

Richmond Save Our Salamanders Network
(RSOSN)



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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 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 attaching wildlife signs to posts that are approved and installed by the Richmond Highway crew by mid-March and for taking them down by mid-May. Volunteers take part in a statewide training session in early 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 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. <https://northbranchnaturecenter.org/amphibi-an-conservation/>

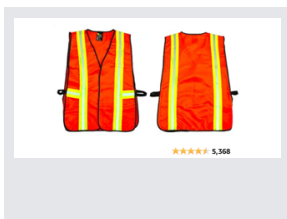
Why the RSOSN Matters

Helping amphibians is a wonderful way for Richmond Community members to make a positive difference for wild inhabitants living close to home. It's 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 it's 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.*

How to Support RSOSN

The RCC is requesting up to \$200 in Conservation Reserve Fund funds to cover the fees for safety vests, clickers and 3 metal crossing signs with an image of a frog or salamander, similar to standard deer crossing signage. These signs will alert motorists about the spring migration of herps at confirmed crossing hot spots used by many different species of frogs and salamanders on Cochran Road and Wes White Hill Road. Every spring frogs and salamanders move from their upland forest habitats to fish-free vernal pools along the Winooski Rivershore and Gillett Pond. Spotted yellow salamanders can live 20 years and are known to use the same migration paths annually. Signs will alert Richmond residents to the presence of these animals and give drivers the opportunity to slow down and prevent unintended casualties of amphibians. Signs would look similar to the existing ones posted in Huntington, VT.

1. We are requesting funds for three aluminum frog crossing signs for approximately \$100 (including shipping and taxes), \$25 for the posts, \$40 for safety vests, and \$10 for clickers to use for counting. See examples below. The group has been in communication with Pete Gosselin and Josh Arneson about placing the signs.



2. In addition to posting signs and monitoring these crossing sites, the RSOSN would like Richmond to formally participate in collecting data to contribute to statewide efforts monitoring the population and health of amphibians throughout Vermont. We would like to request permission from the Selectboard and we invite other community members to join us by attending a training with the North Branch Nature Center via zoom and through other communications to ensure proper training.

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 \$200 in Conservation Reserve Funds to cover the cost of safety vests, clickers and 3 metal signs and posts, as described in the Richmond Save Our Salamanders Network proposal dated Oct 10, 2023 and amended on Dec 1, 2023 to account for the additional sign and post. 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 Oct 16, 2023.

