



Meets & Bounds

News about conserving Richmond's landscape,
resources and rural character

October 2009

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RLT's Bombardier Meadow Conservation Plan Under Final Review



Photo: Lou Borie

Family wants parcel protected by RLT

Last spring, Richmond's Selectboard approved using some of the Town's conservation fund to trigger a much larger grant -- \$77,000 -- from the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board to purchase and conserve the beautiful 10-acre meadow just southwest of the Jonesville Bridge.

The property was offered to the Richmond Land Trust by the Bombardier family so that we would protect and maintain it in much the same way that generations

of their family had. Besides its beauty, the meadow contains prime agricultural soils, historic archaeological sites, a stretch of rare Vermont floodplain forest, habitat for an endangered beetle, and easy access to the Winooski and Huntington Rivers for anglers and paddlers. A local organic livestock operation currently uses the field for growing hay. All these features and more easily qualified the project for a partial funding grant from the Richmond's Conservation Reserve Fund, a pool of money voters created in 2005 and dedicated to conserving "natural, agricultural or historical resources in and of importance to Richmond." As with our other preserves, RLT would pay the property taxes for the parcel. We're hoping for a final ok soon from the Richmond Selectboard so RLT can give this parcel the long-term protection it deserves.

Rivershore Trail Relocated Around Eroding Banks

Every week hundreds of people walk and bike the Rivershore Trail, the result of RLT working with local landowners to link our Beeken and Safford preserves with Town lands to the west. Unfortunately, the Winooski River has its own ideas for sections of the trail. As the river constantly shifts course, huge slabs of earth peel off, endangering the trail. Though course changes are part of the natural process, they can also force relocation of the trail. This past summer, for example, volunteers from the Richmond Trails Committee built new sections of the trail in several places. Just upstream from the Canoe Launch, the river has been steadily edging closer not just to the trail but also to Cochran Road. Thanks to the Trails Committee for their help in fixing that and keeping a safe path open along the mighty Winooski.

RLT Wins Grant to Conserve Remaining Land by Monitor Barns

20% match from Town conservation fund would complete conservation of 400 acres and help VYCC's education and leadership programs benefit more kids and communities around Richmond and the state

Two hundred and seventy-five acres down; 126 to go. RLT has obtained a major grant from a federal program that protects scenic views along Interstate highways to put toward conserving the remaining 126 acres of unconserved land owned by the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps (VYCC).

A 20 percent local match is required to obtain the Federal funds. RLT and VYCC are working together on details of the conservation plan, which would leverage part of the Town's conservation fund for the needed match. If Richmond's Conservation Commission and Selectboard approve, we'll have conserved not only a part of Richmond's scenic and historic landscape but also prime agricultural soils, rare wildlife habitat, timber resources, clear-running streams, hiking trails and - when conditions are safe - hunting areas.

The property will remain open to Richmond residents and others according to terms of the conservation agreement with the VYCC. VYCC will put the money towards paying down its mortgage on the historic Edmunds homestead (the former Vermont Farm Bureau property), including the East Monitor Barn and the conserved land to the north, east and west. That, in turn, will go a long way toward helping the organization expand its youth education and leadership programs, including those now serving students at Mt. Mansfield Union High School and the Essex Technical Center.

Next step: A professional appraisal of the property and a plan for raising the balance of funds after the transportation grant is taken into account.



RLT-Sponsored Wildlife Monitoring Team Ready to Take to the Woods

We all know that Richmond is home to moose, bobcats, bear and many other animals long gone from other places. But sometimes that knowledge just isn't enough. Maybe you're trying to show a funding agency why a particular parcel needs to be conserved. Or you're trying to figure out the best way to manage that parcel to protect the critters living there. In cases like those, you'll want solid evidence of the species that depend on it.

That's why RLT joined the Jericho/Underhill Land Trust in recruiting 21 volunteers from throughout

the area to take an intensive course in wildlife monitoring from acclaimed naturalist Sue Morse and her locally based Keeping Track organization. Volunteers spent six weekend days last winter in the field with Sue, studying tracks and other kinds of wildlife sign. This winter they'll break up into a half-dozen or so teams and, with landowner permission, begin seasonal monitoring of assigned pieces of land throughout our area. They'll be looking for and carefully documenting signs of moose, bobcat, bear, fisher, mink and otter - species high on the food chain that signal the overall health of an ecosystem. Over time, landowners and conservationists can join town officials, planners, wildlife specialists and others can use the information collected by the teams to make better, more informed decisions about conservation and land use.

Kudos to Kart (and Many Volunteers) for Nixing Noxious Non-Natives!

No wonder rumors have been swirling around town that, as a child, Jon Kart was frightened by waking up to see a giant Japanese knotweed plant looming over his baby carriage. Jon has been spearheading efforts to rid RLT rivershore preserves of knotweed as well as several other plants not native to Vermont and known for their ability to push out native species and dramatically change the ecology of large tracts of land.

What makes Jon's work along the rivershore especially important is that the ferns, wildflowers and other plants that thrive there are being displaced by the fast-growing, hard-to-kill, eminently adaptable alien invaders. So Jon teamed up with RLT and The Nature Conservancy - two organizations that manage preserves along the river - to organize a volunteer campaign to get the invaders under control.



This past season and last, Jon led several major assaults on the invaders, even going so far as promoting the edibility of knotweed and another local scourge, garlic mustard. He even got garlic mustard on the menu at On the Rise. During the spring and summer, he put together other efforts to eradicate the plants and give native plants more room to grow, enlisting volunteers from Richmond, other towns and area companies and organizations.

And all this while working full-time with the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department, serving on the Richmond Selectboard during a grueling period, and finding time for his family. We thank Jon for all of the hard work and expertise he has so generously given to the land. And if you'd like to know more about how to identify and control non-native species on your own property, see "Wise-on-Weed" at www.nature.org/vermont.

FAQ: "Meets & Bounds"?

Wondering about our newsletter's name? It refers to an ancient system of land surveying that uses bearings and distances from natural features and adjoining parcels to describe the perimeter of a piece of land. We thought it a fitting name for the newsletter RLT uses to describe for you our ongoing work to conserve and protect the key features that define the Richmond landscape and the community it supports.

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