

**Bristol Town Administrator**

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**From:** Carolyn Dash <thecarolyndash@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, January 8, 2021 11:36 AM  
**To:** Bristol Town Administrator  
**Cc:** Kristen Underwood; Porter Knight; Jono Chapin; Melanie Lloyd; davidr1946@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Re: Conservation Commission capital plan & budget

Valerie,

Thank you for checking in with the BCC about the Conservation Reserve Fund since we tend to act as stewards of this fund. As you are aware, the voters of the Town of Bristol established the Conservation Reserve Fund to be expended by the Selectboard for the purpose of land acquisition, conservation easements and /or interests in property that achieve the Bristol Town Plan’s conservation objectives. A tradition of an annual appropriation of \$10,000 has sustained the fund and enabled many important conservation, recreation and restoration projects of considerable value to the taxpayers. Especially in this year of COVID-19, we have seen extraordinary use of our town parks and trails by many from within and outside of our community.

While the pandemic constrained our activities somewhat this past year, (though we did use the CRF in March to finalize town acquisition of the Fuller lot adjoining the Saunders River Access), we anticipate several community projects that will need attention and require funds in the coming year. Based on past successful projects, we know that an annual \$10K investment can leverage up to \$110K in funds to support town projects, and there is a strong potential that federal (and even state) funds for infrastructure, recreation and conservation will be even more available in the coming year.

Projects we currently anticipate:

- 1) The Universal Fishing Platform and ramp at Eagle Park will require funds to match anticipated FEMA funds to repair extensive damage sustained in the 2019 Halloween flood. This is one of the only riverside ADA-compliant Universal Fishing Platforms in the state and it remains a serious concern that we have not been able to get this fixed.
  
- 2) Engineering and construction expenses at Veterans Memorial Park are needed to address trail and bridge components that are in disrepair, address safety concerns, and improve accessibility.
  
- 3) Assessment and cleanup of the illegal dumping site on Upper Notch Road which is affecting drainage to the Notch Brook and ultimately the New Haven River swimming access at Sycamore Park beach - one of the most popular swimming spots in town. With your help, we now have the sheriff's department performing regular patrols that will hopefully cease this illegal dumping. However, to conduct landowner outreach and begin to address the sizeable existing dump will require significant resources given the potential for hazardous or pathogenic waste components, and the logistics and safety concerns around site access.
  
- 4) We also need to be ready for unanticipated requests from Vermont Land Trust, Vermont River Conservancy, and other groups that bring conservation or restoration project opportunities to us for consideration. When the Selectboard agrees that such a project is in the best interest of the greater Bristol community, having these funds available allows us to be nimble, effective and responsive in our support.

The voters of the Town of Bristol established the Conservation Reserve Fund and we're proud of the work that the BCC and SB have been able to do on their behalf. If the members of the Selectboard are interested in more specifics on the CRF, we invite them to read this document on the BCC website:  
[http://bristolvt.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Conservation\\_Reserve\\_Fund\\_Information.pdf](http://bristolvt.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Conservation_Reserve_Fund_Information.pdf)

Please feel free to reach out anytime to discuss this matter as we grapple with that is best for the town during this challenging budget season. We would be happy to attend a Selectboard meeting if requested.

Thank you,

Dr. Carolyn Dash, Chair BCC

Dr. Kristen Underwood, Vice-chair BCC

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On Wed, Jan 6, 2021 at 4:17 PM Bristol Town Administrator <[townadmin@bristolvt.org](mailto:townadmin@bristolvt.org)> wrote:

Hi Carolyn and Kristen,

The Conservation Reserve Fund currently has a balance of \$63,966.31 and the Town has traditionally allocated \$10,000 every year as part of its capital appropriations. Does the Conservation Commission have a plan of sorts for use of this fund? I understand its value to be available to leverage opportunities that cannot necessarily be predicted, but is there a plan of known projects or uses for this fund? Is there a goal or threshold this fund is trying to reach?

The Selectboard will be taking a close look at its overall capital plan in the coming weeks. They may be hard-pressed to allocate additional funds to this one in a particular year if it does not have a plan when there are other funds with identified priorities that could use more. I am not singling this one out. They will be taking a close look at all the funds.

I hope you're doing well.

Thanks!

--Valerie

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