



Stewardship Monitoring Report

Property Information

(1) **Name of Property:** West Monitor Barn

(2) **Property Ownership:**

RLT Private

If privately owned, record name and address of current owner:

Name(s): Vermont Youth Conservation Corps (VYCC)

Address: 1949 East Main Street, Richmond, Vermont 05477

Contact Name & Phone #: Keegan Tierney: 802.434.3969 x141, keegan.tierney@vycc.org

(3) **Has there been a change in ownership since last report?**

Yes No

If Yes, include recording information below:

Visit Report

(4) **Date and Time of Inspection:** Wednesday 11/11/2010, 8am-10:30pm

(5) **If privately owned, was owner contacted prior to visit (if yes how)?**

Yes No

I contacted Keegan Tierney, VYCC Land and Facility Manager, several weeks prior to the visit via email and telephone to schedule the inspection.

(6) **Did owner (or representative) accompany the monitor?**

Yes No

Keegan Tierney (VYCC Operations Manger), Kate Hilfiker (VYCC Operations Coordinator) and Lisa Nelson (also VYCC Operations Coordinator) accompanied me on the monitoring tour. Brad Elliott, RLT Chairman was also present.

(7) **Describe how the land is currently being used (in restricted area only). Give specific detail about agricultural and forest uses if applicable:**

The property covers approximately 233 acres. Most of the upper elevations of property are forested. There is little merchantable timber on the property. Lower elevations are primarily open field, agricultural (~35 acres of which ~20 acres serves as cattle pasture, and ~5 acre for vegetable gardens and greenhouse), the West Monitor Barn and parking. Vegetable gardening has increased significantly over the past year as the landowner now operates a production farm. Ten lean-tos have been installed along the west side of the property in the tree line just above the old field.

(8) Monitor's best assessment of whether the terms of the conservation restrictions are being observed: (if No, explain below or on attachment) Yes No

Since the 2009 stewardship monitoring report was submitted, the landowner has addressed two persistent problems that have required attention since 2007: a missing property monument at the border with the neighboring Cowles property has been replaced; and, land designated to remain open field has been brush-hogged.

ATV use, however, has increased on the conserved land (see Recreational ATV Use on the attached map) and there is evidence of trail widening and trail clearing for recreational ATV usage. Just outside of the conserved parcel ATV tracks were found in and across streambeds and sensitive and wet soils (figure 1) and on lands owned by neighboring property owners (figures 2 and 3) accessible only through VYCC property. VYCC staff and leaders were made aware of ATV use on the property on September 1, September 23 and October 15 of this year. Despite this lead-time, the VYCC representatives that accompanied me on the monitoring tour reported not knowing who the ATV operator(s) is nor who did the trail widening.



Figure 1 ATV tracks in streambed



Figures 2 and 3 Trail clearing for Recreational ATV usage on neighboring properties

VYCC staffers have suggested that trading recreational ATV access to the property was offered to a neighboring property owner in exchange for brush-hogging and other land management services, and in an effort to maintain neighborly relations. Recreational ATV usage is not allowed according to easement language and is therefore not a good or service that VYCC can offer to the neighbor.

ATV's have been seen crossing Route. 2 and onto the East Monitor Barn parcel. It appears that the ATV's are then accessing the West parcel from the adjacent East Monitor Barn parcel. It is highly recommended that neighboring property owners whose lands have been impacted by ATV use and associated trail clearing be notified immediately. The installation of locking gates, log barriers and appropriate signage are recommended as first steps to curtail this problem.

(9) Did you note any possible violations of the terms of the conservation restrictions:

(if Yes, explain below or on attachment)

Yes No

Recreational ATV use in and around riparian areas and streambeds and the widening and clearing of trails to accommodate ATV use. No other conditions were noted on the West Monitor Barn property that clearly appeared to be a violation of conservation restrictions.

(10) General Remarks:

A. Property Management Plan: At the time of the 2009 Stewardship Monitoring Tour VYCC reported that it is updating its property management plan and expected to have a new draft finalized by May 2010. (RLT requested this update by 12/31/2008.) As of 11/11/2010, a draft has not been completed. VYCC should consult with the Richmond Land Trust and the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board as it prepares the update to the property management plan and forest management plan.

The forest management plan for this property calls for thinning stands four and five and re-examining stand three in 2009. As of 11/11/2010 this has not begun. VYCC should review the forest management plan and the requirements for enrollment in the State's Current Use program to ensure that it is not in danger of violating that agreement.

B. Trail Master Plan: In 2009 VYCC reported that it is the process of "creating a detailed trail master plan that will become incorporated as part of our land management plan." This plan will "include phased restoration and construction timelines." The projected completion date was to be the end of March 2010. As of 11/11/2010 this plan has not been completed. Easement holders have not yet been invited to review the draft plan. It is recommended that VYCC consider providing a draft plan to RLT and VHCB in time to allow for review prior to its adoption.

C. Trail maintenance and trail development: VYCC installed a new trail crossing the property this past year. Additional trail work occurred on the westside in the vicinity of the lean to. As noted in the 2008 and 2009 monitoring reports, water diversion structures installed on the Westside trail require yearly maintenance (removal of debris/leaves) and should be inspected yearly to ensure proper function. The upper portion of this trail still requires a more systemic fix to address surface water flows.

Repair, rerouting, and potentially decommissioning, of some trails and culvert replacement is *still* needed at some of the locations identified in the 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009 stewardship monitoring reports. Repairs at these locations (sites 1-4 on attached map) are needed to restore and/or maintain forest and water quality and to prevent further soil erosion on the property. As requested in 2008, VYCC should provide a written, time-sensitive action plan for trail repair before the end of the year. Such a report was never received.

As stated in the 2007, 2008 and 2009 stewardship monitoring reports, an ATV barrier is recommended at the northern end of the narrow—often wet—trail in the ravine between rocky ridges with significant wildlife sign (site #4 on attached map). Consider steps to reduce erosion here as well. Trails may require additional signage and barriers to prevent unwanted ATV usage.

- D. Invasive Exotic Plants:** In 2007 the exotic, invasive shrub Japanese barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*) was found growing in the northwest portion of the property (site #7 on attached map) and the largest plants were covered with a blue tarp. As recommended in 2007, 2008 and 2009 these plants and others in the area should be removed before they can spread and the surrounding area should be checked for additional plants. Follow-up monitoring should occur for two-three years to ensure that dormant seeds haven't sprouted. This problem has not yet been addressed.

In 2008 Bradley Materick, VYCC Land Stewardship Specialist, identified another Japanese barberry site and the presence of buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*), an invasive exotic tree on the property (site #8 and 9 on attached map). Actions were taken immediately and again in 2009 to remove these plants. These sites were not monitored or treated in 2010 but should be to ensure the plants do not re-sprout.


- E. New Surveys:** The Landowner's representative reports that some property lines near the East and West Monitor Barn campus were resurveyed in the past year. It would be helpful if the Landowner would provide RLT, VLT and VHCB with the survey data in an appropriate GIS format to facilitate stewardship mapping.

(11) Attachments (Note how many of each - leave blank if none):

3 Photos 1 Map ___ Drawings ___ Appendix

___ Other (describe _____)

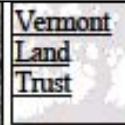
(12) Name of Monitor: Jon Kart

Signature: 

Date: 11/16/2010

Stewardship Recommendations for the West Monitor Barn Property 2010.

Base map from VLT



Property: Montior Barns
Location: Richmond, Vermont

8 Bailey Avenue Montpelier, VT 05602

7. Japanese barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*) infestation. Identified in 2007. It should be relocated and treated.

1. Standing water often found at low spot in trail ~10m long & 5m wide. Consider re-routing trail or installing bridge/raised-walkway

3. Steep, rutted, trail prone to erosion. Re-route to follow contours. Consider installing ATV barrier.

4. Narrow—often wet—trail in the ravine between rocky ridges with significant wildlife sign. Consider steps to reduce erosion and ATV access from trails connecting from the East Monitor Barn property.

8. Japanese barberry (*B. thunbergii*) 2008

9. Buckthorn (*R. cathartica*) 2008

2. Culvert still needs replacement

Recreational ATV use and trail clearing for ATV use. See figures 1, 2 and 3.

Conserved Wheeler property held by RLT & VHCB

New survey in red

Conserved Monitor Barns property in yellow Co-held by RLT & VLT

Protected Property

Scale: 1:10,000

