

Richmond Save Our Salamanders Network (RSOSN)



RSOSN

A group of volunteer citizen scientists dedicated to monitoring the health of our frogs and salamanders during the spring migration season.

Who We Are

The Richmond Save our Salamanders Network (RSOSN) is a group of volunteer citizen scientists dedicated to monitoring the health of our frogs and salamanders (aka Herps) during the annual spring migration season. Current members include Richmond Conservation Commission volunteers and other amphibian stewardship enthusiasts in town. This group gathers data regarding both the different species and the numbers of them found along road crossing hotspots where they migrate from our uplands forests to vernal pools to mate and lay their eggs on multiple rainy eves between mid-March and mid-May. Richmond joins a much larger statewide effort launched 25 years ago to contribute to the Vermont Reptile & Amphibian Atlas including thousands of contributors who have sent many records to illuminate distributions of herp species throughout our state reflecting Vermont's strong environmental stewardship commitment. For more information on VT's herps go to

<https://www.vtherpatlas.org/>

What We Do

Network participants view training videos to learn how to identify crossing amphibians and how to collect data which will be shared with the Vermont Reptile & Amphibian Atlas. Participant safety information is provided as well as how to properly handle amphibians. Frogs and salamanders are identified, counted and moved off the road toward the direction they are traveling.

In our pilot effort in the spring of 2024, we decided that we needed more time, practice and safety gear to improve our methodology before inviting members of the public to participate. Items to consider for the Save Our Salamanders program: Volunteers have requested brighter safety signs to alert motorists and supplies (buckets) to help move the herps quickly to safety. Spatulas are used to remove dead herps from the road to increase the accuracy of live/dead counting. We do not have permission to add signs to Rt 2 since it is managed by the state, but two portable signs for Cochran Rd would be ideal (mounting reflective signs with flashers on portable cones). See items below with costs needed to fund the start of the SOS season in early April.

Why the RSOSN Matters

Helping amphibians is a wonderful way for Richmond Community members to make a positive difference for wild inhabitants living close to home. It's loads of fun to learn more about the secret lives of herps while connecting with neighbors on chilly nights for a conservation cause when cabin fever is at its peak. Data in the Vermont Reptile and Amphibian Atlas shows that some frog and salamander

species experience declining population numbers. Decreasing road-kill can help sustain those populations. According to the Vermont Atlas: *The ultimate goal of the Atlas is to gather and disseminate the data that are needed on the reptiles and amphibians of Vermont in a way that involves and informs Vermont individuals and organizations so that they can become more informed and effective stewards of wildlife habitat.*

Request for additional supplies for the RSOSN Spring 2025 Continued Pilot Project

The RCC is requesting up to in Conservation Reserve Fund funds to cover the fees for additional larger signage, more safety vests and other relevant material, detailed below:

18X24 Reflective Signs \$99/sign



Two 12" Rechargeable Flashing lights to attach to the signs \$35/strip of flashers



Two 28" Tall Reflective waterproof cones \$37.50 to mount the signs.



6 Safety Vests (We already have 6 and we anticipate 12-15 Volunteers) \$30 for 6



12 x 3qt buckets to Transport Amphibians \$36 for 12



3 packs of spatulas to remove amphibians \$10/pack of 5, Need 3 packs = \$30



CRF Criteria

This proposal meets the Conservation Reserve Fund criteria of:

General Criteria A1-A5, protection of natural resource, permanent protection of wildlife, meets natural resources planning requirements, protects and enhances access to a natural resource and is directed at a threatened resource. It meets Natural Resource Protection Criteria B4 and B5: preserving biodiversity and providing a corridor.

Motion for Richmond Conservation Commission to consider:

The Richmond Conservation Commission recommends that the Selectboard approve up to \$500 in Conservation Reserve Funds to cover the cost of additional safety and herp collection gear, as described in the Richmond Save Our Salamanders Network proposal dated February 11, 2025. The total cost is \$441 dollars but does not include taxes and shipping so we are asking for up to \$600 to include those costs. The request meets CRF criteria A1-A5 and B4 and B5, as enumerated in the proposal, as related to providing access to and preserving recreational opportunities and conserving an important natural resource. These funds must be expended within 3 years of the date of final approval, by approximately February 11, 2028.

