

Town of Richmond



Richmond Land Trust



BASELINE DOCUMENTATION REPORT

Richmond Town Forest (West of Stage Road) Richmond, Vermont

April 29, 2020

Prepared by:
Lou Borie
Richmond Land Trust
P.O. Box 605
Richmond, VT 05477

Richmond Land Trust (Holder) and the Town of Richmond have signed this Baseline Documentation Report with the understanding and agreement that this Report will be used for, but not limited to, monitoring the property depicted and described in this Report for compliance with the Grant of Development Rights and Conservation Restrictions dated _____ and signed by us. We have read this Report and understand it. We agree that this Report including the maps and photographs accurately describes and depicts the physical features, relevant site conditions, and current structures and land uses on our property conserved by the Grant of Development Rights and Conservation Restrictions.

Reviewed and Accepted by:

(Town of Richmond) (Date)

(Duly Authorized Agent of the Richmond Land Trust) (Date)

Landowner

Town of Richmond
P.O. Box 285
Richmond, VT 05477
www.richmondvt.gov/

Easement Holder

Richmond Land Trust
P.O. Box 605
Richmond, VT 05477
www.richmondlandtrust.org

Directions to Property

From the intersection of Stage Road and US Route 2, take Stage Road 3½ miles to a woods road on the west (left) side of Stage Road where signage indicates the owner as the Jericho Underhill Land Trust and the location of the VAST Trail. Follow the woods road and VAST trail 1/2 mile (2,600 feet) to the town line which separates the Richmond Town Forest from the Bolton Town Forest. See Conservation Plan for more detail.

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Overview

The Richmond Town Forest parcel (the property) is a 30+/- acre, rectangular-shaped parcel of land located in the northeast corner of the Town of Richmond, Vermont. The property is entirely wooded and gently to steeply sloping from south to north. Elevations range from 900 feet about sea level (asl) at the southwest corner to 1,240 feet above sea level at the northeast corner. Small drainage channels and pools exist on the parcel, however there are no identified streams.

Landscape Context

The property is located within a broad swath of forest known as the Chittenden County Uplands that connects Camel's Hump State Park to Mt. Mansfield State Forest. For more than 15 years, organizations, agencies, and volunteers have worked to protect over 10,000 acres of connected forest, much of which is open to recreation,

Watershed

The parcel is located in the lower Winooski watershed. The Winooski River begins in the town of Cabot and flows 90 miles to Lake Champlain in Colchester. The watershed drains approximately 1,080 square miles in central Vermont, encompassing all of Washington County, about half of Chittenden County, and portions of Lamoille and Orange Counties. The Winooski River is the largest tributary watershed to Lake Champlain. It includes almost 10% of the land area of Vermont. Approximately 72% of the Winooski watershed is forested, 12% is in agriculture and 9% is considered developed land which includes rural roads and urban and built up land. Water accounts for 5% of the total acreage and the remaining percentage is in miscellaneous land uses such as gravel pits, farmsteads, marshland and isolated single rural residences.

Neighborhood

The Richmond Town Forest parcel is located in the Town of Richmond, which occupies 22,022 acres of land in eastern Chittenden County. As of the 2000 US Census, Richmond had a population of 4,090 (Richmond Town Plan, 2012) Richmond is bisected by the Winooski River valley, where much of the town's residential development is located. Low density residential development occurs in the remainder of town, limited by topography and soils. The Richmond Town Forest parcel is located in the northeast corner of the town, on the town line with the Town of Bolton. The area is predominantly rural, with scattered residential development along the length of Stage Road, the nearest town road to the east.

The Richmond Town Forest parcel is surrounded by large parcels of land conserved by local and state conservation organizations. To the west and south is a 1,730 acre parcel owned by Prelco, Inc. and subject to a conservation easement held by the State of Vermont. To the north is a 260-acre parcel owned by the Jericho Underhill Land Trust and subject to a conservation easement held by the Vermont Land Trust. Directly to the east is the 13.5+/- acre Bolton Town Forest parcel which is owned by the Town of Bolton and subject to an easement held by the Richmond Land Trust. Contiguous to the Town of Bolton parcel and portions of the Richmond Town Forest parcel is a 128-acre tract of land owned by Jericho Land Trust and subject to a conservation easement held by the State of Vermont.

Cultural History

In 1941 the Cunningham family donated to the Town of Richmond a 30+/- acre parcel abutting the Richmond/Bolton town line. The family had carved out a small, upland farmstead on the land in the early- to mid-1800s but abandoned the property later in the century, as sheep farming declined in Vermont. At the same time as the donation to Richmond, the Cunnninghams gave to the Town of Bolton the abutting parcel of approximately 13.5+/- acres they owned in that Town. Though both parcels and surrounding lands are now re-forested, one can still see abundant evidence of the Cunningham's 19th-century homestead, including an intact stone cellar hole and foundation, stone-lined well, stone-lined spring, and boundary walls. Today, the town line between Richmond and Bolton divides the parcels and serves as the common boundary.

Natural Resources

Soils

Soils on the parcel are predominantly Lyman-Marlow very rock loams (5 – 60 percent slopes) with a small area of Marlow extremely stony loam (5 – 20 percent slopes) in the southern portion.

Natural Communities and Land Cover

Northern Hardwood Forest

The forest covering most of the parcel is relatively young, characterized by a diverse canopy of hardwood species with a few hemlocks mixed in. Dominant tree species include red maple (*Acer rubrum*), sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*), American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*), white and/or green ash (*Fraxinus americana*/*F. pennsylvanica*), and basswood (*Tilia americana*). Older growth hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*) predominates in the northern portion of the parcel. See Wetland, Woodland, Wildland (Thompson & Sorenson 2005) for a more detailed description of this natural community.

Wildlife Habitat and Connectivity

Vermont Conservation Design (VCD) considers the property to be within a Highest Priority Interior Forest Block. Interior Forest Blocks provide areas of contiguous forest and other natural communities and habitats (such as wetlands, ponds, and cliffs) that are unfragmented by roads, development, or agriculture. Forest blocks provide many ecological and biological functions critical for protecting native species and the integrity of natural systems, including:

- Supporting natural ecological processes such as predator-prey interactions and natural disturbance regimes;
- Helping to maintain air and water quality and flood resilience, supporting the biological requirements of many plant and animal species, especially those that require interior forest habitat or require large areas to survive;
- Supporting viable populations of wide-ranging animals by allowing access to important feeding habitat, reproduction, and genetic exchange; and
- Serving as habitat for source populations of dispersing animals for recolonization of nearby habitats that may have lost their original populations of those species.

The property is also within a Priority Connectivity Block according to VCD. Connectivity Blocks are the network of forest blocks that together provide terrestrial connectivity at the regional scale (across Vermont and to adjacent states and Québec) and connectivity between all Vermont biophysical regions. A network of Connectivity Blocks allows wide-ranging animals to move across their range, allows animals to find suitable habitat for their daily and annual life needs, allows young animals to disperse, allows plant and animal species to colonize new and appropriate habitat as climate and land uses change, and contributes to ecological processes, especially genetic exchange between populations.

Recreational Resources

Current Infrastructure

Access to the property is provided by a woods road which runs along the border of the property in the southeast corner. This woods road is also the location of the VAST snowmobile trail. The property is not served by any other trails or recreational infrastructure, however it is open to the public for low impact, dispersed recreational activities, subject to the terms of the conservation easement.

Management considerations

Draft Management Plan

The easement provides that the Town of Richmond may develop a comprehensive Management Plan, including updates, revisions and amendments, to guide the management and use of the property. Certain uses that are prohibited by the easement, may be permitted if authorized in the Management Plan. As of the date of this Report, no Management Plan has been developed.

Invasive Species

No invasive species have been identified on the property.

Summary of Landowner and Easement Holder Rights and Restrictions

Refer to the Grant of Development Rights and Conservation Restrictions (Richmond Land Trust and Town of Richmond, 2020) for a list of landowner and easement holder rights and restrictions.

References

Friends of the Winooski website, 2020: <https://winooskiriver.org/winooski-watershed>

Thompson, E.H., & Sorenson, E.R. *Wetland, Woodland, Wildland: A Guide to the Natural Communities of Vermont*. Montpelier, VT: The Nature Conservancy and the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife. 2005

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. 2004. The Soils of Vermont and their Associated Natural Communities.

Vermont Agency of Natural Resources. 2018. Natural Resources Atlas and Vermont Conservation Design: <https://anrmaps.vermont.gov/websites/anra5/>

Annotated Photographic Documentation

See "Photo Point Map" for photograph locations.

									
Photo:	1	Facing: N	Date:	4/18/2020	Photo	2	Facing: W	Date:	10/18/2019
Subject: Cedar post set along the approximate town line dividing the Town of Richmond and Town of Bolton parcels. Set on 4/18/20.					Subject: Remnants of house foundation from Cunningham farm.				
									
Photo:	3	Facing: NW	Date:	10/18/2019	Photo:	4	Facing: SE	Date:	10/18/2019
Subject: View of southeast corner of property looking northwest. Note flagged iron pin in stone wall at corner.					Subject: View of southwest property corner looking southeast. Note flagged iron pin marking corner.				



Photo: 5 Facing: NE Date: 10/18/2019

Photo 6 Facing: SW Date: 10/18/2019

Subject: View of southwest corner of property looking northeast along property line, showing character of northern hardwood forest. Note iron pin at corner.

Subject: View of interior of property showing character of northern hardwood forest.



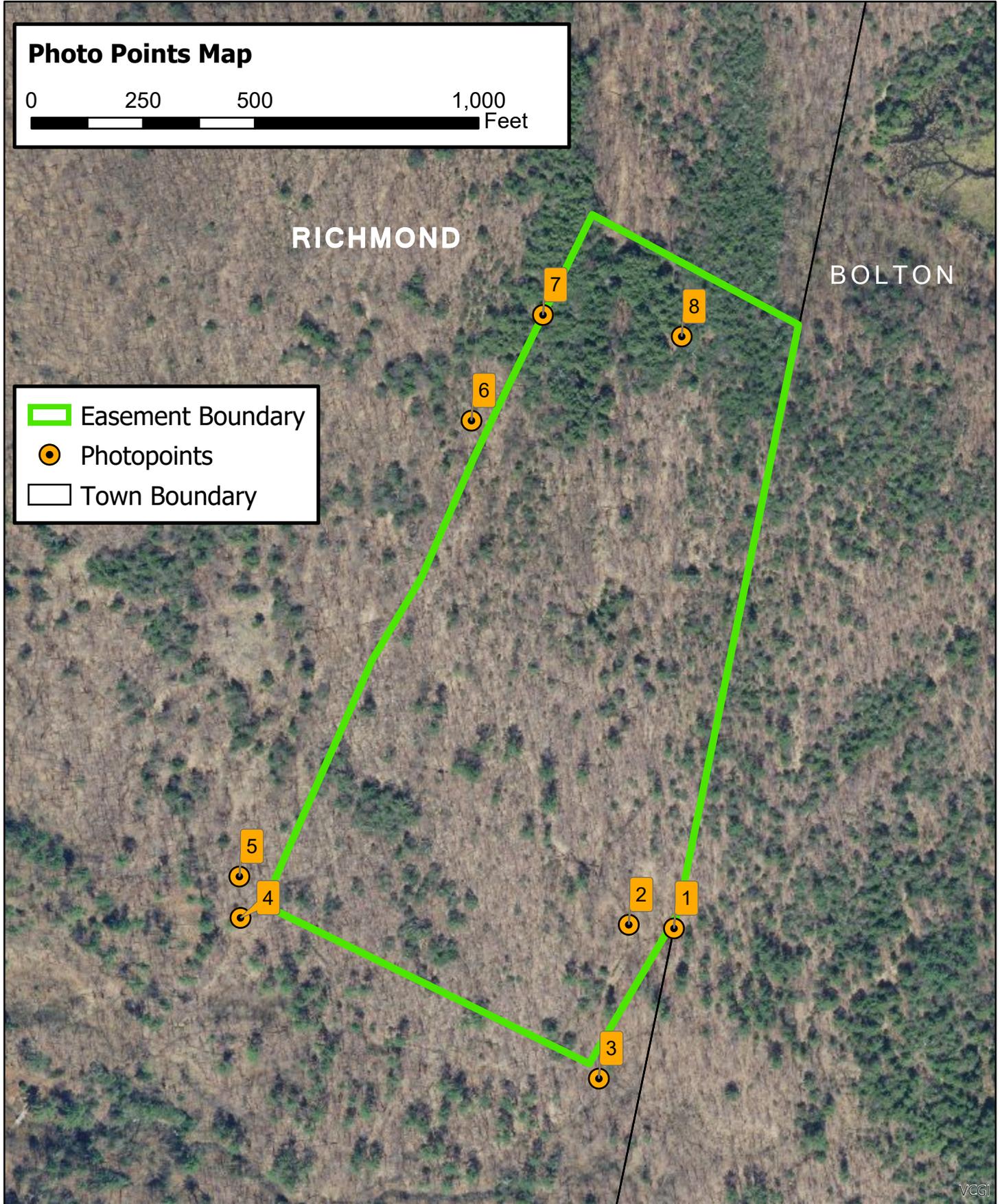
Photo: 7 Facing: N Date: 10/18/2019

Photo: 8 Facing: N Date: 10/18/2019

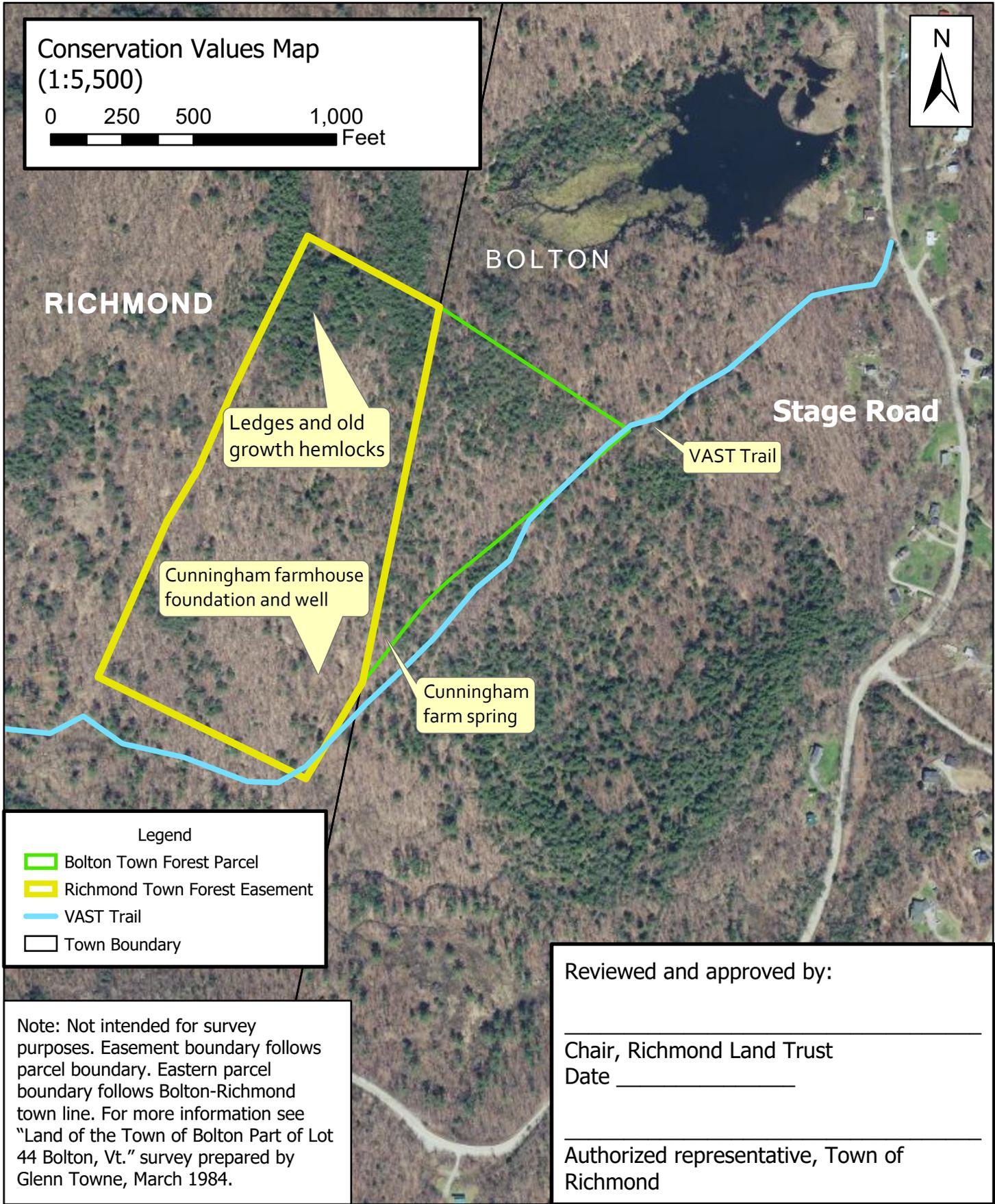
Subject: View of ledges long north along western property line. Note blaze on tree.

Subject: View of hardwood forest near northeast corner.

Richmond Town Forest Easement



Richmond Land Trust and Town of Bolton Richmond Town Forest Easement Town of Richmond, Vermont



Conservation Values Map
(1:5,500)

0 250 500 1,000 Feet



RICHMOND

BOLTON

Stage Road

Ledges and old growth hemlocks

VAST Trail

Cunningham farmhouse foundation and well

Cunningham farm spring

Legend

- ▭ Bolton Town Forest Parcel
- ▭ Richmond Town Forest Easement
- VAST Trail
- Town Boundary

Note: Not intended for survey purposes. Easement boundary follows parcel boundary. Eastern parcel boundary follows Bolton-Richmond town line. For more information see "Land of the Town of Bolton Part of Lot 44 Bolton, Vt." survey prepared by Glenn Towne, March 1984.

Reviewed and approved by:

Chair, Richmond Land Trust

Date _____

Authorized representative, Town of Richmond