



HEALTHY LAND. CLEAN WATER. VIBRANT COMMUNITY.

For Immediate Release

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Mad River Watch Launched

Over the weekend, community volunteers geared up to help the rest of the Mad River Valley enjoy the 2020 swimming season. Friends of the Mad River has run its volunteer-driven Mad River Watch (MRW) water quality monitoring program since 1985 to get a sense of the watershed's overall health, provide public health information to river users, and identify areas needing improvement. Monday, June 8th, was the first of six 2020 sampling dates – with one every other week from June through August.

Sampling results from the first round of Friends' 2020 Mad River Watch water quality monitoring show **no sites with unfavorable *E. coli* levels** as of Monday morning. Thunderstorms on Friday and Saturday caused the river to crest at 5:15 Saturday evening at 260 cubic feet per second (cfs), flushing pollutants from the land into the water and downstream long before sampling Monday morning.

At the time of sampling on Monday morning, the river's discharge (volume per second) was down to 99.3 cfs at the US Geological Service flow gage in Moretown. The flow condition of the Mad River at the time of sampling Monday morning was Low and Steady (LS). The mean flow for this date over the last 90 years is 196 cfs; the water level is low for this time of year.

Remember that rains can cause *E. coli* levels to fluctuate, even on a daily basis, as water carrying pathogens moves down the watershed. FMR's *E. coli* sampling results are only a snapshot in time intended to give you a sense of the conditions that lead to high pathogen levels in the water so you can be informed. **You** are your best protector - use common sense and don't swim for several days after a rain. It is estimated that at the level of 235 colonies *E.coli* per 100 mL water, approximately 8 out of every 1,000 swimmers are likely to contract a water borne illness related to fecal contamination.

2020 – Changes Afoot

For 2020, Friends pared the program back to its roots and isn't taking samples for phosphorus, turbidity, or nitrogen analysis this year; instead, they're only sampling *E. coli* from 12 swimhole sites and analyzing samples at their General Wait House lab. "Over the decades, Friends has used Mad River Watch data to guide many successful clean-up efforts," said Executive Director, Corrie Miller. "We're excited to be using the organization's 30th Anniversary as an opportunity to redesign Mad River Watch so that it better meets clean water and community goals." She adds, "A side benefit is that some of our tried and true volunteers are turning their efforts to taking care of swimholes and riparian restoration areas so we can explore how a caretaker program could benefit the community."

This week, Paula Baldwin, who acted as MRW Lab Coordinator for four years, trained Lisa Koitzsch, a former Friends of the Mad River Coordinator and Fayston resident, to fill her shoes. Miller adds, "We feel fortunate to welcome Lisa back to this program, but also deeply grateful for the non-stop enthusiasm and dedication Paula

breathed into Mad River Watch through these past four summers. We wish her well as she spends more time at the beach!" This week's volunteers include: Charlie Baldwin, Sally Boudreau, Annie & Julia Fender, Rick Hungerford, Ruth Lacey, and Michael Ware.

For more information about *E. coli* and the Mad River Watch program visit www.FriendsoftheMadRiver.org. Throughout the summer, Mad River Watch results will be available in the Valley Reporter, on Facebook ("Friends of the Mad River"), and on sign posts at swimholes across the Valley. Friends of the Mad River is a community-supported organization committed to healthy land, clean water, and a vibrant community. Mad River Watch and other important programs depend on the generosity of community members; learn how to become a member and donate securely online at Friends' website.

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Data Follows

SITE LOCATION	SITE #	Time Sampled (AM)	Water Temp. °F	<i>E.coli</i> per 100ml *
Blueberry Lake	BBL	7:45	66	19
Warren Falls (Mad River)	1	8:10	51	3
Warren Store (Freeman Brook)	4	8:30	52	38
Warren Riverside Park (Mad River)	7	7:27	53	<1.0
Lareau Swimhole (Mad River)	19	7:38	54	2
Couples Club Field (Mad River)	19.2	7:48	54	6
Waitsfield Covered Bridge (Mad River)	20	7:54	52	38
Meadow Road Bridge (Mad River)	23	8:20	54	21
Moretown Village Swim Access (Mad River)	27	7:04	58	96
Ward Swimhole (Mad River)	29	6:39	57	128