

**RIENDS OF THE MAD RIVER**  
**2008 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 continues to provide a voice for the river in many different capacities. Many thanks to our Mad River Valley members for eighteen years of support.

**2008 Achievements include:**

**Mad River Watch**

This past summer marked the twenty-third successful season of river watching and testing. Each year, volunteers collect water samples every other week from June through August at thirty-seven sites on the Mad River and its tributaries. In 2008 data was collected on water temperature and pH, and samples were tested for E. coli bacteria. In addition, seventeen 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 popular swimming holes.

**New Website Launched**

In April 2008, FMR completed a major overhaul of our website. Key features of the new site include a media center, watershed resource center, events calendar, and search capabilities. The media center provides access to photos, videos and archived newsletters. The watershed resource center is a compilation of relevant publications and reports about the Mad River.

**River Corridor Planning**

In 2008 FMR secured a grant from the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to implement recommendations put forth in the Upper Mad River Corridor Plan. Completed in January 2008 with input from a variety of stakeholders, the Plan outlines practical recommendations for corridor protection and improvement and includes an analysis of Fluvial Erosion Hazards. This analysis provides important information to residents and towns about the risk of flooding and erosion related losses. Many thanks to the DEC for their continued support.

**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, resulting in water quality degradation. In addition, the erosion is costly to repair each year. FMR partnered with the DEC's Watershed Initiative Program, the Town of Waitsfield, and landowners on Dana Hill Road to address the problems. The roadwork was completed in 2008, with generous funding from the State of Vermont Better Backroads Program and the National Wildlife Federation.

**Outreach and Education**

As in past years, FMR sponsored an educational display during two Saturdays 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.

Didymosphenia geminata (a.k.a Didymo or Rock Snot) is a nuisance alga discovered in the Mad River in July 2008. FMR worked to disseminate information about preventing the spread of Didymo to tributaries and upstream locations by posting additional signs at access points, writing newspaper articles, including information at the Waitsfield Farmer's Market booth, and through our website ([www.FriendsoftheMadRiver.org](http://www.FriendsoftheMadRiver.org)). FMR has secured funding from the Lake Champlain Basin Program to conduct a watershed wide outreach program in 2009 to help prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species.

FMR staff also worked with teachers at Waitsfield Elementary School, Fayston Elementary School, and Harwood Union high school to educate students about watershed topics.

### **Community partnerships**

FMR continued its work with watershed towns and partner organizations including work on the Kingsbury Community Farm project; the Forest, Wildlife and Communities project; with Planning and Conservation Commissions from Waitsfield and Warren; and with the Mad River Watershed Conservation Partnership.

### **Fundraising to Protect the Mad River**

This year FMR secured funds from the DEC to support the implementation of projects outlined in the Upper Mad River Corridor Plan. With your help we also raised matching funds for an educational outreach project related to aquatic invasive species. As in previous years, we were 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!

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](http://www.FriendsoftheMadRiver.org)

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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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