

April 19, 2022

Richmond Conservation Commission
c/o Judy Rosovsky, Chair
via email

Re: Application for Supplemental Conservation Reserve Fund to Complete EAB Work

Dear Commissioners,

Thanks to the \$20,000 match that was granted by the Richmond Conservation Commission in the spring of 2022 (original application appended), Richmond's Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Taskforce was able to secure \$15,000 from Vermont's Urban and Community Forestry program to carry out management and tree protections given the arrival of EAB. These activities included treatments, removals, diversified plantings, milling, and community outreach (detailed in the appended report). I now write to request a supplement from the Conservation Reserve Fund (CRF) to complete the milling and firewood processing, which will complete this extensive effort that has meet multiple CRF criteria:

- *Contributes toward the protection of natural resource in and of importance to Richmond.*
- *Yields a clear, sustainable benefit to Richmond residents in the form of preserving scenic and environmental values (e.g., beauty, shade, habitat).*
- *Is directed at threatened resources.*
- *Preserves biodiversity.*
- *Attracts and leverages funds from other sources.*

Along with the arborist (Limbwalker) and highway foreman Pete Gosselin, I identified approximately 16 ash trees within the public right-of-way on Dugway Rd that were simply too large for the highway department to manage. Limbwalker removed these trees, transported the logs to a town-owned lot on Cochran Rd, and subcontracted a miller to rough-cut the logs into planks. Within the allowable budget, the miller completed approximately 15-20% of the milling, which yielded approximately 16 8'x3'x5/4" planks (see photo below). Selectboard member Jeff Forward graciously offered barn space for these planks to cure over the next year; he and I transported them to his barn this past weekend (see photo below). There is much enthusiasm about using this beautiful wood in upcoming Town Center renovations. In addition to the 10-12 8' logs that remain to be milled, there are approximately 5 cords of firewood to be processed. This wood is from removals along Dugway as well as in the village. Much of this material remains in logs 6-12' in length. Once processed, we will conduct a lottery to distribute this firewood to Richmond residents.

I write to request a supplement of CRF funds not to exceed \$5,500 to compete the milling and firewood processing of the ash logs for anticipated use in Town Center renovations and by Richmond residents as firewood. For reference, the miller who completed 15-20% of the milling in a day charges \$600 per day. The Assistant to the Town Manager is in the process of soliciting bids from millers and firewood processors so that we can proceed with this final task, pending your consideration and granting of this request and subsequent approval by the Selectboard.

Many thanks for your consideration.

Caitlin Littlefield
978-807-1494
clittlef@gmail.com



Motion EAB Supplement

Recognizing the success of the Richmond EAB initiative as described in the attached summary Report, the Richmond Conservation Commission recommends that the Selectboard support additional Conservation Reserve funding not to exceed \$5,500, to cover the costs of milling and firewood processing as described in the request received 4/20/2022. The request is in accord with CRF guidelines and priorities as outlined in the initial funding package and in its prior recommendation for CRF funding. Approval should sunset three years from the date of final approval, approximately April 2025.

March 7, 2021

Richmond Conservation Commission
c/o Judy Rosovsky, Chair
via email

Re: Conservation Reserve Fund Application for Richmond Emerald Ash Borer Response Plan

Dear Commissioners,

Richmond's Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Taskforce has been preparing for the impending arrival of the non-native insect since 2019. These preparedness efforts proved timely: EAB was detected just north of Richmond's village during the fall of 2020. The EAB Taskforce is committed to proactively addressing the ongoing EAB invasion and has developed a comprehensive, multi-year response plan. The plan's overarching vision is *to maintain the beauty, character, and shady canopy cover of our town's historic village, major recreation corridors, and roads while ensuring public safety and the myriad ecological functions that healthy, diverse trees afford*. The plan seeks to do so in a swift, strategic manner to minimize the inevitable costs borne by Richmond, and we seek support from the Conservation Reserve Fund to carry out this plan.

The plan (enclosed) entails both treating and removing ash within the village and surrounding area (including the entrance to Andrews Community forest, a CRF-supported town acquisition) as well as replanting a diversity of species. Useable wood will be milled and put to use by local woodworkers; chipped wood will be applied as mulch to recent plantings in Volunteers Green. These activities will commence this spring and will largely be completed by the end of May. Active outreach efforts, including an informational postcard mailed to every Richmond resident, will continue over the coming years as the town implements this response plan.

Collectively, the EAB response plan meet multiple CRF criteria:

- *Contributes toward the protection of natural resource in and of importance to Richmond.*
- *Yields a clear, sustainable benefit to Richmond residents in the form of preserving scenic and environmental values (e.g., beauty, shade, habitat).*
- *Is directed at threatened resources.*
- *Preserves biodiversity.*
- *Attracts and leverages funds from other sources.*

The EAB Taskforce has already secured a \$15,000 grant from Vermont's Urban and Community Forestry (UCF) Program to put towards completing the first phase of the plan (treating or replacing ash trees within the village). The cost of this first phase will likely near or exceed \$30,000, per estimates of multiple ISA-certified tree service providers who have expressed their interest in carrying out this effort. Moreover, the UCF grant requires a match.

We thus request a CRF contribution to make that match, continuing the CRF's strong record of turning every dollar from Richmond taxpayers into nearly five times that. It is also important to note that the cost of responding to EAB (including over 1000 dead ash trees along Richmond's roads) will inevitably be borne by Richmond taxpayers over the coming decade. Proactively responding at this time will help minimize that cost, while capitalizing on external funding.

The EAB Task Force requests that the Richmond Conservation Commission grant us Conservation Reserve Funding, of an amount not to exceed \$20,000, to carry out the first phase of the EAB response plan.

We appreciate your consideration, and please let me know if you have any questions.



Caitlin Littlefield,
EAB Response Plan Coordinator
978-807-1494, clittlef@gmail.com

Richmond's 2021 Ash Tree Management Grant

Final Report - April 15, 2022

Grant #: 06130-UCF-CFC-21-04

Award period: 12/15/2020 – 04/15/2022 (amended from 01/15/2022)

Award amount: \$15,000 (matched by \$20,000 from Richmond's Conservation Reserve Fund)

Grantee name and address: Town of Richmond, 203 Bridge Street, Richmond, VT 05477

Contact: Caitlin Littlefield, Richmond Conservation Commission, (978) 807-1474,
clittlef@gmail.com

With support from UCF's grant (and a match from the Richmond Conservation Reserve Fund) Richmond's EAB Taskforce has successfully carried out the three facets of the municipal plan for ash tree management within the village and removals of ash along outlying roads, in addition to engaging extensively with members of the public. We have done so in pursuit of our overarching vision: *to maintain the beauty, character, and shady canopy cover of our town's historic village, major recreation corridors, and roads while ensuring public safety and the myriad ecological functions that healthy, diverse trees afford.*

We initiated this process by sending to every Richmond household a postcard explaining EAB and upcoming work as well as offering guidance and additional resources on EAB management options for private property (Appendix A). We mailed these over 2,200 postcards right before Arbor Day in late April 2021 and posted them on town bulletin boards. At the same time, we solicited bids from ISA-certified arborists to carry out the work within the village and ultimately selected Limbwalker based on both their quote, their clear understanding of our overarching vision for the village, and their willingness to accommodate the public process associated with this work. Specifically, Mike Fallis of Limbwalker worked closely with Taskforce lead Caitlin Littlefield to coordinate tasks; we cannot overstate how patient, responsive, and knowledgeable Mike and others at Limbwalker have been.

Limbwalker either treated, removed, and/or replanted ash trees within the public right-of-way or on municipally owned land at ten locations around the village, as described below. In all cases, Littlefield was directly in touch with landowners and other relevant stakeholders, and we regularly posted updates to Front Porch Forum.

- **Treatment.** The most prominent and healthy ash trees within and around the village were treated by Limbwalker with emamectin benzoate in May 2021, following Littlefield meeting in-person with or calling all landowners. These treatments included four trees in front of the town Center (Fig. 1, left panel); one on the corner of Bridge Street and Church Street, two along Depot Street Extension; one multi-stemmed ash on Cochran Rd; one 40" tree on Baker Street; and one 36" tree at the entrance to the Andrews Community Forest. Along a fairly new development on Church Street, eleven trees were treated with the expectation

that the many ash lining the street would be “phased out” over time. *A total of 21 trees (approximately 300”) were treated.*

- **Removals.** Limbwalker removed several declining ash trees within the village in May 2021. These included one in front of the public library (Fig 1, middle panel); one in front of Congregational Church; and two near the Round Church. Two trees were also removed from Church Street, as part of the “phase out” noted above. We engaged library administrators, Congregational Church leadership, the Richmond Historical Society, and residents of Church Street (including the neighborhood’s HOA treasurer) engaged prior to these removals. *A total of six trees were removed.*
- **Plantings.** Obtaining some desired species (e.g., sycamore) was a challenge, given nursery shortages, but Limbwalker ultimately planted ten trees in June-July 2021 to replace the ash trees removed. We sought to plant primarily native species found in floodplains and/or those at the northern edge of their range and worked with the individuals mentioned above to determine final species selection and placement. For example, the Church Street neighborhood desired several smaller, flowering trees as inter-plantings (Fig. 1, right panel); the Congregational Church elected to *not* replant to retain the sunlit view of the church and its stained glass; and Littlefield met in-person multiple times with neighbors of the Round Church and the Richmond Historical Society to determine a final design that prioritized views. *In total, ten trees were planted: three flowering pears; two hackberries; two burr oaks; two red maples; and one crabapple.* Limbwalker installed watering troughs around each planting, and we (the EAB Taskforce) and neighborhood volunteers have been watering the trees since.

The subsequent phase of work entailed removing trees along the public right-of-way on two outlying roads – Dugway Road and Cochran Road, which are major recreation corridors. These trees were among those inventoried by volunteers using the state’s EAB tracking tool (ArcGIS Collector) during the spring of 2020. We again solicited bids from ISA-certified arborists to carry out these removals and ultimately selected Limbwalker. In February 2022, Littlefield, Mike, and Richmond’s highway foreman Pete Gosselin walked and flagged trees along these two roads that were too large for the highway department to handle. Littlefield sent letters to landowners along those two roads alerting them of upcoming work and requesting contact if landowners wished to retain the wood for their own use (two wished to do so). In March 2022, Mike and the Limbwalker crews carried out these removals and transported the wood to a town-owned lot on Cochran Rd, where the wood from the village removals had been deposited. (Tops and limbs were chipped and blown onto the slopes of Dugway and Cochran Roads for stabilization.)

At the town-owned lot, the logs are being rough-cut by Alaskan mill by a miller subcontracted by Limbwalker. This wood will be dried at a volunteer’s barn and either used in upcoming Town Center renovations (e.g., as trim) or distributed to end users (e.g., Boy Scouts, local artisans). We will hold a lottery to distribute the remaining firewood. (We ended up *not* transporting firewood to Wood for Good for processing to slow the spread of EAB.)



Figure 1. Three locations (of ten) in the village where ash trees were managed. (Top left) Four prominent ash trees in front of the Town Center were treated; (top middle) one declining ash was removed in front of the library and replaced with a burr oak and a crabapple; (top right) eleven trees lining Church Street were treated and two were removed and replaced with two flowering pears and a hackberry. (Bottom left) Larger trees removed along outlying roads were processed by Alaskan mill for anticipated use in Town Center renovations.