



# MAD RIVER VALLEY

## RECREATION DISTRICT

APRIL 2018







# 1 Introduction





## What is The MRVRD Strategic Plan?

The Mad River Valley Recreation District Strategic Plan is a 3-5 year plan that will guide the future growth and direction of the recreation district. The Strategic Plan represents the outcome of a six-month process through which the organization explored its

vision, mission and key areas of focus, both internally and with its member communities and partners. The Strategic Plan is intended to empower the Mad River Valley Recreation District (MRVRD; “the District”) and its member communities to move forward with confidence in the development of recreation in the Valley more broadly and with capacity-building in the District more specifically.





The Strategic Plan provides guidance in four steps:

- 1. Documenting the need for and benefits of enhanced recreation in the Valley**
- 2. Developing a compelling and inspiring vision for the future of the MRVRD**
- 3. Crafting discrete, clear and action-oriented strategies to achieve the vision**
- 4. Providing relevant case studies and real-world solutions for carrying out strategies**

## **MRVRD Organizational Overview and History**

The MRVRD was incorporated by MOU in 1994 with a stated purpose to “provide for the recreation needs of the Member Towns through a program of planning, administration, programming, land acquisition, facility development and maintenance.” Member towns include Fayston, Warren, and Waitsfield. While not a member town, Moretown also contributes to the management of the recently acquired Mad River Park. Two board members are appointed by the Select Boards of each member town and serve 2 to 3-year terms. Up to three additional “at-large” members may be appointed by the MRVRD Board. As of Fiscal Year 2017, each member town contributes \$15,000 for a current annual budget for the organization of \$45,000. Historically, the primary function of the MRVRD has been to redistribute these municipal funds to support recreation in the Valley. It has done so by annually soliciting grant proposals from local recreation stakeholders who develop and maintain recreation trails, facilities, and programs that benefit the community. This Strategic Plan envisions an expanding role for the MRVRD in supporting and strengthening recreation in the Valley







Photo Credit: John Atkinson, Mad River Riders



Photo Credit: Joshua Schwartz







The all-volunteer organization consists of:

- Doug Bergstein, Warren
- Jeff Whittingham, Waitsfield
- Luke Foley, Warren
- Michael Nucci, Waitsfield – Mad River Park Field Committee Chair
- Whitney Phillips, Warren
- John Stokes, Fayston
- Chrissy Bellmyer, Fayston
- Alice Rodgers, Warren
- Liza Walker, Waitsfield





# THE RECREATION DISTRICT MODEL

The recreation district model is relatively unique in VT, but is more common nationally. It is a highly effective and lauded service delivery model that maximizes financial and physical resources and minimizes duplication of services by sharing recreation responsibilities and support across municipalities. While there are only three in Vermont (MRVRD, Winooski Valley Parks District, and Wrightsville Beach Recreation District), none is a traditional recreation district like those successfully employed in California, Colorado, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, and Oregon. These traditional districts typically undertake the management of an array of recreational resources and programs in a multi-town area, including public lands and even golf courses or marinas. The MRVRD MOU envisions and enables more traditional recreation district, though, until recently, the MRVRD has served a more narrow set of objectives, primarily grant funding. The recreation district model presents

a opportunity for the MRVRD to expand its scope, and to capitalize on the legacy of Valley cooperation and collaboration to provide more expansive and efficient support of recreation in the Mad River Valley.

## Why use a Recreation District?

- Unites community recreation under one independent organization
- Provides greater transparency and oversight
- Eliminates redundancies (programs, brochures, communications, etc.) and creates potential for cost savings
- Provides long-term stability
- Reduces confusion and provides one-stop shopping for residents
- Creates Equity in community
- Provides ability to “house” other initiatives
- In line with the spirit of recent consolidation and unification efforts in VT







# **2** Need & Benefit Assessment



A scenic landscape of a river valley. In the foreground, three kayakers are on a gravelly shore next to a calm river. The kayakers are wearing red, yellow, and orange gear. The river reflects the surrounding greenery and the blue sky. In the background, there are rolling mountains covered in dense forests, some of which are showing autumn colors. The sky is clear and blue.

## Current Recreational Activities

The MRV is endowed with extensive and high quality recreational resources including trails for hiking, biking, skiing, two ski resorts, swimming holes, a skating rink, and more. There are over 50 miles of mapped trails in the Valley, and top-notch programs and events for youth and adults. These recreational resources consist of a mix of privately owned and public lands and facilities, many of which are sustained by local non-profit organizations

and volunteers, with only a modest taxpayer investment. However, an even greater investment in recreation would positively impact the quality of life in the Valley and be instrumental in making the Valley a premier four-season destination in New England. This condition limits the potential for recreation to meet the demand or sustain the Valley's future as a premier destination for outdoor recreation in Vermont.





Photo Credit: Mad River Riders

**Current Recreational Landscape:** Recreational opportunities in the MRV consist of diverse recreational assets supported by a significant social investment, in the form of volunteerism, philanthropy, and funding.

**Recreational Assets include the following:**

- Over 100 miles of mapped public recreational trails (Catamount Trail, Long Trail, VAST Trails, as well as local trails ) enjoyed by the public for hiking, trail running, dog walking, skiing, snowshoeing and mountain biking
- Two cross country ski areas and two ski resorts
- Mad River Park- six recreational fields now owned by the MRVRD
- Flemer Field, a town green used for youth and adult sports
- The Skatium, a privately owned, winter-only skating facility.
- Playgrounds and recreation fields at Waitsfield, Warren and Moretown elementary schools; and privately owned baseball fields at Couples Club

- Town forests in Waitsfield, Warren, Fayston and Moretown with trails and dispersed recreational opportunities
- 22,000 acres of state and national forestland available to the public
- Social and Capital Investments in recreation include:
  - Volunteer-operated youth sports programs such as Mad River Soccer Association and Mad River Valley Lacrosse
  - In-kind donations to MRV recreation include 2400 hrs in donated labor by the Mad River Riders for trail construction and maintenance.
  - More than \$145,000 in private donations enabling the MRVRD purchase of Mad River Park
  - State and Federal grants supporting public land acquisition and trail development
  - MRVRD board members dedication of 600+ hours securing the Mad River Park



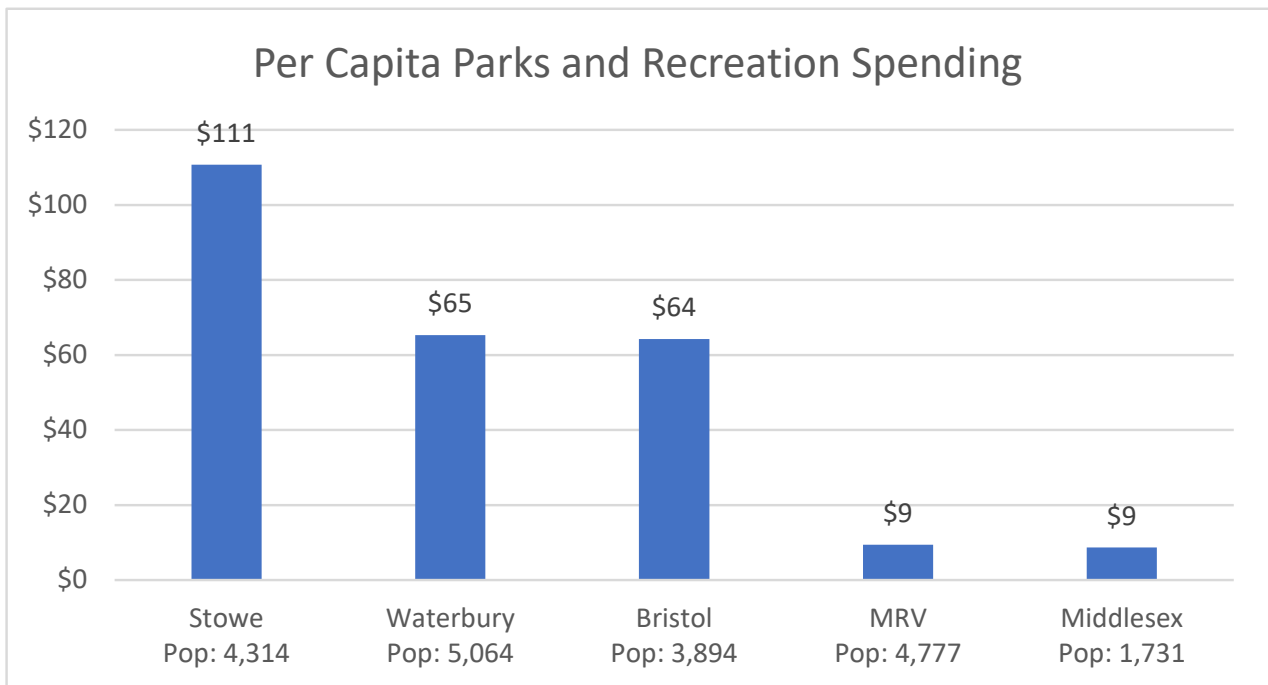


# Like Community Benchmarking

As the MRV recognizes and seeks to increase the economic benefits of recreation, it is essential to weigh its financial investment towards this outcome. Like it or not, the MRV “competes” with other Vermont communities to attract both visitors, second home owners, and employers—and recreation is a big reason why all three of these groups come to the Valley. Community benchmarking helps us understand our efforts relative to our neighbors and other similar communities to understand if we are investing enough in recreation. Looking at the numbers, the MRV is at the low end of the spectrum in terms of investment in recreation, spending about one tenth of the per capita amount spent in Stowe.

- Stowe
  - Population of 4,314
  - Staff of seven (Parks & Recreation Director, Program Director, Administrative Assistant, Parks Superintendent, Parks Foreman, Arena Superintendent, and Arena Foreman)

- 2017 Parks and Recreation Budget: \$477,675
- Waterbury
  - Population of 5,064
  - Full Time Rec Director, Seasonal Staff
  - 2017 Parks and Recreation Budget: \$330,535
- Bristol
  - Population of 3,894
  - Rec Department of 3 + 2 (Recreation Director, Recreation Assistant, Potter in Residence, Youth Center Director, Youth Center Program Director)
  - 2017 Parks and Recreation Budget: \$250,195
- Mad River Valley
  - Population of 4,777
  - No Rec Staff
  - 2017 Recreation Budget: \$45,000
- Middlesex
  - Population of 1,731
  - Part Time Rec Director
  - 2017 Parks and Recreation Budget: \$15,015





## Current Recreational Landscape and Community Mandate

The Mad River Valley is renowned for its exceptional recreational opportunities, set within a spectacular landscape and supported by an energized community. Recent town planning processes and community discussions have recognized recreation's significant contributions to the economy and quality of life in the community and has called for enhancing recreation assets and opportunities in the MRV. These include:

- 2014 MRV Economic Study
- Vision and Vitality Series
- Valley Futures Network
- Valley Vision 2020
- Valley Forum Series
- Vermont Downtown Action Team Report
- MRV Moves Plan
- MRVRD Community Survey
- 2014 Town Leadership Meeting
- Select Board Discussions
- MRV Residents!!

## Mad River Valley Values Trails and Recreation

Trails are one of the most valued recreational amenities in the Mad River Valley. Existing residents, potential new residents, visitors, as well as employers have placed a premium on having trails and recreation. For example, the 2015 National Association of Realtors Community Preference Survey found that 80% of Americans consider having trails and places to take a walk one of their top priorities when deciding where they would like to live. This ranked higher than even “high quality public schools,” which was selected by 74% of survey respondents. This desire doesn't stop with new permanent residents either—second home owners also value these resources. For example, all Kelsey & Norden Resort Real Estate Surveys have identified trails as the #1 amenity for second-home and resort communities, noting that “all aspects of the resort experience must be connected by visible and accessible pathways and trails.”

Confirming findings from the Mad River Valley Economic Study and Economic Vitality Series Meetings, the MRV Moves community survey found that trails are a critical component of recreational tourism in the Mad River Valley. 78 percent of survey visitors reported “the availability of recreation trails and opportunities to hike, bike, walk, ski and snowshoe” were important for their decision to visit the MRV. A full 34 percent of visitors reported these opportunities as the deciding factor in their destination choice. The MRV Economic study found that these visits motivated by trail resource are very beneficial to the local economy .[Day visitors to the MRV were found to spend

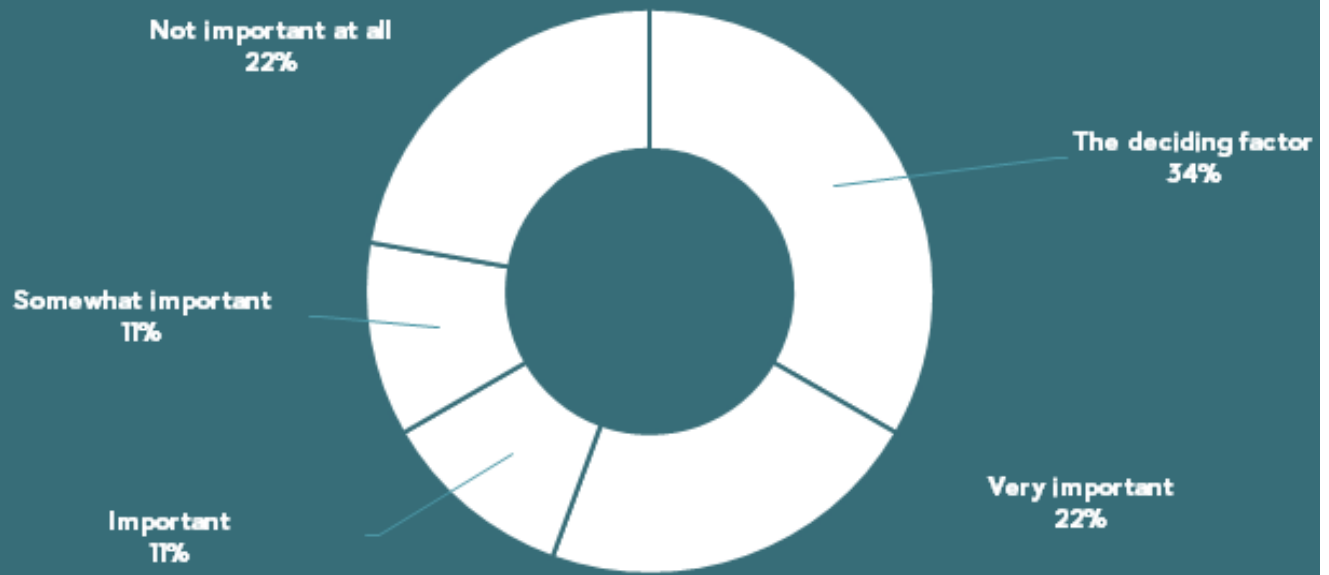
\$70.14 per day and overnight visitors were found to spend \$176.98 per day.]







## HOW IMPORTANT WERE TRAILS IN YOUR DECISION TO VISIT THE MRV?





# THE BENEFITS OF RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

Discussions of the benefits of parks, trails, and recreation are often narrowly focused on the direct benefits to individual recreationist. However, the benefits of vibrant recreational resources also positively impact many aspects of community living. Broadly, improved recreational resources can make our communities more livable; improve the economy through tourism and civic improvement; preserve and restore open space; and provide opportunities for physical activity to improve fitness and mental health. When seen as a whole, the evidence about the far-reaching benefits of recreational resources is compelling. Given the minimal public investment dedicated to recreation as compared to other community undertakings like transportation improvements or development projects, it is time to do more for recreation.

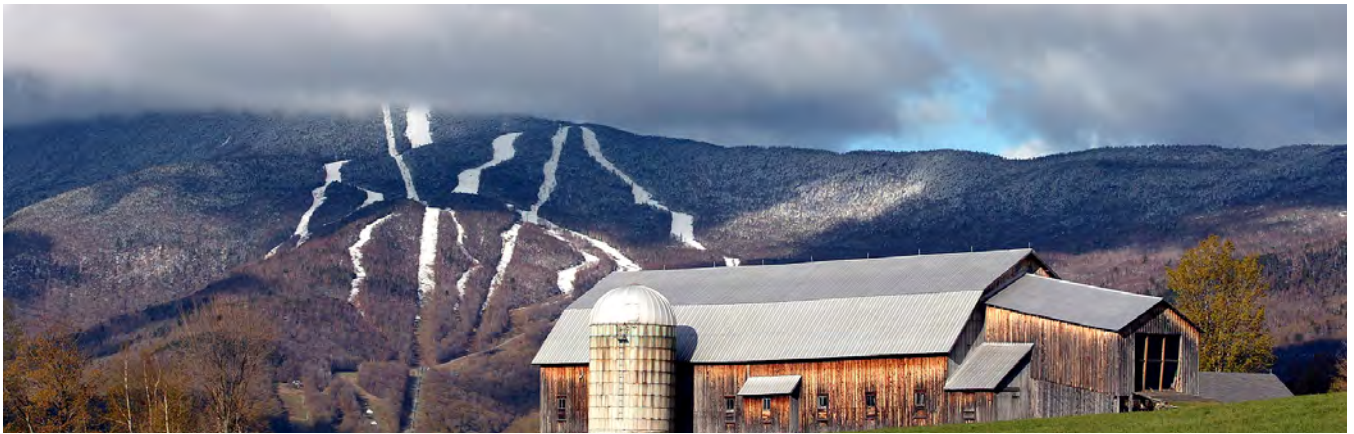
# WHY PARKS, OPEN SPACE, TRAILS AND RECREATION?

Because they:

- Preserve and restore open space and natural areas
- Provide opportunities for physical activity to improve fitness and mental health
- Encourage community transformation and raise quality of life
- Build and support community pride and identity
- Enhance economic revitalization and sustainability through tourism and civic improvement
- Make our communities more livable by providing transportation and other community benefits





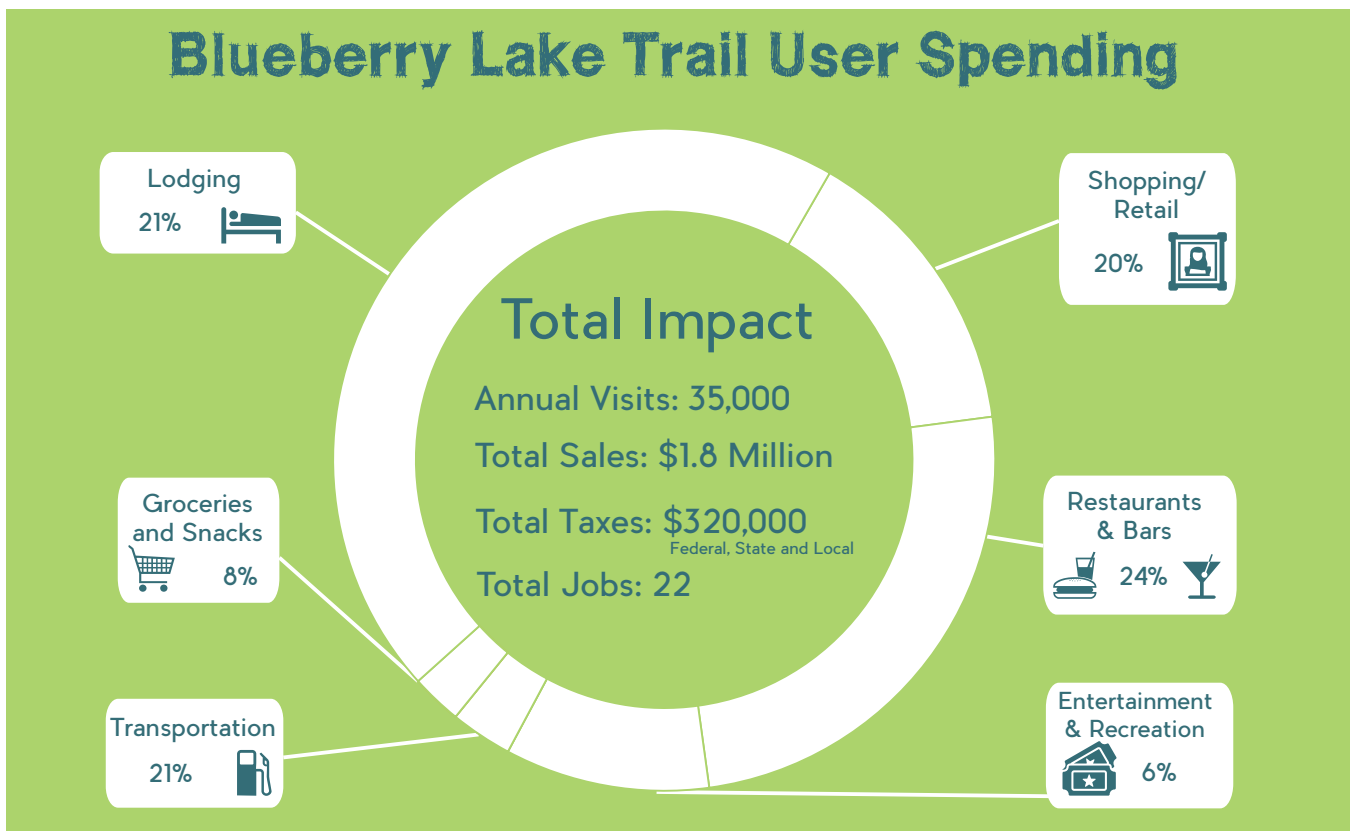




# Economic Impact of Trails and Recreation

Trails and recreation facilities are important community amenities that help to spur economic development. From home owners choosing to live along a trail to tourists who choose their destinations based on the availability of trails and recreation, the Mad River Valley's trails and recreation system is comprised of important

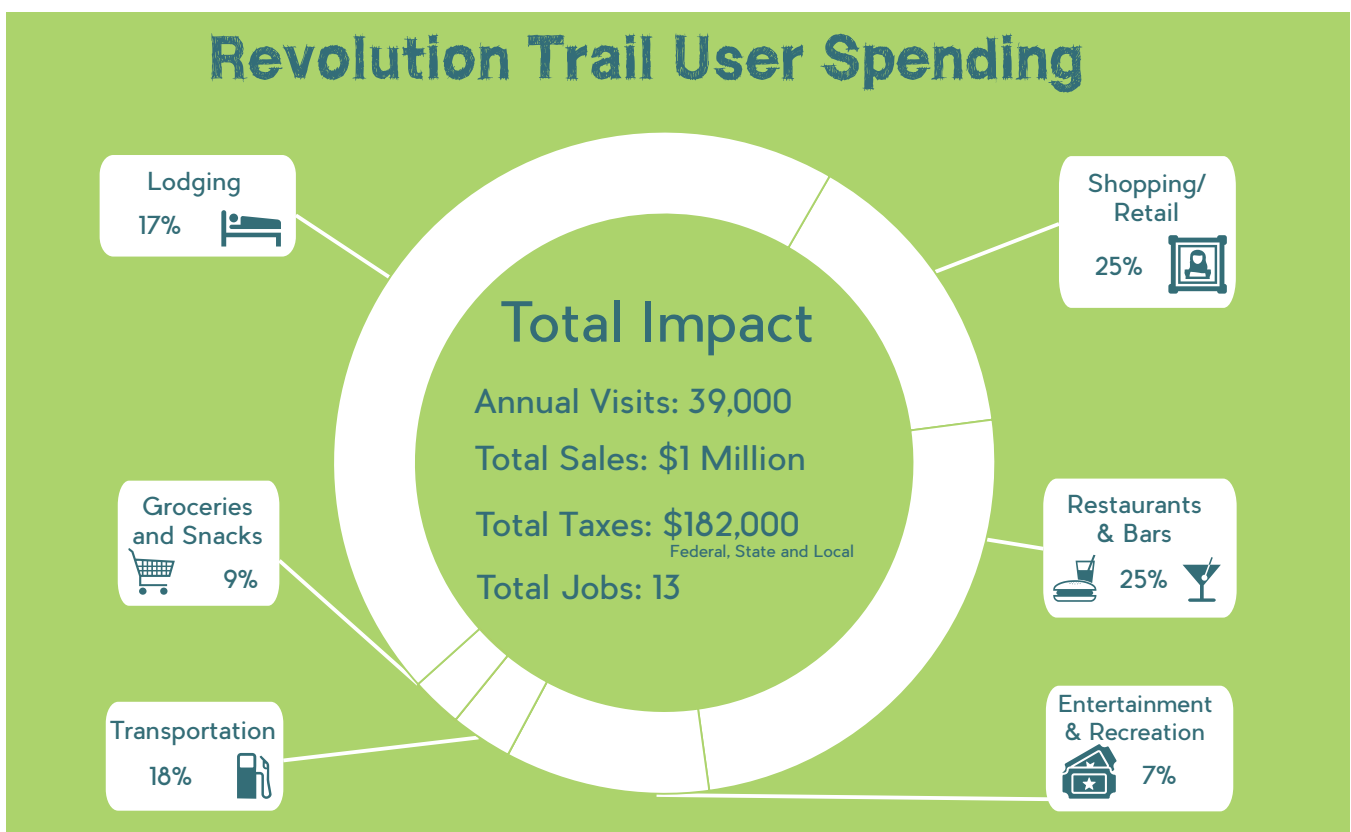
community facilities that attract both people and dollars. The economic effects of these assets are sometimes readily apparent (as in the case of trailside businesses) and are sometimes more subtle, like when a company decides to move to a particular community because of such amenities, but mounting new evidence shows an almost universal positive connection between well-designed trails and recreation facilities and important economic development indicators.





The economic benefits of just a few small portions of the MRV trail system—the Blueberry Lake Trails, the Revolution Trail, and the Waitsfield Village Path – have been found to be very significant to the local MRV economy, and these represent just a fraction of the region’s trail assets. Spending associated with the Blueberry Lake trail system alone is estimated to contribute approximately \$1.9 million to the Mad River Valley economy each year, generating approximately \$340,000

in federal, state, and local taxes and supporting approximately 24 jobs. Even as an incomplete path, the Waitsfield Village Path is estimated to contribute approximately \$190,000 to the Mad River Valley economy each year, generating approximately \$34,000 in federal, state, and local taxes and supporting approximately 2.5 jobs.

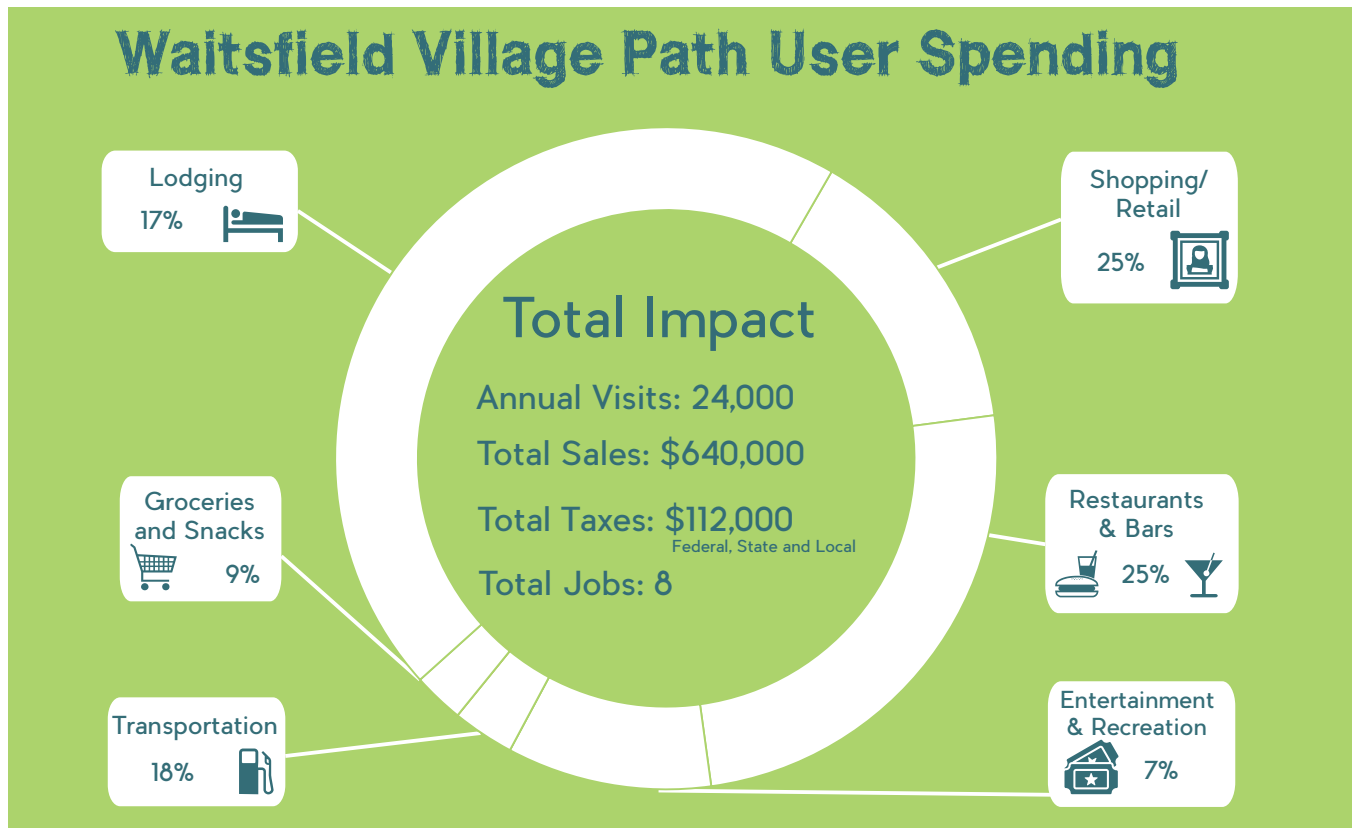




Economic benefits don't stop with trails either. Economic impact studies of recreational assets elsewhere have also been found to provide substantial benefits to communities. In College Station, Texas, a two-day Regional High School Tennis Championship with 30 Teams and 171 Participants was found to generate \$41,993 in Total Economic Impact in the local community. This is based on two overnight stays and average spending of \$47.71 per person per day. The ASA Men's State Softball Tournament, also in College

Station, was found to generate \$141,451 in Total Economic Impact. This was based on 38 Teams and 570 Participants for a two-day tournament (2 overnight stays) and average spending of \$187.23 per person per day.

With the newly acquired recreational site at Mad River Park and the MRVRD's intention to broaden its scope, the MRV has the potential to host recreational events, including tournaments, which could be an economic boon to area businesses.





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A scenic autumn landscape featuring a grassy path on the right, tall reeds on the left, and people cycling in the distance. The scene is bathed in warm, golden light, suggesting a late afternoon or early morning setting. The reeds are tall and thin, with some brown leaves scattered on the grass. The path is well-trodden and leads into the distance. In the background, there are more trees and a glimpse of a mountain range under a clear sky. The overall mood is peaceful and active.

# 3 MRVRD Vision Framework





The MRVRD's vision guides the future growth and direction of the recreation district. By developing this vision framework, the organization will make the beliefs and governing principles of the MRVRD clear to the greater community, as well as establish the

direction of the organization for its own staff, participants, and volunteers. Ultimately, the vision framework will help organizational leaders and decision makers determine where to spend time, human capital, and money in the Valley.



The vision for Mad River Recreation District establishes the overarching aspirations for the organization in the long term. The vision of the MRVRD is:

*“Enhancing the Mad River Valley’s way of life through recreation.”*

The mission of an organization describes how the organization is going to execute the vision and why the vision is important. The mission of the MRVRD is:

*“To facilitate, enhance, and create recreational opportunities throughout the Mad River Valley that promote community vitality, physical fitness, appreciation for the outdoors, and a high quality of life.”*



Photo Credit: John Atkinson, Mad River Riders



Acting as a recreation facilitator, convener, and planner, the MRVRD will execute its mission and achieve its vision. The MRVRD will build upon the decades of projects and organizations dedicated to recreation in the Valley, and work to connect and better support the efforts of these organizations. This approach reflects the MRVRD's commitment to respecting and capitalizing upon the Valley's unique climate of municipal and organizational cooperation with the support of the MRVRD individual organizations will be able to move forward with confidence knowing their short-term projects will achieve the long-term goals and aspirations of the community.

A vision framework cannot advance on its own, however. It needs a structure from which it can guide the future actions of the organization. The "Key Focus Areas" are that structure. Building from the themes discovered during the strategic planning process and recognizing the existing baseline conditions described in Chapter 2, the Key Focus Areas articulate the critical areas of action that will help the MRVRD achieve its vision and mission. The Key Focus Areas are as follows.



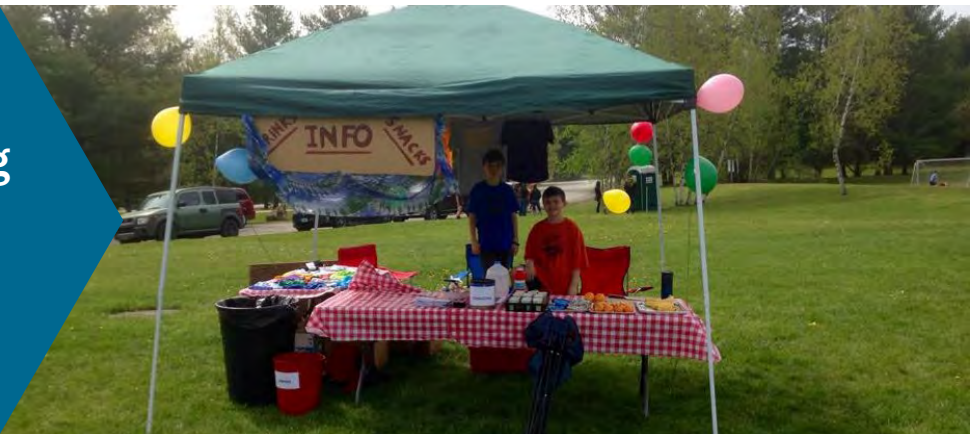


# Trails



Photo Credit: John Atkinson, Mad River Riders

# Programming



# Events



## Parks & Facilities



## Needs Assessment & Planning

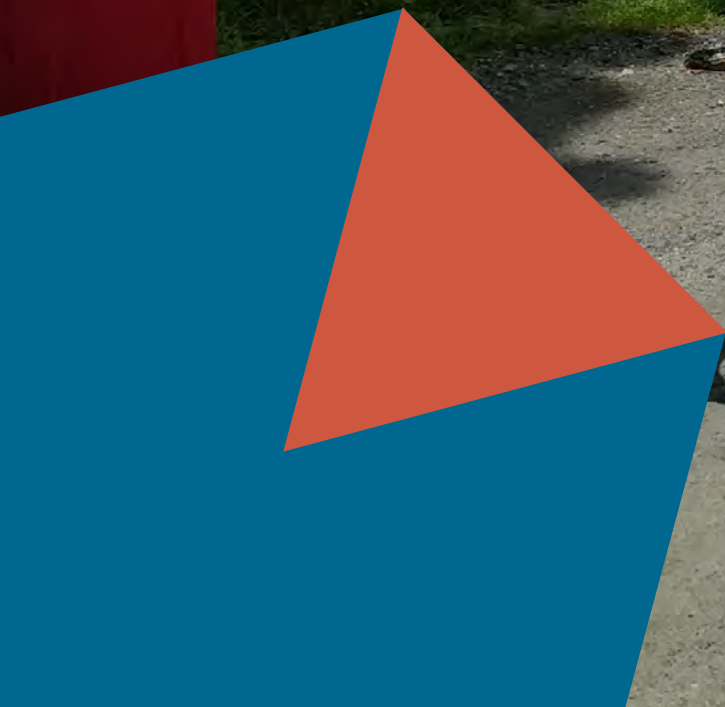


## Grants






# 4 Initiatives and Actions



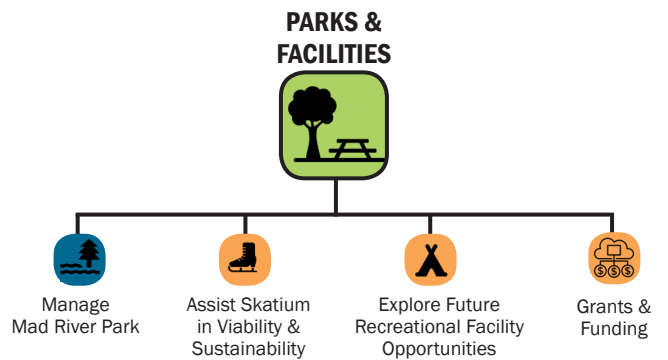
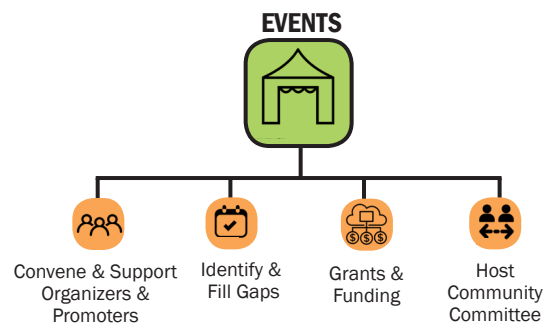
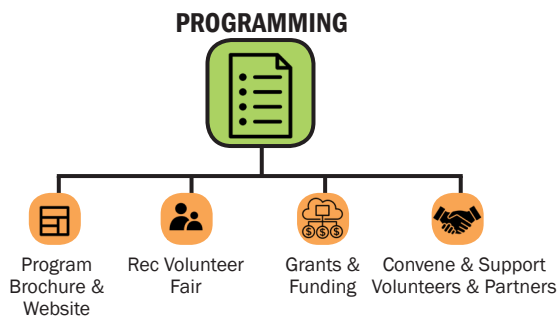
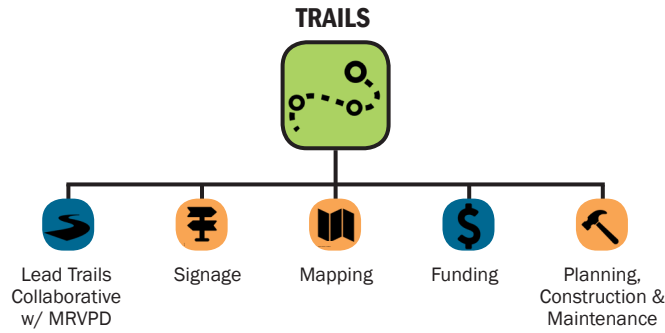
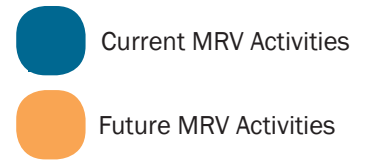




This chapter describes initiatives within each of the Key Focus Areas that will help the MRVRD achieve its vision. Initiatives were developed and prioritized through the needs assessment and strategic planning process and may represent a one-time strategy or recurring/ongoing effort of the organization. Initiatives represent overarching activities of the MRVRD that will result in new recreational outcomes or

“deliverables” in the valley. Discrete, clear and implementable actions have been identified to facilitate completion of each initiative. The Initiative and Actions Matrix included at the end of this chapter identifies the “Champion” who will lead the effort within the MRVRD, the timeline for completion, the frequency of the initiative or action, the partners involved, and the relative cost of the initiative or action.













## LEAD TRAILS COLLABORATIVE WITH MAD RIVER VALLEY PLANNING DISTRICT

Work with MRVPD to facilitate collaboration and communication across trail organizations in the Valley to sustain and enhance trail-based recreation:

- Help convene meetings of Trail Collaborative to identify next initiatives to advance trail recreation objectives, such as MRV Moves
- Help develop MOU to clarify roles and responsibilities of various trail stakeholders in the MRV

## SIGNAGE

Support Trails Collaborative initiative to establish unified signage and trailhead kiosks in the Mad River Valley:

- Assist MRVPD to secure municipal funding and identify alternative sources of funding to complete the project
- Work with trail stakeholders to finalize design and installation of kiosks and the development of maintenance plan going forward.







## MAPPING

Support Trails Collaborative initiative to develop, disseminate and promote an updated, singular recreation map identifying a public trail network in the MRV as well as additional recreation assets and opportunities in the MRV:

- Work with MRVPD and stakeholders to gather data, design map and plan for production and dissemination of paper and digital map
- Join with trail stakeholders to engage business sponsorships to support future map updates

## PLANNING, CONSTRUCTION, AND MAINTENANCE

Ensure thoughtful, sustainable and balanced trail development and maintenance in the MRV:

- Review funding applications from stakeholders with consideration for Valley-wide trail objectives and environmental standards..
- Encourage stakeholders to coordinate efforts in sourcing funding, volunteers and other resources needed to expand and maintain the MRV trail network.
- Ensure MOU addresses respective roles and responsibilities of trail stakeholders in the MRV.





## RECREATION PROGRAM BROCHURE & WEBSITE

Act as a clearing-house for information on recreation programs and opportunities in the Mad River Valley

- Gather and consolidate information from program providers for easy, one step access by the community. Consider and utilize the most effective approach, including:
  - online options (facebook, website, social media, other?)
  - publication put out once a year (twice/thrice a year?)
  - Valley Reporter (insert?) once a year
- Help promote events and activities. Review and manage development of brochure and website

## LINKING VOLUNTEERS WITH RECREATION STAKEHOLDERS

Organize, co-host or promote events that introduce community members to volunteer opportunities and allows recreation stakeholders an opportunity to “advertise” what they do.

- Utilize social media to promote events needing volunteers
- Work with partners to host recreation volunteer celebration or fair (close to 70 local coaches/volunteers in youth sports alone!)







## SUPPORT AND FACILITATE ORGANIZERS AND PROMOTERS

Assist partners or organizations that want to provide recreation opportunities and events in the MRV.

- Offer advice and support
- Connect them with available resources, including MRV Chamber of Commerce
- Help form or support event host committee

## GRANTS AND FUNDING

Utilize our grant program to incentivize new, creative recreation events that engage the community and attract visitors

## IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES FOR EVENTS

Work with partners to promote events that utilize and are compatible with our existing resources (Mad River Park, trails, etc).

- Work with the Parks and Facilities section and the Mad River Park Field Committee to identify potential events or tournaments for Mad River Park
- Evaluate scale and feasibility of proposed event to ascertain economic and community benefits or potential impacts on resource.





# Parks and Facilities

## MANAGE MAD RIVER PARK

Work with Mad River Park Field Committee to provide and manage high quality recreation fields for the community:

- Cultivate and establish Mad River Park use while ensuring appropriate leases are in place.
- Ensure fields are properly maintained and manage field improvement projects.
- Confirm users are acting in accordance with their lease.
- Maintain Mad River Park budget.
- Address all complaints related to MRP, work with Select boards and other stakeholders to rectify.
- Maintain compliance with Town of Waitsfield, permits, grants and Facility Management Plan.
- Update Mad River Park Facility Management Plan as needed.
- Explore cost savings measures for field maintenance, submit RFPs as appropriate.
- Work with the Events Section and the Programming Section and evaluate potential events or new users for Mad River Park.

## CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS AT MAD RIVER PARK

Work with stakeholders and the Mad River Park Field Committee to ensure construction projects are completed.

- Secure State and local permitting (submit applications, attend hearings and address concerns).
- Coordinate with and provide updates to stakeholders.
- Certify construction is performed in accordance with the permit.
- Enlist qualified volunteers to assemble kiosk and storage shed







## EXPLORE FUTURE RECREATIONAL FACILITY OPPORTUNITIES

Explore and consider future opportunities to facilitate, manage or purchase additional recreational facilities

- Potential new facilities could include: fields, running tracks, pump tracks, campgrounds, recreation centers, swimming pools, volleyball/basketball/tennis courts, horseshoe pits, bowling alleys, etc.
  - Work with the Needs Assessment and Planning Section and the Programming Section to identify needs, potential locations, stakeholders and champions.
  - Identify challenges (funding shortfalls, construction, required permits, property tax issues etc.).
  - Cultivate relationships with stakeholders and property owners.
  - Work with the Grants Section to identify funding opportunities.

Evaluate potential cost savings in management of existing facilities through sharing resources, skills.

- Convene existing facility managers of trails, parks, recreation fields to evaluate broad maintenance needs and consider opportunities for greater efficiencies



# Needs Assessment and Planning

## ANNUAL STATE OF RECREATION REPORT

Produce annual report that documents public input, reviews progress on strategic plan, accounts for district funds received and disbursed, and plans for the year ahead.

- Record which actions have been implemented and which actions are ongoing.
- Document feedback received that year.
- Circulate State of Recreation Report to each town before Town Meeting

## COMMUNITY-WIDE RECREATION SURVEYS

Conduct a recreation survey once every 3-5 years to provide clarity on the ongoing recreational demands of the community and facilitate community engagement.

- Create survey questions designed to assess public opinion regarding current recreational opportunities and to determine future needs.







## POST EVENT/PROGRAM FOLLOW UPS

Facilitate Post Program and Event surveys to enhance feedback from program organizers, event attendees and to ensure public accountability.

- Design survey questions to solicit feedback that helps to improve future events and programs and to ensure a positive experience.

## FACILITATE COOPERATION AND COLLABORATION ACROSS PARTNERS

Serving as the Valley's primary recreation facilitator, convener, and planner the MRVRD will facilitate cooperation and collaboration across partners.

- Poll partnering organizations to assess changing public needs and priorities that they are seeing.
- Conduct Focus Group and Stakeholder interviews.
- Invite stakeholders to relevant MRVRD meetings.
- Invite Selectboard feedback and direction.
- Set action items and agendas based on feedback from partner organizations and Selectboards



# Grants

## FUND STRATEGIC PARTNERS

Provide financial support to local recreation stakeholders as well as initiatives that provide recreation opportunities and facilities in the Mad River Valley.

- Annually request funds from the three towns, solicit proposals from local recreation stakeholders and award grants
- Review grant process to ensure accountability and equitability
- Maximize use our public funds - look for opportunities for efficiency

## GRANT WRITING SUPPORT

Identify opportunities other funds (private, state, federal grants) in order to leverage municipal funds in support of recreation projects in the Mad River Valley.

- Convene with partners and identify eligible projects and grant resources
  - Planning
  - Trails
  - Maintenance
- Take the lead or assist local partner in writing of grants .





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# 5 MRVRD Operations





## Charting Our Course & Measuring our Success

The MRVRD recognizes the critical importance of monitoring its annual progress, ensuring outreach, and providing accountability to its Selectboards and the public. While this public accountability has always been central to the

MRVRD's operations—the founding MOU calls for an Annual Report presented at a district meeting and published in the Town Reporter of each town before their Town Meeting—the District wants to ensure its progress is well documented as the organization is now entering a period of expanding operations with the recent acquisition of the Mad River Park and the other projects it has planned for the future.



To document public input, review annual progress, and plan for the year ahead, the MRVRD will produce an annual “State of Recreation Report” whose development will facilitate two-way communication between the public, MRVRD partner organizations, member town Selectboards, and the District. In addition to accounting for district funds received and disbursed during the preceding fiscal year—which will satisfy MOU and Bylaw requirements—the State of Recreation Report will track progress on implementation of the strategic plan and any future action plans, and will complete all of the Needs Assessment and Planning actions identified in this Strategic Plan. The State of Recreation Report will record which actions have been completed under each Key Focus Area—Trails, Programs, Events, Parks & Facilities, Grants, and Needs Assessment & Planning—and which actions are still ongoing or planned for the upcoming year. The State of Recreation Report will also document public feedback received that year.

Public feedback into MRVRD operations will be gathered through a number of sources, which may include:

- **Community-Wide Surveys:** One of the planned MRVRD Planning and Needs Assessment Strategies is to conduct community-wide recreation surveys. The MRVRD has conducted community surveys in the past, and will continue to conduct a

recreation survey once every 3-5 years to provide clarity on the ongoing recreational demands of the community. Questions will center around respondents’ vision for future development in the Key Focus Areas.

- **Post Program/Event Surveys:** One of the planned MRVRD Planning and Needs Assessment Strategies is to facilitate Post Program or Event Surveys. This tool can help enhance feedback from program participants and event attendees and ensure public accountability, particularly for those programs and events MRVRD funds. These surveys will be conducted in conjunction with the partnering program organizations and event organizers. The MRVRD will provide guidance and reminders, host the surveys on Google forms, and share raw results back with the partner organizations, coaches and organizers. The partner organizations and organizers will have responsibility for disseminating the surveys and compiling the results and major takeaways from the feedback.
- **Trails/Program/Events/Partner Meetings:** Given the importance of the MRVRD’s partnering organizations, the Strategic Plan proposes a bi-annual convening of the partnering organizations for Trails, Programs, and Events. These organizations provide an excellent conduit to residents and the end users of the trails, programs, and facilities,





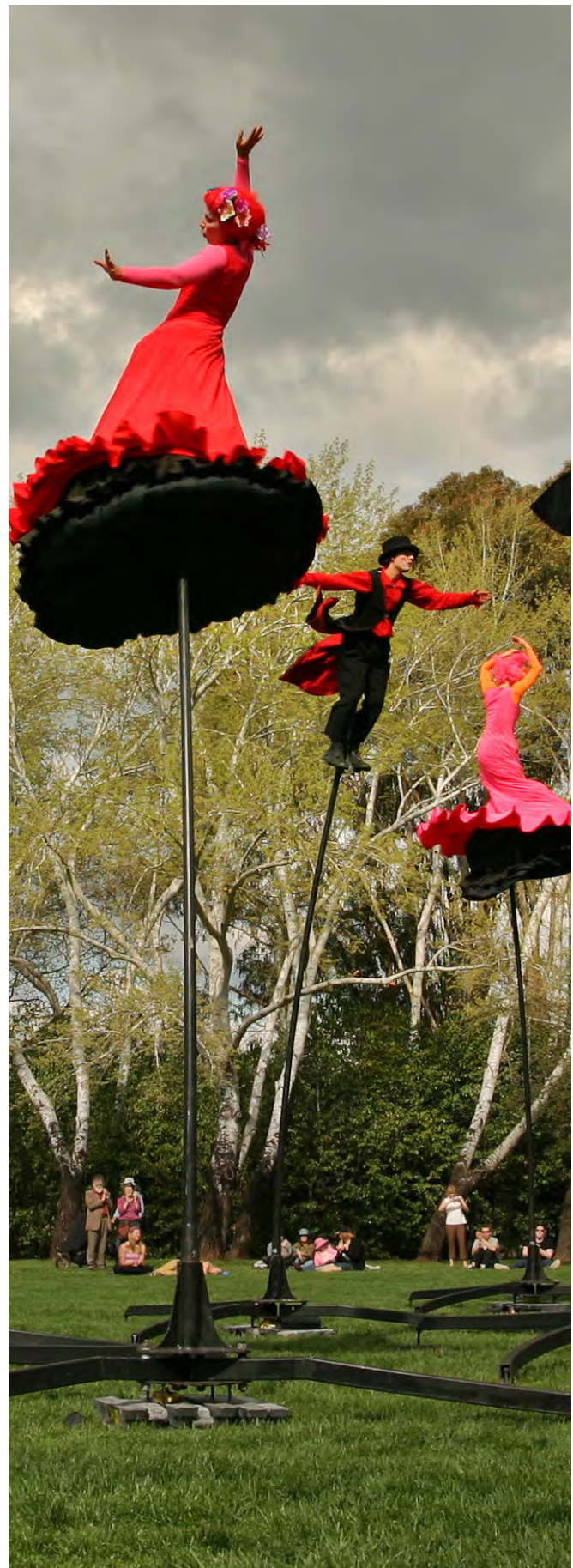
They will be polled regarding the changing public needs and priorities they are seeing from their membership. These meetings will also document the progress each group has made over the past year, and help coordinate and direct the projects on deck for the coming year. The meetings will include non-profit, volunteer, government and private recreation providers (Sugarbush, Mad River Glen, Ole's Cross Country Ski Center, etc.).

- **Focus Groups/Stakeholder Interviews:**

Conducting a series of Focus Groups/Stakeholder Interviews related to each Key Focus Area is another way the MRVRD could facilitate public engagement. By inviting stakeholders to scheduled MRVRD board meetings, the District could facilitate focus group discussions that allow for extensive interaction, follow-up questions, and observation of thoughts, attitudes, behaviors, and opinions from those who know and love these resources most.

- **Selectboard Feedback and Direction:**

Town representatives to District's board should meet with their respective Selectboards to exchange information and updates which will better inform the district's efforts, assist with implementation, and create accountability. This should occur on as needed basis but no less than annually in order to provide interim updates, receive feedback, review the proposed budget, and preview the draft State of Recreational Report..A fall meeting should focus on reviewing the draft State of Recreation Report findings and MRVRD's proposed budget in advance of the Town Leadership Meeting (typically November).



# MRVRD Operations Manual

The following outline describes the steps the MRVRD Board will take to facilitate its meetings, notices and hearings in accordance with the incorporating MOU and the District's Bylaws.

- Regular meetings
  - Typically occur on the third Tuesday of each month
  - Regular meetings must be noticed at least 48 hours in advance (24 hours in advance of a special meeting) with a meeting announcement and an agenda posted in each member town's municipal office and in at least two other designated public places in the municipality.
  - Minutes must be distributed to the legislative bodies of the member municipalities. Minutes will also be posted to the MRVRD website. This will typically happen within 14 days of the meeting.
  - Members may participate via phone or video conference, but a least one member needs to be physically present at the noticed location to maintain compliance with open meeting law requirements.
- Meeting with Selectboards
  - MRVRD board members should attend regularly scheduled Selectboard meetings at least once a year.
  - A meeting in the Spring or Summer meeting should be more check-in oriented, focusing on interim updates from both MRVRD and the Selectboards.
  - A fall meeting should focus on reviewing the draft State of Recreation Report findings and MRVRD's proposed budget in advance of the Town Leadership Meeting (typically November).
- Notices and minutes of Selectboard proceedings should be sufficient for MRVRD/Selectboard interactions.
- Budgeting
  - The operating budget should show comparative figures for estimated income and expenditures of the current fiscal year and actual income and expenditures of the preceding fiscal year. It should also include all projected costs associated with the operation of programs, maintenance of facilities, staffing, and related costs exclusive of land acquisition, facility development and other capital costs necessitating long term indebtedness.
  - The MRVRD must hold a budget hearing to present the proposed budget to the community and invite discussion thereon. The hearing can be held concurrently with the Town Leadership Meeting, which would create efficiencies for the member town Selectboards and the public.
  - The hearing must be warned by a notice in a newspaper of general circulation in member towns (Valley Reporter) at least fifteen days prior to the meeting. The notice must contain a summary of the proposed budget, and the legislative body of each
  - Member town must be sent a copy of the proposed budget at least fifteen days prior to such hearing.
  - After the public hearing, MRVRD must finalize the budget based on feedback from the public and forward a copy, along with the amount to be raised from the member Towns, to the Board of Selectmen in each member Town no later than December 15 of each year.











# 6 Case Studies







## The recreation district model

The recreation district model, though relatively rare in New England, is popular in western communities. Washington state has 86 such districts and California has 64. These districts include towns, surrounding unincorporated areas, and whole counties to plan, manage, and utilize an area's recreational facilities.

Generally with professional expertise, these districts provide regional coordination of an area's resources to limit duplication and inefficiencies of recreational activities and facilities. Below, we provide case studies of three western recreation districts in communities similar to the Mad River Valley: rural micro-regions with strong ties to recreation and a rural mountain lifestyle.





# ESTES VALLEY RECREATION & PARK DISTRICT

The Estes Valley Recreation & Park District (EVRPD) is located at the edge of Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado. The district includes the Town of Estes Park, the adjacent areas of Rocky Mountain National Park, and the surrounding unincorporated area, spanning Boulder and Larimer counties. The town's population is 6,362 and the entire district's varies from 10,800 to 11,600, depending on the year. As the district includes and is surrounded by Rocky Mountain National Park, annual visitation to district facilities is about 4 million.

The district was founded in 1955 as the Rocky Mountain Metropolitan Recreation District, to provide recreational facilities within its boundaries. The district's fundamental objective remains unchanged, although the mission now includes recreational programming and providing diverse recreational opportunities to visitors and residents of all ages, ability, and income levels.

The district manages and operates all the public recreational facilities in the town and the vicinity: two golf courses, a marina on Lake Estes, a soon-to-be completed community center, an aquatics center, campgrounds, parks, picnic areas, and trails. Stanley Park, a community park, also has a community garden that offers plots to the community and a local food pantry.

The citizens residing within the EVRPD elect a five-member Board of Directors. The board meets once a month and is responsible for the overall management and direction of the district. They oversee and appoint an executive director to lead the day to day operations of the district. That director manages a staff of 23. Most of the staff are assigned to specific recreational facilities such as the golf course or the marina. From there,

they coordinate the operations and programming of that facility. Small staffs manage all parks and trails, administrative duties, and maintenance of the facilities. The district recruits instructors and volunteer coaches to offer additional recreational programming. The full-time staff and program instructors are vital to the district's operations and make up 2/3 of the district's operating budget.

The district receives additional guidance and support from the Estes Valley Trails Committee (EVTC) and the Senior Advisory Committee. EVTC, formed in 1995, is an advisory committee that coordinates efforts between trail agencies, educates the public on trail projects, provides a forum for discussion around trails, and advises the district board and staff on trail use and regulations. The Senior Advisory Committee advocates for facilities and accommodations for seniors at EVRPD recreation facilities. The district's Senior Services Center offers classes, social hours, wellness clinics, and a community facility for the area's senior residents. The public is also invited to play an active role in the district. They are encouraged to attend all board meetings and offer comments and new business items.

The EVRPD is a special district with its own taxing authority. A portion of the property and ownership taxes from district residents in Boulder and Larimer Counties goes to the district. In the 2017 budget, that tax revenue made up of 36% of district revenue. That is an increase over previous years due to a public funding measure for the new community center. Fees, primarily from the golf courses and campgrounds, made up 41% of 2017 revenue. Intergovernmental funds, largely grants from the state, provide nearly all of the remaining revenue. Significant flooding in the area in 2013 has required improvements and upgrades to many recreational facilities, but much of the funding for those projects has come from grants. The district, with a key objective of financial viability and sustainability, maintains an operating reserve of 25% of the annual budget.









## SI VIEW METROPOLITAN PARKS DISTRICT

Si View Metropolitan Parks District is a recreation district located in the Snoqualmie Valley, 30 miles east of Seattle, in the foothills of the Cascades. The district includes the City of North Bend (pop. 6,000) and the surrounding unincorporated area, for a total population of about 25,000 and a land area of roughly 27 square miles. Within that, Si View Metro Parks owns an 11-acre community park and operates an additional 890 acres of parkland in the City of North Bend.

The district was founded in 2003 when King County discontinued operation of the Si View Pool and Community Center. In a ballot measure, the residents of North Bend and the nearby communities who used the facility overwhelmingly supported the creation and funding of a recreation district to continue operations.

Initially, much of the Recreation District's revenue came from property taxes. When property values plummeted during the recession and the district's full levy amount was prorated, the district protected a 25-cent portion of its levy. The district, since then, has increased its revenues through an additional maintenance and operation levy, grants, a capital improvements bond, and fees from recreation activities and facilities.

While the pool/community center remains the centerpiece of the district, the district is increasingly operating and managing parkland owned by the city of North Bend. These areas comprise a balanced system of parks, programs, and trails providing active and passive recreational opportunities for the community. Through district management, the city-owned parks benefit from the professional expertise and improvements of both entities and less duplication of services. The district also works with local entities such as the school district, farms, the senior center, and local medical services to offer a full array of recreation

and wellness programming and utilize all area facilities. The district holds fitness classes at local schools and senior centers and hosts festivals and farmers market throughout the year.

Recently, the district began managing Tollgate Farm Park in the city of North Bend. A 410-acre historic farm, the property features historic structures, open space, a trail network, and playground facilities. The district led and funded the construction of a new parking area, restroom, picnic area, playground and trail system and the preservation of an on-site farmhouse. Currently, the district also provides programming and interpretation to help visitors best appreciate the site. The district is exploring the present feasibility of agriculture on the site and Tollgate Farm Park as a community-supported incubator farm and farm store to support valley farmers and educational programs.

All of the district's programming and facilities are managed by a staff of 14. Led by an executive director, the district has three divisions – recreation, operations, and administration. Recreation, with 6 full time employees and another at  $\frac{3}{4}$  time, manages the district's recreation offerings. Two staff are devoted to the district's aquatic program. Operations performs the maintenance of the facilities, with three maintenance technicians and a supervising manager. The administration, staffed by a Finance & HR manager and administrative support specialist, coordinates the budgets and other organizational matters.

The district is governed by a five-member Board of Commissioners who are responsible for adopting the District budget and developing its goals, policies, and regulations. The commissioners meet twice a month at meetings open to the public and actively solicit feedback.

The commissioners and district staff have worked closely with the local community for funding and support. The Si View Community Foundation,





a non-profit 501(c)(3), collects tax-deductible donations from the community to expand the educational program offerings and acquire future parks, trails and open space. The foundation has also funded over \$26,000 in scholarships for area families to participate in district programming free of cost. Volunteers have long played an important role in the maintenance, recreational programming, and special events of the district. A frequently updated website has been essential to recruiting volunteers although the coordination of the many volunteers nearly requires a full-time position. Local corporate, health, and conservation organizations have played an active part in the district by sponsoring events and leading programming. Many larger projects have been funded via ballot measures and grants. For example, the Tollhouse Farm Park farmhouse exterior rehabilitation was funded by a \$150,000 grant from 4Culture's Saving Landmarks program. Grants, while an incredible opportunity, can be unreliable due to the competitiveness, local matching, and labor required to secure them. Overall, the district looks to a combination of funding sources for its operations.



# TEHACHAPI VALLEY RECREATION AND PARKS DISTRICT

The Tehachapi Valley Recreation and Parks District (TVRPD) is located in the mountainous region of south-central California. The communities in the valley are surrounded by rugged landscapes and are relatively isolated from larger population centers. The city of Tehachapi, population 12,495, is the largest community in the region of over 36,000 residents.

The recreation district, founded in 1958, is the primary provider of recreational facilities in the area. The district covers 468 square miles, although much of it is inaccessible due to the terrain. The district operates four parks, one regional recreation area, five recreation facilities, and two undeveloped mountain parks. These parks, a total of 116 acres, have playgrounds, trails, a pump track, athletic fields, picnic pavilions, and a skate park. Passive recreational activities, such as camping, fishing, and wildlife viewing are also available. The district works closely with other recreational entities in the area to complement their facilities, such as Kern County who operates a regional park and the state with its historical park. These efforts create a diverse, well-rounded recreational experience in the area.

Sustainability has become a major focus for the TVRPD. They are adopting and developing sustainable practices at their facilities and offering educational programs to encourage sustainable lifestyles for members of the community. The district is enacting studies to measure the effectiveness of these steps and plan future projects.

The TVRPD is a largely independent body separate from both the Tehachapi city and Kern county government. A Board of Governors oversees the

district's operation. The board has five members: two appointed by the Tehachapi City Council and three appointed by the Kern County Board of Supervisors. The district has a seven-person staff to manage day to day operations.

The district staff, led by a district manager, manages the financials, recreational activities, and operations of the district. The staff includes a business manager, an operations manager, a recreation manager, a recreation specialist, and two office specialists.

The district's recreation staff work with 60 seasonal employees, independent contractors, and volunteers to provide year-round recreational programming. Volunteers provide up to 10,000 hours of service annually for TVRPD. The district calculated that those hours come at a savings of \$195,000 for the district's operational budget. Volunteer activities include teaching hobbies, coaching sports, facilitating special events, and park and trail clean up and maintenance. Community partnerships with Little League or other national sports leagues offer additional recreational opportunities at TVRPD facilities sans district funding or labor.

Community partnerships are at the core of many of the district's programming and projects. Local corporations sponsor many facility improvements and upgrades. For example, Aspen Builders Inc. gave a sizable donation for recent improvements to the district's activity center and received the naming rights to the facility. The Tehachapi Parks Foundation is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization that aims to improve the area's quality of life through support for the TVRPD. All donations to the foundation are tax-exempt and contribute to the efforts of the TVRPD. The foundation has financially supported improvements not funded by tax dollars, such as new playgrounds, restrooms, and skate park features. The district also works closely with the City of Tehachapi, the police, the Chamber of Commerce, the Community Services district, and the school district to coordinate





efforts and best utilize existing facilities.

However, the majority (60%) of TVRPD revenue does come from the property taxes from district residents. Given the volatility of the housing market, the district is concerned that they are over-reliant on that revenue and is exploring

other funding mechanisms and community partnerships. Other existing sources of revenue are programming fees, leasing property and facility revenues, donations, grants, and local development impact fees.



# Trails Collaborative Case Studies

## CARRABASSETT VALLEY TRAILS COMMITTEE

In recent years, the Carrabassett Valley has exploded into a regional hub for mountain biking. The area has long been a winter destination with Sugarloaf Mountain ski area. Now, visitors are flocking to the area year-round for a robust trail system, recently named #1 in the state by [singletracks.com](http://singletracks.com). This trails success story is due to the collaborative effort of the Carrabassett Region chapter of the New England Mountain Biking Association (CRNEMBA), the Town of Carrabassett Valley, and Maine Huts & Trails. In 2017, the three formalized the partnership as the Carrabassett Valley Trails Committee. Sugarloaf recently joined the committee to fuel the growth of the trails network.

In 2009, the town conducted a study on the feasibility of new mountain bike trails and drawing riders to the area. The study called for the formation of a mountain bike club to spur trail development in the area and CRNEMBA began in 2010. The club worked closely with the town and Maine Huts & Trails to formalize existing trails and huts as part of a mountain bike trail network. The system incorporated the town's 90 km of Nordic ski trails and the Main Huts & Trails four lodges and 50-mile trail corridor. The three entities have worked closely to build more trails in the area, through fundraising and co-hosting trail building events. The town hired a professional trail builder and co-hosted an International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA)/NEMBA trail school with CRNEMBA. The event drew experienced trail builders to the region to share their expertise with local riders who began to sustainably construct trails in the area. Maine Huts & Trails, along with CRNEMBA, hosted a NEMBA Trail Fest in 2012

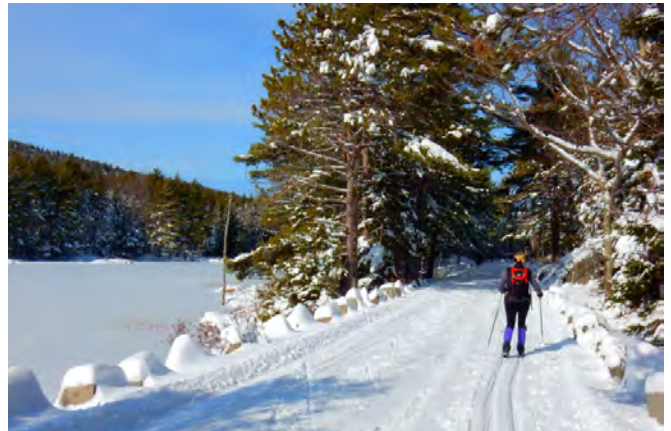
that brought mountain bikers from across New England to ride and help build the trails. The event has become a yearly fixture and CRNEMBA also hosts work days throughout the year to maintain and improve the trail system. Today, the trail system has 77 miles of trails, 23 of which are new or entirely reconstructed in the past few years.

The trails committee has also worked closely with other area groups for volunteers, funding, and easements. The trails are on a combination of town, Penobscot Indian Nation, Sugarloaf Mountain, private, and Carrabassett Sanitary District land. The Sugarloaf Outdoor Center, the base for Nordic skiing operations in the winter, is one of the "pods" of the network with 35 miles of trails and its own bike shop. Local businesses and non-profits have sponsored trail maps and volunteered their time to help build the network.

At the end of the day, the town has played a central role in the network's success. The town instigated many of these collaborations, provided land, and invested heavily in the system. Much of the funding for the project has come from the town's Recreational Endowment fund. The fund, from taxpayer dollars, supports recreation-related projects for town residents by matching grants and donations. Through these efforts and partnerships, the Carrabassett Valley has a world class mountain biking network.







## WOODSTOCK TRAILS PARTNERSHIP

Woodstock, Vermont, a town just south of the Mad River Valley, has many miles of trails that offer a great variety of trail experiences and settings. Some trails traverse the village green and the heart of the town while others climb Mt. Tom and Mt. Peg. They pass through land owned by a variety of agencies, individuals, and land trusts. The town, a popular tourist destination, realized the trails lacked systematic coordination or readily available public information. In 2004, a coalition of local, state and federal organizations formed the Woodstock Trails Partnership. The partnership aims to “enhance the awareness, preservation, and ultimately the use of the network of trails in Woodstock.”

By joining the existing trails into a system and creating new links, the partnership has created a 30+ mile trail system in the area. Pedestrian pathways through the village have signs to inform visitors about other trails and offer connections to many of the longer, scenic hikes in the area. The partnership created a Walk Woodstock Trail Map and a unified, comprehensive signage system throughout the area. The system now has 135 new signs, 96 new sign posts, and four new trailhead kiosks.

The core partnership includes the Town of Woodstock, the Billings Park Commission (a private entity that manages a local park connected to the trail network), Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Park (a NPS-operated historic site with trails dedicated to educating the public about stewardship and conservation), the NPS Rivers and Trails program, the Woodstock Area Chamber of Commerce, the Faulkner Trust (a private land trust that manages a park with trails), the Vermont Land Trust, and the Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Planning Commission. These groups, working together, maintain the trails on their land and support greater accessibility for the

system. Recently, the partnership began working with the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps on a year-round youth trail stewardship program at Woodstock Union High School. High school students and summer youth groups provide the partnership with a free volunteer maintenance crew for the trails. The partnership also works with local sustainability, arts, education, and trails organizations for volunteers, sponsorships, and coordination towards larger area goals. For example, the partnership is participating in the “Walkable Woodstock” and Safe Routes to Schools program.

As its major goal is to “reinvigorate the community’s connection to trails,” the partnership hosts trail-based events throughout the year. Frequent trail workshops and work days involve local residents in maintaining and improving the network. Annual trail “celebrations” offer family-friendly activities to appreciate the trails and resources of the Woodstock area. Recent events have been Trek to Taste, a celebration of local food and local trails, and Peak to Peak, an event with the Ottawaquechee Health Center to celebrate healthy trails and healthy people.

The Woodstock Trails Partnership currently does not have a paid staff. Instead, they rely on a Student Conservation Association Intern to manage the day to day operations. The core partners will come together and meet to discuss issues as they arise, and are currently working on connecting the system to the Appalachian Trail.







## RIDGES TO RIVERS PARTNERSHIP

The Ridges to Rivers Partnership is a collaborative effort from multiple governmental agencies in the Boise foothills to support preservation and provide trails in the area. The partnership consists of the City of Boise, Ada County, the Bureau of Land Management Four Rivers Field Office, the Boise National Forest, and the Idaho Department of Fish and Game. The city of Boise is the lead agency and provides much of the financial backing (80%) for the partnership.

The partnership, part of a long-term vision for the foothills, was established in 1992. The foothills are a patchwork of different land ownerships and many residents envisioned a collaborative management to provide greater access and trails in the area. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) governs the partnership. The MOU established the partnership's purpose as "[maximizing] cooperation and coordination amongst the agencies to efficiently manage public land resources." Each of the agencies within the partnership operates with a unique mission, authority, and expertise. Each has significant landholdings that they provide for Ridge to Rivers trails. Thus, the partnership is a pooling of resources and knowledge towards recreation and preservation of the Boise foothills. Given their resources and mission, the partnership presently manages and maintains the vast majority of trails in the foothills.

A representative from each agency serves on the partnership's coordinating committee. The committee meets quarterly to discuss communication, education, and public outreach; the development of partnerships with other public and private entities; funding strategies; and the implementation of the Boise Foothills Open Space Management Plan. The City leads these meetings and each agency offers technical support and natural resources expertise.

By the end of 2016, the partnership managed 190 miles of trails that connect 85,000 acres of public and private lands. These trails cross National Forest, National Forest land on Bogus Basin Mountain Recreation Area Special Use Permit, private property, and BLM land. A small staff of professional trail builders, employed by the partnership, maintain and build the trails. Staffing represents 70% of the partnership's budget, with the remaining 30% going to operating expenses and equipment. Volunteers and donations also provide additional support. In 2015 alone, volunteers donated 3,882 hours, much of it towards trail building and maintenance. The partnership has also established a strong relationship with local landowners who allow Ridges to Rivers trails on their property. Through all these collaborations, the trail system in the Boise foothills is well-maintained, expansive, and accessible.









# 7

# Appendices







## MRV Economic Impact Methodology

Economic impacts of the Blueberry Lake Trails, the Revolution Trail and the Waitsfield Village Path were projected using a computer-based model—IMPLAN3—as part of the MRV Moves Planning Process (2016). IMPLAN3 is a broadly accepted model used for making projections regarding employment and economic impacts, often used for economic analyses of trails and active transportation

facilities, as well as the analysis of a wide range of projects and policies beyond trails and recreation including everything from real estate developments to proposed legislation. The model demonstrates the immense value of the active transportation system as an economic engine in the Mad River Valley, by estimating the economic impact of spending associated with trail use on the Blueberry Lake Trails, the Revolution Trail and the Waitsfield Village Path in terms of changes in jobs, tax impacts, and total sales.



IMPLAN3 economic modeling requires the estimation of annual trail traffic volume and trail user spending in order to simulate the effect of these activities on the economy. While IMPLAN3 modeling utilizes the most current observed industry interdependencies calibrated to the local and regional economy of the Mad River Valley, the results of any economic model are only as accurate as the data used to describe the modeled activity (i.e., trail use). Therefore, certain estimations and assumptions related to these trails had to be made.

First, annual trail traffic volume was estimated using data collected by Traffix automated trail counters placed in the Valley from Tuesday, August 16, 2016 through Wednesday, August 31, 2016. For Blueberry Lake, an automated trail counter was placed at the primary trail entrance off of Plunkton Road near the north side of dam. For the Revolution Trail, an automated trail counter was placed in the trees just beyond the entrance to the trail from Lareau Farm. For the Waitsfield Village Path, an automated trail counter was placed along the boardwalk of the trail between Shaw's and The Big Picture Theater & Café. Counts from these periods were used to extrapolate an estimate of annual trail traffic volume following the extrapolation methodology of the National Bicycle and Pedestrian Documentation Project (NBPD) (NBPD, 2016).

Second, an assumption of trail traffic volume by user type (Local Day User, Non-Local Day User, and Non-Local Overnight User) was necessary for this analysis because, on average, these user types spend significantly different amounts in connection with their trail visits (see discussion of spending profiles below). For Blueberry Lake, we have assumed 66 percent are Local Day Users, 11 percent are Non-Local Day Users, and 23 percent are Non-Local Overnight Users. These user type proportions reflect general users of the Green Mountain National Forest, which were calculated by the US Forest Service in 2013 and documented in the report "Estimation of National

Forest Visitor Spending Averages From National Visitor Use Monitoring: Round 2" (USFS, 2013). We felt these values were a reasonable proxy in this case because the Blueberry Lake Trails are part of the GMNF and are more of a "destination facility," particularly when coupled with the recreational opportunities available at the lake. For the Revolution Trail and the Waitsfield Village Path we have assumed 85 percent are Local Day Users, 5 percent are Non-Local Day Users and 10 percent are Non-Local Overnight Users. These assumptions were made because at this stage in their development the Revolution Trail and the Waitsfield Village Path are more "convenience facilities" than a "destination facilities," although both are planned to become part of a larger more destination-oriented systems (i.e. the Camel's Hump State Forest Trails and the completed Waitsfield Village Path).

Finally, Visitor Spending Profiles must be estimated for the three primary categories of trail users: Local Day Users, Non-Local Day Users, and Non-Local Overnight Users. The estimate of Local Day User spending, at \$11.32 per person per day, was calculated by taking the average of 16 recent trail studies that included a trail user spending survey, focusing on those from Vermont and the northeast. The estimate of Non-Local Day User spending was taken from the 2011 Benchmark Study of the Economic Impact of Visitor Spending on the Vermont Economy conducted on behalf of the Agency for Commerce and Community Development (ACCD) (ACCD, 2011). This estimate reflects the average spending of all Non-Local Day Visitors to the State of Vermont and is calculated at approximately \$70.14 per person per trip. The estimate of Non-Local Overnight User spending is also taken from this 2011 benchmarking study, calculated at \$176.98 per person per trip.

The spending profile of these user groups is presented below. Most of the spending associated with locals is on shopping/retail items, restaurants and bars, and snacks, as the most common purchases for locals are meals and





other food. Visitor’s largest spending category is lodging, followed by restaurants and bars, and then gas and other transportation.

Trail user spending was also asked about in the MRV Moves Community Survey conducted as part of this project, but the sample size of the responses was not large enough to provide statistically accurate results (i.e. they may be skewed towards certain user groups or behaviors) and hence was not used for this analysis. However, the MRV Moves Survey results for visitors to the MRV were very similar to the estimate of overnight visitors from the ACCD (\$174.87 vs \$176.98 per person per day). The local user data, however, was higher than average at \$56.89 per person per day (vs \$11.32). This result is certainly in the high-end of the range of local spending found in other trail user surveys, but is still within the realm of what has been found in some other communities, and may reflect the relatively higher cost of meals, goods

and services in the Valley, as well as the relatively high proportion of second home ownership in the MRV. Given these results, and relatively higher cost of the MRV as a destination when compared to the rest of Vermont, estimates for trail user spending presented herein likely reflect very conservative estimates of the potential economic impact of these facilities.

With reasonable estimates of annual trail traffic volume, trail use by trail user type, and spending profiles for each user type, the IMPLAN3 model can be completed and run. The model utilizes input-output modeling and industry relationship data from the US Census to estimate total economic impacts. Purchases for final use (i.e. trail user spending) drive the model. Industries that produce goods and services for trail user consumption must purchase products, raw materials, and services from other companies to create their product. These vendors must

Spending Category	Local Day Users	Non-Local Day Users	Non-Local Overnight Users
Restaurants and Bars	\$3.17	\$17.29	\$40.27
Grocery and Snacks	\$1.47	\$3.11	\$14.27
Shopping and Retail	\$4.86	\$19.30	\$25.89
Gas and Other Transportation	\$0.57	\$25.96	\$36.16
Lodging	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$51.47
Entertainment and Recreation	\$1.24	\$4.49	\$8.91
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$11.32</b>	<b>\$70.14</b>	<b>\$176.98</b>



also procure goods and services. This cycle continues until all the money is leaked from the region's economy. There are three types of effects measured within an IMPLAN3 Model: the direct, the indirect, and the induced effects. The direct effect is the known or predicted change in the local economy that is to be studied (i.e. the trail user spending). The indirect effect is the business-to-business transactions required to satisfy the direct effect. Finally, the induced effect is derived from local spending on goods and services by people working to satisfy the direct and indirect effects. Total impacts reflect

the total changes to the economy as the result of trail user spending (i.e. Direct effects + Indirect effects + Induced effects = Total Impacts).

In this analysis, jobs are discussed as "Full-Time-Equivalents" (FTEs). An employment position may be a year-round or seasonal job and either full-time or part-time, whereas one FTE provides sufficient work to keep one person employed full-time for one year. In seasonal industries, one FTE is likely to represent several employment positions.





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# DETAILED ECONOMIC IMPACTS

## Blueberry Lake Trails

Based on projections from the IMPLAN3 Model, Blueberry Lake trail users currently spend approximately \$1.2 million each year. This direct spending generates a total annual output of approximately \$1.8 million into the Washington County economy, which includes direct, indirect and induced effects. Approximately 22 FTEs and \$630,000 in labor income are generated each year in response to this trail user spending. Approximately \$143,000 in federal taxes and approximately \$177,000 in state and local taxes are generated each year by this economic activity. The table and graphic below summarizes the impact of Blueberry Lake trail user spending.

The top ten industry sectors impacted by Blueberry Lake trail user spending are as follows:

1. Full-service restaurants
2. Hotels and motels, including casino hotels
3. Other amusement and recreation industries
4. Retail - General merchandise stores
5. Retail - Food and beverage stores
6. Retail - Gasoline stores
7. Real estate
8. Management of companies and enterprises
9. All other food and drinking places
10. Advertising, public relations, and related services

Impact Type	Employment (FTEs)	Total Sales	Total Local, State and Federal Taxes
Direct Effect	17.7	\$1,200,000	--
Indirect Effect	2.1	\$320,000	--
Induced Effect	2.4	\$300,000	--
<b>Total Impact</b>	<b>22.2</b>	<b>\$1,800,000</b>	<b>\$320,000</b>





# Blueberry Lake Trail User Spending



# Revolution Trail

Based on projections from the IMPLAN3 Model, Revolution trail users currently spend approximately \$670,000 each year. This direct spending generates a total annual output of approximately \$1 million into the Washington County economy, which includes direct, indirect and induced effects. Approximately 13 FTEs and \$370,000 in labor income are generated each year in response to this trail user spending. Approximately \$83,000 in federal taxes and approximately \$99,000 in state and local taxes are generated each year by this economic activity. The table and graphic below summarizes the impact of Revolution trail user spending.

The top ten industry sectors impacted by Revolution trail user spending are as follows:

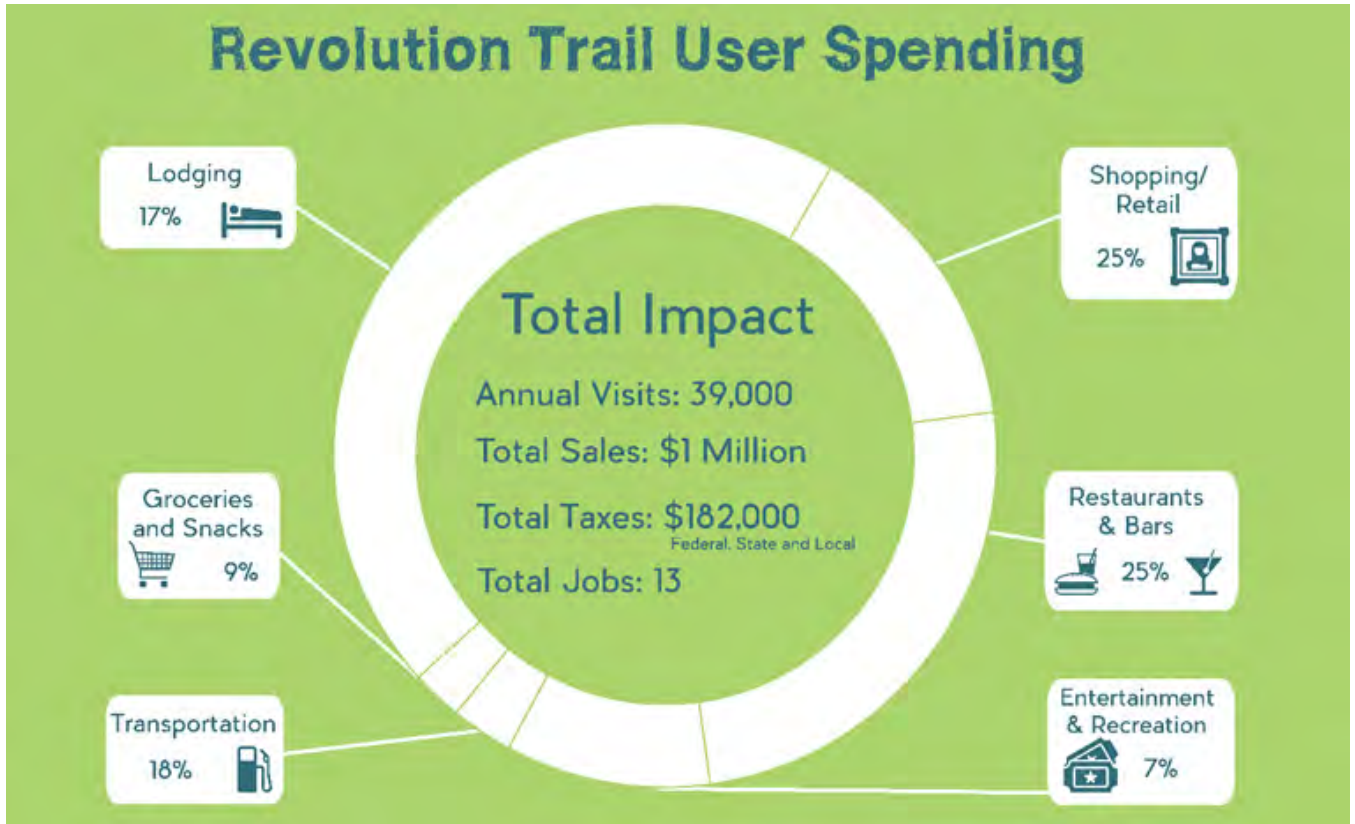
1. Full-service restaurants
2. Hotels and motels, including casino hotels
3. Other amusement and recreation industries
4. Retail - General merchandise stores
5. Retail - Food and beverage stores
6. Retail - Gasoline stores
7. Real estate
8. Management of companies and enterprises
9. All other food and drinking places
10. Advertising, public relations, and related services

Impact Type	Employment (FTEs)	Total Sales	Total Local, State and Federal Taxes
Direct Effect	10.6	\$1,230,000	--
Indirect Effect	1.2	\$340,000	--
Induced Effect	1.4	\$320,000	--
<b>Total Impact</b>	<b>13.2</b>	<b>\$1,900,000</b>	<b>\$182,000</b>





# Revolution Trail User Spending



## Waitsfield Village Path

Based on projections from the IMPLAN3 Model, Waitsfield Village Path trail users currently spend approximately \$413,000 each year. This direct spending generates a total annual output of approximately \$640,000 into the Washington County economy, which includes direct, indirect and induced effects. Approximately 8 FTEs and \$227,000 in labor income are generated each year in response to this trail user spending. Approximately \$51,000 in federal taxes and approximately \$60,000 in state and local taxes are generated each year by this economic activity. The table below summarizes the impact of Waitsfield Village Path trail user spending.

The top ten industry sectors impacted by Waitsfield Village Path trail user spending are as follow

1. Full-service restaurants
2. Hotels and motels, including casino hotels
3. Other amusement and recreation industries
4. Retail - General merchandise stores
5. Retail - Food and beverage stores
6. Retail - Gasoline stores
7. Real estate
8. Management of companies and enterprises
9. All other food and drinking places
10. Hospitals

Impact Type	Employment (FTEs)	Total Sales	Total Local, State and Federal Taxes
Direct Effect	6.5	\$400,000	--
Indirect Effect	0.8	\$110,000	--
Induced Effect	0.9	\$110,000	--
<b>Total Impact</b>	<b>8.1</b>	<b>\$640,000</b>	<b>\$112,000</b>





# Waitsfield Village Path User Spending



