

Renewing Richmond's Conservation Reserve Fund

Draft



- Established by voters 2005
- Last Renewed by voters 2022 (Yes – 560; No – 201)
- Has brought in over \$1.8 Million in outside support

An 19-year successful track record at protecting water and air quality, biodiversity, working farms and forests, outdoor recreation, historic resources and education.

- Enables the Town to move quickly to capture prime, time-sensitive funding opportunities.
- Brings in major support from outside funding sources (State, Federal, foundations)

Information Sheet

www.tinyurl.com/CRF-2023

Draft

RICHMOND'S CONSERVATION RESERVE FUND

What is the Conservation Reserve Fund?

Since 2005 Richmond's Conservation Reserve Fund has provided the Town with a ready source of funds for conservation initiatives throughout our town. Its revenues come from an annual penny on the tax rate, which, being tied to changes in the Grand List, helps keep the CRF in line with changes in local property values and overall inflation. Each year residents vote on renewing the Fund. Last year 77% of voters favored renewal. As shown on the reverse, over the years the Fund has supported Richmond projects ranging from establishing Town forests to protecting key recreational and historic sites to invasive species controls.

Why was the Fund created?

In a growing town like ours, conservation opportunities can arise at any time -- and just as rapidly disappear, often forever. This can make it hard to plan for or quickly find the significant amounts of money often needed today to conserve important and vulnerable resources. Richmond's Fund continues to enable the Conservation Commission, Selectboard and the public to carefully review and still quickly act on key conservation opportunities.

In addition, the CRF lowers the costs of conservation to taxpayers by qualifying the Town to receive matching funds from state, federal and private conservation funders. So far, every dollar Richmond taxpayers spent from the Fund has generated \$3.86 in project funding from other sources -- over \$2.30 million in all.

How are conservation funding decisions made?

Proposals are typically screened first by the Conservation Commission against criteria in the CRF's policy document. The Selectboard reviews the Commission's recommendations and makes the final decisions. The one exception is for real estate acquisitions costing more than \$20,000, which require approval of all voters.

Who uses the Fund?

The CRF is used by property owners, groups and community volunteer groups to protect important local natural, agricultural and historic resources. Town bodies can propose initiatives of their own.

What will renewal cost taxpayers?

The one extra cent on the municipal tax rate will add \$10 to every taxpayer's tax bill per \$100,000 of their property assessments. In fiscal 2024-2025 that is expected to provide approximately \$72,000 in Town support for important conservation projects and generate substantial additional outside matching support as described above.

Does conserving land raise or lower property taxes overall?

An expert on VT tax policy, Deborah Brighton, has shown that conserving land helps keep property taxes in check because, as she notes, "Open space tends to require few public services."

Furthermore, nearly all conserved land in Richmond is privately held, thereby generating tax revenues. Landowners applying for funds usually must guarantee public recreational access to their properties, unless the land is used for agriculture.

What kinds of new projects does the Conservation Commission foresee?

Andrews Community Forest RFP -- Writer
Winooski River remediation

The Conservation Reserve Fund positions Richmond to consider and act on opportunities fairly, efficiently and in a timely way. It's also living, dollars-and-cents proof that our community embraces conservation, helping attract and qualify Richmond for major funding from foundations, government agencies and other potentially large donors.

See the full list of CRF-funded projects the next page. More information on them:

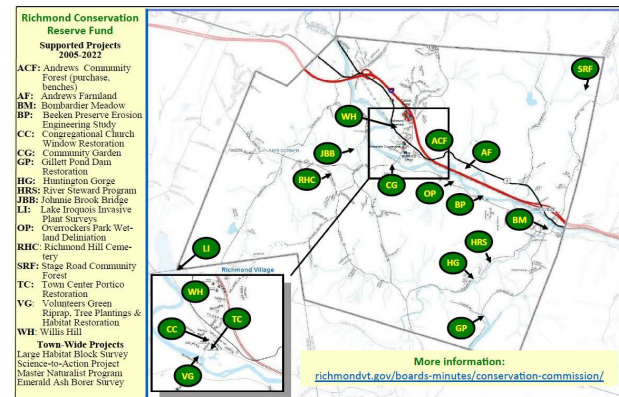
<http://www.richmondvt.gov/boards-minutes/conservation-commission/>

Please vote on or before March 5

Mail-in ballots are available from the Town Clerk at baeren@richmondvt.gov or (802) 434-2221. Or vote in person on March 7 at the Town Center, 7 a.m. -- 7 p.m.

Conservation Reserve Fund Project List

Year	Project	Project Leader	Description	CRF \$	Match \$	Total \$
2009	Bombardier Meadow	Rich. Land Trust	10-acre hayfield on Cochran Rd., with wooded banks on the Huntington and Winooski River	\$51,500	\$77,000	\$128,500
	Large Habitat Block Study	Rich. Cons.	Mapped large blocks of uplands wildlife habitat and connectivity among them	\$2,400	-	\$2,400
	Town Center Portico Renovation	Town of Rich.	Roof and other structural repairs	\$35,265	\$65,035	\$100,300
2010	Richmond Hill Cemetery	Town of Rich.	10-foot deeded path to historic cemetery	\$2,500	-	\$2,500
2011	Andrews Farmland	Vt. Land Trust	187 acres of prime agricultural soils along the Winooski River	\$10,000	\$197,500	\$207,500
2013	Science-to-Action Project	Rich. Planning and Conservation Commissions	Identify public conservation priorities, and inventory/locate key habitat locations to improve planning & zoning processes	\$3,195	\$88,525	\$91,720
2014	Window restoration at Congregational Church	Rich. Cong. Church	Protect 100-year-old stained glass windows	\$6,564	\$12,423	\$18,987
2017	Willis Hill	Rich. Land Trust	20 acres on Rt. 2 at west of village, backing up to elementary and middle schools	\$64,000	\$122,500	\$186,500
2017	Golden Pond	Rich. Land Trust	Replace stone dam	\$150,000	\$325,000	\$475,000
2018	Andrews Community Forest	Vermont Land Trust	428 acres of rich wildlife habitat and educational resources, within one of Vermont's key forest blocks	\$75,000	\$735,000	\$810,000
	Huntington Gorge	Rich. Land Trust, Vermont River Gorge Co.	3.7 acres, dramatic 40-foot rocky gorge, popular swimming holes, site of early 20 th -cent. hydroelectric station	\$10,000	\$55,000	\$65,000
	Johanne Brook Bridge	Rich. Trails Committee	Repair of a key link for hikers and bikers using the Cross Vt. Trail	\$1,000	\$400	\$1,400
2019	Lake Insoquois Plant Survey	Lake Insoquois Association	Invasive plant inventory	\$2,000	-	\$2,000
2019	Richmond Master Naturalist Program	VNM Extension	Support citizen-scientist training to inventory and monitor health of important habitat and other resources	\$4,000	-	\$4,000
2020	Volunteers Green Run-Run	Town of Rich.	Protect hard shell fields from bank erosion	\$20,000	\$117,200	\$137,200
	Andrews Forest Trails	Town of Rich.	Improve trail system, protect sensitive habitat	\$3,000	\$1,500	\$4,500
	Huntington Gorge River Steward	Rich. Land Trust, Vt. River Conservancy	Fund post-fire clean-up and educate Gorge visitors on safety, riparianity and site history	\$1,500	\$5,000	\$6,500
2021	Volunteers Green Tree Planting	Town of Rich.	Mitigate beaver damage to riverbank areas	\$200	-	\$200
	Shore Rd. Town Forest	Rich. Land Trust	Conserve rich forest within the Chitt. County Uplands Conservation Project	\$3,500	-	\$3,500
	Johanne Brook Bridge	Town of Rich.	Repair flood-damaged on Cross Vt. Trail	\$8,400	-	\$8,400
2022	Emerald Ash Borer Control	Town of Rich.	Phase 1 of project to manage impending ash tree losses	\$20,000	\$15,000	\$35,000
	Andrews Forest Trails and Benches	Eagle Scouts	Build benches along timber logged on-site, expand trails before power lines	\$500	-	\$500
	Volunteers Green Habitat Restoration	Town of Rich.	Widened tree buffer between river and fields	\$15,000	\$35,000	\$50,000
2023	Volunteers Green Tree Plantings	Town of Rich.	Establish stands on donated land	\$2,000	-	\$2,000
	Community Garden	Town of Rich.	Deliveries weekly for state program	\$2,500	-	\$2,500
	Becken Preserve Engineering Survey	Rich. Land Trust	Assess erosion threat to Cochran Rd. and costs for improving parking facilities	\$2,500	-	\$2,500
2024	Lake Insoquois Plant Survey	L.I. Association	Invasive plant inventory	\$2,200	\$3,200	\$5,400
	Revere Trail Work	Town of Rich.	Replace fading benches on hiking/bike trail	\$9,500	-	\$9,500
	Emerald Ash Borer Control	Town of Rich.	Mill and process for firewood donated ash trees	\$5,000	-	\$5,000
2025	Bombardier Easement Study	Rich. Land Trust	Improve off-road parking and river access	\$625	-	\$625
	Becken Preserve Reversible Bench	Rich. Land Trust	Co-fund Gary Beckwith's bench installation project	\$300	\$250	\$550
	Andrews Forest Trail Review	Town of Rich.	Check in summer for new plants along reopened trails	\$3,500	-	\$3,500
2026*	Golden Pond	Rich. Land Trust	Replace stone dam	\$50,000	-	\$50,000
	Amphibian Crossing Signs	Town of Rich.	Protect annual wetland migrations	\$150	-	\$150
	Trails and Wildlife Talk	Town of Rich.	Presentation by Sue Morse	\$250	-	\$250
2027*	Emerald Ash Borer Control	Town of Rich.	Phase 2 of project to manage impending ash tree losses	\$37,500*	-	\$37,500*
	*Needs confirmation				TOTALS	\$



Numbers still being updated

CRF Funded Projects

Draft

Richmond Conservation Reserve Fund
Supported Projects 2005-2022

ACF: Andrews Community Forest (purchase, benches)
AF: Andrews Farmland
BM: Bombardier Meadow
BP: Beeken Preserve Erosion Engineering Study
CC: Congregational Church Window Restoration
CG: Community Garden
GP: Gillett Pond Dam Restoration
HG: Huntington Gorge
HRS: River Steward Program
JBB: Johnnie Brook Bridge
LI: Lake Iroquois Invasive Plant Surveys
OP: Overrockers Park Wetland Delineation
RHC: Richmond Hill Cemetery
SRF: Stage Road Community Forest
TC: Town Center Portico Restoration
VG: Volunteers Green Riprap, Tree Plantings & Habitat Restoration
WH: Willis Hill

Town-Wide Projects
Large Habitat Block Survey
Science-to-Action Project
Master Naturalist Program
Emerald Ash Borer Survey

More information:
richmondvt.gov/boards-minutes/conservation-commission/

Recent Projects

- Conservation / Recreation Panel
- Sue Morse trails & wildlife talk
- Trails Repair
- Gillett Pond Supplement
- Amphibian Crossing

www.tinyurl.com/CRF-2023

The CRF Advances Town Plan Priorities

Draft

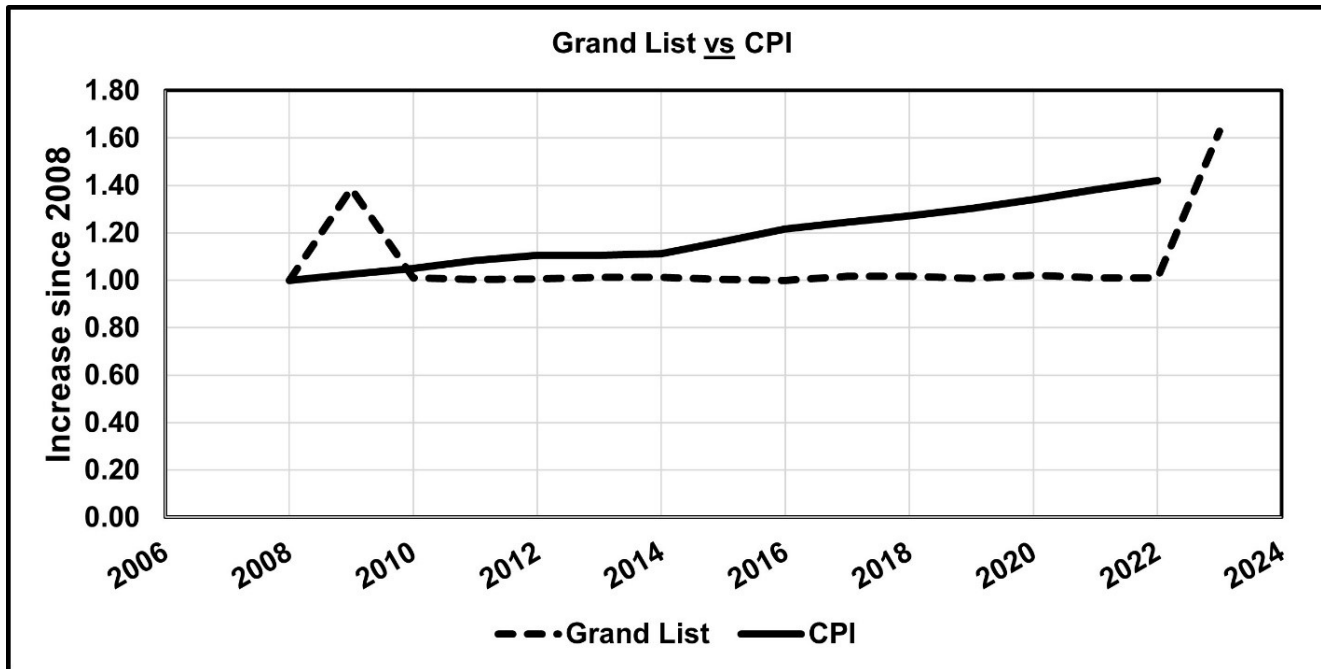
- **“Protect priority natural areas in order to maintain the health and function of those areas and their ecosystem services.”**
- **“Preserve healthy and resilient working lands, agricultural soils.”**
- **“Maintain Richmond’s rural character and scenic beauty.”**
- **“Utilize best management practices for Richmond-owned, publicly accessible natural and recreational areas.”**
- **“Utilize the conservation reserve fund to protect important natural resources and public access to them where appropriate”**

Funding

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- **Financed by 1 cent on the tax rate.**
- **Anticipated FY 2025 yield: estimate \$72,000.**
- **Taxpayer cost \$10 for every \$100,000 of assessed value.**

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400% Return on Taxpayer Funding

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To date:

- CRF grants: \$ 584,733
- Additional \$ generated: \$2,180,533

Leverage: \$1 CRF brought in \$3.73

Numbers still being updated

2023 Projects

Draft

2023	Gillett Pond	Rich. Land Trust	Replace aging dam	\$50,000
	Amphibian Crossing Signs	Town of Rich.	Protect annual wetland migrations	\$150
	Trails and Wildlife Talk	Town of Rich.	Presentation by Sue Morse	\$250
	Expert panel	Town of Rich.	Ecology / Recreation	\$1,000

Gillett Pond Work in Progress


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A Popular Tool for Local Conservation

- **Consistent voter support since 2005**
- **Last year, over 60 residents chipped in for and signed a Times Ink!**
- **More than 70% of voters supported renewal of the CRF and its funding method**

Draft



Please help conserve and protect Richmond's best places.

Our town's highly successful Conservation Reserve Fund is up for its annual renewal in this year's voting. To keep it working, it needs your "YES" vote on or before March 7.

Thanks to solid voter support for the Fund since 2005, Richmond has been able to:

- Protect important local forests, streams, wildlife habitat and farmland, including the Andrews and Stage Road Community Forests, Beelen Rivershore Preserve and Bombardier Meadow.
- Safeguard and improve popular recreational and educational sites, like those above plus Gillet Pond, Volunteers Green, Willis Hill, Hummington River Gorge, the Johnnie Brook Trail and others.
- Restore local historic landmarks, like the portico at the Richmond Town Center.

Plus, for every Fund dollar used the Town has generated \$3.67 more from other sources, helping produce over \$1.9 million in additional support. And all for just a penny on the tax rate.

Let's keep the Fund working for Richmond. Please join us in voting "YES" on Article 5 on this year's paper ballot. Request yours from the Town Clerk at lparent@richmondvt.gov or call 434-2221. You can also vote in person for the Fund and other articles at the Town Center on March 7 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

And thanks for supporting local conservation!

Paid for by:

Marcia Gardner	Jake and Marcia Levison
Calby Akon	Jon Skobins
Ian Stokes	Jeremy & Sarah Hoffman
Cathleen Gent	Jon Karl
Fran Huntoon	Jonathan Smith
Doug Fletcher	Doug Racine
Kalle Brewer	Ted Lyman
The Malone-Watson Family	Marina Nye
Kil Emery	Rick and Chichi Barrett
Paul Garrett	Rosalyn Elliott
Peter Swaine	Andy Solomon
Jeff Forward	Rebecca Starks
Brad & Eileen Elliott	Kathleen and Richard Lewis
Beth Whiting	Bryce & Erin Gilmer
Bruce Hennessey	Jess Robinson
Bob Hetsler	Marcy Harding
Erik and Ole Filkom	Dan Martin
Mike Lawler	Judy McVicker
Jan Sibul	Bill & Sue Minard
Lou & Kathy Borne	John Hamerslough
Eric Thomas	Holly Wilkinson
Fritz Martin	Ernie Bulford
Keith Kasper	John Hildebrand
Fran Pomerantz	Demaris Tisdale
Wright & Cindy Preston	Velma Plouffe
Cori Groux	Fran and Dave Thomas
Andrea Asch	Judy Rosovsky
Amy and Andrew Powers	Krislen Mullins

Vote "YES" on Article 5 to renew the Conservation Reserve Fund

See what the Fund has accomplished so far:
tinyurl.com/2023-CRF

The Question on Australian Ballot Draft

Article __. Shall the Town of Richmond vote to approve funding the Conservation Reserve Fund by adding one cent to the municipal tax rate in the 2024-2025 fiscal year? (To be voted by Australian ballot)

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Questions / Comments?

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