

## **Town Report 2025**

The mission of the Richmond Conservation Commission (RCC) is to assist residents and town officials in recognizing and protecting the natural, scenic, recreational, historic, educational, cultural, scientific, agricultural and archaeological resources located within the town. Noting a new start time, the Commission meets at 7:00 PM on the second Tuesday of the month. More information can be found at: <https://www.richmondvt.gov/boards-meetings/conservation-commission>.

The Conservation Reserve Fund (CRF) continued vital support for a variety of conservation projects. Funded by annual vote by adding one cent to the municipal tax rate, funded projects over the past year have included support for the Richmond Master Naturalist program, tree plantings on Volunteer's Green, continued support for Emerald Ash Borer remediation, and expanding parking at the Beeken Preserve along Cochran Road. Also included was support for acquisition of Winooski Flood Plain Forest land to protect rare Ostrich Fern, Silver Maple Forest, tree-planting at Browns Court and responsible trail maintenance.

The RCC kicked off the year with training in the use of ANR's BioFinder. This mapping tool identifies and maps key ecological and natural resource features and has become a cornerstone tool in developing an updated Town Plan, evaluating applications for CRF funding and updating the Management Plan for our Andrews Community Forest.

A highlight was developing a plan, securing resources, and implementing a "Save our Salamanders" initiative that joins many other towns in Vermont to help amphibians cross roadways safely as they move every spring from upland forests to their vernal pools to breed and lay eggs. Volunteers are also trained as citizen scientists to collect data for 4-6 weeks, which is included in the Vermont Reptile and Amphibian Atlas.

Invasive species continue to be a significant growing problem for our native natural communities. Under the project title, "Richmond Pulls and Plants Together," the RCC has organized a handful of volunteer efforts to preserve the integrity of our local wetlands, woodlands, and grasslands. By detecting aggressive non-native plants early in patches small enough for volunteers to manage close to home, we are educating and empowering community members to keep Richmond wild and beautiful.

RCC continues to participate in the Vermont Master Naturalist Program and ReWild Richmond with the goal of restoring natural communities displaced by non-native weeds. This has included mapping problematic areas, big and small, pulling invasive weeds, and planning native flora. These efforts build on Jon Kart's efforts from The Great Richmond Root Out and his riparian restoration work by committing to long-term and ongoing community-wide management.

RCC, once again, managed a highly successful Green-Up day through informational announcements and mapping tools to maximize coverage. A huge THANK YOU!! to everyone who picked up trash this past week--and earlier--AND to the road crew, and others, who collected/will collect all of the bags, tires, and bulky trash from Richmond's roadsides.

Significant effort was spent on the update to the Richmond Town Plan. This included work on updating the Richmond Future Land Use description and map to coincide with the regional CCRPC map and incorporate the goals of 24 VSA to protect critical natural resources.

RCC was kept informed regularly on revisions to the Management Plan for our Andrews Community Forest, a major focus being on balancing recreational opportunity with the need to assure the integrity of its natural and ecological resources.

Finally, were efforts to understand the effects of Climate Change on our community from understanding how to approach flood damage on Old Jericho Road to opportunities to promote climate resilience.

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