

# MRVPD secures \$33,490 for kiosk project

The Mad River Valley Planning District (MRVPD) has secured \$33,490 in grants for the Mad River Valley Unified Trailhead Kiosk project from two state funding sources.

Planning district applications to the state of Vermont Department of Buildings and General Services Recreational Facilities Grant Program and the Vermont Department of Health 3-4-50 Prevention Block Grant Program were recently granted. The Unified Trailhead Kiosk Project has been awarded crucial funding to continue with the next phases of production and installation of trailhead kiosks throughout The Valley. These grant funds were made possible due to the initial investment of \$8,500 from each of the towns of Waitsfield, Warren and Fayston in 2018, as well as various in-kind contributions from MRVPD staff and a multitude of local volunteers.

The Unified Trailhead Kiosk Project emerged from a collaborative visioning process led by the Mad River Valley Planning District, which included the six municipalities in the watershed, the Central Valley Regional Planning Commission, the Mad River Valley Recreation District (MRVRD), the Mad River Valley Chamber of Commerce, the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, the U.S. Forest Service

and local stakeholder organizations like Mad River Path Association (MRPA), Mad River Riders, Sugarbush Resort, Mad River Glen, municipal conservation commissions and hundreds of residents and visitors.

### FRAMEWORK

This work culminated in the 2016 Mad River Valley Moves Active Transportation Plan, which provides the framework for a consistent, cohesive and connected regional system of trails, roads and sidewalks that provide a range of transportation options and recreational experiences for all. This community-driven plan increased momentum, resulting in 2017 Mad River Valley Trails Summit, which focused on identifying how to put the Mad River Valley Moves plan into action and included 13 local recreation and conservation entities.

Designating the community's existing active transportation network through a unified trailhead signage system and maps was determined to be the first step toward realizing the community's recreation goals. The enhanced Mad River Valley Trails Collaborative that has emerged from this process, which includes a roster of 78 community trail stakeholders, has been actively designing, planning and implementing the initial stages of this project. MRVPD is serving as facilitator and project manager for this community initiative.

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### COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Strong community support has been critical in the project's success, with time, energy and resources provided by the MRV municipalities, non-profit organizations, trail/recreation entities, the business community and citizens. All of these efforts have culminated in the creation of a prototype major kiosk at Waitsfield's Serag Mountain Town Forest, installed July 9 by the Waitsfield Conservation Commission, and the Mad River Park Kiosk unveiled at the pavilion dedication ceremony on October 4. The MRV Trails Collaborative will work on kiosk design and fabrication throughout the winter with installation through 2019.

The approximately 50 major and minor trailhead kiosks being built through this project will be located on publicly accessible property throughout The Valley, specifically within the towns of Waitsfield, Warren, Fayston and Moretown. These recreational facilities will benefit a diverse range of trail users, from those with mobility challenges to thrill-seekers, by increasing accessibility to the evolving regional trail network. This project serves all recreational styles and seeks to enhance human health and wellbeing, environmental health and economic vitality.

# Moretown's future in the HUUSD

By Katie Martin

Former Harwood Unified Union School District (HUUSD) Board member Peter Langella told the Moretown Select Board that he has concerns about potentially closing schools in the district.

At the January 22 meeting, Langella brought up the recent petition from Moretown resident Neil Nussbaum asking the board to include a Town Meeting agenda vote on withdrawing from the district. The petition failed to get the minimum required number of signatures.

Langella thought that the petition would get the conversation going for community members to become more aware and active in the district's decisions. Langella was concerned with the fact that it seemed some HUUSD Board members would do anything to cut their taxes.

He expressed his worries about smaller schools in the district and that Act 46 got the ball rolling for the board to close highly functional schools.

Langella said that Nussbaum's efforts would make community members engage in the conversation about schools in the district and that he sees the school closure problem as a possibility.

Some members of the Moretown Select Board were not enthused about receiving Nussbaum's petition to leave the district on such short notice, claiming it wasn't well planned out.

Board chair Tom Martin questioned why Moretown Elementary is in Superintendent Brigid Nease's crosshairs. Other board members questioned if withdrawing from the district was premature. Board members decided it was important to educate the town and to have a discussion on Town Meeting Day in the "other business" segment.

Select board member John Hoogenboom added that most things that the HUUSD Board has done have been premature and said he doesn't want to follow suit, and that the board and town residents should be more patient.

Martin said if Moretown Elementary School is running a successful operation and growing in students it'll be hard to close its doors in the future. Martin wants to start the discussion and have people watch the HUUSD meetings to get information before acting.

### PARKING BAN

In other business, the select board made the motion to institute a parking ban. A ban was initially brought up by the highway crew after they discussed with the board their difficulties plowing with cars in the way.

The town's prohibition against parking in a public right of way runs November 1 until April 30. Any vehicles parked along town roads within the right of way could be removed at the owner's expense.



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