

Richmond Conservation Reserve Fund Application

Town of Richmond Andrews Community Forest Phase 1 Trail

Submitted by: Andrews Community Forest Management
Committee May 2020

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Project Summary

Since 2018, the Town of Richmond has owned a 428 +/- acre parcel along US Route 2, bordering Maple Wind Farm, VYCC, Prelco and other properties. Together, these and other abutting properties amount to thousands of acres of conserved forest.

While conservation was the driving purpose behind the federal grants that created the bulk of the funding, recreation is also a stated purpose for the property. While there are some logging roads, the VAST Trail and utility easements, there exist no formal trails. During the development of the management plan, a series of trails was mapped to provide access to the public to some of the more interesting parts of the forest, while avoiding the sensitive ecological zones. The ACF Committee would like to begin the Phase 1 lower trail this year, and has a contractor standing by to do just that. To that end, the Andrews Community Forest Management Committee is applying to the Richmond Conservation Reserve Fund for an amount not to exceed \$3,000.

Funding Request

The ACF Committee requests funds not to exceed \$3,000 for the sole use of developing a lower trail, as follows:

Mountain TrailWorx bid to construct trail	\$3,921	Actual Bid
<u>FUNDING</u>		
Rise VT Grant	\$1,500.00	(Actual amount)
Town of Richmond Conservation Reserve Fund	\$3,000	not to exceed

The project sponsor (the Town of Richmond), will only use such funds as needed within the \$3,000.00 limit, which is more than the bid but would allow for unforeseen circumstances during construction.

Property Description

In 2018 the town purchased roughly 428 acres of forest that was formerly part of a much larger farm parcel, most recently owned by the Andrews family for many years. This property is located on US Route 2 (East Main Street) next to Maple Wind Farm, just west of the VYCC property. Prior to this acquisition, the farm had been subdivided with the bulk of the farm, including the barn, going to Maple Wind Farm with the help of the Vermont Land Trust. Through continued negotiations, VLT was able to broker a deal and obtain the financing through several grants and other contributions to allow the Town of Richmond to purchase the forest for ecological and recreational purposes, with no direct cost to the taxpayers. This was a great gift to the Town, and significant planning efforts have been undertaken to approve a Management Plan, Recreation Plan and Forest Plan with the help of the SE Group and Ethan Tapper, Chittenden County Forester.

The property has been timbered in phases before, and was at one time mostly clear of trees. Several ecologically sensitive areas remain and are under the strict protection of the easements held by VLT and VHCB. However, trails are allowed and encouraged, as long as they don't interfere with the ecologically sensitive areas.

Qualifications for a CRF Grant

General Criteria Matched

The parcel's attributes align with numerous criteria used to weigh a proposal's qualifications for CRF funding, however, the purposes of this application are to obtain funding to support trail development.

A2. Will yield a clear, sustainable benefit to Richmond Residents in the form of permanently improving recreational values.

This trail development project will provide permanent access to the interior of the property to allow the general public the enjoyment of a trail in a natural setting.

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

This trail development project will allow more access to the preserved forest, allowing recreational and educational activities to take place.

B7. Supports low-cost outdoor recreational activities such as hiking.

This project will develop a trail for hiking at a fairly low cost as an entry-level trail to the new forest.

CRF Specific Criteria Matched

In addition to meeting the General Criteria for CRF support, the project aligns with the CRF Policy Document's criteria for Recreation under other uses:

IV D Other Uses

Recreation Criteria: Recreation and trail development on Town Owned Lands when in compliance with Management Plans. This project matches this criteria perfectly, as this is for building a new trail on Town-owned land, and is in accordance with the Andrews Forest Management Plan and VLT easement allowances.

Project Schedule

This trail is ready to be built and construction could begin as early as June, 2020.

Project Partners

The Town of Richmond, RiseVT.

Long-Term Plans

The Town of Richmond will continue to own and manage the property through the Andrews Community Forest Management Committee. The uses for the property will continue to be passive recreation, trail development, forest management, ecological conservation and education.

Easement Holders

The Vermont Land Trust and Vermont Housing and Conservation Board are both beneficiaries of an easement that controls the use and development of the property. A big part of that control requires the consultation of an ecologist on all trail activities. Attached is an opinion from VLT's ecologist that the Phase 1 Lower Trail fits within the conservation easement's purpose and is located away from sensitive ecological zones.



LEGEND

1: 2,257

September 9, 2019

NOTES

Map created using BioFinder

376.2 0 188.08 376.2 Feet



Geoffrey Urbanik <gurbanik@gmail.com>

Re: Trail siting

Allaire Diamond <Allaire@vlt.org>

Fri, Oct 11, 2019 at 1:45 PM

To: Tyler Merritt <tyler@allmtngroup.com>

Cc: Jim Monahan <jmjmonahan@gmail.com>, Geoffrey Urbanik <gurbanik@gmail.com>

Hi Tyler, great to get out with you too! You can consider this email my signoff that I don't have any major concerns about the trail route we walked. The one area we discussed keeping in mind was taking steps to prevent erosion from the ridge area as soils are very thin, and keeping the trail concentrated there to avoid spreading impact across the ridge. There are excellent educational and recreational opportunities here too and I'm happy to talk further about those.

Enjoy the afternoon!

Allaire

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