



Logic and Action Plan: Post- Quarterly Progress Meeting

Riparian Forest Buffers – 2023-2024

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

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](#).

Factor	Current Efforts	Gap	Actions	Metrics	Expected Response and Application	Learn/Adapt
<i>What is impacting our ability to achieve our outcome?</i>	<i>What current efforts are addressing this factor?</i>	<i>What further efforts or information are needed to fully address this factor?</i>	<i>What actions are essential (to help fill this gap) to achieve our outcome?</i>	<i>What will we measure or observe to determine progress in filling identified gap?</i>	<i>How and when do we expect these actions to address the identified gap? How might that affect our work going forward?</i>	<i>What did we learn from taking this action? How will this lesson impact our work?</i>
Leadership: Need for high-level coordination and direction at state and Partnership level	There has been high-level leadership engagement with the development of riparian forest buffer action strategies, and growing support for flexible state buffer programs that complement CREP.	Need to maintain leadership engagement with and accountability for state Action Strategy implementation.	Actions 1.1, 1.2, 2.2, 2.3, 3.3, 5.4, 6.1, 6.2	Reporting on Action Strategy implementation at Management Board meetings and in two-year milestones	Ongoing	

Funding: Availability of funding for flexible and effective buffer programs and funding to support capacity building	Focusing on flexible, consistent programs that complement CREP is generating increased interest among landowners.	Increased funding could expand RFB implementation through these existing programs and support the development of new flexible programs where they are not yet available. Grant and funding provisions could also be improved to better support building capacity.	Actions 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 3.3	Amount of funding for flexible buffer programs, changes in grant and funding provisions	Ongoing	
Capacity: Staff capacity/ knowledge/ resources for technical assistance and outreach; contractor capacity for planting and maintenance	USDA funding for state riparian forester positions, increased availability of training for buffer TAs through programs like Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professionals, PA Watershed Forestry Forum, etc.	Much more technical assistance is needed. We need to identify additional long-term sources of funding for technical assistance providers and work to support positions that offer a living wage to increase retention. We also need to better understand the “business of buffers” to identify pathways for increasing contractor capacity.	Actions 2.1, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 5.2, 5.5	More trained TA providers, improved retention of TA providers, more landowner contacts, number of contractors available for RFB planting and maintenance	Ongoing	
Policy: CREP provisions in new Farm Bill, state/local conservation policies to reduce RFB loss	Some improvements for CREP in 2018 Farm Bill, but states didn’t utilize these provisions due to requirements to renegotiate CREP contracts. Some examples of state programs which allow buffers to be put under conservation easements after CREP contract expiration.	CREP could be further improved in the 2023 Farm Bill to improve incentives, streamline enrollment and to allow states to access these improvements through addenda to contracts. There are also opportunities to expand availability of buffer conservation easement programs and to strengthen regulations to reduce RFB loss.	Actions 2.2, 2.4, 6.1, 6.2	Addenda to state CREP contracts incorporating favorable provisions, new buffer conservation easement programs, regulatory changes to increase protection for RFB	Ongoing	
Climate Change	Climate change is increasing the urgency of riparian forest buffer planting to cool streams. Climate change will also have implications for forest buffer design and planting strategies to ensure resilience.	Need to increase awareness of how RFBs can help with climate adaptation and resilience and advance opportunities to improve RFB design and siting to maximize climate benefits.	Actions 5.1, 5.3, 5.4		Ongoing	

ACTIONS – 2023-24

Action #	Description	Performance Target(s)	Responsible Party (or Parties)	Geographic Location	Expected Timeline
Management Approach 1: Renew and maintain leadership					
1.1	Track progress and maintain accountability for implementing state Riparian Forest Buffer Action Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) All states report out on progress towards implementing Action Strategies at annual MB meetings, including any challenges or successes that could provide “lessons learned” for other states b) States report on key indicators in their RFB Action Strategies in their two-year programmatic milestones 	State MB reps with support from FWG reps	Baywide	Initial annual report out at Management Board- April 2023
1.2	Regularly engage state, federal and CBP leaders to identify opportunities to support implementation of state Riparian Forest Buffer Action Strategies (based on updates provided for Action 1.1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Successful efforts identified that can be replicated/ expanded with additional Leadership support b) At least 1 PSC meeting annually includes time devoted to a “deep dive” into a specific challenge or opportunity for increasing RFB implementation (i.e. 2023 Farm Bill, developing a Baywide permanent buffer easement program, etc.) 	FWG to engage PSC, MB, CBP Leadership, USDA	Baywide	Ongoing, to follow updates provided for Action 1.1

Management Approach 2: Support and develop effective buffer programs					
2.1	Build needed financial and human resources capacity to support the expansion of existing effective and flexible buffer programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) States identify funding needed to meet goals b) Increased funding for existing buffer programs c) Increased staff for existing buffer programs 	C-StREAM intern, States, USFS, CBP, NFWF,	Baywide	Ongoing
2.2	Identify and communicate needed improvements to CREP under 2023 Farm Bill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Addenda to state CREP agreements include benefits of 2018 Farm Bill (and any additional benefits from 2023 Farm Bill) b) Acres enrolled through CRP 	CBC, Choose Clean Water Coalition, USDA	Baywide	Ongoing
2.3	Support the development of new effective and flexible buffer programs to complement CREP where needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) # of new buffer programs developed b) Development of “turnkey” CREP RFB pilot programs where a third party receives the cost share and takes on buffer planting and maintenance c) Funding for new buffer programs d) Staff for new buffer programs 	States, USFS, CBP, NFWF	Baywide	Ongoing
2.4	Increase demand for RFB on all lands by leveraging relevant, complementary programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Acres of RFB planted through other agricultural programs requiring RFBs as a condition of funding b) MS4 programs using RFBs to improve water quality c) Instances of RFBs packaged with other BMPs for outreach (e.g. meadow establishment, upland forest planting, etc.) 	State ag and water quality agencies, FWG USFS, NRCS, NFWF	Baywide	Ongoing

Management Approach 3: Build capacity and improve equity in staff, contractors, and outreach					
3.1	Evaluate capacity needs to accelerate RFB implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) States identify staff and contractor capacity needed to meet goals b) Pathways to increase staff and contractor capacity identified 	FWG, C-StREAM intern, States	Baywide	Ongoing
3.2	Coordinate around regional training needs to build capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) # of buffer trainings implemented for staff and contractors b) # of cross sector trainings that incorporate buffers c) # of new NRCS Technical Service Providers (TSPs) d) Increased partner training on CREP 	FWG, SWCDs, Cross GITs, NRCS	Baywide	Ongoing
3.3	Improve grant and funding provisions to better support building and retaining capacity in staff, contractors, and outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Opportunities identified to improve grant and funding provisions to support capacity building b) Changes made to grant and funding provisions (i.e. longer grant terms, requirements to pay living wages, etc.) 	FWG, federal and state funding entities, NFWF	Baywide	Ongoing
3.4	Support forest buffer workforce development in historically underserved communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) # of historically underserved communities/community organizations engaged to support forest buffer workforce development (i.e. nursery supply, planting and maintenance) 	USFS, States, Workforce Action Team	Baywide	Ongoing

Management Approach 4: Improve RFB Outreach and Communications

<p>4.1</p>	<p>Continue to develop communication and outreach plans for RFB, tree canopy, and land use change products</p>	<p>a) Finalize review of prior efforts for 'lessons learned' (OpinionWorks) and disseminate findings b) Develop communications efforts targeted to landowners and specific sectors- Ag, Residential, etc. to generate demand for buffers</p>	<p>CBP Comm Staff, FWG, States</p>	<p>Baywide</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>4.2</p>	<p>Update and maintain the Chesapeake Forest Buffer Network website as a resource for up-to-date information on buffer programs available in different states</p>	<p>a) New programs added to website as information is available b) Website reviewed annually to ensure links are functioning and information is up-to-date</p>	<p>USFS, ACB</p>	<p>Baywide</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>4.3</p>	<p>Develop a Chesapeake Forest Buffer newsletter to highlight examples of particularly effective programs or practices</p>	<p>a) # of newsletters delivered annually</p>	<p>USFS, ACB</p>	<p>Baywide</p>	<p>2023</p>

Management Approach 5: Use new data and tools to improve strategic planning, climate resilience, equitable and effective buffer delivery, and reporting

<p>5.1</p>	<p>Continue to assess multiple benefits of RFB (e.g., stream temperature, habitats, etc.) and issues of cost, design and targeting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Improve maps of priority riparian habitat to restore b) Continue to target RFB to hydro-geographically sensitive areas c) Continue to mitigate issues of concentrated flow via targeting and RFB design d) Work to include buffers as hazard mitigation e) Look at SCORP and recreation ties f) Explore where in the watershed natural regeneration is feasible 	<p>FWG, LUWG, Habitat and WQ GITs, STAC</p>	<p>Baywide</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>5.2</p>	<p>Analysis of RFB Loss/Gain</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Use new stream and land use change data to determine where RFB are being lost or gained b) Incorporate information about RFB gain/loss into new State of the Forests Storymap c) Communicate with other stakeholders (local gov'ts, Management Board) what is learned 	<p>FWG, LUWG, CBP GIS Team, Communications Team</p>	<p>Baywide</p>	<p>2023-24</p>

5.3	Evaluate opportunities to optimize RFB implementation for climate adaptation, resilience, and equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Lead GIT-funded project on RFBs and climate adaptation/resilience b) Use new mapping tools to identify where RFBs are most needed to improve tree equity and start/continue cultivating relationships in those communities c) Identify ways to make RFB work less carbon intensive (i.e. biodegradable tree tubes, less gas-powered machinery) 	FWG, USFS, State forestry agencies, NGOs	Baywide	2023-24
5.4	Initiate efforts to develop a new 10-year management strategy for RFBs that incorporates climate and equity (per EC directives) and aligns with the Partnership’s vision for “Beyond 2025”.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) New Management Strategy developed 	FWG, USFS	Baywide	2025
5.5	Improve reporting and verification of forest buffers to ensure new buffers are getting full credit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Work with LUWG to determine efficient strategies to verify buffers using high-resolution imagery b) Work with USDA/EPA Task Force to improve verification of federally-funded RFBs c) Evaluate potential to further extend credit duration for RFBs under permanent easements 	LUWG, USGS, USFS, USDA	Baywide	Ongoing

Management Approach 6: Conserve existing buffers

<p>6.1</p>	<p>Strengthen policies to minimize loss of existing forest buffers</p>	<p>a) Research conservation policies used in other states to reduce RFB loss and develop conservation policies that reduce RFB loss in Bay states b) Identify opportunities to strengthen state/local stream restoration policies to lessen impact on existing buffers</p>	<p>FWG, State and local governments</p>	<p>Baywide</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>6.2</p>	<p>Develop and expand forest buffer easement programs to incentivize permanent conservation of RFBs</p>	<p>a) Identify model forest buffer easement programs that could be replicated (i.e. MD's CREP Easement Program) b) Explore potential to establish a Baywide Buffer Easement Program</p>	<p>FWG, States, CBP, USDA</p>	<p>Baywide</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>