

# Richmond Floodplain Forest Restoration Project

**Richmond's Winooski River floodplain forest** is home to a mix of trees, ferns, wildflowers and wildlife that has all but disappeared from Vermont. Now this special landscape and fabulous recreation area is being invaded. Highly aggressive, alien plants are pushing out native plants and the wildlife that depend on them. They're also weakening the riverbank, undercutting its ability to absorb floodwaters. Luckily, the infestations are still small enough to root out. With your help we can protect a rarity we can't afford to lose.

## Goal

The Richmond Floodplain Forest Restoration Project's goal is to maintain and restore the ecological integrity of Richmond's floodplain forest for the benefit of wildlife, water quality and other natural resources, and for Richmond residents of today and tomorrow. The greater the integrity of the floodplain forest, the more likely it will be able to provide a host of ecosystem services despite stressors such as climate change and encroachment by invasive plants.

To achieve this goal of maintaining and enhancing the ecological integrity of the floodplain forest, the project partners and local residents wish to control non-native, invasive plants within the project area.

## Project Area

We are currently focusing our efforts on a three mile stretch of the Winooski River between the Jonesville and Bridge Street bridges in Richmond. (not all landowners within this area currently participate in the project). We also provide workshops, help and support to property owners and organizations outside of this project area as needed.

## What's so special about this place?

Richmond is home to the largest silver maple-ostrich fern floodplain forest remaining on the upper Winooski River and one of the best examples remaining in the state. Now rare in Vermont, floodplain forests control erosion, filter phosphorus and other pollutants from the water, buffer uplands against catastrophic flooding and provides essential habitat for fish and wildlife. As noted in Vermont's [Wildlife Action Plan](#), 49 wildlife and 28 plant Species of Greatest Conservation Need depend upon floodplain forests for habitat. It's also a great recreation area.

Wildlife found in Richmond's Floodplain Forest include: beaver, bobcat, deer, mink, moose, coyote, raccoon, woodpeckers (downy, hairy and pileated), barred owl, grosbeaks, bald eagle, osprey, numerous warbler species, nuthatch, brown creeper, brook trout, and the endangered cobblestone tiger beetle.

Though more than 100 acres of this exceptional floodplain forest are protected from human development in Richmond, it is currently under assault from invasive exotic plants including Japanese knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum*), common reed (*Phragmites australis*), garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*) and honeysuckles. The ecological damage caused by these invasive plants includes:

- *Hastening erosion:* Lacking the strong root structure of natives, invasives such as Japanese knotweed do a poor job of anchoring the bank to prevent siltation and phosphorus loading throughout the year.
- *Replacing native species:* Japanese knotweed and common reed grow so densely that they replace native herbs and trees.
- *Disrupting the food chain:* Native insects do not feed on these invasives, resulting in a loss of a critical food source for bird and fish species.
- *Altering the Soil Chemistry:* The roots of both common reed and garlic mustard exude chemicals that prevent native plants from growing.

## **Roll Up Your Sleeves & Join Us to Restore a Special Place Volunteers Needed On**

Wednesday, May 5: 5-6:30 pm  
Monday, June 14: 5-6:30 pm  
Monday, June 28: 5-6:30 pm

Sunday, July 11: 2-5 pm  
Monday, July 12: 5-6:30 pm  
Monday, July 26: 5-6:30 pm

Sunday, August 8: 2-5 pm  
Monday, August 9: 5-6:30 pm  
Monday, August 23 5-6:30 pm

**To help, call 881-3423 or e-mail [richmondfloodplain@hotmail.com](mailto:richmondfloodplain@hotmail.com)  
For more info find us on Facebook or go to [www.richmondlandtrust.org](http://www.richmondlandtrust.org)**

### **Other Coming Events**

#### **Eco-Gardening Workshop: Using Native Plants & Installing Rain Gardens**

**Saturday, June 5, 10 am – 1 pm**, Camel's Hump Middle School, \$5 suggested donation

Lush foliage and vibrant flowers are more than meet the eye when you plant with natives and design gardens to capture and absorb stormwater. Learn which Vermont perennials, shrubs and trees are beautiful and attract butterflies, pollinators and birds. We'll explore Camel's Hump Middle School's new 1000 square foot native plant garden and then move to On the Rise Bakery, where we'll learn the basics of designing and installing a rain garden – with natives and edibles!

Presented by: Sharon Plumb, The Nature Conservancy & Laura Killian, Lake Champlain Sea Grant.

For more information or to register, call 859-3086 x340 or email [lkillian@uvm.edu](mailto:lkillian@uvm.edu).

#### **Floodplain Bird Walk**

**Saturday, June 12, from 7-8:30 a.m. Richmond Land Trust Beeken Preserve, Cochran Road**

See and listen to the dozens of different species of birds that are in Richmond's floodplain forest at this time of year – year-round residents as well as migrating warblers, shorebirds and others. Jim Shallow, local birder extraordinaire, will lead a walk through RL'T's Beeken Rivershore Preserve on Saturday, June 12, from 7-8:30 a.m. Meet at the Richmond Land Trust Canoe Access on Cochran Road. Bring binoculars if you have them – otherwise, a few pair will be available. There's no charge for the walk, and it'll take place rain or shine.

### **Project Partners**

Richmond Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy, Richmond Conservation Commission Richmond Trails Committee, Vermont Youth Conservation Corps, Boy Scout Troop 23, VT Fish & Wildlife Dept, VT Dept of Environmental Conservation, Winooski Natural Resource Conservation District