

# Town of Richmond, Vermont

## Conservation Commission

### Contacts:

Guy Roberts, Chair  
Richmond Town Forest Steering Committee  
[guyr@gmavt.net](mailto:guyr@gmavt.net)

Judy Rosovsky, Chair  
Richmond Conservation Commission  
[judy.rosovsky@jsc.edu](mailto:judy.rosovsky@jsc.edu)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

### **Richmond Seeks Public Input on Managing New Town Forest**

*January 8, 2018* -- The Town of Richmond will host a workshop on Thursday, January 18 to collect public input for planning and managing uses of the Richmond Town Forest, which the Town is now in the final stages of acquiring. The workshop will be held from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at Camels Hump Middle School.

The parcel covers 428 mostly wooded acres about a mile east of the village, and is part of the former Andrews farm. The land lies within one of Vermont's largest blocks of unfragmented interior forest, stretching from Richmond's uplands up and over the Green Mountains.

To protect the land and its natural resources, the Andrews family is working with the Vermont Land Trust to convey the property to the Town under a conservation agreement. It calls for the Town to conserve the forest's natural and scenic resources and open space values; provide for appropriate recreational, educational and other uses; oversee forest management of the property; and use a public process to guide the property's overall management.

The January 18 workshop is part of that process. In 2017 Richmond was selected as one of 10 Vermont communities to receive a grant from the Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Program to involve the public in planning and stewardship of their town forests.

Over the next ten months the Town will work with SE Group, a consulting firm specializing in community planning, to develop an overall management plan. The process will include public outreach and resource assessments leading to a list of recommended uses and actions to sustain its resources, including timber, wildlife, recreation, agriculture, education and others.

The workshop will start with an overview of the natural features identified to date on the property. These include several unique and uncommon natural communities, beautiful streams and vernal pools, and diverse wildlife habitats and travel corridors.

The forest offers an array of opportunities for residents of Richmond to enjoy. Excellent white-tailed deer and wild turkey habitat has drawn generations of hunters to the land. The property has been actively managed as a working forest to produce sustained crops of timber, firewood and other renewable resources, and produce diverse, healthy forest stands. A VAST trail through the property brings out snowmobilers in the winter, and hikers enjoy the forest year-round. Other possible recreational uses that the Town Forest could sustain include biking, birding and skiing.

The Andrews family, Vermont Land Trust and Town of Richmond expect to complete the transaction in March. A Town Forest Steering Committee, made up of Richmond residents and including an ecologist, a forester and a representative from Vermont Land Trust, is now working to gather the public input and other information needed to develop a comprehensive management plan.

More information and updates on the Forest can be found at [facebook.com/RichmondTownForest](https://facebook.com/RichmondTownForest).

#### **About the Program:**

The Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Program (UCF) is a joint initiative of Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR) and UVM Extension. Working group members include FPR's Recreation Program, the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, and Extension's Tourism and Marketing Program. Partners include over 40 statewide organizations and stakeholders who attended a summit in January, 2017, to help shape the process and deliverables. Over the next year the program and its partners will work with SE Group, a consultant specializing in community planning, to develop town forest management plans. Most towns are focusing on recreational uses of existing town forests, while Richmond, with its new town forest, will have a broader scope.

#### **About Vermont's town forests:**

Town forests have been a tradition in Vermont since 1915, when the first Municipal Forest Bill was passed by the State legislature. Today, shortly after the 100-year anniversary of this Bill, more than 170 towns in Vermont own town forests, according to the Vermont Urban and Community Forest program. These forests are managed for an array of purposes including recreation, forest management, education, wildlife habitat, clean air and clear water, and wildlife viewing. The management of these areas in most cases is handled by a town's conservation commission or town forest committee, in conjunction with the County Forester.

# # #