

Richmond Conservation Reserve Fund Application

Amount Requested: \$400

Project Title: Protecting Richmond's Wildlife from Rodenticide Poisoning (more engaging title TBD!)

Applicant: Bob Galvin, Bolton Conservation Commission & Diane Reynolds, Huntington Conservation Commission

Project Location: Richmond, Vermont

1. Property / Project Description

This proposal seeks funding to help co-host a free, public wildlife education event in Richmond focused on the documented negative impacts of rodenticide poisons on wildlife, pets, and ecosystem health. The event will include a science-based presentation and facilitated discussion explaining how commonly used rodenticides move through the food web and cause secondary poisoning of non-target species, including raptors, mammals, and domestic animals. The Vermont Institute of Natural Science (VINS) will be bringing 3 ambassador raptors and partnering with the conservation commissions to host this event. This will be a fantastic event for children and families, along with many other members of our community.

The program will also provide practical, wildlife-safe alternatives for rodent management that residents can implement in homes, barns, and agricultural settings. The event will be held at the Richmond Library and will be open to all residents (and any other Vermonter who wants to attend). Educational handouts and resources will be provided to attendees.

This project does not involve land acquisition or development but supports conservation by reducing preventable threats to wildlife and water quality through education and behavior change at the community level.

2. Project Significance and Relationship to Fund Purposes and Criteria

This project directly advances the Conservation Reserve Fund's purposes of protecting wildlife, preserving environmental quality, and providing settings where children and adults can learn directly about the environment.

Rodenticides represent a significant and ongoing threat to wildlife in Vermont, particularly birds of prey and mammalian predators that naturally regulate rodent populations. Secondary

poisoning undermines biodiversity, disrupts ecological balance, and can contaminate soil and water through improper use and disposal. By educating Richmond residents about these impacts and offering alternatives, this project addresses a threatened natural resource and yields a clear, sustainable benefit to the community.

The project aligns with General and Natural Resources Protection Criteria by:

- Preserving and restoring biodiversity by reducing wildlife mortality
- Supporting healthy predator populations that contribute to natural rodent control
- Reducing non-point source pollution risks to soil and water
- Promoting stewardship practices that protect Richmond's rural character and quality of life
- Supporting Town Plan goals related to conservation education and natural resource protection

Education is a critical and cost-effective conservation tool that helps prevent harm before it occurs.

3. Project Schedule

The event is anticipated to take place within 3 months of funding approval.

Proposed timeline:

- **January 2026:** Confirm venue, speakers, and partner organizations
- **Early February 2026:** Develop educational materials and begin outreach
- **Late February/Early March 2026:** Host the public event and distribute materials

No closing dates, purchase agreements, or preservation documents are required for this project.

4. Project Partners

The event will be co-hosted by the Bolton Conservation Commission, the Huntington Conservation Commission, VINS, and (hopefully) the Richmond Conservation Commission. Partners will contribute in-kind services including speaker time, outreach support, volunteer staffing, and educational expertise. No partner restrictions will be placed on use of funds or materials.

Local promotion will occur through community networks such as Front Porch Forum, local news outlets like Seven Days & VTDigger, and conservation partners to maximize attendance and impact.

5. Financial Information

Total Project Budget: \$677.50 (Bolton Conservation Commission approved a \$177.50 contribution, and the Huntington Conservation also approved a \$100 contribution).

Requested from Conservation Reserve Fund: \$400 (one-time allocation)

Proposed Use of Funds:

- \$250 for program fee and mileage for an employee of VINS to travel to Richmond with 3 live ambassador birds (other portion of program fee and mileage covered by Bolton & Huntington CCs).
- \$50 honorarium to VINS employee Anna Morris, who has been a champion for educating Vermonters on the impacts of rodenticides and will be presenting at this talk.
- \$50 for light refreshments to encourage community participation.
- \$50 for rental fee of Richmond Library for 2 hours.

Financial records will be maintained by the applicant in accordance with standard accounting practices. Documentation of expenditures covered by the Fund will be submitted within four months of project completion, as required.

6. Long-Term Plans

While the event itself is time-limited, its conservation benefits are long-term. Educational materials will continue to circulate digitally and in print, and attendees will be encouraged to share information within their households and networks. The project builds community awareness that can lead to sustained reductions in rodenticide use, protecting wildlife, water quality, and ecosystem health over time. There have been several other presentations on the negative environmental and ecological impacts of rodenticides throughout Vermont, and we hope that this presentation may inspire other Conservation Commissions or private individuals to continue educating the public on this issue.

This project also lays the groundwork for future conservation education efforts in Richmond by strengthening partnerships and increasing public engagement around wildlife protection.