



Riparian Forest Buffers

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Through the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement, the Chesapeake Bay Program has committed to...



Vital Habitats Goal

Riparian Forest Buffer Outcome: *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.

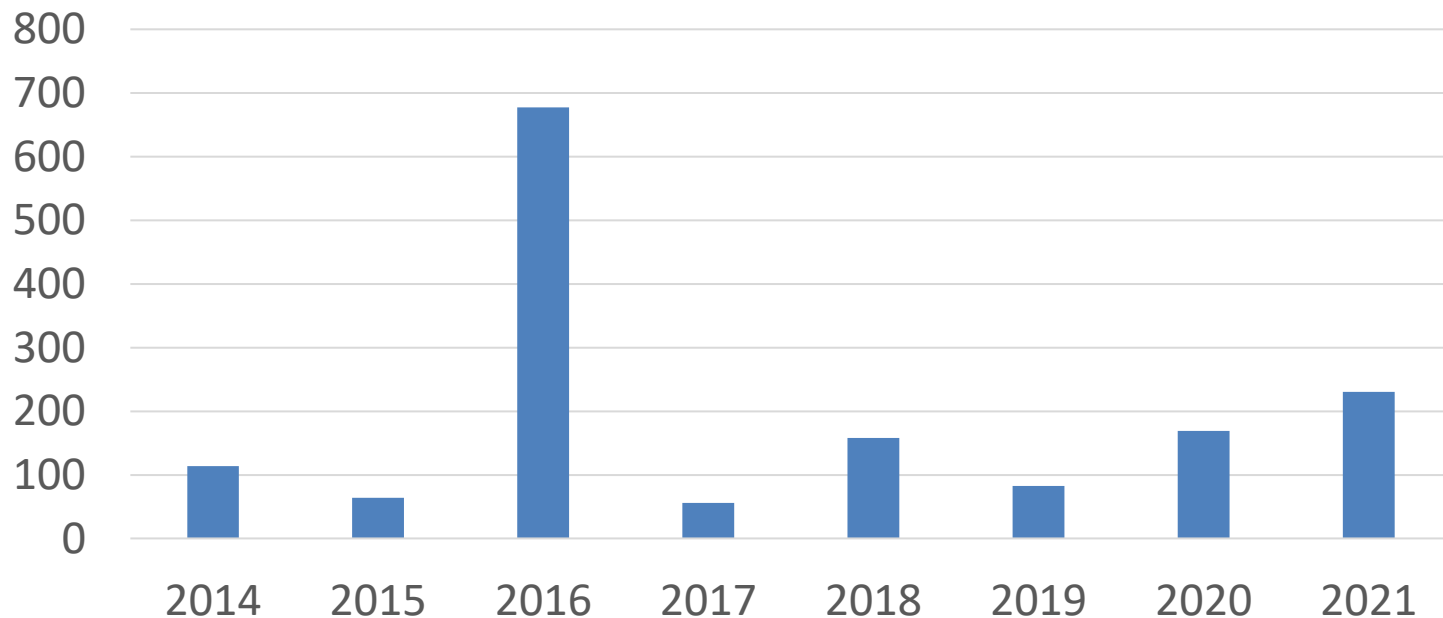


What is our Expected and Actual Progress?

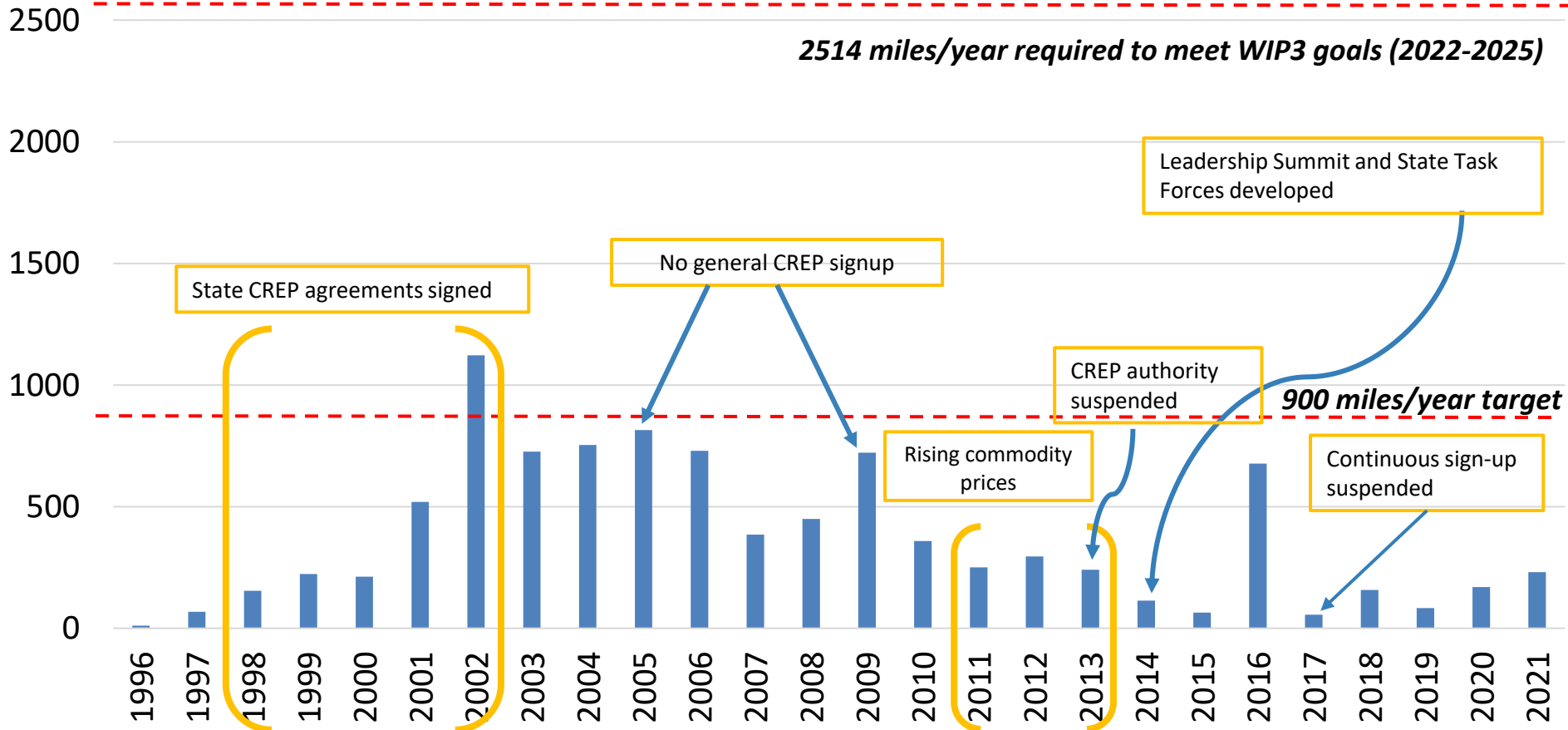


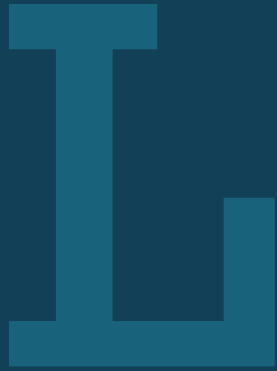
RECENT PROGRESS
INCREASE

Miles of RFB planted since 2014 Agreement



Miles of Riparian Forest Buffers Planted in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, 1996-2021





Learn

What have we learned in the last two years?



Successes

- 2022 Leadership Workshop
- State RFB Action Strategies
- Standalone flexible buffer programs
- Filling information gaps: STAC Rising Temperatures workshop, Maintaining Forests in Stream Restoration project, Forestry Communications study

Challenges

- Maintaining leadership engagement
- Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)
- CAPACITY!



On the Horizon

- Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funding
- New Farm Bill
- Climate change



Adapt

How does all of this impact our work?



**Based on what we
learned, we plan to ...**

- Implement RFB Action Strategies and track progress
- Support flexible buffer programs
- Direct BIL/IRA funds towards buffer planting and maintenance
- Build capacity in staff, contractors and outreach
- Conserve mature buffers



Equitable and inclusive restoration ...

- Integrating forest buffers into communities
- Improving equity in access to federal funding for buffers
- Implementing new FS Equity Action Plan

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Fill the Gap

*How can the Management Board
help achieve the Outcome?*



Filling the Gap

- BECAUSE of the recent influx in funding for restoration and our recently completed state Action Strategies
- Over the next 2 years, we PLAN to focus on strategically using those funds for buffer planting, maintenance and conservation
- BUT – to fill the gap –



Filling the Gap

We need help to...

1. **Support implementation of state RFB Action Strategies.** Work with Forestry staff to track implementation of the Action Strategies and report on progress towards implementing your Strategies in 2-year programmatic milestones. Request annual updates on plan implementation at MB or PSC meetings.

Filling the Gap

We need help to:

2. Identify opportunities where funding could be invested in effective, standalone flexible buffer programs (existing and new programs) and where possible, support investments in these programs. These investments could support both implementation and the needed capacity building.



We need help to:

3. Identify and pursue opportunities to improve grant and funding provisions to better support building capacity in staff, contractors and outreach.





Discussion