

Richmond Conservation Commission Town Report 2021

The Richmond Conservation Commission (RCC) continues to meet the second Tuesday of the month, 7:30 at the Town Center. Information can be found at: <http://www.richmondvt.gov/boards-minutes/conservation-commission/>. All are welcome to attend by contacting the RCC Chair to arrange to attend Zoom meetings that will be replaced by conventional ones as soon as meetings in person are deemed safe. Contact judy.rosovsky@comcast.net or rvenkatamaran@richmondvt.gov.

Major undertakings over the past year have included support from the Conservation Reserve Fund (CRF) for the Huntington River Gorge Stewardship Program and vital repairs to the heavily used Johnny Brook Trail that had been seriously affected by the 2019 'Halloween' storm. CRF funding has gone into trail development and forestry management within the Andrews Community Forest as well as preservation of the smaller Richmond Town Forest on Stage Road. RCC has benefitted greatly in such matters by the availability of easy-access resource mapping (<https://map.ccrpcvt.org/richmondmapviewer/>).

Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) infestation has required extensive work especially since EAB has come to Richmond. RCC has overseen an Ash tree inventory of our Town which has led to a successful Grant from the Agency of Natural Resources and Urban and Community Forestry program to begin remediation centered on the Village and which will require CRF matching funds. Additional anticipated needs center on repair to bridging along the Winooski River Trail.

Attention was paid to Lake Iroquois and the work of the Lake Iroquois Association, an important recreational resource for Richmond residents, with the need to improve water quality, deal with invasive species and assure citizen access. As well, efforts and funding have gone into Volunteers Green to promote tree planting and prevent ongoing beaver damage.

Recurring issues involved Green-Up day which had to be moved to late May because of COVID-19, which despite all was a major success for Richmond and the State (<https://mailchi.mp/f6d10618d75c/green-up-day-enews-7889670?e=491c60517d>). Efforts were materially aided by a new mobile app allowing one to sign up road coverage (<https://apps.apple.com/us/developer/green-up-vermont/id1364770238>; <https://greenupvermont.org/>). Thanks to all participants including Pete Gosselin and the Richmond Highway crew.

Invasive species were on the RCC hit list, with special interest towards Buckthorn, Japanese Knotweed and Eurasian milfoil. Native species concerns included fiddlehead overharvesting, which may require constant vigilance and enforcement.

Cornerstone to conservation efforts has been Richmond's recently up-dated Town Plan. RCC encourages participation in the ongoing discussions by the Planning Commission toward updating our current Zoning Regulations to assure their compliance with our

recently approved Town Plan (<http://www.richmondvt.gov/boards-minutes/planning-commission/>). The need is exemplified by a current proposal to upgrade the Exit-11 Mobil Station that would impinge on an identified wetland and which would require modification of our current wetland regulations. The issue here is what wetland regulations are appropriate for Richmond.

The Conservation Reserve Fund, first approved in 2005, again is up for renewal. The fund is financed by a 1 cent tax on the property tax, which amounts to \$10/\$100,000. CRF funds are spent according Conservation Reserved Fund Policy (<http://www.richmondvt.gov/boards-minutes/conservation-commission/>). The Fund positions Richmond to consider and act on opportunities fairly, efficiently and in a timely manner. It also demonstrates the Town's commitment to conservation and qualifies it for major funding from foundations, agencies and other large donors. As described in the summary of RCC deliberations over the past year, the Fund has been essential to support a number of important conservation-related projects, several of which required local cost-sharing. It is important to note its record of over four-fold leveraging of external funding. And please remember that conservation is a broad concept that includes recreation, agriculture and history.

RCC continues to seek new members who wish to participate in deliberations important to conservation matters before our Town.