



TOWN OF RICHMOND
RICHMOND TOWN CENTER
203 Bridge Street, P.O. Box 285
Richmond, Vermont 05477



May 10, 2021

Richmond Conservation Commission
c/o Judy Rosovsky, Chair
judy.rosovsky@comcast.net

Re: **Conservation Reserve Fund Application: Volunteers' Green Habitat Restoration**

Dear Commissioners,

The Town of Richmond's Volunteers' Green Ad Hoc Committee seeks approximately \$670 in Conservation Reserve Funds to cover out-of-pocket expenses associated with planting trees at Volunteers Green as part of the buffer restoration project.

The Ad Hoc Committee's goal is to protect the ballfields and other amenities at Volunteers' Green from erosion by the Winooski River. We are pursuing this goal by widening the forest buffer between the Winooski River and the park.

Over the past year 450 native trees were planted at the Green with another 100 to be planted in the coming weeks. This will increase the buffer width to approximately 75-feet along most of the Green. The restoration plan was developed in conjunction with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the Friends of the Winooski River.

Trees provided to the Town by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and Friends of the Winooski came with tubes and stakes to protect the trees from deer browse, girdling by rodents, beaver snacking and trampling by exuberant and distracted people. We recently acquired 100 additional trees from another source at no charge, but without tubes and stakes.

This request is in keeping with Conservation Reserve Fund's primary purpose "preserving water quality, providing outdoor recreational opportunities, protecting wildlife, and conserving important natural, agricultural and historic resources."

We expect to plant the additional trees in the coming weeks with the help of Camels' Hump Middle School students. Because of the short timeline of the project we ask that the Conservation Commission please expedite its review and recommendation for funding.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 802-999-7515.


Jon Kart
Volunteers' Green Ad Hoc Committee
802-999-7515, jonkart@hotmail.com

Volunteers' Green Background

The Town of Richmond has maintained the recreation area known as Volunteers' Green for many years. This is the town's primary active recreation facility and is home to youth soccer, baseball and other organized sports as well as a trail, open space, river access and the Town's only public playground. During winter-months, the park is used less formally but hiking, cross-country skiing and ice skating are popular. Dog-owners (and their dogs) are likely the most consistent users of Volunteers' Green, visiting in every season, every kind of weather and from dawn till well after dark.

Additionally, Volunteers' Green hosts the weekly Richmond Farmers Market from May to October, performances of the Richmond Community Band and the town's annual July 4th celebrations.

Volunteers' Green is approximately 18 acres in size, with over 2,000 feet of rivershore; due to floodplain and floodway restrictions, hardened or permanent facilities are restricted, and no new development is likely to occur to expand or improve upon the existing facilities.

Problem: Riverbank Erosion Threatens Volunteers' Green

One of the most attractive features of the park is its location beside the Winooski River. This picturesque river provides additional recreational opportunities and adds to the aesthetic value of the park. Unfortunately, the location beside the river means that the entirety of the park lies within the river's floodplain, with a significant portion within the floodway – an area that is exposed to swift flowing water during floods. The park is vulnerable to erosion damage, as evidenced during the Irene flooding in 2011. While that erosion damage was mostly limited to the playground area, the riverbank downstream of the Bridge Street bridge has suffered gradual erosion over the years from lesser floods (when the river overflows its banks) and from bank-full flows (when the river's flow is very high but stays within its banks), particularly when the river is carrying ice.

In response to repeated requests over several years (beginning in 2007) from citizens concerned by the slow but persistent erosion narrowing the treed buffer between the river and the Volunteers' Green fields.

Project Significance – Volunteers' Green is a vital and important natural asset and meets Conservation Reserve Fund's eligibility criteria

Volunteers' Green is of vital importance to the community. Long-term protection of this community asset is a priority for the Town. The park must be viewed in context with other town recreational facilities and needs. Other than the relatively small Browns Court Ballfield, the town owns no other active recreation property, nor any property that offers the same variety of uses, serving as many people. The recently purchased Andrews Forest is similarly restricted from development through conservation easements, and properties on Cochran Road also lie within the floodplain. Therefore, replacement of Volunteers' Green would mean an additional capital expense to the town through property acquisition and improvements. For that reason, protection of the rivershore from loss by erosion is of high importance. Volunteers' Green cannot easily be replaced.

This project fits the following General Criteria

- III.A2:** Permanently preserving the integrity of the park through erosion management.
- III.A5:** Erosion loss of the park property itself is the target of this project.
- III.B1:** Erosion prevention eliminates a common source of sediment pollution from the river during high water and flooding.
- IV.C:** This preserves land of Richmond's primary recreation resource—the town-owned Volunteers' Green.

Project Schedule

The trees will be planted the week of May 17, 2021. Tubes and stakes can be installed at a later date to allow for review of this application.

Project Partners

Volunteers' Green Ad Hoc Committee, Richmond Recreation Committee, Friends of the Winooski River, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, 350.org.

Financial Information

Richmond's Volunteers' Green Ad Hoc Committee requests approximately \$670 from the Conservation Reserve Fund to help with the planting of native trees to protect the Green. The cost of the trees and the labor for planting are all donated at no cost to the town.

We anticipate that actual costs will be less than \$670 and will only bill for out of pocket totals.

Item	Cost/Unit	Units	Total
Tubex Tree Shelters 36" (pack of 5)	\$23*	20	\$460
Hardwood Tree Stakes ¾"x¾"x48" (pack of 25)	\$37*	4	\$148
Other materials (e.g., flags, tape, zip ties, gloves)	\$60		\$60
Total (*prices include shipping)			\$668

Richmond Conservation Commission
11 May 2021 meeting

The Richmond Conservation Commission recommends that the Richmond Selectboard approve the request for use of Conservation Reserve Funds towards Volunteer's Green Habitat Restoration as requested in its application dated May 10, 2021, in an amount not to exceed \$700 with a sunset date of May 2024.

In doing so the RCC recognizes that the request responds to a number of Conservation Fund Criteria including A2, A4, B1 and B3 as detailed below.

A2: Will yield a clear, sustainable benefit to Richmond residents in the form of permanently preserving or improving water quality...recreational...or environmental values, including the preservation of significant natural...resources.

A4: Will protect, enhance and provide public access to a natural resource or recreation area

B1: Preserves river, stream and wetland quality

B3: Provides a naturally vegetated buffer zone around or between significant wetlands, streams or rivers, and human activities.,

The motion passed unanimously