations or relocations, repair and mitigation of local roads and bridges, replacement of undersized culverts, remediation of stream bank erosion, etc. More info below. An approved Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan is required for eligibility. Warren & Fayston currently have expired PDM plans. CVRPC is in the process of helping towns update their PDM plans. Application deadline of 1/20/12. More info at [www.vem.vermont.gov](http://www.vem.vermont.gov).

### Energy

- The MRV Energy Series Is still gaining speed. The first four events have been successful, Local Energy History & The Foundation for our Energy Future, Residential & Community Solar Projects, Financing & the State Energy Plan, and MRV Biomass. The final event is scheduled for 12/13 and will focus on Conservation, Weatherization & Efficiency. This event will include Summaries of each event and all of the presentations are available at <http://mrvpd.org/DocumentsLibrary.php>.
- The 12/13 event will include a weatherization trailer set up for the day for residents to learn methods for buttoning up their homes. This will be followed by a weatherization skillsshop for Waitsfield residents on 12/14.

### Agriculture

- The Mad River Food Hub has received its meat processing permits and is officially open. The value-add meat processing equipment is installed. MRFH has a full time Facility Manager on site every day. This week the Hub has processed lamb, pigs and chicken. [www.madriverfoodhub.com](http://www.madriverfoodhub.com).
- The Mad River Food Hub hosted a food safety course on 11/16. *Essentials of Food Safety for Food Producers* was developed by UVM Extension and specifically designed for value-added food processors working in a shared-use food processing facility.

### Mad River Valley Path Association

- Clay Brook Bridge ramps completed.
- MRPA is undertaking a review of its Strategic Plan.
- Mad River Path cleanup has commenced along the West Greenway and other sections.
- MRPA is in the process of revamping their website, focusing on completion in December.
- MRPA will be meeting with the Waitsfield SB in Dec to discuss tax stabilization and town easements.

### Transportation

- Working on behalf of MRV Transportation Advisory Committee to finalize contributions and funding for upcoming Mad Bus season. Contributions from lodging establishments are up significantly from the previous few years.
- MRVTAC met on 10/24 and focused on finalizing the route for the upcoming season.
- The first day of service for the Mad Bus is December 3<sup>rd</sup>.

- Plans have been finalized for the Waitsfield Safe Routes to School project to narrow Old County Rd. and put in a permanent crosswalk across Rt. 100.
- The final report on the Waitsfield Village West Sidewalk Conceptual Alignment Analysis was submitted on 11/27. The project cost estimate is approximately \$480k. The Mad River Valley Rural Resource Commission was closely involved in this project.
- Joshua is attending a meeting on 12/1 to provide comment on the VTrans RT.100 preliminary paving design plans. The current plans only show a 3' shoulder. 4' shoulders were expected along the length of the project.
- Joshua attended a Complete Streets Workshop in Newport on 10/28 which provided presentations by two national experts on Complete Streets, both with a deep commitment and broad experience in working with communities to achieve their livability goals.

#### Forests, Wildlife, Communities Project

- The annual tri-town meeting of the MRV's conservation committees took place on 10/25 and included updates from individual commissions, an update on the Forest Wildlife Communities Project, the status of the Welcome Wagon Kit project, and post-flood efforts.
- The FWC meets on 12/8 and will review curriculum and overview for realtor and engineer trainings and debrief on fall out of conservation maps.
- Joshua is overseeing development of the FWC web presence, which will be hosted on the [mrvpd.org](http://mrvpd.org) site.
- Hosted a meeting of the Winooski Natural Resources Conservation District Board of Directors and presented on the FWC initiative.

#### Waitsfield Infrastructure

- The second phase of the Waitsfield's Decentralized Wastewater Management Project Study is underway. Consultants Stone Environmental and TetraTech are running four days of meetings during the second week of December in an attempt to develop the scope of a wastewater management district for decentralized wastewater systems in Waitsfield. Part of the project is to determine the funding options for decentralized systems and address the existing Clean Water State Revolving Fund Loan and \$1,000,000S TAG funding that were originally developed to fund the larger scale Wastewater Plan defeated by voters in 2008. Results of the intensive weeklong project will be brought to the Waitsfield SB at its 12/12 meeting.
- Continuing to dialogue with Wastewater Education to explore additional avenues for decentralized wastewater support.

#### Recreation

- 20 people attended the 11/15 MRV Trail Summit held at Sugarbush. The evening focused on inventorying MRV trails, creating an updated trail map, and developing a list of potential projects for a summer 2012 VYCC crew. Joshua and Autumn are hard at work on moving these projects forward. The plan is to have the map completed by next summer.
- The MRV Trails Collaborative received an award for technical planning assistance through the National Parks Service Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA). This is the second year that this support has been received.

#### UVM

- The third installment of the Local Community Initiatives course is underway. Final

presentations on the four projects that the students have been engaged in through the fall will take place at the Big Picture Theater on 12/7 – 6-8 PM. The four projects for 2011 are Compost Power, Waitsfield Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) Program, Mad River Valley Health Center, and MRV Solar Farm.

#### Economic Development

- Joshua submitted a \$15k consortia grant application to the Housing & Community Development's Municipal Planning Grant (MPG) program on behalf of Warren and Fayston. If funded, the grant will fund a consultant to help the MRV undertake a baseline economic analysis of the MRV that will identify data sources, develop a set of indicators, and create a replicable methodology.
- Joshua met with economic consultants, planning commissions, and selectboards before submitting the grant. Selection is anticipated by mid-Dec.
- Joshua has been playing phone tag with a reporter from VPR who is interested in an interview about this project.

#### Rural Resource Commission

- Mad River Glen's CLG funded historic designation application is currently under review by DHP. Ellen Strauss and Joshua are administering this grant.
- Warren Dam CLG funded historic designation amendment is currently under review by DHP. Ellen Strauss is administering this grant.

#### Other

- CVRPC's application for a federal grant to the Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program to develop a Sustainable Regional Plan for Central Vermont was not funded.
- Joshua attended a *Planning and Zoning Forum* on 11/2 to discuss pressing issues in municipal planning and zoning with officials from across the state. The workshop covered the following topics: Town Planning & Economic Development, Residential Energy Efficiency Regulations, Complete Streets, Update on State Energy Planning, Land Legislative Updates & Looking into the Future.
- Met with Kate Stephenson to discuss Yestermorrow's activities and opportunities for collaboration.
- Met with Gregor Barnum to discuss opportunities for systems mapping in the MRV.