

RICHMOND'S CONSERVATION RESERVE FUND

What is the Conservation Reserve Fund?

Richmond voters established the Fund in 2005 so our Town could better participate in important conservation projects. It supports property owners, non-profits and community volunteer groups in developing and implementing projects to protect important local natural, agricultural and historic resources. It enables the Town to consider and act quickly and decisively on conservation opportunities. Since its inception voters have supported the CRF with a penny on the tax rate (\$10 per \$100,000 of property valuation). The Fund is voted upon annually. Last year the vote was 844-247 in favor of renewal.

How has the CRF been used?

As shown on the reverse, the Fund has supported numerous important conservation projects ranging from Town forests to protecting recreational treasures, working farms and historic preservation.

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 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.

The Fund has also greatly reduced our Town's costs of conservation. Many state, federal and private conservation funders require communities to share in project costs to show that voters support conservation. Voter-financed funds such as ours provide the needed proof, qualifying projects for very significant additional funding. So far, every dollar Richmond taxpayers have invested in conservation has generated \$3.84 in project funding from other sources – over \$2.18 million in all.

How are funding decisions made?

Proposals are made to the Conservation Commission, which assesses their compliance with the funding criteria. The Selectboard makes the final decisions after considering the Conservation Commission's recommendations. Both bodies deliberate in public sessions. For funding any land acquisitions by the Town exceeding \$20,000, direct voter approval is required.

What does the Fund cost taxpayers?

By adding one cent to the municipal tax rate (approximately %), renewing the Fund would cost taxpayers \$10 for every \$100,000 of a property's assessment. That would generate an estimated \$79,000 for important conservation projects across town.

Does conserving land raise or lower property taxes overall?

An expert on Vermont tax policy, Deborah Brighton, has researched this and shown how conserving land helps keep property taxes in check. She says, "Open space tends to require few public services. More people tend to require more public services, resulting in higher taxes."

Furthermore, nearly all conserved land in Richmond, being privately held, continues generating tax revenues. (The exceptions are the Town-owned Andrews Community Forest, the Stage Road Community Forest and Overrockers Park. To qualify for public funds, landowners usually must guarantee public access to conserved land as warranted for hiking, hunting, fishing, skiing and other activities (one exception being land used for agriculture or livestock grazing).

What kinds of new projects does the Conservation Commission foresee?

Applications for CRF support can come from residents and Town committees at any time. At year's end likely projects include rewriting the Andrews Community Forest management plan, completing a Forest environmental assessment, a Winooski River study, and repairs to trails on Town property damaged during last summer's floods.

The Conservation Reserve Fund was designed to enable Richmond to consider and act on opportunities fairly, efficiently and in a timely way. It has also served to demonstrate 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 lparent@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

Conservation Reserve Fund - Project Summary 12/4/23

Awards to Date:	\$584,733
Matching Grants Won:	\$2,180,533
Balance	\$294,094.67
Expected for FY 2024:	

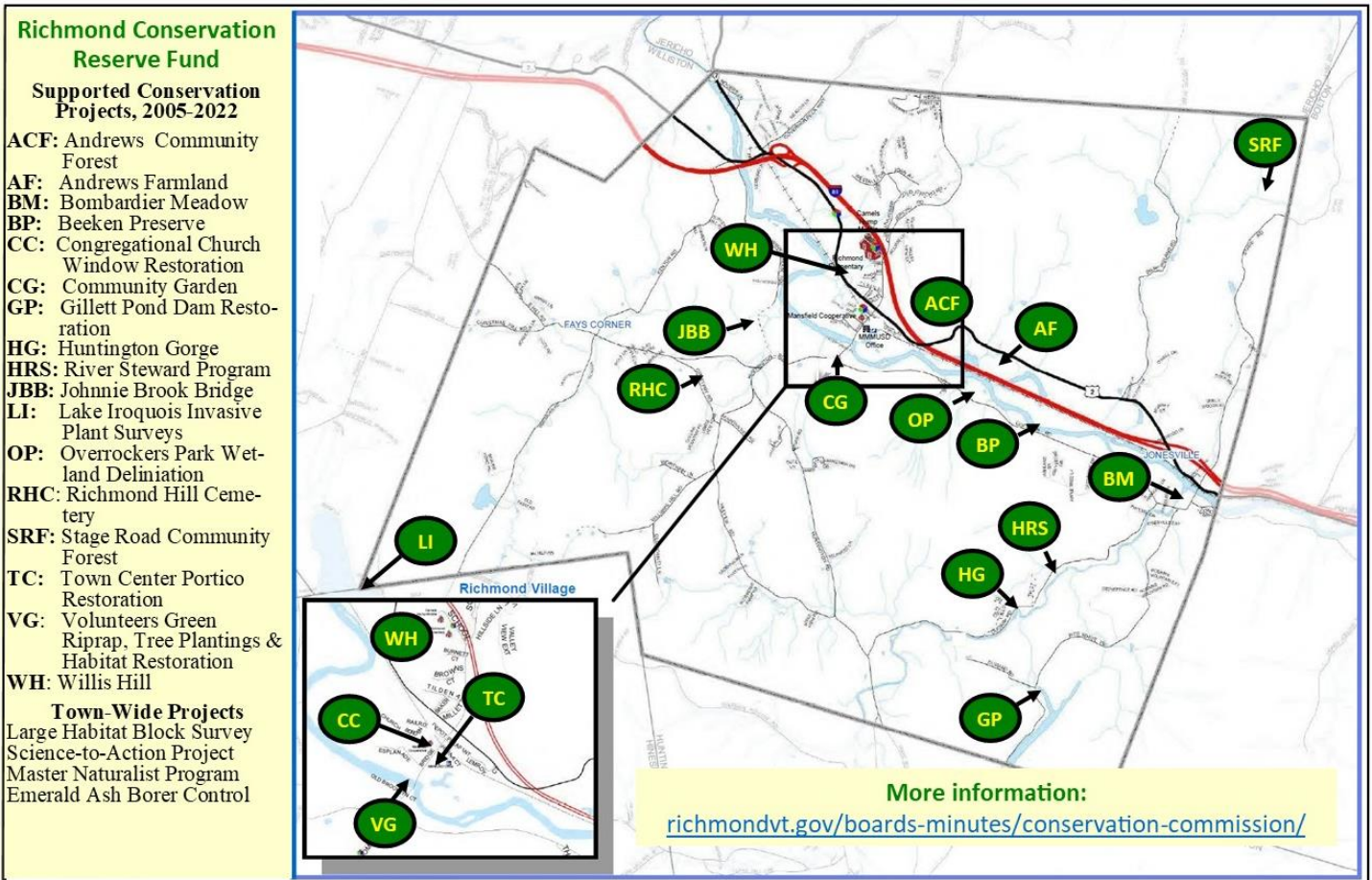
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Numbers still being updated

Submissions	Request	Actual	Year	Matching \$	Total \$
Bombardier meadow	\$51,500		2009	77,000	\$128,500
Large Habitat Block Study (PC, CC)	\$2,400		2009		\$2,400
Town Center Portico	\$35,265		2010	65,035	\$100,300
Richmond Hill Cemetery	\$2,500		2010		
Andrews Farmland	\$10,000		2012	197,500	\$207,500
Science to Action	\$3,195		2013	88,525	\$91,720
Richmond Congr. Church Windows	\$6,564		2014	12,423	\$18,987
Willis Hill	\$64,000		2014	\$122,500	\$186,500
Gillett Pond Dam	\$150,000		2017	\$650,000	\$800,000
Andrews Forest	\$75,000		2018	735,000	\$810,000
Huntington Gorge	\$10,000		2018	55,000	\$65,000
Johnnie Brook Bridge	\$1,000		2018	400	\$1,400
Lake Iroquois Plant Survey	\$2,000				\$2,000
Richmond Master Naturalist Program	\$4,000		2019		\$4,000
SE Group: ACF Management Plan	\$4,500		2019		\$4,500
Town Green Rip-Rap	\$20,000		2019	117,200	\$137,200
Andrews Forest Trails	\$3,000		2019	1,500	\$4,500
Huntington Gorge Steward	\$1,500		2020	5,000	\$6,500
Johnnie Brook	\$8,400		2020		\$8,400
Volunteer's Green Beaver Protection	\$200		2020		\$200
Stage Road Community Forest	\$3,500		2020		\$3,500
EAB Match	\$20,000		2021	15,000	\$35,000
Eagle Scout Andrews Table Benches	\$500		2021		\$500
Volunteers green Habitat Restrn.	\$15,000		2021	35,000	\$50,000
Richmond Community Gardens	\$2,000		2021		
Overackers Park Wetlands delineation	\$2,500		2021		
Beeken Preserve Engineering study	\$2,500		2021		\$2,500
Lake Iroquois Assn. Plant Survey	\$2,200		2021	3,200	\$5,400
Riverside Trails Work	\$9,500		2022		\$9,500
EAB Supplement	\$5,000		2022		\$5,000
Bombardier Engineering Study: parking	\$625		2022		
Winooski Riveride Trail Work	\$9,500		2022		
Andrews Forest Ecological Study	\$3,500		2022		\$3,590
Beekin Preserve Bench	\$300		2022	250	\$550
Sue Morse talk - trails& wildlife	\$250		2023		\$250
Amphibian crossing signage	\$150		2023		\$150
hh	\$1,684		2023		\$1,684
Gillett Pond Dam supplemental	\$50,000		2023		\$50,000
Conservation-Recreation Panel	\$1,000		2023		\$1,000
Totals	\$584,733			2,180,533	\$2,748,231

In the Pipeline:					
RFP ACF Management Plan Rewrite					
Winooski River Study					
Trails Flood Repair					

CONSERVATION RESERVE FUND TOWN-WIDE PROJECT MAP



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