

Trail Mix: The Valley's Conservation and Recreation Visioning Project (CRV)

What's New and What's Next

By the CRV Leadership Team

The Mad River Valley Conservation and Recreation Visioning (CRV) Project began in Summer 2022 with funding support from VOREC (Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative). Over the past year, representatives from 15 different local recreation and conservation groups have been meeting as the CRV Steering Committee. The ultimate goal is to develop, through an inclusive community process, a set of maps, shared goals, guiding principles, and best practices that together will provide a well-supported vision for balancing ecological integrity with recreation and trails across the Valley.

On June 15th, the CRV Steering Committee hosted its first Community Forum at Lareau Farm. "We'd like to start by thanking all who participated, whether by contributing to the potluck, asking questions, or engaging thoughtfully in the discussion. We also extend our gratitude to MRV TV for filming the event, the Schenk family for housing, and Lareau's amazing staff for their help," said Phil Huffman, Co-Chair of the CRV Steering Committee.

The June Community Forum provided an invaluable opportunity for the CRV Steering Committee to share information about the project and hear from community members about their hopes and concerns. Following the Forum, the CRV Leadership Team recapped the event in a brief report, available for all to read on the Mad River Valley Recreation District's CRV Webpage: <https://www.mrvrd.org/about-crv/>. "We deeply appreciate the nuanced and diverse perspectives shared during the Forum. While this recap attempts to summarize your input, we recognize the inherent challenge of capturing the depth and breadth of the evening's discussion," said Laura Arnesen, CRV Steering Committee Co-Chair.

Recognizing the need for ongoing conversation, the CRV Steering Committee plans to host a number of other events. "Following the success of this first Forum, we very much look forward to further engagement with the Valley community. Prior to the year's end, we intend to host a Community Learning Session with guest speakers. Our next Community Forum is slated for the beginning of the year. Please stay tuned for more information," continued Huffman.

In the months following the Community Forum, the CRV Steering Committee has focused its attention on hiring a consultant to assist with Phase 1 elements of the project. This

consultant will compile ecological and recreational information for the Steering Committee to consider. That information is likely to include wildlife surveys, natural resource inventories, maps of existing trails, recreational use data, and more. Using that content, the consultant will assemble preliminary maps and informational summaries for the Steering Committee to use as it embarks on Phase 2: developing best practices and opportunity areas maps.

The CRV Steering Committee issued a Request for Proposals on August 1st with a September 1st deadline. Three extremely qualified consultants submitted proposals within this timeframe. After much discussion, the CRV team is pleased to announce the selection of Arrowwood Environmental of Huntington, VT as the Phase 1 consultant. Arrowwood brings a wealth of experience in recreation, ecology, and the specific needs of the Mad River Valley.

We look forward to sharing more as this project continues. In the meantime, for more information or to sign up for our email list, please contact our Community Project Manager, Emily Friedman, at madrivercrv@gmail.com.