

## Riparian Forest Buffer (RFB) Management Strategy CBP Work Plan Virginia

**Goal: *Vital Habitats*:** Restore, enhance and protect a network of land and water habitats to support fish and wildlife, and to afford other public benefits, including water quality, recreational uses and scenic value across the watershed..

**Riparian Forest Buffer Outcome:** By 2025, continually increase the capacity of forest buffers to provide water quality and habitat benefits throughout the watershed. Restore 900 miles per year of riparian forest buffer and conserve existing buffers until at least 70 percent of riparian areas throughout the watershed are forested.

**2 year Target: 2016-2018**

**Partner contributions to 2 year target:** TB

### RFB Management Approach 1: Renewed leadership for “all hands” approach

<b>Key Action</b> <i>Description of work/project. Define each major action step on its own row. Identify specific program that will be used to achieve action.</i>	<b>Performance Target(s)</b> <i>Identify incremental steps to achieve Key Action</i>	<b>Partners Responsible</b> <i>Identify responsible partner for each step.</i>	<b>Geographic Location</b>	<b>Timeline</b> <i>Identify completion date (month and year) for each step.</i>	<b>Estimated Project Cost</b> <i>Best estimate total cost of project (need)</i>	<b>Available funding by Partner</b>	<b>Total Available Funding</b> <i>Roll up of estimated funding</i>	<b>Factors Influencing and/or Gap</b> <i>ID related factor or gap in Mgmt. Strategy</i>
Engage federal, state and local leaders with each other, with USDA, and with progress on the RFB Initiative	DOF has focused its riparian forest buffer-GIS targeting / marketing efforts in the Potomac River Watershed and expanded to the northern Piedmont through the establishment of “Buffer Teams”.  DOF also leads an Open Field Targeting Initiative in Central Virginia that aimed at open lands not currently being used in an agricultural capacity or that are otherwise abandoned. We Identify landowners and contact for tree planting	FSA, NRCS, VDCR, VDOF, Local Gov’ts, SWCDs, USFS, NGOs	DOF work is currently through a new 4 County area in Central Virginia. Work is already done in a 4 county Shenandoah Valley area	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	Inconsistent leadership at the local level that recognizes that riparian forest buffers are a priority practice. Counties that prioritize riparian forest buffers have more success than those that do not.

Make non-federal match available as new opportunities present for federal funding	DOF provides cost-share funding to establish riparian forest buffers through the WQIF to those landowners that would not otherwise qualify for cost-share funding through federal programs	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	
Each state appoints a high-level coordinator to work across agencies on this outcome	Russ Baxter, Deputy SNR for Chesapeake Bay named as coordinator. DCR and DOF will partner on RFB efforts with DCR as lead and DOF serving in enhanced technical assistance capacity	Done	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	SWCDs are important to recruitment of landowners to install RFBs. Implementation strategy needs to include them.
Make non-federal match available as new opportunities present for federal funding	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	
RFB Management Approach 2: Improve existing programs to make the RFB practice more appealing to landowners								
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Increase and improve Technical Assistance	FSA at national level announced \$5M in add'l. assistance to CB jurisdictions last summer. VA/FSA submitted \$1M grant request. Received notification of award in 10/15. Follow-on actions pending with FSA in lead.  DOF conducts BMP implementation monitoring to determine BMP rates being applied to forest harvest sites	FSA, NRCS, VDCR, VDOF, NGOs  DOF	statewide  statewide	ongoing	Funding for DOF BMP implementation monitoring and Silvicultural Water Quality law enforcement comes from funding provided by a CBRAP Grant	TBD	TBD	Inconsistent availability of the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) hinders landowner outreach. Increases skepticism among landowners and program staff about CREP's viability.

	within the Bay Watershed							
	DOF conducts a robust enhanced enforcement program of the Virginia Silvicultural Water Quality Law in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. Enforcement is at 100% of harvest sites							
Develop programs to assist landowner with maintenance	Proposed in VA/FSA \$1M grant request. Now that VA/FSA has received award notification, VDOF and VDCR need to coordinate with FSA to implement grant SOW elements	FSA, NRCS, VDCR, VDOF						Successful RFB establishment requires long-term maintenance. Fields of leaning or downed tree-tubes and other signs of failure discourage landowners from enrolling in programs. Incentives for establishment are inadequate and need to begin before planting and be available for at least five years.
Amend state CREP agreements – increase flexibility and incentives; support verification	FSA/VA CREP agreement has been amended. DOF has been added as a signatory.	FSA, VDCR, VDOF	statewide	Done				Reliance of Fed. Gov't. on CREP for funding excludes non-agricultural land RFB targets

### RFB Management Approach 3: Make new program linkages and use financial leverage to conserve and restore more RFB

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Look broadly to align related projects/funding (e.g., state preservation programs, stream restoration, etc.)	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	
Use federal funding as leverage to get more RFBs	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	
Integrate RFBs as part of state stormwater programs	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	

### RFB Management Approach 4: Apply science and technology to improve the RFB practice.

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Use geographic prioritization tools and analyze for effectiveness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. for brook trout (e.g., Appalachian LCC tool)</li> <li>2. for water quality (various)</li> </ul>	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD		Lack of training for technical service providers, land trusts and other partners on the importance of riparian forest buffers
Use demographic tools (outreach) and analyze for effectiveness	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD		

				The CBP is securing it for all the jurisdictions in the CBW except VA which is securing it on its own. One meter resolution imagery will be standard in the 2017 version of the EPA TMDL model		TBD	TBD	TBD	
Improve tracking of total RFB using high-resolution imagery	DOF and many other organizations made this recommendation and it was accepted. Imagery using one meter resolution will be available across the CBW by 2017.				2016-2017				There have been technical data challenges associated with the effort given the differences in type, quality, robustness, etc. of the data collected by localities throughout the watershed. These challenges however are being resolved.

