

**MAD RIVER VALLEY PLANNING DISTRICT**  
**2011 Annual Report**

The [Mad River Valley Planning District](#) was created to carry out a program of planning directed toward the physical, social, economic, fiscal, environmental, cultural and aesthetic wellbeing of the towns of Fayston, Waitsfield and Warren. In 2011, the Planning District continued its work on a broad range of projects, including building relationships with and between the MRV's various municipal boards, volunteer groups, and business community. Highlights of the year include engaging the community through the MRV Renewable Energy Series, supporting the creation of the Mad River Food Hub, developing and funding the MRV Trail Collaborative, connecting local leaders with UVM students to address community challenges, and providing support and coordination for Tropical Storm Irene recovery and resiliency.

Following is a summary of MRVPD projects and initiatives during 2011.

**Grants**

In 2010 MRVPD secured over \$15k in grants and provided support for efforts that resulted in over \$6 million to the MRV. MRVPD is awaiting word on \$15k in funding requests. A few highlights:

- Obtained \$2,938 through the VT Energy Climate Action Network (VECAN) to undertake a series of MRV Renewable Energy forums.
- Obtained an EPA Smart Growth Implementation Assistance grant in conjunction with the State of VT focusing on disaster recovery and long-term resilience planning.
- MRV received funding for all three of its requests through the Community Local Government Grant Program, totaling \$17,016: Mad River Glen for Historic District nomination (\$7,920), Warren Blair Barn restoration/preservation project (\$7,116), and update Warren's Historic District Register to include the Timber Crib dam (\$1,980).
- Obtained a second technical assistance grant through the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program in support of the MRV Trails Collaborative.
- Submitted a \$15k consortia grant application to undertake a baseline economic analysis of the MRV through the VT Dept. of Economic, Housing & Community Development's Municipal Planning Grant (MPG) program.
- Provided grant writing assistance and letters of support to various groups that applied for grants, such as Friends of the Mad River (National Life River Restoration Program), Town of Warren (Transportation Enhancement Grant), Town of Fayston (VYCC Trail Transportation Enhancement Program), Mad River Path Assoc. (New England Grass Roots Environmental Fund, FP&R's Recreation Trail Grant, VYCC Trail Transportation Enhancement Program), Central VT Regional Planning Commission (HUD Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Project, VVDH Food Systems Planning Grant), Mad River Food Hub (VT Specialty Crop Block Grant Program, VHCB Farm Viability Enhancement Program, VT Sustainable Jobs Fund, USDA Rural Business Enterprise

Grant Program, Agency of Ag's Agricultural Innovation Center Infrastructures Development Program).

### **Selectboard Funding Forum**

MRVPD organized the sixth annual Three Town Selectboard Meeting in November. The Valley-wide meeting proved to be an effective means for local groups and organizations to present their annual funding requests and for coordination between the three Selectboards.

### **Data**

As specified by its Memorandum of Understanding, MRVPD maintains a database and develops an annual data report. The updated Valley Data Report is available at [www.mrvpd.org](http://www.mrvpd.org).

### **Energy**

MRVPD developed a five-part MRV Renewable Energy Discussion presentation series focusing on: Local Energy History & The Foundation for our Energy Future, Residential & Community Solar Projects, Financing Energy Projects & VT's Energy Plan, Biomass, and Energy Conservation, Efficiency, & Weatherization. Summaries and presentations are available at [www.mrvpd.org](http://www.mrvpd.org).

### **Recreation**

MRVPD hosted a third Mad River Valley Trails Summit designed to enhance networking and connections between MRV trail organizations. The Trail Summits spurred the creation of the MRV Trails Collaborative, focusing on developing a trail inventory, MRV-wide trail map, and coordinated trail projects. This work will continue through 2012 with the help of a technical assistance grant recently received from the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program..

### **Conservation**

MRVPD serves as a key partner in the Forest, Wildlife, & Communities planning initiative, focused on creating a coordinated approach to wildlife and forestland conservation through assisting in conservation efforts across town boundaries and providing mapping data, planning information and guidance that could benefit landowners and local conservation planning efforts. In the past year the project has refined wildlife habitat maps, developed a suite of non-regulatory tools, and coordinating discussions between the towns' CC, PC, DRB, and SB. Three grants have been received to further the efforts, including landowner outreach, development of a conservation planning manual, and development of town build-out analysis. Build-out analysis and coordinated maps have been created for the three MRV towns..

### **Mad River Path**

The Steering Committee continues to hold the Path as one of its top priorities. MRVPD attends Path Board meetings, holds a seat on the Land Owner Committee, and provides general assistance, especially in regards to working on specific properties, fundraising opportunities, securing grants, and exploring opportunities for collaboration with municipalities.

**UVM Course**

Now in its third year, the MRV served as the focus of a fall UVM Service Learning Class entitled Local Community Initiatives. Twenty UVM students took active roles in MRV projects addressing a variety of essential community issues. The students broke into groups with resident partners focusing on four projects throughout the semester: Compost Power, Waitsfield Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) Program, Mad Rive Valley Health Center, and MRV Solar Farm. Final reports and presentations are available at [www.mrvpd.org](http://www.mrvpd.org).

**Budget**

For FY13, MRVPD requests level funding at \$21,010 from all four of its funders, Fayston, Waitsfield, Warren, and Sugarbush. A seven voting member Steering Committee, consisting of a Selectboard member and Planning Commissioner from each town and a representative from the Mad River Chamber of Commerce, oversee MRVPD activities. Representatives from Sugarbush and the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) serve ex-officio. Meetings are open to the public and are usually held the third Thursday of each month at the General Wait House in Waitsfield at 7pm. The Executive Director, Joshua Schwartz, can be reached at 496-7173 or [mrvpd@madriver.com](mailto:mrvpd@madriver.com). Additional information may be found at MRVPD's website: [www.mrvpd.org](http://www.mrvpd.org).

**Mad River Valley Planning District Steering Committee**

Jared Cadwell (Fayston), Chair  
Jim Sanford (Warren), Vice Chair  
Chuck Martel (Fayston)  
Bob Ackland (Warren)  
Bill Parker (Waitsfield)  
Steve Shea (Waitsfield)  
Jim Halavonich (MRV Chamber)  
Margo Wade(Sugarbush)  
Laurie Emery (CVRPC)

Respectfully Submitted,  
Joshua Schwartz, Executive Director