

**It's time to ask voters,
"Shall the Town of Richmond continue
funding the Conservation Reserve Fund..."**

Conservation Reserve Fund Policy

Overview and Guidelines


Conservation Reserve Fund Application Process

Conservation Reserve Fund Application Form

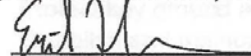
Effective Date

This policy shall become effective upon approval by both the Richmond Selectboard and Richmond Conservation Commission.

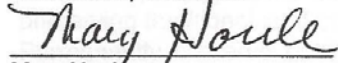
**Approved by vote of the
Richmond Selectboard
On July 18, 2005**



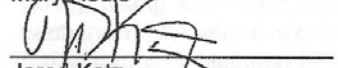
Frances F. Thomas, Chair



Erik Filkorn, Vice-Chair



Mary Houle



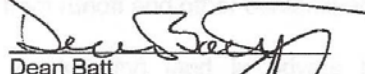
Jared Katz

K. Peter Parent

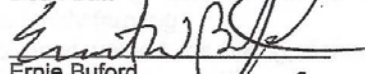
**Approved by
Richmond Conservation Commission**



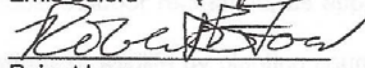
Alison Lane Anand, Chair



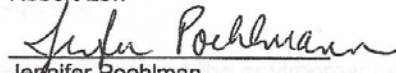
Dean Batt



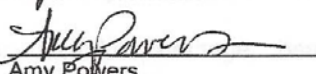
Ernie Buford



Robert Low



Jennifer Pohlman



Amy Powers

Cindy Schaefer

Richmond's Conservation Reserve Fund

What is the Conservation Reserve Fund?

It is a fund Richmond voters established in 2005 to enable the Town to participate in important conservation projects. It allows Richmond to work with willing property owners, non-profits and community volunteer groups to protect important local natural, agricultural and historic resources.

The Fund is supported by a penny on the tax rate (\$10 per \$100,000 of property valuation per year) and requires renewal by voters every five years. The 2015 vote was 693-223 to renew. The next vote comes on March 3, 2020.

How has the Fund been used?

As the reverse side shows, the fund has been instrumental in furthering the conservation of projects ranging from our new Town Forest to the protection of working farms, recreational treasures and preservation of historic sites.

Why was the fund created?

In a growing town like ours, conservation opportunities can arise at any time – and just as quickly disappear, often forever. This makes it hard for a town to plan for or quickly find the significant amounts of money needed to conserve important, vulnerable resources. Richmond's fund enables the Conservation Commission, Selectboard and the public to carefully review and quickly act on key conservation opportunities.

Having a fund also reduces the costs of conservation. Many state, federal and private conservation funders require communities to share in project costs to show that voters support conservation. Voter-financed funds such as ours provide the needed proof, qualifying projects for significant additional funding. So far, every dollar Richmond taxpayers have invested in conservation has generated \$4.66 in funding from other sources – over \$1.3 million in all.

How are funding decisions made?

Proposals are made to the Conservation Commission, and the Selectboard makes the final decision after considering the Conservation Commission's recommendations. Deliberations of both bodies are held in public sessions. Any land acquisitions by the Town over \$20,000 must be approved by voters.

What does the fund cost taxpayers?

One cent on the tax rate per year, equal to \$10 for every \$100,000 of a property's assessment. Though amounting about 1.4% of the FY20 Richmond's tax rate, that penny generated \$46,465 in FY 2020.

Does conserving land raise or lower property taxes overall?

An expert on Vermont tax policy, Deborah Brighton, has researched this and shown how conserving land helps keep property taxes in check. She says, "Open space tends to require few public services. More people tend to require more public services, resulting in higher taxes."

Furthermore, nearly all conserved land in Richmond, being privately held, continues generating tax revenues. (The exceptions are the Town-owned Andrews Community Forest, and the Stage Road Community Forest.) Landowners usually must agree to let the public use conserved land for hiking, hunting, fishing, skiing and other activities (with the exception of land being used for agriculture or livestock grazing).

What kinds of new projects does the Conservation Commission foresee?

One likely conservation project is saving Gillett Pond by restoring the historic dam that created and protects the water body, one of Richmond's most treasured natural and recreational assets. Other applications to the Fund appear to be pending, and more, undoubtedly, will come in.

The Conservation Reserve Fund positions Richmond to consider and act on these opportunities fairly, efficiently and in a timely manner while also qualifying the Town for major funding from foundations, agencies and other large donors.

Complete project list on reverse. More information: <http://www.richmondvt.gov/boards-minutes/conservation-commission/>

Please Vote on March 3. Polls open 7am-7pm at Camels Hump Middle School. Absentee ballots available from Town Clerk.

PROJECTS SUPPORTED BY RICHMOND'S CONSERVATION FUND

Project	Resources Conserved	Project Leader	Description	Town Funding	Additional \$\$ Generated
Bombardier Meadow (2009)	Recreation, habitat, water quality, scenic, agriculture	Richmond Land Trust	10-acre hayfield on Cochran Rd., with wooded banks on the Huntington and Winooski River	\$51,500	\$77,000 (Vt. Housing and Conservation Board)
Large Habitat Block Study (2009)	Habitat	Richmond Conservation Commission	Mapped large blocks of uplands wildlife habitat and connectivity among them	\$2,400	
Town Center Portico Renovation (2010)	Historic	Town of Richmond	Roof and other structural repairs	\$35,265	\$65,035
Richmond Hill Cemetery (2010)	Historic	Town of Richmond	10-foot deeded path needed for access to historic cemetery	\$2,500	
Andrews Farmland (2012)	Agriculture, economic, scenic	Vt. Land Trust	187 acres of prime agricultural soils along the Winooski River	\$10,000	\$197,500
Science-to-Action Project (2013)	Habitat, water quality	Richmond Planning and Conservation Commissions	Identify public conservation priorities, and inventory/confirm key habitat locations to improve planning & zoning processes	\$3,195	\$88,525 (includes in-kind service donations)
Window restoration at Congregational Church (2014)	Historic	Richmond Congregational Church	Protected 100-year-old stained glass windows	\$6,564	\$12,423
Willis Hill (2014)	Recreation, education, water quality, habitat, scenic	Richmond Land Trust	20 acres on Rt. 2 at western entrance to village, backing up to elementary and middle schools	\$64,000	\$67,500 (Vt. Housing and Conservation Board) \$55,000 (private donors)
Andrews Community Forest (2018)	Habitat, recreation, pastures, timberland, watershed quality, education, scenic	Vermont Land Trust	428 acres of publicly accessible forest with rich wildlife habitat and educational resources, located within one of Vermont's most important forest blocks.	\$75,000	\$780,000
Huntington Gorge (2019)	Recreation, scenic, historic	Richmond Land Trust, Vermont River Conservancy	3.7 acres, including a dramatic 40-foot rocky gorge with popular swimming holes below, and the site of an early 20 th -century generating station	\$10,000	\$55,000
Johnny Brook Bridge (2018)	Recreation	Richmond Trails Committee	Repair of a key link for hikers and bikers using the Cross Vermont Trail	\$1,000	\$400
Lake Iroquois Plant Survey (2018)	Water quality, recreation, habitat	Lake Iroquois Association	Invasive plant inventory	\$2,000	-
Richmond Master Naturalist Program (2019)	Wildlife habitat, forest health, water quality	UVM Extension	Support of a group of citizen-scientists trained to inventory and monitor the health of important habitat and other resources	\$4,000	-
Volunteers Green Rip-Rap (2019)	Soil, recreation, historic	Richmond	Armor-plate the bank of the Winooski River where erosion threatened Town recreational resources	\$20,000	\$117,200
TOTAL SPENT & ADDITIONAL FUNDS GENERATED				\$287,424	\$1,342,133

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