

Richmond Save Our Salamanders Network (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 the Richmond Conservation Commissioners and volunteer amphibian-stewardship enthusiasts in town. This group gathers data on the different species and the numbers found along road-crossing hotspots where they migrate from our upland forests to vernal pools to mate and lay their eggs on multiple rainy evenings between mid March and May. Richmond joins a much larger statewide effort launched 23 years ago to contribute to the Vermont Reptile &

Amphibian Atlas, including thousands of contributors who have sent over 100,000 records to illuminate distributions of herp species throughout our state, reflecting Vermont's strong environmental stewardship commitment. <https://www.vtherpatlas.org/>

What We Do

Network participants are responsible for installing signs and lights to alert motorists to their activities. Volunteers undergo a statewide training session in March, conducted by the North Branch Nature Center, 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, along with guidance on how to properly handle amphibians. Frogs and salamanders are identified, counted, and moved off the road toward the direction they are traveling. <https://northbranchnaturecenter.org/amphibian-conservation/>

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 fascinating to learn more about the secret lives of amphibians while connecting with neighbors on chilly nights for a conservation cause. Every spring, frogs and salamanders move from their upland forest habitats to fish-free vernal pools along the Winooski Rivershore and between the Andrews Community Forest and Lilly Pond Circle. Spotted yellow salamanders can live 20 years and are known to use the same migration paths each year. Data in the Vermont Reptile and Amphibian Atlas show that some frog and salamander species experience declining population numbers. Decreasing roadkill can help sustain those populations. According to the Vermont Atlas: *The ultimate goal of the Atlas is to gather and disseminate the data needed on the reptiles and amphibians of Vermont in a way that involves and informs Vermont individuals and organizations, making them more informed and effective stewards of wildlife habitat.*

How to Support RSOSN

The RCC is requesting up to \$115 from the Conservation Reserve Fund to cover fees for safety lights and data recording field notebooks. These signs alert motorists about the spring migration at confirmed crossing hot spots used by many different species of frogs and salamanders on Cochran Road and Route. Signs and safety lights alert Richmond residents to the presence of these volunteers and give drivers the opportunity to slow down and prevent unintended amphibian casualties.

In short, we are requesting funds for 6 waterproof data collection notebooks at \$23.37/ pack of 3 and 6 Safety Light Wands at \$15.90 per two-pack. The total would be $(46.74 + 47.70 = 94.44 + \text{tax ?})$



CRF Criteria

This proposal meets the Conservation Reserve Fund criteria of:

General Criteria A1-A5, protection of natural resources, 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 \$115 in Conservation Reserve Funds to cover the cost of data-collection notebooks and safety lights, as described by the Richmond Save Our Salamanders Network for the spring 2026 season. 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."



Project Schedule

Equipment will be purchased by mid-March 2026, prior to the start of the spring amphibian migration season (mid-March through May). Documentation of all costs will be submitted within four months of project completion, by no later than September 30, 2026, in accordance with the Fund policy.

Project Partners

The project partners with the North Branch Nature Center (NBNC), which conducts the annual statewide volunteer training in March and collects and analyzes amphibian data as part of the Vermont Reptile & Amphibian Atlas. NBNC's in-kind contribution includes training materials, data infrastructure, and expert guidance. NBNC places no restrictions on the use or management of the monitored crossing sites. All monitored locations are on or adjacent to public rights-of-way.

Financial Information

The full allocation of \$100.11 is requested as a one-time lump sum for the spring 2026 season. The itemized budget is as follows:

Waterproof data collection notebooks (2 packs of 3) @ \$23.37/pack	\$46.74
Safety Light Wands (3 two-packs) @ \$15.90/two-pack	\$47.70
Vermont sales tax (6%)	\$5.67
Total requested:	\$100.11

Funds will be dispensed by the Town of Richmond to the applicant. Conservation Commissioner Jeanette Malone will purchase the items and be reimbursed directly. All receipts will be retained by Commissioner Malone and submitted to the Conservation Commission after purchase.

Long-Term Plans

RSOSN is a volunteer-run network with no ongoing operating costs beyond the annual purchase of consumable field supplies (notebooks and replacement safety lights as needed). The network is sustained by the dedication of its volunteer members, including Richmond Conservation Commissioners, and by the continued partnership with the North Branch Nature Center, which provides training and data management infrastructure at no cost to the Town. The amphibian monitoring program is expected to continue annually each spring, contributing data to the Vermont Reptile & Amphibian Atlas and supporting the long-term conservation of amphibian populations and their habitats along Cochran Road and Route 2. Future small requests to the CRF for replacement consumables may be submitted on an as-needed basis.