

## Riparian Buffer Financial Assistance Opportunities

### Introduction

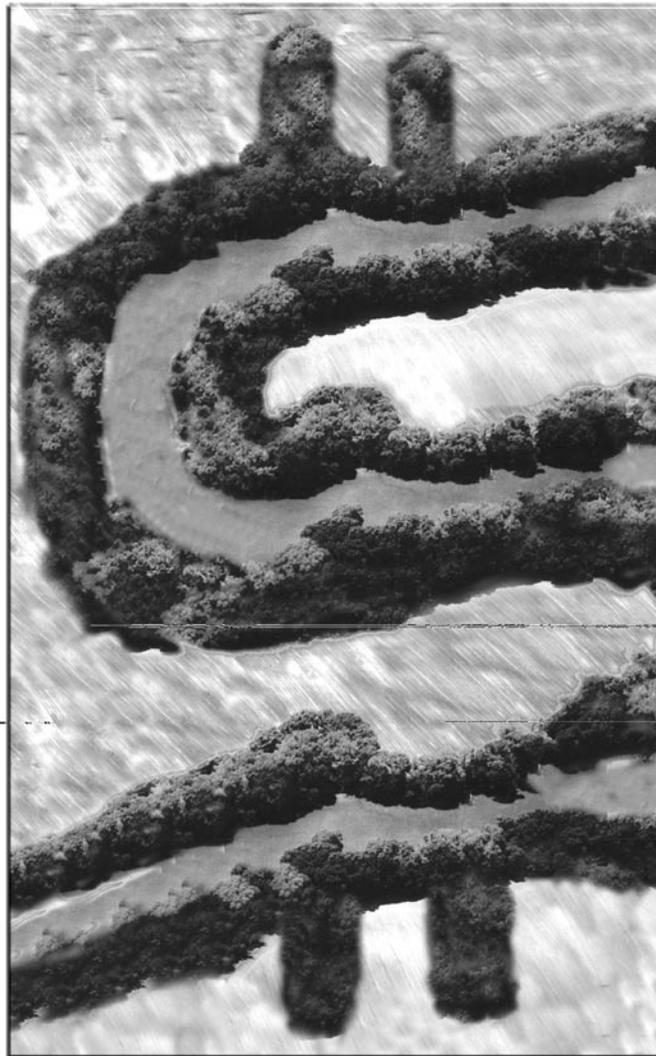
Riparian buffers reduce the amount of nonpoint source pollution entering wetlands, lakes, and streams. Buffers also provide fish and wildlife habitats and preserve the ecosystem of the waterways. The Chesapeake Bay Executive Council, tasked with reducing nutrient loading in the Bay, set a goal of establishing 2,010 miles of riparian forest buffers within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed by the year 2010, through voluntary incentive-based programs. The state of Maryland set a goal of establishing 600 miles of riparian forest buffer by 2010.

### Programs Available for Financial Assistance

Landowners interested in creating riparian buffers can take advantage of cost-share programs available for establishing buffers. The most notable is the USDA-CREP (United States Department

of Agriculture–Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program). Under this program, landowners who have cropped their agricultural land two out of the past five years or who have marginal pasture that will be converted to trees are eligible for cost-share funding, as well as an annual rental payment for a minimum of ten years up to a maximum of fifteen. The rental payment is based on the landowner's county and the soil types found on the farm. There is also an additional incentive for planting trees and grasses, a 70 percent rental bonus for planting trees and a 50 percent rental bonus for planting grasses in the riparian area.

In cooperation with USDA-CREP, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Ducks Unlimited, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Maryland Department of Agriculture will provide up to 100 percent cost sharing to establish forested buffers and up to 95 percent cost sharing to establish grass buffers. Cost share



is also available for livestock watering systems and fence and stream crossings, if necessary for successful buffer establishment. Since there are many organizations offering financial help, it is important you work with your local FSA (Farm Service Agency) and NRCS (Natural Resource Conservation Service) offices. They will provide information on available programs and assist you with the program details and sign-up process. In addition to these cost-share programs, landowners have the option of putting a permanent easement on the land and receiving a lump-sum payment calculated by an established formula. In this case, the riparian area would have to remain a vegetated buffer forever with limited rights to harvest the timber or grass.

Additional cost-share programs to assist landowners in establishing buffers and other conservation practices include the following:

- **Maryland State Buffer Incentive Program (BIP)** provides a one-time \$300 per acre grant for up to 50 acres for tree planting and maintenance along streams and shorelines. A minimum of one acre of buffer is required for eligibility. Participants must maintain the trees for ten years and will only receive payment after the first season if 65 percent of their trees survive. The program requires buffers to be at least 50 feet wide and prohibits planting Christmas trees and orchard trees. The buffer must be adjacent to and within 300 feet of a stream, river, pond, wetland, or other open water, or within the 100-year floodplain. Landowners receiving funds through BIP may also piggyback on other cost-share programs to receive financial assistance.
- **Maryland Agricultural Cost Share Program (MACS)** will cost share up to 87.5 percent of the cost of a conservation practice with a maximum of \$20,000. This program for agricultural producers includes costs of establishing grass buffers, forested buffers, and other stream protection practices such as fences, livestock watering systems, and stabilized stream crossings. This program provides part of the cost-share assistance established under CREP.
- **Maryland State Woodland Incentive Program (WIP)** provides up to 50 per-

cent cost share with a maximum of \$5,000 for one-year or \$15,000 for three-year projects involving tree planting, stand improvement, and management to private nonindustrial forest landowners. WIP seeks to enhance the environmental, aesthetic, and wildlife benefits provided by private woodlands while providing the forest resources essential to commerce and industry in the state. Participants must have 10 to 500 contiguous wooded acres capable of producing 20 cubic feet per acre per year. A forest stewardship plan must be prepared or approved by a licensed forester. The trees must be maintained for at least fifteen years. Inspectors must be granted access for periodic inspections. This program cannot be combined with other cost-share programs.

- **USDA Stewardship Incentive Program (SIP)** provides up to 65 percent cost share for forest management plan development, tree planting, riparian and wetland improvement, and recreation and wildlife habitat improvement. Participants must have at least one acre but less than 1,000 acres of nonindustrial private forestland. For contiguous forested acreage, a forest stewardship plan must be developed. The trees must be maintained for at least ten years.
- **USDA Wetland Reserve Program (WRP)** provides cost-share and easement payments for restoration of drained wetlands in cropland, pasture, hay land, and woodland. Riparian corridors are also eligible for funding, but only under the following conditions: (1) the corridors must be used to connect two or more wetlands that are permanently protected by an easement or are publicly owned for wildlife habitat purposes; (2) the protected wetlands can be no more than one mile apart; and (3) the corridors must average no more than 300 feet wide on one side, or a total of 600 feet wide if both sides are enrolled. WRP provides up to 75 percent cost share for restoration projects that involve either a ten-year agreement or thirty-year easement, and up to 100 percent cost share for restoration under a permanent easement. Easement payments are based on

the agricultural value of the land, not its development value. Other government agencies, as well as nonprofit or private organizations, may provide additional funding for WRP projects.

- **USDA Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)** helps landowners improve fish and wildlife habitat. Maryland has set priorities in restoring and managing riparian corridors, shallow water habitats, and upland grassland habitats. The NRCS will provide technical assistance to develop a plan and up to 75 percent cost share for installing approved practices. A five- to ten-year cost-share agreement is required. WHIP is primarily targeted toward habitat restoration on private lands. Projects for outdoor education on locally owned public lands (such as public schools) as well as private lands are also eligible for funding. If there are sufficient funds available, NRCS may fund special projects on state, county, and other locally owned lands. NRCS will assist landowners in preparing a wildlife habitat development plan. Acreage currently enrolled in CRP (Conservation Reserve Program), WRP, and similar programs is not eligible. Funds cannot be used on converted wetlands or for mitigation projects.
- **USDA Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)** provides up to 75 percent cost share as well as incentive payments, technical assistance, and education to landowners. Conservation practices such as riparian buffers, filter strips, manure management buildings, and wildlife habitat improvement are eligible. There is also incentive payment for landowners who employ nutrient, manure, and integrated pest management practices. Other government agencies or nonprofit groups may provide additional cost share for certain practices.
- **Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) Partners for Wildlife** can provide

technical and financial assistance to retain, create, or manage wetland habitat for wildlife. This program is used in conjunction with CREP to provide financial assistance in establishing riparian buffers.

## Where Do I Start?

Since there are many financial cost-share programs available to assist landowners in establishing riparian buffers, it is important to contact the right organization and people. Usually your first contact would be your local FSA or NRCS county office. They can initiate the paperwork necessary to start your request for financial funding and help you in identifying the natural resource management professionals you will need to assist you. These resource professionals (such as your local forester, wildlife biologist, soil conservationist, or extension educator) can assist you in making riparian buffer management decisions and help explain the options available to you. The following table lists key contacts in your county who can identify the cost-share assistance programs available to you and also help you make management decisions.

## References

The USDA-NRCS website has the latest details for acceptable conservation practices for many of the programs described above. "National Handbook of Conservation Practices" at <http://www.ncg.nrcs.usda.gov/index.html>.

## Reviewers

We wish to thank Patty Engler of the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service and Anne Hairston-Strang of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources for their review and comments on this document.

# Maryland Sources of Information and Assistance

County	Maryland DNR— Forest Service	Farm Service Agency	Natural Resource Conservation Service	Maryland Cooperative Extension
State Office	Tawes State Office Building, 580 Taylor Ave., E-1, Annapolis, MD 21401 410-260-8531	8335 Guilford Rd., Ste. E, Columbia, MD 21046 410-381-4550	John Hanson Business Center 339 Busch's Frontage Rd., Ste. 301, Annapolis, MD 21401 410-757-0861	1200 Symons Hall, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742 301-405-2907
Alleghany	Western Regional Office, 3 Pershing St., Rm. 101, Cumberland, MD 21502 301-777-2137	11602 Bedford Rd., NE Cumberland, MD 21502 301-777-1536	11602 Bedford Rd., NE Cumberland, MD 21502 301-777-1494	701 Kelly Rd., Ste. 101, Cumberland, MD 21502 301-724-3320
Anne Arundel	Forestry Education Center, 8023 Long Hill Rd., Pasadena, MD 21122 410-768-0830	County Administration Bldg., 14741 Gov. Oden Bowie Dr., Upper Marlboro, MD 20772 410-574-5162	2662 Riva Rd., Ste. 150, Annapolis, MD 21401 410-222-7822	Anne Arundel County Government Office Bldg., 7320 Ritchie Hwy., Ste. 210, Glen Burnie, MD 21061 410-222-6757
Baltimore	Cub Hill Ranger Station, 9405 Old Harford Rd., Baltimore, MD 21234 410-665-5820	9831 Van Buren Ln., Cockeysville, MD 21030 410-666-1188	9831 Van Buren Ln., Cockeysville, MD 21030 410-666-1025	9811 Van Buren Ln., Cockeysville, MD 21030 410-666-1025
Calvert	P.O. Box 1136, Prince Frederick, MD 20678 301-535-1303	65 Duke St., Rm. 108, P.O. Box 589, Prince Frederick, MD 20678 410-535-1790	65 Duke St., Rm. 106, P.O. Box 657, Prince Frederick, MD 20678 410-535-1521	150 Main St., Ste. 300, P.O. Box 486, Prince Frederick, MD 20678 410-535-3662

# Maryland Sources of Information and Assistance

County	Maryland DNR— Forest Service	Farm Service Agency	Natural Resource Conservation Service	Maryland Cooperative Extension
Caroline	Caroline/Talbot Counties, Martinak State Park, 105 Deep Shore Rd., Denton, MD 21629 410-479-1623	640 Legion Rd., Ste. 2, Denton, MD 21629 410-479-1202	640 Legion Rd., Ste. 3, Denton, MD 21629 410-479-2182	207 S. Third St., Denton, MD 21629 410-479-4030
Carroll	328A E. Nicodemus Rd., Westminster, MD 21157 410-848-9290	1004 Littlestown Pike, Ste. C, Westminster, MD 21157 410-848-2780	1004 Littlestown Pike, Ste. B2, Westminster, MD 21157 410-848-6696	700 Agricultural Center, Westminster, MD 21157 410-386-2760
Cecil	Black Hill Ranger Station, 130 McKinneyton Rd. North East, MD 21901 410-287-5777	101 Chesapeake Blvd., Ste. A-2, Elkton, MD 21921 410-398-4411	101 Chesapeake Blvd., Ste. A-3, Elkton, MD 21921 410-398-4411	County Office Building, P.O. Box 326, Elkton, MD 21922 410-996-5280
Charles	P.O. Box 2746, LaPlata, MD 20646 301-934-2543	P.O. Box T, 101 Catalpa Dr., Ste. 106-A, La Plata, MD 20646 301-934-2611	101 Catalpa Dr., Ste. 106-C, La Plata, MD 20646 301-934-9588	9375 Chesapeake St., Ste. 119, La Plata, MD 20646 301-934-5283
Dorchester	4329 Golden Hill Rd., Church Creek, MD 21622 410-228-1861	501 Court Ln., Cambridge, MD 21613 410-228-5640	501 Court Ln., Rm. 213, Cambridge, MD 21613 410-228-1323	501 Court Ln., P.O. Box 299, Cambridge, MD 21613 410-228-8800
Frederick	8602 Gambrill Rd., Frederick, MD 21702 301-473-8417	92 Thomas Johnson Dr., Ste. 240, Frederick, MD 21702 301-662-1321	92 Thomas Johnson Dr., Ste. 230, Frederick, MD 21702 301-695-2803	330 Montevue Ln., Frederick, MD 21702 301-694-1594

# Maryland Sources of Information and Assistance

County	Maryland DNR— Forest Service	Farm Service Agency	Natural Resource Conservation Service	Maryland Cooperative Extension
Garrett	1728 Kings Run Rd., Oakland, MD 21550 301-334-3296	1916 Maryland Hwy., Ste. C, Mountain Lake Park, MD 21550 301-334-6954	1916 Maryland Hwy., Ste. C, Mountain Lake Park, MD 21550 301-334-6950	1916 Maryland Hwy., Ste. A, Mountain Lake Park, MD 21550 301-334-6960
Harford	Central Regional Office, 2 S. Bond St., Bel Air, MD 21014 410-836-4551	1212 Churchville Rd., Ste. 201, Bel Air, MD 21014 410-838-3950	1208 Churchville Rd., Ste. 201, Bel Air, MD 21014 410-838-6181	2335 Rock Spring Rd., P.O. Box 663, Forest Hill, MD 21050 410-638-3255
Howard	Howard/Montgomery Project Forester, 17400 Annapolis Rock Rd., Woodbine, MD 21797 410-442-2080	9025 Chevrolet Dr., Ste. J, Ellicott City, MD 21042 410-465-3470	9025 Chevrolet Dr., Ste. J, Ellicott City, MD 21042 410-465-3180	3525-L Ellicott Mills Dr., Ellicott City, MD 21043 410-313-2707
Kent	Kent/Queen Anne's Project Forester, 120 Broadway Ave. Centreville, MD 21617 410-758-5254	122 Speer Rd., Ste. 3, Chestertown, MD 21620 410-778-5353	122 Speer Rd., Ste. 4, Chestertown, MD 21620 410-778-5150	Kent County Public Works Complex, 709 Morgnec Rd., Ste. 202, Chestertown, MD 21620 410-778-1661
Montgomery	Howard/Montgomery Project Forester, 17400 Annapolis Rock Rd., Woodbine, MD 21797 410-442-2080	18410 Muncaster Rd., Derwood, MD 20855 301-590-2846	18410 Muncaster Rd., Derwood, MD 20855 301-590-2855	18410 Muncaster Rd., Derwood, MD 20855 301-590-9638

# Maryland Sources of Information and Assistance

County	Maryland DNR— Forest Service	Farm Service Agency	Natural Resource Conservation Service	Maryland Cooperative Extension
Prince George's	Huntington Community Center, 13022 8th St., Bowie, MD 20720 301-464-3065	County Administration Bldg., 14741 Gov. Oden Bowie Dr., Upper Marlboro, MD 20772 410-574-5162	14741 Gov. Oden Bowie Dr., Rm. 1020, Upper Marlboro, MD 20772 301-952-3930	6707 Groveton Dr., Clinton, MD 20735 301-868-9366
Queen Anne's	Kent/Queen Anne's Project Forester, 120 Broadway Ave., Centreville, MD 21617 410-758-5254	505 Railroad Ave., Ste. 2, Centreville, MD 21617 410-758-1380	505 Railroad Ave., Ste. 3, Centreville, MD 21617 410-758-1671	505 Railroad Ave., Ste. 4, Centreville, MD 21617 410-758-0166
St. Mary's	Carter Building, Leonardtown, MD 20650 301-475-8551	P.O. Box 268, 22660 Washington St., Leonardtown, MD 20650 301-475-8431	P.O. Box 810, 22660 Washington St., Leonardtown, MD 20650 301-475-5856	21580 Peabody St., Rm. 61, P.O. Box 663, Leonardtown, MD 20650 301-475-4482
Somerset	10990 Market Ln., Princess Anne, MD 21853 410-651-2004	30730 Park Dr., Princess Anne, MD 21853 410-651-0370	30730 Park Dr., Princess Anne, MD 21853 410-651-0390	30730 Park Dr., Princess Anne, MD 21853 410-651-1350
Talbot	Caroline/Talbot Project Forester, 105 Deep Shore Rd., Denton, MD 21629 410-479-1623	215 Bay St., Easton, MD 21601 410-822-1344	215 Bay St., Easton, MD 21601 410-822-1577	P.O. Box 519, Easton, MD 21601 410-822-1244
Washington	14038 Blairs Valley Rd., Clear Springs, MD 21722 301-791-4733	1260 Maryland Ave., Ste. 107, Hagerstown, MD 21740 301-797-0500	1260 Maryland Ave., Hagerstown, MD 21740 301-797-6820	1260 Maryland Ave., Hagerstown, MD 21740 301-797-1304

# Maryland Sources of Information and Assistance

County	Maryland DNR— Forest Service	Farm Service Agency	Natural Resource Conservation Service	Maryland Cooperative Extension
Wicomico	Powellville Work Center, 6905 Sixty Foot Rd., Parsonsburg, MD 21849 410-543-1950	2322B Goddard Pkwy., Ste. 2, Salisbury, MD 21801 410-546-4777	2322B Goddard Pkwy., Ste. 3, Salisbury, MD 21801 410-546-4731	28647 Old Quantico Rd., P.O. Box 1836, Salisbury, MD 21802 410-749-6141
Worcester	6572 Snow Hill Rd., Snow Hill, MD 21863 410-749-2206	303 Commerce St., Snow Hill, MD 21863 410-632-2464	304 Commerce St., Snow Hill, MD 21863 410-632-5439	River St., P.O. Box 219, Snow Hill, MD 21863 410-632-1972

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