Logic and Action Plan: Pre- Quarterly Progress Meeting

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**Riparian Forest Buffers – 2021-2022**

**Long-term Target:** (the metric for success of Outcome) Seventy percent of riparian areas throughout the watershed forested

**Two-year Target:** (increment of metric for success) 900 miles of riparian forest buffers planted and preserved per year

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| **Instructions:** Before your quarterly progress meeting, provide the status of individual actions in the table below using this color key. |
| Action has been completed or is moving forward as planned. |
| Action has encountered minor obstacles. |
| Action has not been taken or has encountered a serious barrier. |

Additional instructions for completing or updating your logic and action plan can be found on [ChesapeakeDecisions](http://www.chesapeakebay.net/decisions/srs-guide).

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| Factor | Current Efforts | Gap | Actions | Metrics | Expected Response and Application | Learn/Adapt |
| *What is impacting our ability to achieve our outcome?* | *What current efforts are addressing this factor?* | *What further efforts or information are needed to fully address this factor?* | *What actions are essential (to help fill this gap) to achieve our outcome?* | *What will we measure or observe to determine progress in filling identified gap?* | *How and when do we expect these actions to address the identified gap? How might that affect our work going forward?* | *What did we learn from taking this action? How will this lesson impact our work?* |
| Need for high-level coordination and direction at state level | 1. some states already have non-forestry leadership 2. PSC engagement | More networking, coordination, incentives | 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 2.3, 3.1, 4.1, 5.1, 5.2 | Action Strategy developed, pilot innovative programs at state level | Ongoing |  |
| Improved Technical Assistance | 11 positions with USDA funding, additional trainings | Need for consistent funding for positions, expand training | 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 4.1, 5.1, 5.2 | More trained TA providers, more landowner contacts, additional funding, state TA plans | Ongoing |  |
| Implementation partners need consistency, security, cost-savings | CREP and some localized programs tiered to RFB and innovation | Broaden-out existing programs, find like-programs that could incorporate RFB | 1.2, 2.1, 2.3, 5.1 | Public funds are leveraged in new ways, additional funding | Ongoing |  |
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|  | ACTIONS – 2020-2021 | | | | | | | | |  | |
| Action # | Description | | Performance Target(s) | | Responsible Party (or Parties) | | Geographic Location | | Expected Timeline | Justification for color. Is assigned color appropriate? Why? Provide examples | |
| Management Approach 1: Renew leadership | | | | | | | | | |  | |
| 1.1 | Work at WQGIT and MB level to form RFB coordinating body/advisors in each state where goals are regularly not being met | | 1. Designated, water quality specialist state contact who can help with 1.2 and 1.3 2. Advisory board formed 3. Strategy developed (see 1.2) | | MB, WQ GIT, State leadership, FWG | | Baywide | | March 2021 | There are successful examples of state and regional RFB coordinating bodies, but generally, WQGIT/MB members have not been involved with these.  Some WQGIT/MB involvement with the workshop and action strategies, but longer-term plans for coordination between FWG/WQGIT/MB still lacking | |
| 1.2 | Develop state high-level Action Strategies in each jurisdiction to help focus and coordinate RFB efforts | | 1. Diagnostic tools used 2. Localized goals are set 3. Agricultural landowners with the greatest number of bufferable acres are identified 4. Secure/stabilize/capitalize on current successful efforts critical for desired results to ensure they can continue, which will enable space for additional innovations | | States, FWG | | Baywide | | May 2021 | Action strategies developed in 5/6 states, final strategy in development. More work needed to identify agricultural landowners with large bufferable acres once new riparian LULC data is available. | |
| 1.3 | Develop Natural Filters restoration-type programs with innovative financing | | 1. Public funding sources are identified that can be directed to the Program (i.e., SRF, 319 $) 2. Programs are developed 3. Private funding is leveraged 4. Look at aggregation of newly planted buffers for carbon credits and consumer willingness to pay for clean water | | USFS, state contacts and advisory boards, conservation finance consultants | | Baywide | | Ongoing | Some new public funds and grants have been secured to help move this work forward, including the Keystone Tree Fund check-off (PA), INSR to the Alliance, and the GIT funding project working with local gov’s in MD. The MD Conservation Finance Act may make it easier to implement a natural filters-style program using public funds.  Need more assistance in identifying additional sources of public and private funding to sustain these efforts. Verified carbon credits likely not viable due to small scale of buffer plantings (voluntary, CSR-type credits may be an option) | |
| 1.4 | Work on policies to maintain and increase RFB on landscape | | 1. Amendments to state CREP agreements include benefits of 2018 Farm Bill 2. Conservation policies that reduce RFB loss are developed 3. Look at stream restoration policies to lessen impact on existing buffers   Work with other agencies w/in jurisdictions engaged in stream restoration work for collaborative opportunities  Work to include buffers as hazard mitigation | | CBC, Choose Clean Water Coalition, state advisory boards, CSN, FEMA and state EMAs | | Baywide | | Ongoing | No new amendments to state CREP agreements due to requirement to renegotiate CREP agreements and accept other unfavorable provisions.  Tree Solutions Now Act- provides $1000 CREP bonus payment for RFB in MD. Any other examples of new **policies** for maintaining/increasing RFB?  Stream restoration study has identified some opportunities and recommendations, but these still need to be translated into action. | |
| Management Approach 2: Improve existing programs and continue to develop new ones | | | | | | | | | |  | |
| 2.1 | Develop Natural Filters restoration-type programs with innovative financing and comprehensive RFB services (e.g., planning, planting and maintenance) (see 1.3) | | 1. Increase funding 2. Pilot 2 or more programs at the state level | | State contacts/advisory boards, USFS, conservation finance consultant, NFWF | | Baywide | | Ongoing | Making progress on piloting this model with the Alliance and MS4’s in MD. Other flexible “one stop shop” programs have been developed, including Healthy Forests Healthy Waters (ACB), USC Buffer Program, PA RFB program (ACB), JRA Buffer Program | |
| 2.2 | Improve RFB Verification by working with states on reporting | | 1. Work with LUWG to determine efficient strategies to verify buffers using high-resolution imagery 2. Work with FSA/NRCS to get data on buffer width and verification data (sanitized ok) 3. Extend credit duration for ag RFB to 15-years | | LUWG, USGS, USFS, FSA, NRCS, Verification Ad-Hoc Team | | Baywide | | September 2021 | Still losing a lot of buffer acres due to lack of verification.  Chesapeake Conservancy is exploring ways remote sensing/geospatial tech can be used for BMP verification, but unclear if/when a strategy will be developed.  BMP Verification Team explored opportunities to get access to federal cost-share practice data. There are some broader partnership efforts to address 1619 agreement issues but many challenges remain. | |
| 2.3 | Increase demand for RFB on all lands by leveraging relevant, complementary programs (related to 1.3, 2.1) | | 1. Work with CREP as much as practical, incorporating updates in an expedient manner 2. # of landowner programs strategically linked with RFB 3. # programs in developed areas 4. Use MS4 as driver 5. Look at SCORP and other recreation ties 6. Package with other BMPs for outreach (e.g., meadow establishment, upland forest planting, etc) | | State, state Advisory Boards, USFS, FSA, NRCS, NFWF, conservation finance consultants | | Baywide | | Ongoing | More is needed, but there are some good examples that could be replicated/ expanded:   * MD: $1000/acre CREP RFB bonus payment * MD: MS4 credit for RFB increased from 38% to 150% under new 2021 guidance, developed the FFIT tool to help explore funding options for forestry projects to fulfill MS4 requirements * PA Regional Watershed Forestry Specialists able to do outreach for multiple watershed forestry practices | |
| Management Approach 3: Improve Technical Assistance | | | | | | | | | |  | |
| 3.1 | Develop state plans with goals for improved technical assistance (could be part of 1.2) | | 1. TA personnel retained thru increased funding and support at state level 2. Use tools and local goals to focus TA where needed 3. Efficient landowner service | | States, FSA, USFS, NRCS, CBC, SWCDs, Ag consultants | | Baywide | | Ongoing | State plans developed in 5/6 states, but more TA is needed and retention is a big issue.  FSA/USFS supporting 12 riparian forester positions watershed-wide. MD FS hiring 13 new contractual positions through Tree Solutions Now. | |
| 3.2 | Training and improved support networks for TA providers | | 1. Train Conservation Districts, NGO’s and county TA providers on more efficient RFBs and Natural Filters Restoration Program 2. # of trainees and networks established 3. Work on steering committee of GIT-funded project to improve TA Coordination | | State Advisory Boards, FWG, SWCDs, Cross GITs, NRCS, | | Baywide | | Ongoing | Some progress, but more is needed. Training/networking opportunities include a CBLP Buffer Certificate Course, PA Watershed Forestry Summit, the upcoming RFB Networking Summit (ACB), volunteer training opportunities through Riparian Rangers and Tree Stewards programs, USC Buffer Steward Program, and riparian forester exchanges organized by USFS.  Any other examples of new venues for RFB TA trainings or networks? | |
| Management Approach 4: Improved RFB Outreach and Communications | | | | | | | | | |  | |
| 4.1 | Continue to develop communication and outreach plans for RFB, tree canopy, land use change products, and Natural Filters Restoration Program | | 1. Review of prior efforts for ‘lessons learned’ 2. Circulate proven ideas of what works now 3. Develop efforts targeted to specific sectors- Ag, Residential, etc. Utilize focus groups. 4. Conduct direct outreach on a smaller, local scale based on target audiences. 5. Use science to better connect buffers to flooding. 6. Couple local outreach with broader news releases, social media campaigns, etc. | | CBP Comm  Staff, FWG, State advisory boards, Cross GIT, PA DCNR | | Baywide | | Ongoing | New OpinionWorks paper produced outlining best practices, challenges and recommendations for outreach and communications. This paper identified a need to develop more capacity for communications/outreach and to use more targeted communications with new audiences. | |
| Management Approach 5: Strategic Planning and Buffer Delivery | | | | | | |  | |  |  | |
| 5.1 | | Continue to assess multiple benefits of RFB (e.g., stream temperature, habitats, etc.) and issues of cost, design and targeting | | 1. Help with STAC proposal to explore stream temperature rise 2. Improve maps of priority riparian habitat to restore 3. Direct Stream Restoration Riparian Habitat GIT-funded project 4. Continue to target RFB to hydro-geographically sensitive areas 5. Continue to mitigate issues of concentrated flow via targeting and RFB design 6. Explore where in the watershed natural regeneration is feasible | | FWG, LUWG, Habitat and WQ GITs, STAC | Baywide |  | | | Good progress on several projects. Multiple states have developed methods for targeting implementation.  Once new hyper-res hydrography and land use is available, there will be more opportunities to advance our analysis of multiple benefits and look at opportunities to better target efforts. | |
| 5.2 | | Analysis of RFB Loss/Gain | | 1. Use new stream and land use change data to determine where RFB is being lost or gained 2. Communicate with other stakeholders (local gov’ts, Management Board) what is learned | | FWG, LUWG, Communications Team | Baywide |  | | | Need access to new riparian LULC data and to define “bufferable” acres. Some delays here due to delays in the release of the new high-res data. | |