

Agenda
Warren Selectboard
December 6, 2022
Warren Municipal Building
6:30 PM
Via Zoom or In Person

6:30 PM – Public Comment

6:35 PM – Agenda Changes

6:40 PM – Steward/MRV Program – Eric Friedman – Mad River Valley Chamber

7:00 PM – Treasurer, Human Resources, Delinquent Tax Collector, Insurance Taxes, Other Expenditures, Special Appropriations Budgets - Dayna Lisaius

7:30 PM – Town Clerk & Office Assistant Budgets – Reta Goss

7:50 PM – Library Budget – Marie Schmukal

8:15 PM – Selectboard, TA, Postage, Office Supplies, Postage, Computer, Photocopy, Telephone/Fax, Washington County Sheriffs, Village Wastewater, Recreation, Building Maintenance (Capital – Town Buildings, Town Improvements, Wastewater System, Dam & Covered Bridge & Town Planning) – Cindi Jones

8:45 PM – Other Business

8:55 PM – Approval of Minutes for 11/29/2022

8:57 PM – Approval of Accounts Payable and Payroll Warrants

Ongoing:

ARPA

Road Crew Status Hiring

Town Garage

Town Of Warren is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Selectboard Meeting

Time: Dec 6, 2022 06:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86311447377?pwd=ck5MeUVDSGR1K3kxTXNlVm5VOHRWQT09>

Meeting ID: 863 1144 7377

Passcode: 574591

One tap mobile

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+1 360 209 5623 US

+1 386 347 5053 US

+1 408 638 0968 US (San Jose)

+1 507 473 4847 US

+1 564 217 2000 US

+1 669 444 9171 US

+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

+1 689 278 1000 US

+1 719 359 4580 US

+1 253 205 0468 US

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

Meeting ID: 863 1144 7377

Passcode: 574591

Find your local number: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/kdV3pMPtJf>

Street name - Meadow view Lane - Appraisal
Ladder Truck Replacement. Jeff C.

8:30 - Executive Session - Request Personnel
-0- \$36,628.82, Harwood Warrant \$1,602,603.94

Minutes of December 6, 2022

Warren Selectboard

6:30 PM

Via Zoom or In Person

Warren Municipal Building

Members Present: Luke Youmell, Chair, Andrew Cunningham, Vice Chair, Robert Ackland, Camilla Behn & Devin Klein Corrigan.

Others Present: Tom Spencer, Eric Friedman (Chamber), Maura Connolly, John Egan, Craig Eilers, Reta Goss, Dayna Lisaius, Jeff Campbell, Sue Carter, Mary Gow, Rob (TV44/45), and Alex McClay.

6:30 PM – Public Comment – Mr. Cunningham wanted to congratulate a Warren Volunteer Fireman, Luke VanVught for the birth of his second child.

6:35 PM – Agenda Changes – Planning District

6:40 PM – StewardMRV Program – Eric Friedman & Tom Spencer – The goal of this program is to instill a greater sense of environmental stewardship within the Mad River Valley Community. This program is in its second year and has been very successful. They hired Mr. Spencer as a program coordinator who oversees all 23 sites and they have 19 volunteers. Funding for the 2022 program came from the Town of Fayston \$4,000, Town of Waitsfield \$5,000, Town of Warren \$5,000, Mad River Chamber-led-Memory Tree Fundraiser - \$5,600 and the Mad River Valley Chamber donated \$10,000 in the name of the business community. This year they are asking for funding of \$7,500 to help pay the coordinator. Fayston and Waitsfield have agreed to the \$7,500 funding request with The Chamber adding \$10,000 and some from crowd funding. Their budget is around \$30,000. Mr. Friedman sent out a huge "Thank You" to A&J Recycling for all their efforts in helping to make this a success in the trash pickup areas. A more extensive report is attached.

6:50 PM – Budgets Treasurer's, HR, Tax, Insurance Taxes, Other Expenditures and Special Appropriations. Dayna Lisaius – Ms. Lisaius asked Mr. Eilers to start the conversation with Town's Health Insurance. He commented that both carriers MVP and Blue Cross asked for and were approved for double digit increases. He researched a few plans and recommended the town going with the Blue Edge Business Plan through Blue Cross Blue Shield. This plan has fully insurance rates, less than in the Health Connect Exchange and is a savings of \$33,000 to the Town of Warren and saves the Town in HRA Expense line.

Motion by Mr. Ackland to approve the change switching from MVP and moving to the Blue Edge Business CDHP 1 plan, seconded by Ms. Behn. All in Favor: VOTE: 5-0.

Ms. Lisaius commented that she did not change her budgets that much from the year before. The Village Garden increased to \$1,753. Ms. Lisaius commented the reason being is that it covers replacement plants and trimming around the Gazebo. In the Special Appropriations section, the only increase was in the Central VT Community Health and Hospice going from \$4,000 to \$5,000. The board was ok with this as it is very difficult to get health care and they do provide a great service. She did have a question regarding the HRA Expense line. So far the Town has used 60% of that line as some people do not use their full deductible.

Page 2

Mr. Ackland suggested budgeting that line at 70%.

7:13 PM – Town Clerk – Reta Goss – Ms. Goss commented that she is leveled funded her budget and that the only change is that there are no state elections.

7:15 PM – Office Assistant – Ms. Goss & Ms. Lisaius – Both agreed to level fund for 2023. They do have Ms. Begin and Ms. Campbell that are helping when both need some assistance.

7:16 PM – Warren Library – Marie Schmukal – Ms. Schmukal commented that the Library Board will go with what the town decides to do for salaries. They did plug in a 6% place holder as what Mr. Ackland put in as a place holder. Their total expenditures are up by \$5.00 from 2022. The only difference is that the revenue they received will be a lot less as they had an overwhelming year for grants income. Ms. Schmukal did comment that having the Children's Program Director full time has allowed for full Library coverage and many more programs.

7:30 PM – Approval of Road Name: Meadow View Lane – Motion by Ms. Klein Corrigan to approve the road name "Meadow View Lane," seconded by Mr. Cunningham. All in Favor: VOTE: 5-0.

7:35 PM – Mad River Planning District Update – Bob Ackland – January 12 2023, Tri Town Meeting – A Review what is happening and the future and what is important for the Mad River Valley Planning District to focus on. It will be moderated by Paul Costello and Ted Brady at the Waitsfield Meeting House from 6:30 to 9:00PM. No meal provided.

7:40 PM – Selectboard, TA, Postage, Computer, Photocopy, Telephone/fax, Village Wastewater, Recreation, Building Maintenance – Ms. Jones – Ms. Jones started with the Selectboard budget with a small change in the VLCT Dues. She leveled funded the public notices as this year they were over as \$1,000 was for Road Crew Ads, 700.00 for Town Meeting and \$465.00 was for the Covered Bridge. In the TA line only changes in salary and benefits with the 6% as a place holder. Postage: Only change was an increase in the rental of the post office box. In the computer there was discussion on the line item of Maintenance Contracts and why an increase. Ms. Jones indicated that its just a place holder at this time. Photocopying level funded, Office Supplies level funded, telephone and fax level funded. Sewer Operations – Ms. Jones Commented that she had added a line for E. Warren School House Septic Repairs as the media bags in the tank will need to be replaced and disposed of. Ms. Klein Corrigan asked why the Engineer inspection line had increased? Ms. Jones explained that there are two engineers for that system. One inspects the sand box filter and reports to the state as required by the Towns Permit, and the other is AOS that inspects the actual sewage filtration system. AOS inspection seemed to have been lumped in with repairs. Mr. Cunningham asked about the Town Building Fees. Ms. Jones commented that she has not completed the Users Wastewater Budget, but those fees are for the Town Hall, Municipal Building, Fire Station, Town Garage, and the Town Green hook up that the Town pays the wastewater user budget as they are a user of the wastewater system. Building Maintenance – Ms. Jones commented that changes were made in the LP and Oil line items. The board felt that the Fuel Oil was about right but the LP line needed to be looked at more closely. Ms. Behn asked about what goes into the Repairs and Maintenance Line? Ms. Jones commented building maintenance such as painting, carpeting, pest control, replacing rotting wood, elevator inspections, elevator issues, fixing stuff at the recreation field like the rotting trail head kiosk, and the tennis benches etc. Warren Cemetery increased to \$25,000 for the mowing trimming, spring cleanup and fall cleanup.

Page 3

Recreation – increase in MRVStewardship Program as explained by the Mr. Friedman and the July 4 Parade as costs for the sheriff's, concert security and transportation have gone up confirmed with Ms. Klein.

8:00 PM – Motion by Mr. Ackland to go into Executive Session for Personnel, inviting Ms. Carter and Ms. Gow, seconded by Ms. Behn. All in Favor: VOTE: 5-0.

8:25 PM – Motion by Mr. Ackland to come out of Executive Session, seconded by Mr. Cunningham. All in Favor: VOTE: 5-0. No Action

8:30 PM – Other Business

Ladder Truck Potential Purchase – Mr. Campbell came before the board to discuss a ladder truck that they had found to purchase in Hamburg PA. It is a 2003 HME Rosenbauer 107/Quint 1500/200 aerial with a 450 cummings. It has a single stage 1500 GMP Pump and a water tank that carries 200 gallons. It has a HME Cab and Chassis and a stainless-steel body. It has 4800 demo miles on it and they are asking \$198,000. The pictures look very clean and Mr. Campbell and a few others will be going down to look at it more closely. Mr. Ackland recommended that they get an oil test. The purchase would be contingent upon a ladder certification test and a certification test of the pump and oil test. The Town of Warren would pay for these costs.

Motion by Mr. Ackland to authorize the purchase of the 2003, HME Rosenbauer 107' quint 1500/200 not to exceed \$210,000 and contingent upon that it passes all the test certifications, seconded by Ms. Behn. All in Favor: VOTE: 5-0.

8:49 PM – Verizon Update: Mr. Youmell reported that there has been no update from the Town's lawyer on the Verizon Tower. The Town's Lawyer will be getting up to speed on the case. The board briefly discussed asking for Town governmental groups to weigh in with a written response to the Selectboard. That would include the DPS, PC, DRB and from the Warren Conservation Commission. The board very strongly agreed that the Town's Attorney needs to petition Verizon on the time line for comments since they canceled on the 12/12/22 meeting because of a technicality on Verizon's legal team.

9:16 PM – Approval of Minutes for 11/29/2022 – Motion by Mr. Cunningham to approve the Minutes of 11/29/2022 seconded by Ms. Ackland. All in Favor: VOTE: 5-0.

9:17 PM – Approval of Payroll Warrants – Motion by Mr. Ackland to approve the payroll warrants as presented for \$36,628.82, seconded by Ms. Behn. All in Favor: VOTE: 5-0

9:18 PM – Approval of the Harwood Unified District Warrant – Motion by Mr. Ackland to approve the Harwood Unified District Warrant as presented for \$1,602,603.94, seconded by Ms. Behn. All in Favor: VOTE: 5-0.

9:20 PM – Motion to adjourn by Mr. Cunningham, seconded by Ms. Behn. All in Favor: VOTE: 5-0.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted by,
Cindi Jones, Warren Town Administrator

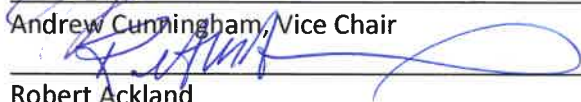
The Warren Selectboard



Luke Youmell, Chair



Andrew Cunningham, Vice Chair



Robert Ackland



Camilla Behn



Devin Klein Corrigan



MAD RIVER VALLEY

VERMONT

stewardMRV 2022

Final Report

By

Tom Spencer - stewardMRV Coordinator

Eric Friedman - MRV Chamber Executive Director

Table of Contents

Partners & Summary	.....Page 3-4
Introduction - Origins	.....Pages 5-6
Objectives	..... Page 7
Scope of Work	..... Page 8-10
Funding	..... Page 11
Results	..... Page 12
Testimonials	..... Page 13
Reflections 14-15	..... Page
Looking Forward 16-19	.....Page
Conclusion 20-21	.....Page
Budgets	..... Page 22
Images 23-24	..... Page

PARTNERS

Project Coordinator: MRV Chamber of Commerce

Project Partners: Friends of the Mad River, Mad River Path, Mad River Recreation District, Mad River Planning District, Mad River Riders and the local community.

SUMMARY

The stewardMRV program debuted in May of 2021 as a response to issues associated with the increased usage of Mad River Valley's key assets of trailheads and swim holes. The goal of this program is to instill a greater sense of environmental stewardship among both residents and visitors of the valley; this concept was introduced through tangible outcomes.

During the second year of stewardMRV our goal was to:

- Expand our volunteer base and site base to ensure that we reach as many recreation sites as possible by a wide base of volunteers
- Establish regular communication with the steward and ensure they felt supported and motivated
- Work closer with towns to present and collaborate on new projects for site improvement
- Dog etiquette education
- Improved pack-in pack-out communications at sites without receptacles
- Encouragement of volunteerism resulting in vastly increased participation
- Dedicated program management
- Public communication and social media plans

This pilot program necessitated funding of \$35,000 in seed money that was enabled via generous grants provided by Bournes' Energy, Lawson's Finest's matching program, the Mad River Valley Chamber of Commerce, the MRV Rotary Club, and individual donors within the community. In the second stewardMRV season of 2023 the program was funded by the towns of Waitsfield (\$5,000), Fayston (\$4,000) and Warren (5,000), the MRV Chamber of Commerce (\$10,000) and via the Chamber-led Memory Tree Fundraiser (\$5,500).

The second year for stewardMRV has been an unqualified success. The growth of the volunteer base and expanded collaboration with towns and committees has built a solid and sustainable foundation for the program moving forward. In order to make this program sustainable for future years it is vital that the current funding mechanism remains intact. The stewardMRV program needs broad based community support to remain viable. This will include continued MRV Chamber of Commerce support, a commitment from the Mad River Valley municipalities and the on-going support of the partner organizations.

This document outlines the origins, objectives, scope of work, funding, results, and suggestions for the future of stewardMRV.

INTRODUCTION - ORIGINS

Usage at many of the Mad River Valley's trailheads and swimming access points have been on the upswing for many years¹. The pandemic served only to accelerate this trend. The corresponding challenges that come with this increase have also been exacerbated by the impact of the pandemic. These challenges include:

- Inadequate parking spaces for demand
- Inadequate restroom facilities
- Increased litter
- Overflowing garbage receptacles
- Overwhelmed site management plans
- Off season trail use
- Dog waste and misbehavior
- River bank erosion and creation of inappropriate access points
- Inconsistent public awareness and stewardship ethic

Stewardship of our community is vital to maintain the sustainability of outdoor recreation and the health of the Mad River Valley's environment. Scenic beauty, a pristine environment, and outdoor recreation are important drivers to our local economy. How we care for this place is at the heart of why so many people visit and why so many people desire to live here. It is vital that we continue to foster this commitment to stewardship, that we maintain a sustainable plan to address these emerging challenges, and that we position the Mad River Valley as a clean, friendly, caring, safe, and healthy community.

The goal of stewardMRV is to steward the Mad River Valley's recreational access points with collaboration of the existing MRV Trails Collaborative partners. This stewardship initiative was a natural next step to build on the foundation of the Trails Collaborative. The unprecedented collaboration has been incredibly successful in bringing many organizations and stakeholders together, including the Mad River Valley Recreation District, the Mad River Path, Friends of the Mad River, the Mad River Valley Planning District, the Mad River Riders, and the Mad River Valley Chamber of Commerce, and the municipal governments of the Valley's towns.

¹Mad River Valley Planning District Memo re: Mad River Valley 2020 Trail Use Data. 11/09/2020.
https://mrvpd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/MRVPD-Memo_2020-Trail-Use-Data.pdf

stewardMRV was designed with an eye towards extending a scope beyond these very visible trailheads and swim holes, working to instill an ethos of stewardship for the Mad River Valley's entire network of recreational assets, and the community beyond.

OBJECTIVES

The overarching goal of this program is to instill a greater sense of environmental stewardship within the Mad River Valley community. We need to build an understanding that all individuals should be aware of and be active participants in the stewardship of our outdoor recreational resources. It is vital to maintain the resiliency of recreation and health of the environment in the MRV—both for those that live here, and those that visit. Outdoor recreation is the major driver of tourism to this community. Having clean and healthy sites will ensure positive experiences and encourage visitation to the Valley in general.

It is also important to note that the economic health of our individual towns depends on the collective economic health of the Mad River Valley. Clearly all of the MARV's towns are interconnected economically, and socially. While some towns may have more sites than others we need to view our collective recreational assets holistically, as proper stewardship benefits everyone. While Waitsfield is our economic hub, the more people who come to visit Waitsfield, the more they visit and benefit the other towns within the Mad River Valley.

SCOPE OF WORK

From May through October, a total of 24 sites were visited on a weekly basis at the very least and for some 3-4 times per week. These visits were made by our stewardMRV volunteers and/or by the Program Coordinator. These sites include:

Fayston

- Chase Brook Town Forest
- Camel's Hump State Forest - Howe Block
- Mad River Park Recreation Fields
- Boyce Hill Town Forest

Moretown

- Kenneth H. Ward Memorial Access Area
- Moretown Town Forest

Waitsfield

- Bridge Street Swim Hole @ Bridge Street Marketplace
- Lareau Swim Hole
- West Greenway at Meadow Road
- Wu Ledges Town Forest
- Joslin Memorial Library Park
- Bridge Street
- Pines Rest Area
- Lovett Park
- Austin Parcel
- Heart of the Valley Trail
- Fiddlers Walk

Warren

- Warren Skate Park
- Warren Path
- Blueberry Lake (*Beach Access North, Access South, Trailhead*)
- Kingsbury Greenway at Wabanaki Conservation Area
- Riverside Conservation Area
- Quayls Way River Access
- Warren Falls

Data

The stewardMRV Coordinator kept track of site visits, trash/recycling pickups, estimates of the amount of trash and recycling collected, public communications and press attention. Site stewards also provided observations and feedback via communications with the program coordinator.

Communications

A new [stewardMRV introductory video](#) was produced showcasing the foundation of the program, efforts to encourage volunteerism, and the ethos of stewardship.

stewardMRV has received tremendous media attention including a [feature story on WPTZ News](#) along with frequent articles in the Valley Reporter, helping to garner a public presence within the Mad River Valley..

Trash/Recycling

stewardMRV paid for thrice-weekly pickup of trash and recycling receptacles at key locations around the Valley, adding recycling at each location to conform with state recycling laws. These sites include: the Joslin Memorial Library Park, Joslin Memorial Library stairs on Bridge Street, the covered bridge on Bridge Street, Lovett Park, the Bridge Street Marketplace parking lot, the Lareau Swim Hole parking lot and at the Warren Skate Park. stewardMRV entered into a special agreement with the town of Waitsfield for trash pick-up at certain sites traditionally covered by the town road crew (such as Bridge Street); by transitioning management from the town to stewardMRV, services were augmented to include thrice-weekly pickup and recycling. Trash pickup was provided by A&J Recycling. A&J recycling is an important partner in the stewardMRV effort; they were incredibly flexible, quickly pivoting to include Saturday pick-ups at Bridge Street and Lareau Swim Hole when the summer weekend crush necessitated it.

Infrastructure

StewardMRV continues to maintain two portalets each in the Bridge Street Marketplace parking lot and the Lareau Swim Hole parking lot. Previously, there had been only one each. The additional one installed at each site was an ADA-compliant portalet. These portalets were cleaned twice a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Previously they had only been serviced weekly resulting in frequently dirty and unusable facilities.

New garbage and recycling bins were provided by stewardMRV for the Bridge Street Marketplace and Lareau Swim Hole parking lots. The Warren Skate Park has garbage and recycling receptacles, along with thrice weekly pickups.

Dog waste signage was improved and dog waste dispensers were placed at various locations as part of the public outreach effort.

Outreach & Signage

“The Poop Stops Here” signage was created and added at many sites. “The Poop Stops Here” campaign was advertised through signage at Kenyon’s, Shaw’s, Valley Animal Hospital, and Mad River Veterinary Service. Dog waste dispensers were also placed at Mehuron’s and the Waitsfield Farmers Market.

A StewardMRV banner was hung on the banner poles next to the former TD Bank as a way to solidify awareness around stewardship in the Mad River Valley community.

Signage concerning public access on private land has also been made, with a QR code leading to a webpage designed to encourage users to respect privately owned sites.

stewardMRV was promoted at the Waitsfield Farmers Market and the Wednesday night “Round Ups” at the Bridge Street Marketplace with an information table.

High quality metal signs are affixed to the shelters at Bridge Street Marketplace and at Lareau Swim Hole to identify them as part of the stewardMRV program and to highlight program sponsors.

FUNDING

Funding for the program in 2022 came from these sources.

- Town of Fayston - \$4,000
- Town of Waitsfield - \$5,000
- Town of Warren - \$5,000
- Mad River Valley Chamber of Commerce donated \$10,000 in the name of the business community.
- Mad River Chamber-led Memory Tree Fundraiser - \$5,600

In order for this program to be successful and sustainable, there needs to be a consistent flow of funding. This will include continued MRV Chamber of Commerce support, a commitment from the Mad River Valley municipalities, the on-going support of partner organizations, funds derived from the Memory Tree initiative and direct appeals to individual stewardMRV contributors. The proposed 2023 Budget is currently in process and the results for 2022 are currently under review. Upon completion they will be added to the appendix.

RESULTS

The stewardMRV initiative was an unqualified success. To introduce the concept of stewardship in a tangible and meaningful way, stewardMRV combated the issues associated with the growing usage of our outdoor recreational access points in many ways including:

- Identification of outdoor recreational access sites
- New public trash and recycling receptacles with more frequent pickups
- Enhanced public restroom facilities with more frequent cleanings including ADA compliant units
- Construction of attractive new shelters to house portalets and trash/recycling receptacles
- Dog waste mitigation
- Improved pack-in pack-out communications at sites without receptacles
- Encouragement of volunteerism resulting in vastly increased participation
- Pertinent data collection
- Dedicated program management
- Public communication and social media plans

Data

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| ● # of Trash Recycling Pick-Ups | 300 plus |
| ● # of Recycling Bags Removed | 300 plus |
| ● Bulk of Trash Collected (<i>estimated</i>) | 7.5 tons |
| ● Bulk of Recycling Collected (<i>estimated</i>) | 4 tons |
| ● # of Site Visits Made By Coordinator | 450 |
| ● # of Site Visits by Volunteers | 750 |
| ● Total Site Visits | 1,200 |
| ● # of New Site Stewards Volunteers | 19 |
| ● # of Outdoor Experiences Enhanced | Countless |

TESTIMONIALS

Travis Kerr, Owner of Splinters and stewardMRV volunteer, “I think the stewardMRV program can help us get more advocates on our side and be involved in the town with more support. It can help get more parents, families and community members to help spread the word about all the hard work that we are doing and invite more people to enjoy it.”

Karen Lawson, Co-owner of Lawson's Finest Liquids, “Our natural resources are a big draw here in the Valley. We really feel that it is our responsibility to take care of our natural assets and ensure they are well maintained for generations to come.” 2023 Testimonials from volunteers, land owners and business leaders will be added shortly

Sarina Gulisano, Owner of The Sweet Spot, “The area along the Mad River by the covered bridge in Waitsfield continues to be a busy destination for both locals and visitors. More traffic equals more trash. The Steward program headed by the Mad River Chamber of Commerce has proven to be essential for our community. They provide receptacles for trash and recycling that greatly reduces the amount of trash left around our beautiful valley. The port-a-lets are also super popular for people enjoying time at the river.

Thank you for this program and we appreciate all the people that make it happen.”

Patty Pasley, stewardMRV Volunteer, “I was recruited to be an MRV steward in the ditch along Route 100 while picking up garbage for Green Up Day. I may have been an easy target to be a site steward, but I jumped at the chance to help maintain one of our local outdoor spaces. Throughout the summer, I visited my site to clean up trash; check for trail maintenance needs; cut back weeds, brambles, and knotweed; and make the trailhead inviting and comfortable for visitors. Friends frequently offered to help! The stewardMRV program director was very responsive and helpful with any support I needed--he even worked with the Town of Fayston to repair a damaged fence at my site. I'm super proud to be associated with this group and the way it draws together community volunteers, town stakeholders, local non-profits, the Chamber, and business sponsors to give attention to our recreational spaces. It's unique and innovative and another one of those things that makes the Valley a special place.”

Lisa Koitzsch, Co-Chair, Fayston Conservation Commission, The Mad River Valley has seen a big increase in visitors to our trailheads and swimming holes over the past few years. I am so grateful for stewardMRV and the work they are doing throughout our Valley. This group of dedicated and caring volunteers stepped in and shouldered the responsibility of keeping these special places clean and trash free. The trailhead at Fayston's Chase Brook Town Forest has never looked better - thanks to Patty Pasley, our stewardMRV volunteer. stewardMRV = Community Pride.”

Kathy Haskel, MYSA School and stewardMRV volunteer, “The StewardMRV program draws attention to our valley's more precious assets, our open and shared outdoor spaces. Through the commitment of the Valley residents the Mad River Valley's recreational spaces are kept clean for everyone to enjoy. The Valley takes pride in their land and this program exemplifies how our community lives into shared values. I feel honored to be part of a place that puts in the effort to clean and problem solve around the increased use of our outdoor recreational spaces.”

REFLECTIONS

- This second year of stewardMRV saw significantly less trash than in the inaugural year and certainly far less than the years prior to the start of the program in 2021. The first two years of the stewardMRV program have clearly created a strong foundation for a sustainable, long-term effort.
- Although this program brought about many great successes, there were some points of difficulty and lessons learned, which will help to shape how stewardMRV proceeds in the future.
- Communication and engagement with volunteers was a problem in the first year and it was recognized as an issue that needed to be dealt with. Tom Spencer, the Program Coordinator tackled this issue head on and solved the problem. This success points to the need to ensure that the Program Coordinator position is filled by a mature, strong communicator and that the communication with volunteers. Landowners and business leaders are of the utmost importance. It is vital that volunteers, land owners and stakeholders feel appreciated and valued.
- There were process and communication challenges with the working groups' collaboration on the stewardMRV program. It is important that the group works collaboratively to ensure that all stakeholders' opinions and perspectives are heard.
- Site selection and needs for new infrastructure need to be conducted in the fall in order to ascertain how stewardMRV can best aid their site stewardship plans and realistic budgets can be created. For example, we'd like to engage the Town of Fayston to learn about their plans for the Boyce Town Forest and how stewardMRV might help them meet their stewardship challenges.
- New infrastructure such as bear proof garbage cans would be a great asset. The Lareau Swim Hole had an animal tear through the garbage cans, making a mess that is unsightly and unwelcoming for our residents and our visitors.
- We were not consistent with social media posts and there was a lack of coordination among the collaborators. Having a schedule in advance of the season

would be beneficial.

- We need to fund and better organize beginning of year and end of year parties for the volunteers.

Looking Forward

The success of the 2022 season offers a strong foundation for the future. The work of stewardship is inherently forward-looking. It is intimately tied with the work of building shared values and fostering a community that is able to draw together and support one another. The partnering organizations involved in the launch of the stewardMRV initiative aim to support these goals through the development of five strategic areas, including;

- The building of an ethos of stewardship that knits together the diversity of stewardship work already being done.
- The celebration and coordination of these diverse efforts so that they support one another.
- The engagement and support of volunteers as a critical piece of the puzzle.
- The development of funding mechanisms that can support critical stewardship initiatives as they arise.
- A commitment to ongoing learning that will ensure the stewardship of the Mad River Valley happens in a thoughtful, equitable, and inclusive manner.

An Ethos of Stewardship

The stewardMRV initiative arose in response to a perceived need for the stewardship of recreational access points and the initiative is far from having a monopoly on stewardship in the Mad River Valley – nor does it claim to. Rather, during the development of the 2021 field season, it became clear that the short-term goals of the stewardMRV initiative were in support of a broader goal to encourage a Valley-wide stewardship ethic. Many individuals and organizations were and are already involved in the work of stewardship. Moving forward, stewardMRV aims to use its brand as an ‘umbrella’ under which existing stewardship activities can be highlighted and shared with the broader community. Outcomes of this effort will likely include cross-organization media and social campaigns. However, the success of a stewardship ethic is more than branding alone and will only become better with the success of the following strategic focus areas.

Outcomes

- Branding Campaign

- ‘Umbrella’ framework for discussing and sharing stewardship work
- Broader recognition of ongoing stewardship activities in the MRV

Building Community

The Trails Collaborative offered fertile ground for the growth of the stewardMRV initiative. In much the same way, the initiative seeks to provide a space for groups interested in stewardship work to connect and coordinate their efforts. Ongoing meetings of the core partners that continue to develop programmatic elements will have a kind of ‘open-door’ policy to encourage participation and awareness of new and evolving stewardship opportunities. The Chamber will continue to host these meetings for the foreseeable future and serve as a hub for initial efforts to coordinate cross organizational events and activities. A key piece of the effort to build community around stewardship will be the role partnering organizations play in celebrating one-another’s work.

Outcomes

- Ongoing stewardMRV meetings
- Awareness between organizations of each other’s activities
- Work to expand the “big four” to two/three stewards that collaborate to visit more often. Warren Falls, Blueberry Lake, Bridge Street and Laureau Swim Hole.

Taking Action – Volunteers

In recognition of the aforementioned ‘umbrella’ approach and the limited capacity of any one partner organization, the stewardMRV initiative will limit its role as a site for direct volunteer activity. In general, this means that each partner organization will continue to coordinate their individual volunteers, albeit with the branding and community building support of the stewardMRV initiative. However, the Chamber will continue to play host to the stewardMRV site-based volunteer program that emerged from the 2021 field season. The initiative can serve as a hub for sharing volunteer opportunities, and for fostering a connection between organizations that encourages volunteers to explore new opportunities for getting involved.

Outcomes

- Webpage hosting volunteer opportunities
- Branding opportunities for ‘umbrella’ / stewardship ethos
- Volunteer ‘cross-pollination’
- Co-hosted events

- Ongoing site-based stewardMRV stewardship program

Taking Action – Infrastructure

Much of stewardMRV's inaugural season focused on the roll-out of infrastructure investments at a few high-profile sites. The initiative will continue to work with the towns and other partners to identify and facilitate infrastructure investments as needed. The first few years of the program are set up as a pilot program to showcase the value that high quality investments in infrastructure can bring to stewardship and to the community. However, the initiative and its surrounding community of partners will aim to support future infrastructure investments as they are able.

Outcomes

- Piloting bear-proof trash receptacles
- Additional restroom and trash infrastructure
- Work on elevating our recreation trail head and swim spots to be more uniform (signage, fencing, etc.) and inviting. We want to send a consistent and clean message to site users. Develop a plan to standardize our look.
 - For example, make sure all signage has a consistent look and message.
 - In addition, upgrade all posts to be consistent and inviting. Remove all metal posts and replace them with more aesthetically pleasing wooden posts that match the kiosks. Place the dog waste bags and dog etiquette sign on this nicer post.
 - Remove all old signage and metal posts.
- Clean all kiosks as they have become dirty. In addition, stain the existing kiosk posts to make them look new.
 - Have a plan in place to replace the 8" x 12" signage at least three times a year with a new message.

Sustained Effort

In order to make stewardMRV viable for future years, it is vital that a sustainable funding mechanism is developed and nurtured. The stewardMRV program will need broad-based community support to become the fixture in the Mad River Valley that it needs to be. This will include continued support of the business community via the MRV Chamber of Commerce, a commitment from Mad River Valley municipalities, the on-going support of the partner organizations, and contributions from individuals.

Outcomes

- Clear funding mechanisms for ongoing investments and infrastructure needs
- Per-project and general fundraising activities
- Ongoing engagement with towns and State

Ongoing Learning

A bookend to the development of a stewardship ethos is the recognition that our work is ongoing and needs to grow and reflect our learning. The stewardMRV initiative will continue to focus on developing key infrastructure investments, tackling specific needs for more volunteers, and highlighting the successful, ongoing efforts of many individuals and organizations already doing the work of stewardship in the Mad River Valley. At the same time, the initiative and its supporting organizations are committed to learning and adapting in support of an equitable and inclusive approach to the work of stewardship.

Outcomes

- Incorporation of diversity, equity, and inclusion principles
- Research and learning about updates to best practices for stewardship work

CONCLUSION

As noted previously, the stewardMRV initiative has been an unqualified success to date. Tremendous strides were made in 2022 with much of the success attributable to the presence of a strong and highly dedicated Program Coordinator . Another key was the diligent collaboration of the working partners involved in the program: representatives from the Mad River Valley Chamber of Commerce, Friends of the Mad River, Mad River Path, Mad River Riders, Mad River Valley Planning District and Mad River Valley Recreation District. Their efforts were strongly supported by a dedicated and growing cadre of volunteer site stewards that were our “boots on the ground,” keeping a careful eye on our beloved outdoor recreational access points.

Despite an array of challenges that include short planning periods, limited budget and a complicated array of sites, each with their own challenges, the stewardMRV initiative has had a clear positive impact on the health of our outdoor recreational access points over the past two years.. There was a demonstrable difference in site cleanliness from previous years and we were able to turn the tide of what had become a downward slide for these places we all love and appreciate. There is a lot of momentum to build upon as the 2022 season comes to close and we begin planning for 2023. With our strong foundation and proper funding we can focus on taking our recreation trailheads and swim holes to the next level of improvement and stewardship.

Volunteers

We would like to thank our dedicated volunteers:

Steward:	Locations:
Stephen Willis	Blueberry Lake Access Points
Pam Lerner	Blueberry Lake Trailhead
Johanna Palmer	Boyce Hill / Fayston Town Forest
Patty Pasley	Chase Brook Town Forest
Joan Gilbert	CHSF (Tucker Hill Road)
Jill Veit	Fiddler's Walk
Martin Veit	Heart of the Valley Trail
Kathy Haskell	Joslin Memorial Library Park
Bill Moore	Kingsbury Greenway @ Wabanaki Conservation Area
Gail Helmer	Laureau Swim Hole
Lani Wharton	Lovett Park & Bridge Street

Thatcher Simpson	Mad River Park Recreation Fields
Larissa Darias / Neck of the Woods School	Moretown Town Forest
Joshua Schwartz	Pines Rest Area
Tom Spencer	Quayls Way River Access
Kim Pickering	Riverside Conservation Area
Thatcher Simpson	Ward River Access
Mike Ware	Warren Falls
Tom Spencer	Warren Path
Travis Kerr	Warren Skate Park
Larissa Darias / Neck of the Woods School	West Greenway
Stephen Peterson	Wu Ledges

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