



Stewardship Monitoring Report

Property Information

(1) Name of Property: East Monitor Barn Easement

(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

Visit Report

(4) Date and Time of Inspection: Wednesday 11/4/2010, 7am-10:00am

(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.

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

☒ Yes ☐ No

Keegan Tierney (VYCC Operations Manager), 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 under easement covers approximately 44 acres and is a mix of forest (white and red pine plantation, and red oak-northern hardwood forest) and old field. It is anticipated that the make-up and acreage of conserved land will change in the coming year with the likely installation of a series of solar trackers. VYCC and easement holders are currently negotiating this potential change.

(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

Woody vegetation, mostly staghorn sumac (*Rhus typhina*) and white pine (*Pinus strobus*), is actively encroaching upon the open field areas on the east side of the property (Site #1 on map). According to the conservation easement requirements, open field areas should be brush-hogged every third year if they

are not under agriculture. Significant brush-hogging occurred this past year on the open field area on the west side of the property.

ATV activity on the main trail across the parcel has increased. ATV's have been seen crossing Route 2 and onto the East Monitor Barn parcel. It appears that the ATV's are crossing this conserved parcel to access lands just to the North, including other conserved lands where recreational ATV use is prohibited. Trail clearing and widening to accommodate ATV travel on VYCC land to the north, as well as on adjacent properties belonging to neighboring landowners on Snipe Ireland Rd accessible only through VYCC property appears connected. VYCC staff and leaders were made aware of ATV use on the property on September 1, September 23 and October 15 of this year. The landowner representatives that accompanied me on the monitoring tour report not knowing who the ATV operator(s) is, nor who did the trail work.

To control this problem, we recommend that VYCC install locking gates at suitable places where the trail enters and exits the conserved land on the north and south, and that downed trees or similar barriers be used to block ATV access to trails leading into the West Barn parcel.



ATV Tracks on main trail through the conserved portion of the parcel

(9) Did you note any possible violations of the terms of the conservation restrictions?
(if Yes, explain below or on attachment) ☐ Yes ☒ No

Two issues are possible violations of the conservation restrictions:

- a) ATV activity for purposes other than in support of VYCC agricultural, forestry or other land management purposes. This activity is causing soil disturbances and conflicts with the overall spirit of the easement and current prohibition of trail clearing, construction and maintenance for motorized recreation.
- b) While areas designated to remain open field on the West side of the this parcel were been brush-hogged this past year, woody vegetation continues to encroach on the area designated as open field on the East side of the parcel. This has been brought to the attention of the landowner each of the past three years.

No other conditions were noted on the property that clearly appeared to be a violation of conservation restrictions.

(10) General Remarks:

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.

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 VLT in time to allow for review prior to its adoption.

Invasive Plants: An infestation of the exotic, invasive shrub Japanese barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*) identified on the east side of the property along a trail (site #3 on map) during the 2007 stewardship monitoring tour. Both the previous property owner and the current owner were made aware of its location in 2007, 2008 and 2009. The infestation remains in place. The current landowner reported in 2009 having found an additional, and more extensive, infestation near the first (site #4 on map).

On 11/7/2010 I visited this area to begin removal of barberry. At that time I identified honeysuckle (*Lonicera species*), another invasive plant, in the same area. I spent an hour removing barberry and honeysuckle (*Lonicera species*) in this area on 11/7/2010 and again on 11/11/2010, but could not get to all the plants on the site. Some additional plants were marked with orange flags. This area should be surveyed more extensively and remaining barberry and honeysuckle plants removed. Follow-up monitoring should occur for 2-3 years following removal.

Survey: The Landowner's representative reports that property lines were resurveyed in the past year. If pins were not placed at locations marked on the map as #5, #6 and #7, it would be prudent to do so in order to help VYCC keep development of the East Monitor Barn site out of danger of encroaching on conserved land. It would be helpful if the Landowner would provide RLT and VLT with the survey data in an appropriate GIS format to facilitate stewardship mapping.

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

2 Photos

1 Map

____ Drawings

Other _____

(12) Name of Stewardship Monitor: Jon Kart

Signature:  Date: 11/16/2010

Stewardship Recommendations for the East Monitor Barn Easement Lands 2010

Base map from Vermont Land Trust Monitor Barns/VFBS orthophoto map

