**The Mad River Valley Energy (MRVE) Network** is a group of individuals aiming to implement and promote renewable energy use in the area, in ways that are harmonious with local values and the natural landscape.
**Their first project** is a cooperatively-owned community solar farm, to be located on an existing septic site on Sugarbush Resort property, out of major viewsheds.
**A survey** was recently taken online to gauge the interests of the community, with the help of some UVM students.
**The results are positive–** almost half of the survey participants reported interest in investing in the project (compared to the 15% that had none). The survey will yield valuable information and momentum for MRVE moving forward.
Currently, **installation** is planned for the summer of 2012; MRVE is in the process of **incorporating** and will begin **accepting memberships and investments** in the near future. We encourage you to visit the MRVE website (www.mrve.net), sign up for their mailing list, or follow on their blog, Facebook, or Twitter accounts.

# Examples of Community Solar Projects

**Hall's Pond Solar Co-operative**
**Ontario, Canada**

The proposed 7.5 megawatt solar installation will be built on part of a 105 acre property on Gordon Street. Located within Guelph city limits on Urban Reserve Land, it will be the largest urban community financed solar project in Ontario.

Members to Hall's Pond Solar Co-operative will receive a 5% return on their investment, increasing by 20% every five years. The minimum investment is $5,000. The minimum term is 5 years. Their goal is to raise the financing primarily (and perhaps exclusively) from the citizens of Guelph and surrounding area.

*http://www.hallspondsolar.org*

**Bright Sky Power**
**Burlington, Ontario, Canada**

All residents of Burlington have the opportunity to directly invest in the project by becoming a member of the BrightSky Power Community Solar Co-operative and purchasing a share or bond. This community power project allows people, who may not own property suitable for solar panels or do not have the available

funds to buy their own solar system, to participate in Ontario's new green economy. By offering residents the opportunity to invest in the project, BrightSky is enabling them the oppertunity to earn income from solar energy. At the same time they will be keeping their energy dollar in the local economy.

BrightSky Power's solar installation will be contracted to sell energy through the Ontario Power Authority's Feed-in Tariff (FIT) program. To cover development stage costs, BurlingtonGreen (the organization the spearheaded the program) has secured a grant from the Community Energy Partnerships Program (CEPP).

*http://www.brightsky.ca*

**The Edmonds Community Solar Co-op**
**Washington state, USA**

The idea of the Edmonds Community Solar Co-Op is to lower the barriers to installing solar, by centralizing the installation in a sunny location, pooling the installation costs, and using State incentives to lower the costs over the long term. The Community Solar Co-Op model allows families to put in as little as $1,000 towards the project at a time, putting it within reach of far more of us.

Collaborating with the City of Edmonds, this project is working toward the objective of installing a community-owned solar photovoltaic array atop the Frances Anderson Center. This is particularly alluring for homeowners whose property isn't suitable for a home solar installation, but who want to contribute to local power generation. Phase I of the project will install 4.2kW of panels in Summer 2011.

*http://www.tangerinepower.com/edmonds*
*http://sustainable-edmonds.org/community-projects/*

**Solarize Portland**

Solarize Portland is a solar panel volume-purchasing program led by Portland area neighborhood associations.

Solarize Portland is a volunteer-driven community effort led by three area neighborhood coalition offices, bringing renewable solar energy and the benefits of weatherization to thousands of Portland homes.

*http://www.portlandonline.com/bps/index.cfm?c=51902*

# Guides and References

**Green Energy Act Alliance**
**Ontario, Canada**

Talks about the benefit of "community power" and gives examples of Canadian projects that are following that model.

*http://www.greenenergyact.ca/Page.asp?PageID=122&ContentID=887&SiteNodeID=201&BL_ExpandID=43*

**Solar "Cooperative" Concept…Plan…Reality?**

The Solar "Cooperative" idea is to help anyone and everyone who would like to buy and install solar equipment, but who are prevented from doing so for any one (or more) of the following reasons:

1. Too much shading on your property;
2. Poor sun exposure (lack of south-facing roof or space to mount panels);
3. Renters whose landowner/s do not want to allow an installation on their property;
4. Although restrictive covenants preventing solar from being built are not legal, many choose to maintain a NIMBY attitude in order to not upset their neighbors.
5. Those who do not have $10,000 or more to spend; but, who can and will spend a fraction of that to bring green electricity to the community.

Provides info for people who are interested in the solar co-op idea.

*http://sites.google.com/site/solarconnections/solar-cooperative*

**Community Supported Energy Offers a Third Way**

CSE projects are somewhat similar to Community Supported Agriculture (CSA). The main difference, however, is that instead of investing in potatoes, carrots, or cucumbers, with CSE, local residents invest in energy projects that provide greater energy security and a wide variety of other benefits.

The main point is to identify the project as belonging to the community, which may avoid (or at least minimize) the usual conflicts between local residents and developers, whose large-scale, commercial proposals are often viewed as primarily benefiting absentee owners. Local ownership is the key ingredient that transforms what would otherwise be just another corporate energy project into an engine for greater energy security that directly benefits its owners -- the members of the community.

*http://www.communityenergyprogram.ca/Files/CSA=CSE.pdf*

**The Community Solar Guide**

This guide is designed as a resource for those who want to develop community solar projects, from community organizers or solar energy advocates to government officials or utility managers. By exploring the range of incentives and policies while providing examples of operational community solar projects, this guide will help communities to plan and implement successful local energy projects. In addition, by highlighting some of the policy best practices, this guide suggests changes in the regulatory landscape that could significantly boost community solar installations across the country.

PDF
http://solaramericacommunities.energy.gov/pdfs/A_Guide_to_Community_Solar.pdf

**New Generation Energy - Community Solar Lending Program**

Incentives/Policies for Renewables & Efficiency
http://www.dsireusa.org/incentives/incentive.cfm?Incentive_Code=VT42F&re=1&ee=1

**VPIRG Energy**

Has some offering if you join their Solar Communities
VPIRG Energy negotiated a 25% discount with our state's leading solar installer for roof-mounted solar power equipment to meet the needs of Vermont homes and businesses. Alteris Renewables offers Solar Community members the same discounted rate it offers its own employees. There's no better deal available to Vermonters. And Alteris offers "same as cash," zero interest financing to cover the government incentives until customers are issued those rebates and tax credits.
http://www.vpirgenergy.org/pv/faq/#j

**Southern Vermont Renewable Energy**

Organization in Vermont doing Community Solar
http://soveren.org/community-solar/

**Database of Community Energy Partnership Programs**

Provides a lot of information on community power.
*http://www.communityenergyprogram.ca/Resources/ResourcesCommunityPower.aspx*