

Conserving Land For Richmond's Future



**Renewing Richmond's
Conservation Reserve Fund**

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

Richmond's Conservation Reserve Fund

Handouts

- **Information Sheet**
- **Projects to Date**
- **Fiscal Performance**
- **Draft Article: Australian ballot**

Richmond's Conservation Reserve Fund

- **2005: Established by voters for five years**
- **2010: Renewed by voters**
- **2015: Renewed by voters (Yes - 693; No - 223)**
- **2020: Funding expires**

Richmond's Conservation Reserve Fund

- **Financed by 1 cent on the tax rate.**
- **FY 2020 yield: \$46,465.**
- **Focuses on conserving local natural, agricultural and historic resources.**
- **Enables the Town to move quickly to capture time-sensitive funding opportunities.**

Richmond's Conservation Reserve Fund

Decision- Making

- **Conservation Commission reviews projects proposals on continuing basis.**
- **Recommendation to Selectboard.**
- **Selectboard approves or disapproves expenditures.**

Built-In Fiscal Protections for the Town

- **Design encourages non-profit and volunteer responsibilities for project initiation, management and stewardship.**
- **Minimizes Town's administrative burdens and expenses.**
- **“...Any acquisition of a parcel of real estate by the Town, meaning acquisition of a whole parcel and not solely its development rights, requiring in excess of \$20,000 from the reserve fund will require approval of the voters.”**

Why Renew?

Advances Town Plan Priorities

- **“Protect priority natural areas in order to maintain the health and function of those areas and their ecosystem services.”**
- **“Preserve healthy and resilient working lands, agricultural soils.”**
- **“Maintain Richmond’s rural character and scenic beauty.”**
- **“Utilize best management practices for Richmond-owned, publicly accessible natural and recreational areas.”**
- **“Utilize the conservation reserve fund to protect important**
 - **natural resources and public access to them where appropriate”**

CRF Projects to Date

Natural Areas

- Andrews Community Forest
- Huntington Gorge

Working Farms

- Bombardier Meadow
- Andrews Farmland

Recreational Treasures

- Willis Hill
- Johnnie Brook Bridge
- Volunteer's Green Rip-Rap

Historic Sites

- Town Center Portico
- Cong. Church Stained Glass Windows
- Richmond Hill Cemetery

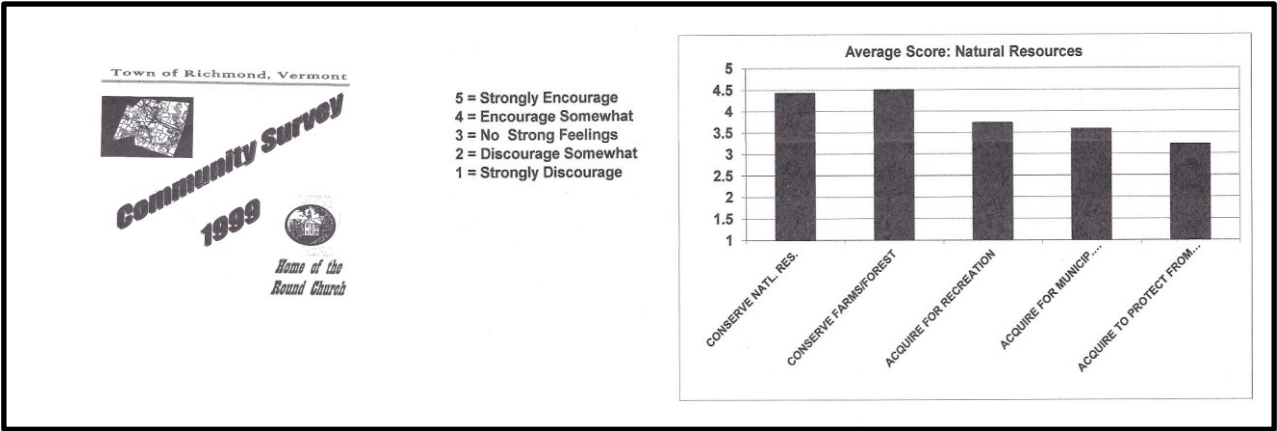
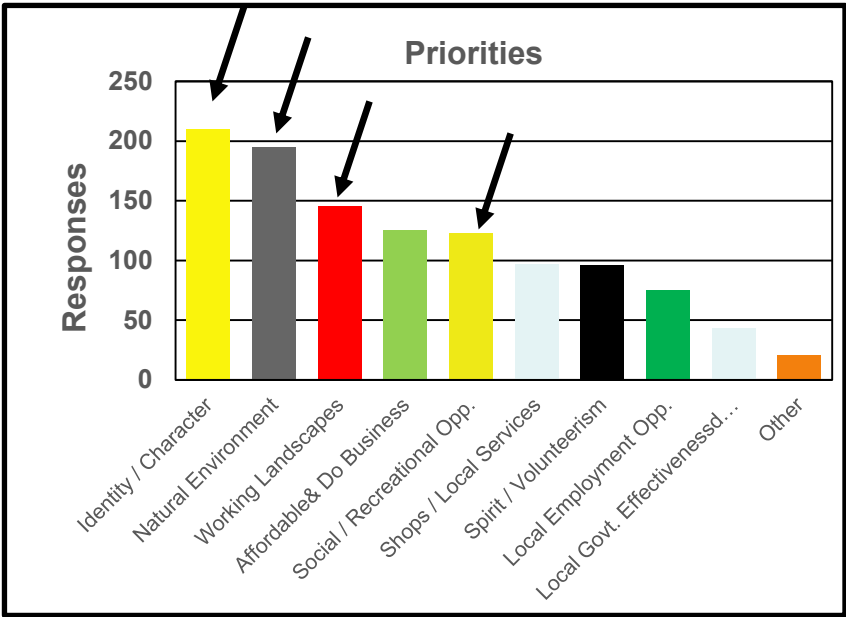
Environmental Research and Education

- Large Habitat Block Survey
- Science-to-Action Report
- Master Naturalist Program
- Lake Iroquois Plant Survey

A 15-year successful track record at protecting water and air quality, biodiversity, working farms and forests, outdoor recreation, historic resources and education

Why Renew?

Tracks with Longstanding Residents' Vision for Richmond's Future



Radiate



440% Return on Taxpayer Funding

To date:

- CRF grants \$ 287,724
- Matching grants won \$1,342,133
- Total value of projects \$1,744,257

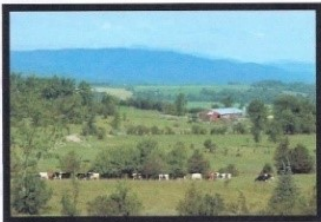
Leverage: \$1 CRF brought in \$4.66

But what about Taxes?

The Evidence

- Towns with more conserved acreage have lower property taxes.
- Conserved properties demand fewer municipal services.

Land Conservation and Property Taxes in Vermont



By Deb Brighton, Tax Policy Consultant

It's time to again hear from the voters

- **CRF funding expires in 2020**
- **Richmond Conservation Commission requests the Selectboard to:**
 - **Put another 5-year CRF renewal before the voters on Town Meeting Day 2020**
 - **Retain basic article as passed in 2005, 2010 and 2015 (change dates and \$\$ yield)**
 - **Schedule public hearing**
 - **Send informational mailing prior to vote**
 - **Conduct all-day vote by Australian Ballot**

ARTICLE __. Shall the Town of Richmond continue funding the Conservation Reserve Fund established by the voters in 2005, and renewed in 2010 and 2015, for the purpose of preserving water quality, providing outdoor recreational opportunities, protecting wildlife, and conserving important natural, agricultural and historic resources, with funding maintained at one cent on the Municipal Tax Rate for five years beginning in fiscal year 2020-2021? One cent on the tax rate, which is equal to \$10 per \$100,000 of assessed value, will yield \$46,465 for the Reserve Fund in FY2020. The Selectboard will administer the fund after considering recommendations by the Conservation Commission. Any acquisition of a parcel of real estate by the Town, meaning acquisition of a whole parcel and not solely its development rights, requiring in excess of \$20,000.00 from the reserve fund, will require approval of the voters.

**It's time to ask voters,
“*Shall the Town of Richmond continue
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“Shall the Town of Richmond continue funding the Conservation Reserve Fund established by voters in 2005”

Questions / Comments?