

Conservation Reserve Fund Application

Richmond Land Trust

September 21, 2021

Project Description

The Richmond Land (RLT) owns the permanently conserved Beeken Preserve, located in between Cochran Road and the Winooski River. The Beeken Preserve is facing two ecological challenges:

- 1) The existing parking lot is poorly designed and situated. It is too small, poorly designed to maximize parking, continuously accumulates standing water, is subject to riverside erosion, and the entrance driveway creates a dangerous intersection with Cochran Road. Because of limitations of the site (sandwiched in between the river and the road) these problems cannot be addressed at the current location.
- 2) There is a spot along the existing trail to the east of the parking lot where serious river erosion threatens not only the trail but threatens to undermine Cochran Road. Road Foreman Pete Gosselin has asked if the RLT can address the problem.

The RLT requests funding of up to \$2,500 to pay for engineering to address both problems.

- 1) Engineering to convert a now seasonal temporary lot (in the field to the west of the existing parking lot) into a permanent year-round lot. This lot could also be expanded seasonally to accommodate excess parking demand.
- 2) Design of an engineered solution to stop the river erosion that threatens Cochran Road. We will explore both conventional solutions (rip rap) and more aesthetically and ecologically friendly solutions.

This request is for engineering only, not for the actual work to complete these two projects.

Project Significance

The Beeken Preserve is a popular and highly used recreational resource in Richmond. The trail, linked to contiguous trails on Town and privately owned land, is widely used for walking, running and mountain biking. Nature lovers collect fiddleheads in spring and use the preserve for bird watching. The canoe access at the Beeken Preserve is a popular entry point for paddlers and floaters. The parking area is also used by recreational enthusiasts using Cochran Road. The Town recently created additional parking at Overrockers, but on warm summer weekends all lots are still near capacity (and there is no canoe access at Overrockers).

This request meets the following Conservation Reserve Fund Guidelines:

Overall: "...providing outdoor recreational opportunities... conserving important natural, agricultural and historic resources."

General Criteria

A.2. "permanently preserving... recreational values..."

A.4. "Will protect, enhance, and provide public access to a natural resource or recreation area."

A.5. "Is directed at threatened resources."

Natural Resources Protection Criteria

B.7. "Supports low or no-cost outdoor recreational activities."

The proposed projects match examples of qualifying projects listed in the Policy Overview:
“Establish and maintain hiking trails”
“Permanently preserve public access to land... as appropriate for each individual parcel and its setting.”

Project Schedule

Engineering will be completed this year. The actual work to complete the projects would happen in 2022.

Project Partners

The RLT anticipates partnering with the Town of Richmond on plans and funding to complete both the parking area and also to address the rivershore erosion. This may be in the form of in-kind materials and services, or a joint application for grant funding to complete the work.

Financial Information

The RLT has received a quote (attached) for the work from East Engineering (\$1,000 plus \$100 per hour). This request would fund the initial design work and fifteen hours of bid oversight and evaluation for each project – the parking lot and the erosion control.

Long Term Plans

The subject property is already permanently protected by a conservation easement held jointly by the RLT and the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board and is managed on a day-to-day basis by the RLT. The site for the new parking lot occupies a small portion of a much larger elevated field that is well set back from the river. It is much more favorably located than the current parking lot. We will complete an ecological and archaeological assessment and obtain any required permits and permissions before proceeding with work to convert this temporary lot to a permanent lot. If and when the permanent lot is established, the RLT plans to close the existing Beeken lot and replant and rehabilitate that area to a natural state. (The existing canoe access, a short walk from the new lot, will be maintained unless a preferable closer alternative site can be found).

Regarding addressing the shoreline erosion, the Winooski River shoreline is obviously fluid and everchanging. There may be a need to address other erosion areas in the future. Currently, this is by far the most severe spot of erosion, in closest proximity to the existing trail and to Cochran Road. We do not foresee any additional areas that will need to be addressed in the very near future. Once engineering is completed and a design solution selected, we will go out to bid to find a resource to complete the work in 2022.

Contact Information

Jim Feinson, RLT Stewardship Committee Chair feinson@gmavt.net 802-434-3966
Jeremy Hoff, RLT Chair jeremydhoff@gmail.com 802-434-3796



Hey Jim,

Good seeing you on Monday and thanks for the quick tour on both sites. Here is what I proposed for the 20-car parking lot and slope stabilization project.

Design/Permit (Floodplain, Army Corps, and ANR): \$1,000 (excluding permit fees).

Meeting Attendance/Bid/Construction Assistance: \$100/hr

Please let me know if this is acceptable and if you have any questions.

Thanks,

Tyler Billingsley, P.E.

Engineer/Owner

Cell: 802-989-6686