

Daniel Schmidt
ACF Letter of Interest

Thank you for considering my application to serve as the Richmond Conservation Commission appointee to the Andrews Community Forest Committee. I've lived or worked in the Richmond/Huntington area for the last eight years and have a deep appreciation for the rivers, fields and forests in this part of the Green Mountains. I've worked in the field of conservation for twenty years and would bring to this position a passion for our local ecology and a collaborative spirit.

For the past five years, I've worked at the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps. In my current role, as the Chief Program Officer, I work closely with both our Conservation and Farm programs to create connections between young people and the natural world. Prior to this, I was the Education Manager at the Green Mountain Audubon Center in Huntington, leading science education programs on topics ranging from Forest Management for Birds to Pond Ecology. And before that, I taught a variety of ecology classes at CCV including Field Biology, Wetland Ecology, and Environmental Science. The common thread that runs through these career paths is my desire to not just implement conservation projects but to engage a wide variety of people in those projects. Through the process of literally getting my hands dirty—pulling invasives, planting riparian trees, building erosion control structures— my work has centered around creating connections that have a lasting impact.

Prior to Vermont, I completed a PhD in Physical Geography from the University of California, Berkeley and spent many years researching the effects of climate change on tropical ecosystems. I also worked in a variety secondary and post-secondary schools and have a passion for facilitating experiences in the outdoors. My career path has always meandered between education and science, and I'm fortunate to have found a position at VYCC where I can wear both my educator hat and ecologist hat.

I am excited about serving on the Andrews Community Forest Committee because the successful management of this forest will require balancing human use and ecological conservation – a theme I have spent much of my career exploring. In addition, I have found ACFC members to be creative and thoughtful in their approach and am inspired to learn from and take part in the process of stewarding the Community Forest. I spend much of my time birding, running and just generally exploring Richmond's forests and I would be grateful to serve on the ACFC and help manage this invaluable community resource.