

## Conservation Reserve Fund Application

Richmond Land Trust

September 22, 2022

### Project Description

The Richmond Land (RLT) owns the permanently conserved Bombardier Preserve, located in between Cochran Road and the Winooski River adjacent to the Jonesville Bridge “put in” spot. The Bombardier Preserve is facing two ecological challenges:

- 1) Serious parking problems have arisen at the Bombardier Meadow, on Cochran Road adjacent to the Jonesville Bridge Winooski River “put-in” spot. There has been rampant illegal parking along the roadsides and illegally on conserved land. The RLT has been erecting a seasonal temporary lot at Bombardier at the request of the Richmond Parking Advisory Committee to allow better recreational access to the Winooski River and to reduce parking pressure. Users do not respect the boundaries of this seasonal lot and this seasonal parking is degrading the meadow and threatening the conservation values the easements were meant to protect.
- 2) The “put in” spot at the river itself has developed through historical usage patterns. The entrance is neither optimally located nor designed, resulting in rivershore erosion. River users have also started crossing ecologically sensitive habitat to access a second unintended “put-in” spot.

The RLT requests funding of \$625 to pay for engineering to address both problems.

- 1) Engineering to convert a portion of the now seasonal temporary into a permanent year-round lot. This lot could also be expanded seasonally to accommodate excess parking demand.
- 2) Design of an engineered solution to create a safe and sustainable river access point, leveraging the armored rock bed already adjacent to the Jonesville bridge abutments. The unintended second put-in spot will be closed and rehabilitated.

*We had hoped to amend a prior grant to cover this request but at the request of the Conservation Commission we are submitting a new proposal. This request is for engineering only, not for the actual work to complete these two projects.*

### Project Significance

The Bombardier Preserve is a popular and highly used recreational resource in Richmond. The put-in spot is highly used for access to the Winooski river and has become the default starting point for river floating. The meadow is also ideally situated to provide nearby access to popular Huntington River swimming spots, the widely used Rivershore trails as well as easy access to Duxbury and Cochran Roads for running and cycling. The Town and the RLT created additional parking at Overrockers and at the Beeken Preserve, but on warm summer weekends Bombardier remains the most heavily used river access point.

This request meets the following Conservation Reserve Fund Guidelines:

Overall: “...providing outdoor recreational opportunities... conserving important natural, agricultural and historic resources.”

General Criteria

A.2. “permanently preserving... recreational values...”

A.4. "Will protect, enhance, and provide public access to a natural resource or recreation area."

A.5. "Is directed at threatened resources."

#### Natural Resources Protection Criteria

B.7. "Supports low or no-cost outdoor recreational activities."

The proposed projects match examples of qualifying projects listed in the Policy Overview:

"Establish and maintain hiking trails"

"Permanently preserve public access to land... as appropriate for each individual parcel and its setting."

### **Project Schedule**

Because of the time sensitive nature of the parking problems at Bombardier, and the anticipation of the same again next summer, the engineering was completed by Tyler Billingsley of East Engineering this year. The actual work to complete the projects would only proceed after collaboration with the Town and neighbors, to satisfy concerns that the ecological and conservation values of the Bombardier meadow are preserved, and the character of the neighborhood is maintained.

### **Project Partners**

The RLT will partner with the Town of Richmond and with the neighbors on plans, and as appropriate funding, to complete both the parking area and also to address the rivershore access. This may be in the form of in-kind materials and services, or a joint application for grant funding to complete the work.

### **Financial Information**

The RLT has received an invoice for the work from East Engineering (\$1,250, split evenly across Beeken and Bombardier, so \$625 for Bombardier). This request will fund this initial design work.

### **Long Term Plans**

The subject property is already permanently protected by a conservation easement held jointly by the RLT and the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board and is managed on a day-to-day basis by the RLT. VHCB has approved parking lot development in concept and would participate in and have to approve going ahead with any final design. We will seek approval from the neighbors, complete an ecological and archaeological assessment, and obtain any required permits and permissions before proceeding with work to convert any portion of this temporary lot to a permanent lot. The existing canoe/kayak/float access, a short walk from the lot, will be improved and maintained regardless.

### **Contact Information**

Jim Feinson, RLT Stewardship Committee Chair [feinson@gmavt.net](mailto:feinson@gmavt.net) 802-434-3966

Jeremy Hoff, RLT Chair [jeremydhoff@gmail.com](mailto:jeremydhoff@gmail.com) 802-434-3796