



MAD RIVER VALLEY

TRAILS COLLABORATIVE

Mad River Valley Trails Collaborative Meeting
Wednesday, January 19, 4 - 5:30 pm | Zoom

MINUTES

Present:

Laura Arnesen (MRVRD), Amy Tomasso (MRVPD), Liza Walker (MRVRD & VLT), Carolyn Schipa, Josh Schwartz, John Stokes (MRVRD), Richard Czaplinski, Corrie Miller (Friends of Mad River & Fayston CC), Jaclyn Comeau (VT Fish & Wildlife Department), Ross Saxton (Mad River Path), Bob Cook, James Donaldson (Waitsfield CC), Curt Lindberg (Waitsfield CC), George Schenk (Warren CC), Eric Friedman (MRV Chamber & stewardMRV), Steve Sharp (MRV Backcountry Coalition), Taylor Corrigan (Warren CC), Phil Huffman, Jim Edgcomb, Margo Wade (Sugarbush Resort), Chris Stephenson, John Atkinson (Mad River Riders), Kate Wanner

1. Welcome and review of meeting agenda - Liza Walker (5 min)

- a. Liza Walker called meeting to order at 4:10.
- b. Adjustments to agenda:
 - i. Trail mapping conversation expanded to include broader context, trail data management, and trail map issues.

2. VOREC Grant Update - Laura Arnesen (5 min.)

- a. MRV partners submitted grant in November for \$410,000
- b. Laura heard back on Friday 1/14 from Jackie Daggart, head of VOREC, who asked clarifying questions on permitting, project management experience, and ability to complete project by 2023. MRV submitted follow-up answers on 1/19.
- c. Final decisions are delayed until mid-February.

3. stewardMRV 2021 Report & 2022 Planning - Eric Friedman (15 min.)

- a. stewardMRV final report from 2021 inaugural season is available. Eric will present report to the towns to support next year's contributions.
- b. Eric met with all 3 Selectboards in the past few months.
 - i. Waitsfield pledged \$7500
 - ii. Warren pledged \$5000
 - iii. Fayston is supportive and will make a pledge later this year.



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- iv. Chamber will put forward \$10,000. Together these contributions will fully fund the program going forward.
 - c. 2021 season hosted 19 stewardship sites around Valley
 - d. Flagship sites: Lareau Swimhole, Bridge Street area
 - e. Program sponsors: Lawson's, Bourne's Energy, and MRV Chamber all put 10K to launch the effort
 - f. Program positives:
 - i. Having an intern in place who managed sites on a day-to-day basis
 - ii. Collaborating organizations represented a true Valley-wide group effort.
 - iii. Heavily trafficked Warren Falls & Blueberry Lake benefited from site steward visits 2x/wk.
 - g. Going forward: stewardMRV is umbrella for all stewardship in Valley
- 4. Dogs on Trails - Ross Saxton (10 min.)**
- a. "The poop stops here" campaign/outreach around dog poop will continue this year. Effort is part of stewardMRV & Mad River Path.
 - b. Instead of a designated Dog Committee, Path will host informal planning meetings around the issue of dog waste. Floated idea of a public forum on Zoom, maybe comedy videos to address issue
 - c. ~12 dog poop bag stations around Valley; go through around 5000 bags/year!
- 5. Trail Mapping**
- a. Trail data set management (Joshua Schwartz)**
 - i. Trailhead Kiosk Project completed. 47th kiosk installed late 2021.
 - ii. Offshoot of kiosk project: trail database w/ Standard Operating Procedures
 - 1. MRVDPD is acquiring & standardizing data from multiple sources to have a single, consistent trail network dataset. This will aid in recreation planning & trail monitoring activities.
 - 2. MRVDPD is the repository for trail data, which will be updated annually.
 - 3. Brian Voigt has been contributing expertise for 4 years.
 - 4. Database will include trail attributes for each trail (ex: seasonal use restrictions, responsible organizations, dog permissions, etc).



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5. Timeline:

- a. Mid-February - deadline for partners to give feedback on the next map draft
 - b. Spring 2022 - finalizing dataset
 - c. Fall 2022 - deadline for partner organizations to add to dataset.
- iii. MRVBC asked if future funding is available to continue the project. MRVPC is hoping to maintain dataset in-house. Project is about more than making paper maps - highlighting recreational assets to drive decision-making going forward.
- iv. Eric expressed that lack of Long Trail on map is confusing. Will this change?
1. Reach out to trailfinder directly about that.

b. Adventure Map update (Ross Saxton)

- i. MRV trail map last updated by Map Adventures in 2019. Intention to update every few years.
- ii. Major updates this year include:
 1. More trails.
 2. Size of map will be bigger scale (1:42,000)
 3. Map expanded to include Middlesex Area.
- iii. Receiving draft version of updated map this week in mail. Trails Collab will have opportunity to review safely in person.
 1. Goal: have all notes & feedback done by 1/28

c. Questions and discussion

- i. Liza: Distribution timelines?
 1. A few months.
- ii. Eric: Print run? Distribution process?
 1. 2500 copies.
 2. Retail ~\$11, will be available around town. 4'x8' relief map @ same scale in the Chamber so easy to show visitors.

6. Community Recreation Visioning for a MRV 'Gold Standard' Trail Network - Valley Conservation Commissions & Friends of the Mad River (30 min.)

- a. Corrie & Phil: Follow-up to 9/22 meeting of Trails Collab at Lareau Farm. 3 town Conservation Commissions & FMR shared ideas to foster closer communication & collab b/t MRV



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conservation & trail groups. Work towards the idea of “gold standard trail network” for residents & visitors. Trail assets in harmony w/ natural environment.

- b. Great initial progress including stakeholder conversations:
 - i. Warren CC, Mad River Riders Board meeting, Mad River Path Association Board.
- c. Work proposal: community visioning effort. MRVPD could be neutral convener for this process. VOREC grant would help enable process.
- d. Project Outline proposed in VOREC grant: Community Recreation Visioning
 - i. PROTECT: “Create a gold standard for environmental protection and recreation in the MRV by safeguarding natural resources and planning for long-term stewardship opportunities.
 - ii. Engage the community in a visioning process to ensure future initiatives reflect the Valley’s dual interests in **diverse outdoor recreation experience and protecting the integrity of the working and natural landscape.**
 - iii. Proposed Timeline:
 - 1. Shared Goal Setting (March - July 2022);
 - 2. Recreation & Conservation Working Groups’ Learning & Sharing (March 22 - Feb 23);
 - 3. Mapping a Vision (August 22 - Oct 23)
 - iv. Next Steps:
 - 1. Get decision from VOREC.
 - 2. ID project lead.
 - 3. Set up Steering Committee w/ reps from each stakeholder group/org. Development of process & hiring consultants.
- e. Breakout rooms:
 - i. What reflections do you have on the early work on the MRV Gold Standard Trail Network?



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- ii. What are other ideas or input that hasn't been heard or that you'd like to echo that will help our community pull off this project?

Group 1

- Trail organizations include sustainability and standards in the work already being done, part of the work of these groups
- General public doesn't realize the detail of the work that goes into trail building
- Wondering how trail location and ecological sensitivities come up in the same conversation
- Trails are part of the transportation network, providing for a variety of needs. Not just recreation singularly.

Group 2

- Thoughtful communication so far, and its importance, new trails collaborative members starting to see how all the items come together (dog waste, habitat, stewardMRV)
- Consider telling Waitsfield CC's Scrag story – enhancing opportunities and protecting critical habitat
- Opportunity of trail counters to tell more parts of the story around use

Group 3

- Symmetry between rec & conservation groups – different species of focus
- If all trails are multi use, they can become homogenized and threaten ecological sensitivities
- Erosion challenges and alignment with stewards
- Valuing the impacts on wildlife
- Business as usual cannot continue (nature is in trouble, so focus on env impacts)

Group 4



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- Increasing awareness & spreading info to community and trail users about overall community values and threats to local ecology (opportunity at Visitor Center & kiosks)
- Consider seasonality → habitat needs changing over different seasons
- Kate – ADKS Audubon handing out info cards ← possible opportunity, including economic outcomes of good trails
- Balance between where new trails are desired and sensitive ecology
- Involving youth
- Moretown & Duxbury (and Granville) should be included (perhaps Northfield)

7. Announcements and other business (5 min)

a. MRVRD website

- i. mrvrd.org
- ii. Feedback welcome, please take the survey on the homepage

b. Upcoming event- Regional Recreation Economy Meeting, *“Fostering a Regional Recreational Economy- Creating Networks in Central Vermont”* January 25, 2022, hosted by CVRPC. To register:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMrf-ipqD0sEtH2lfxBBfH-v265K9xNaGs->

- i. Joshua Schwartz will be representing Trails Collab and presenting on Trailhead Kiosk project

8. Next Meeting: Tentative date for next Trails Collaborative Meeting: March 16, 2022 or perhaps we should delay until April?

- a. Wait until we hear back from VOREC
- b. Meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Amy Tomasso.