



Annual Report to Mad River Watershed Towns

Friends of the Mad River (FMR) is a private non-profit organization committed to protecting, improving and enhancing the ecological, recreational, and community values of the Mad River and its watershed. FMR has been working on issues relating to the Mad River and its watershed since 1990 and we thank Mad River Valley residents for sixteen years of membership support.

2007 Achievements include:

Mad River Watch

In 2007 Mad River Watch had its 22nd successful summer of river watching and testing. Every summer, volunteers collect water samples from 36 sites on the Mad River and its tributaries. In 2007 data was collected on water temperature and pH, and samples were tested for *E. coli* bacteria. Several sites were sampled for phosphorus and turbidity. MRW results are published in the Valley Reporter and FMR website and also displayed on FMR signs at swim holes.

River Corridor Planning Study

In 2007 FMR secured a grant from the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to complete a River Corridor Planning study. This study builds on previous geomorphic assessment, applying assessment information to practical recommendations. A River Corridor Management plan will result that includes information about watershed, floodplain and channel stressors, analysis of channel adjustment, discussion of bridges and culverts that may be impacting the stream, and recommendations for protection and restoration. An included Fluvial Erosion Hazard analysis will inform potential Fluvial Erosion Hazard Zoning. If adopted, this zoning would provide additional protection beyond current regulations. Many thanks to DEC for the generous support.

Farmer's Market Day

As in past years, in 2007 FMR had an educational display at the Waitsfield Farmer's Market. This year's booth featured a fantastic water table model, loaned to FMR by the DEC. It demonstrates how rivers move and react to changes, showing how the Mad River works. The booth also included information about Didymo, an invasive species found in nearby watersheds which could seriously impact the Mad River.

Groundwater Assessment Project

FMR partnered with the Vermont Rural Water Association on a project on the overall condition of groundwater in the watershed. The project considered which contaminants are likely to be present, pinpointed known and potential areas of contamination, and provided education on private wells and drinking water quality. FMR offered drinking water testing. The tests informed homeowners about the quality of and potential threats in their drinking water. The sampling data can be used in future groundwater mapping and contaminant databases. FMR will offer testing again in 2008.

17th Annual Clean Water Week Poster Contest

Every spring, local elementary school students draw posters on watershed-related topics and enter them in FMR's annual Vermont Clean Water Week Contest. The contest gives students an opportunity to think about a specific aspect of the watershed and win great prizes from local sponsors. This year's theme was "Nutrients & Sediments – Clean Water Starts With You". Students reflected on what happens when it rains and how run-off affects streams, rivers, lakes and ponds. Caleb Kessler, a 5th grader from Fayston Elementary School won first prize.

Community partnerships

FMR continued its work with watershed towns and partner organizations including work on the Kingsbury Community Farm, with the road crews from Moretown, Fayston, Duxbury, Waitsfield and Warren, and with the Mad River Watershed Conservation Partnership.

Dana Hill Better Backroads Project

Dana Hill is a steep gravel road in Waitsfield. Due to the road grade and other factors, a significant amount of roadbed material erodes each year, especially during spring snowmelt. The small tributary to Mill Brook adjacent to the road receives this polluted run off. Not only does this result in water quality degradation, the erosion is costly to repair each year. FMR partnered with the DEC's Watershed Initiative Program and the Town of Waitsfield to address the problems. FMR helped coordinate a Better Backroads workshop attended by the town road crew. The workshop suggested road management skills that should help protect water quality and save money. Dana Hill roadwork will be completed in 2008, with generous funding from the State of Vermont Better Backroads Program and the National Wildlife Federation.

Fundraising to Protect the Mad River

Thanks to our membership support and excellent staff, FMR was very successful in 2007 in securing funds from the DEC to support the river assessment. With your help we also matched two grants bringing in \$13,000 for educational outreach. We were also awarded a laboratory services grant from the DEC to strengthen and expand our Mad River Watch program. Thank you for your generous and continued support!

New Watershed Coordinator

This fall, FMR hired a new Watershed Coordinator. Caitrin Noel, of Warren, joins us with new energy and fresh ideas. She has a background in environmental science, water resources, and education and is looking forward to working with her neighbors to protect her favorite river. Many thanks to Miranda Lescaze, our previous coordinator, for her hard work and dedication to FMR. Best of luck to her in her new career as a teacher.

Please contact us if you would like to get involved with Friends of the Mad River. We welcome your comments and ideas. The Friends' office is in the General Wait House in Waitsfield.

Website: www.FriendsoftheMadRiver.org.

Phone: 496-9127.

Email: friends@madriver.com

Friends of the Mad River is a membership organization. Donations and membership support can be sent to our mailing address: PO Box 255, Waitsfield, VT 05673.

Respectfully submitted by the Board of Directors:

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