

September 2009

**Interim Management Plan
For the
Bombardier Meadow**

Prepared by:

Richmond Land Trust
P.O. Box 605
Richmond, VT 05477

VHCB #2009-066

I. Purpose

A. Goal of the Management Plan

- This interim management plan was drafted by the Richmond Land Trust (RLT).
- The interim management plan and subsequent revisions to it provide a framework for the day to day use and management of the Bombardier Meadow Property (the property). RLT, as the property owner, will carry out the management plan with the assistance of a local stewardship committee. A copy of the management plan and any revised management plan will be provided to the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB), as the easement holder.
- The management plan carries out the purposes of the Grant of Development Rights, Conservation Restrictions, and Public Access Easement (the conservation easement) to be conveyed by RLT to VHCB. These purposes are listed below:
 - (1) To conserve and protect productive agricultural land, biological diversity, important wildlife habitat and natural communities on the Protected Property and the ecological processes that sustain these natural resource values as these values exist on the date of this instrument and as they may evolve in the future.
 - (2) To provide for dispersed public outdoor recreation use that is low-impact, non-commercial and non-motorized, as well as, the quiet enjoyment of the Protected Property, provided such uses are compatible with the Purposes of the Grant.
 - (3) To conserve and protect the Protected Property's undeveloped character and scenic and open space resources for present and future generations.
- The purposes of the easement will be advanced by conserving the Protected Property because it possesses the following attributes:
 - Provides a scenic gateway to the Town of Richmond along Cochran Road;
 - Contains approximately 10 acres of prime and statewide agricultural soils;

- Located at the confluence of the Winooski and Huntington Rivers, and is part of the Winooski River Floodplain Forest natural community;
- Provides public access, including a riparian trail along both Rivers and connectivity with the Rivershore Preserve and Trail and the Cross Vermont Trail;
- Is a site for the State-Threatened Cobblestone Tiger Beetle;
- Contains two recorded archeological sites, VT-CH-619 and VT-CH-627, with VT-CH-619 eligible for the National Register of Historic Sites; and,
- Is in the vicinity of other conserved lands including the George Safford Preserve (RLT), the Lower Huntington Gorge Preserve (RLT) and the Villeneuve Property, a large working timber tract recently conserved by the Vermont Land Trust.

B. Responsibilities

- The Richmond Land Trust developed the Bombardier Meadow project in August 2008, in order to protect the 11-acre Bombardier property for its natural, agricultural, historic, scenic, and recreational values. RLT raised \$52,000 in local funds and received a \$77,000 grant from the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board.
- RLT will take fee title to the property on October 15, 2009.
- The Vermont Housing and Conservation Board is the sole holder of the easement. (Contact Billy Coster: 828-5068 billy.coster@vhcb.state.vt.us)
- RLT took the lead in drafting the interim management plan and will be primarily responsible for implementing the management of the property (Contact RLT Chair: Brad Elliott). RLT will form a local stewardship committee whose representation shall include the RLT Board, neighbors to the property, the Richmond Conservation Commission, and the Richmond Trails Committee.
- As the owner, RLT is authorized to make decisions concerning the property.

II. Background

The property has been owned by the Bombardier family of Richmond for several generations. The property supported a dairy farm operated by the Bombardier family for 30 years, until operations ceased in 1979. Since that time the property has continued to be used for agricultural purposes and as an informal public access to the Winooski and Huntington Rivers. RLT and the Bombardier Family Corp. entered into a Purchase and Sale Agreement for the property on December 8, 2008. Subsequently, RLT applied for grants from VHCB and the

Town of Richmond Conservation Reserve Fund (CRF) to support the acquisition of the property. The Richmond Conservation Commission reviewed the application for CRF funding and forwarded the application to the Richmond Selectboard with a favorable recommendation. The Selectboard approved the funding request for \$51,500 on February 16, 2009. VHCB awarded the project a \$77,000 grant on July 17, 2009.

III. General Description of Property

The property is an important scenic, recreational, and agricultural resource for the Town of Richmond, providing a scenic gateway to the eastern edge of the town, access to the confluence of the Huntington and Winooski Rivers, and 10 acres of primary agricultural soils. The 10 acre agricultural field has been farmed by the Bombardier family and other local farmers for many years, and is currently in hay production. While most of the field is located in the floodplain, a small portion (1+ acres) is not in the floodplain and could support residential development under the Richmond Zoning Regulations.

The floodplain forest along the northern edge of the property adjoining the Winooski River is part of the Richmond Riparian Corridor Floodplain Forest identified by the Vermont Natural Heritage Inventory. This natural community is described as “a 4 mile (7km) stretch of floodplain that represents the most extensive remaining floodplain forest on the Winooski River (exclusive of the delta floodplain complex).” This floodplain forest has also been identified as a Portfolio Site by The Nature Conservancy (TNC). Other portions of this floodplain forest, between the mouth of the Huntington River and Richmond Village, have been permanently protected by RLT and TNC.

The Vermont Natural Heritage Inventory also identifies the site as the location of a State- Threatened Animal Species, the Cobblestone Tiger Beetle.

The field also contains two state-listed archeological sites, one of which is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. An archeological recovery of this site was conducted as part of the construction of the new bridge over the Huntington River in 1995.

IV. Current and Expected Uses

The two principal uses of the property are agriculture and dispersed recreation.

A. Agriculture

Agriculture is one of the Permitted Uses under the terms of the conservation easement. The 10 acre hay field is currently leased on an annual basis to Bruce Hennessey of Maple Wind Farm in Huntington. RLT will work with Hennessey or another local farmer to manage the

hayfield for continued and improved hay production. The local stewardship committee will monitor use of the property to insure that any conflicts between the agricultural use of the property and other uses are resolved.

B. Recreation

Recreation is one of the Permitted Uses under the terms of the conservation easement. The riparian areas of the property have been used by the general public on an informal basis to access the Huntington and Winooski Rivers for fishing, swimming, and paddle sports. The conservation easement requires that the property “shall be available to the general public for all types of non-commercial, non-motorized, non-mechanized, dispersed recreational purposes (including, but not limited to, birdwatching, cross-country skiing, fishing, hiking, hunting, snowshoeing, wildlife observation, and access to the Winooski and Huntington Rivers for canoeing and kayaking) consistent with the Purposes of this Grant and the Management Plans.”

The property will be managed so that the recreational uses of the property do not conflict with the agricultural uses. This is primarily important during the late spring, summer, and early fall, when hay is growing in the 10 acre field. Recreational users will be asked to stay out of the field, using the field borders to access the riparian areas of the property. RLT will monitor the use of the property to determine whether directional signs are necessary to avoid this potential conflict.

V. Gates and Boundary Marking and Posting

There are no current plans to install gates or other barriers to restrict access to the property. There is no need to mark the boundaries of the property since it is bounded by Cochran Road, the Huntington River, and the Winooski River. The Stewardship Committee will consider whether any signs are necessary or appropriate, such as directional signs, signs indicating funding sources and ownership, or signs explaining permitted and non permitted uses.

VI. Current Physical Improvements to Property

There are currently no physical improvements to the property. The 10 acre field is in hay production and is leased on an annual basis to a nearby farmer. Informal trails run along the west and north sides of the field, providing access from Cochran Road to the Huntington River and Winooski Rivers. These trails will be maintained and evaluated to determine whether any improvements are necessary in order to provide continued access to the public.

VII. Description of Proposed Physical Improvements to Property

No physical improvements to the property are proposed by RLT at this time. The easement permits the construction of a small permeable surfaced parking area at the location generally depicted as "Future Parking Area" on the Bombardier Meadow Conservation Plan, or at such other location mutually agreed upon in writing by VHCB and RLT. Currently a limited amount of public parking is available along Cochran Rd. This parking has been adequate to serve the level of public use to date. It is not anticipated that public use will increase significantly, however the stewardship committee will monitor public use to determine whether the construction of a parking area is necessary to provide for public access to the property.

The Bombardier Family Corp. has reserved the right to place a subsurface wastewater disposal system on the property in the general location shown on the Bombardier Meadow Conservation Plan. The wastewater system will be placed as close to Cochran Road as possible in order to minimize the impact to the agricultural use of the property.

VIII. Management of Property

- A member of the Richmond Land Trust Stewardship Committee will **monitor** the property for illegal activities such as dumping, prohibited uses of the property, damage to signs, etc. The Stewardship Monitor will be assisted by a local stewardship committee which will meet periodically to review the management plan, current uses of the property, and any problems that may arise. Where appropriate, the police department will be asked to be involved in enforcement of prohibited activities.
- **No new physical improvements or structures** are permitted except as outlined in the conservation easement and this Management Plan.
- **Agricultural use** of the 10-acre field is authorized under the terms of the conservation easement. This includes management of the field
- **Vehicular traffic** is prohibited. No motorized vehicles are permitted outside of any designated parking area which may be constructed under the terms of the conservation easement.
- **Intensive uses** with negative resource impacts are prohibited. All types of non-commercial, non-motorized, non-mechanized dispersed outdoor recreational uses (including, but not limited to, birdwatching, cross-country skiing, hiking, snowshoeing, walking, and wildlife observation) consistent with the purposes of the easement are permitted.
- **Cutting/removal/harvesting** of native plant and animal species is prohibited unless specified in the management plan.
- **Forest Management** is not a permitted activity at this time. The wooded areas are all within **riparian buffer zones** along the Winooski and Huntington Rivers. (see below)
- The conservation easement requires prior written approval of VHCB prior to any disturbance of the soils on that portion of the property within a **riparian buffer zone** of fifty feet (50') from the Winooski and Huntington Rivers (the

“Rivers”). The riparian buffer zone along the Winooski River is currently wooded and is part of the Richmond Riparian Corridor Floodplain Forest identified by the Vermont Natural Heritage Inventory. The riparian buffer zone along the Huntington River is partially wooded and is partially within the edge of the agricultural field.

The local stewardship committee will determine the location of the riparian buffer zones along the Winooski and Huntington Rivers, using the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources document “*Guidance for Agency Act 250 and Section 248 Comments Regarding Riparian Buffers, December 9, 2005,*” and any successor publications, for guidance. The committee will mark the riparian buffer zones where appropriate.

The local stewardship committee will investigate methods to increase the width of the wooded portion of the buffer along the Huntington River. Limited cutting of dead and downed trees will be permitted within the riparian buffer areas for access, wildlife management, or safety purposes. This policy will be more clearly defined in revisions to this management plan.

- Two state-registered **historic archeological sites** have been identified on the property. These sites are marked on the Bombardier Meadow Conservation Plan and will be protected in place. No disturbance of the surface of the property including, but not limited to, filling, excavation, removal of topsoil, sand, gravel, rocks or minerals, or change of the topography of the land in any manner, is permitted under the terms of the conservation easement.
- Occasional **community events** are authorized under the terms of the conservation easement if they do not conflict with the other purposes of the easement. No such events are planned at this time. The revised management plan will address this issue in more detail.

IX. Natural Features Inventory

The most significant natural features of the property are the Richmond Riparian Corridor Floodplain Forest described above. A Baseline Documentation Report is being prepared for RLT by Walter Poleman and Jon Kart. This report will include an inventory of the natural features of the property. The inventory will be incorporated into the next revision of the Management Plan.

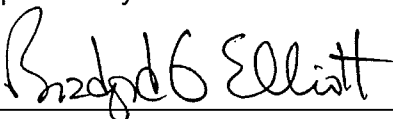
X. Management Plan Update

The local stewardship committee will meet on a regular basis to develop a final management plan for approval by the RLT Board by December 15, 2010. New information gathered as a result of the Natural Features Inventory and other research will be added to the management plan. The committee shall hold at least one publicly warned meeting in conjunction with a regularly scheduled or special meeting of the Richmond Conservation Commission in order to gather public input on the management of the property.

The management plan will be updated every five years or at such times as new uses or management goals are identified. Prior to adoption of any revised management plan the stewardship committee shall hold at least one publicly warned meeting in conjunction with a regularly scheduled or special meeting of the Richmond Conservation Commission in order to gather public input on the management of the property.

XI. Adoption

Approved by:



Date: 11/05/09

Brad Elliott, Chair, Richmond Land Trust

Attachments:

Bombardier Meadow Conservation Map
Copy of Conservation Easement

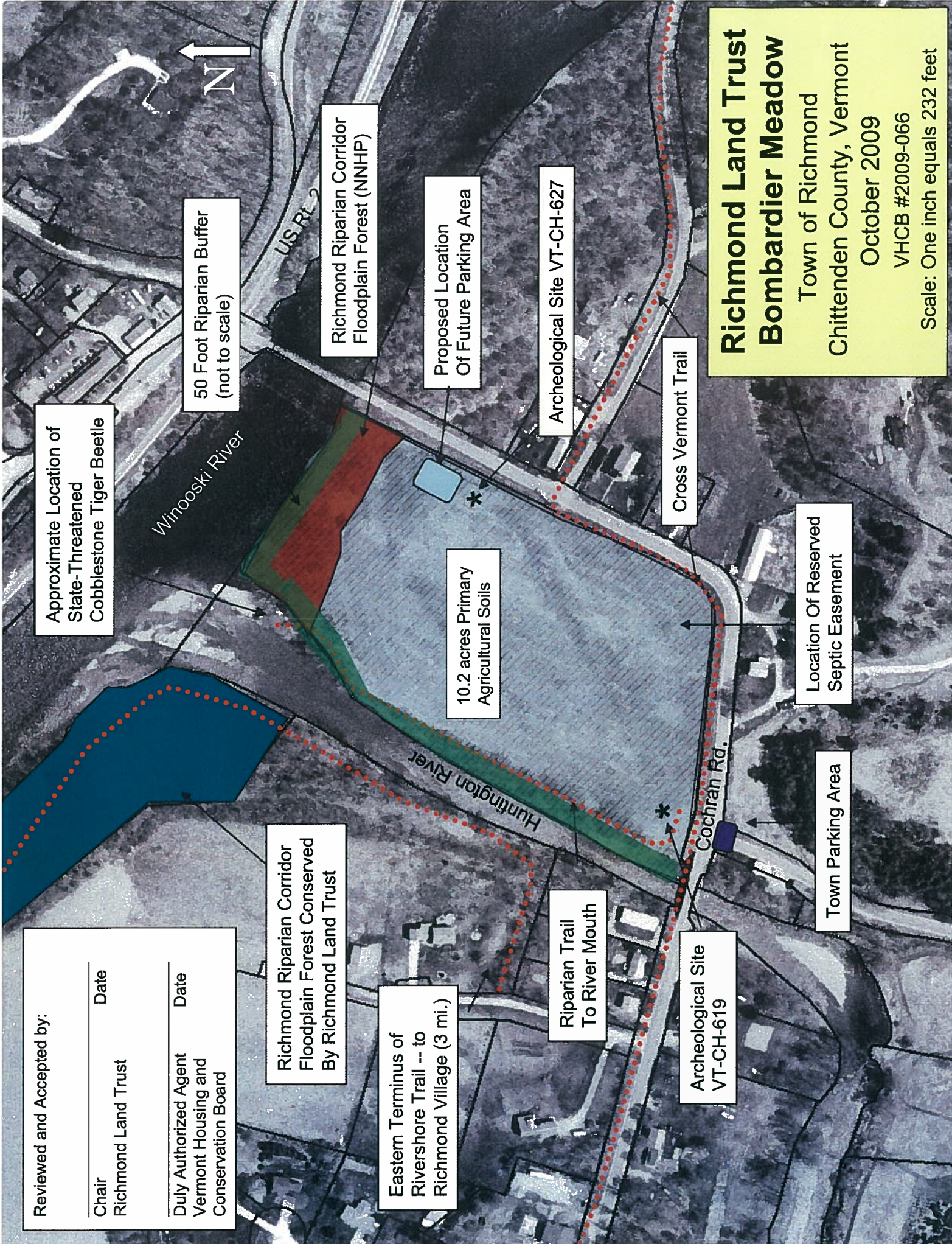
Reviewed and Accepted by:

Chair _____ Date _____

Richmond Land Trust

Duly Authorized Agent _____ Date _____

Vermont Housing and Conservation Board



Approximate Location of State-Threatened Cobblestone Tiger Beetle

50 Foot Riparian Buffer (not to scale)

Richmond Riparian Corridor Floodplain Forest (NNHP)

Proposed Location Of Future Parking Area

Archeological Site VT-CH-627

Cross Vermont Trail

10.2 acres Primary Agricultural Soils

Location Of Reserved Septic Easement

Richmond Riparian Corridor Floodplain Forest Conserved By Richmond Land Trust

Eastern Terminus of Rivershore Trail -- to Richmond Village (3 mi.)

Riparian Trail To River Mouth

Archeological Site VT-CH-619

Town Parking Area

Richmond Land Trust
Bombardier Meadow
 Town of Richmond
 Chittenden County, Vermont
 October 2009
 VHCB #2009-066
 Scale: One inch equals 232 feet