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The historic West Monitor Barn as it appears today

Vermont Youth Conservation Corps (VYCC) to Hold Open House on November 5th at its New Headquarters in Richmond's Historic Monitor Barn

The Vermont Youth Conservation Corps (VYCC), in partnership with the Richmond Land Trust, has restored the historic West Monitor Barn in Richmond, VT and conserved its surrounding 230 acres of natural areas. On September 20, 2005, the VYCC officially made the barn its headquarters. An open house, which is free and open to the public, will be held on November 5th from 9 a.m. to noon to welcome the community to the VYCC's new home. The open house will include a video presentation about the barn's restoration, snacks, and a chance to view the beautifully restored barn and learn more about its new function as the VYCC's Education and Training Center. At 10:30 a.m. Tom Slayton, Editor of *Vermont Life* Magazine, will present a talk on the importance of the West Monitor Barn to the Vermont landscape. Everyone is welcome to attend, and there is no fee charged for the event. To get to the West Monitor Barn take I-89 to exit 11. Merge onto Route 2 heading East toward Richmond. Continue through the traffic light in Richmond and head out of town; the barn will be on your left in approximately 2 miles.

The restoration of the 100 year-old West Monitor Barn, and protection of its surrounding lands, is a joint project of the VYCC and the Richmond Land Trust. The soaring four-story structure, which is capped with an elegant "monitor" ridge of windows along its roofline, is recognized as one of the most important examples of Vermont's architectural and agricultural heritage. In addition, the adjacent undeveloped landscape is a keystone parcel for efforts to conserve the Chittenden County Uplands. The West Monitor Barn is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Since 1985 the VYCC has trained and educated almost 4,000 young people using hands-on conservation projects throughout Vermont. The number of youth who want to participate in the VYCC has steadily increased over the past 20 years. In 2004 only 26% of young VYCC applicants were able to be offered a job because of limited space for training, equipment, and staff. Thomas Hark, Founding President of the VYCC, stated that, "In order for us to meet the demand of youth that want and need the VYCC experience, we must establish a home for the Corps." The VYCC selected the West Monitor Barn as an ideal home for its training facility, and has spent the last four years conducting a \$3.7 million capital campaign to raise the funds needed to restore the barn in compliance with historical standards and outfitting it to serve as its headquarters. Jim Feinson, a board member of the Richmond Land Trust, said "We really needed the barn to be returned to productive use, and the VYCC was a perfect match. What's really unique about this project is that we have a partnership between two organizations...It's really a model for land conservation, historic preservation and youth development." Although the organizations have raised \$2.6 million toward the \$3.7 million goal, they are actively seeking the last \$1.1 million needed to complete the restoration.

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