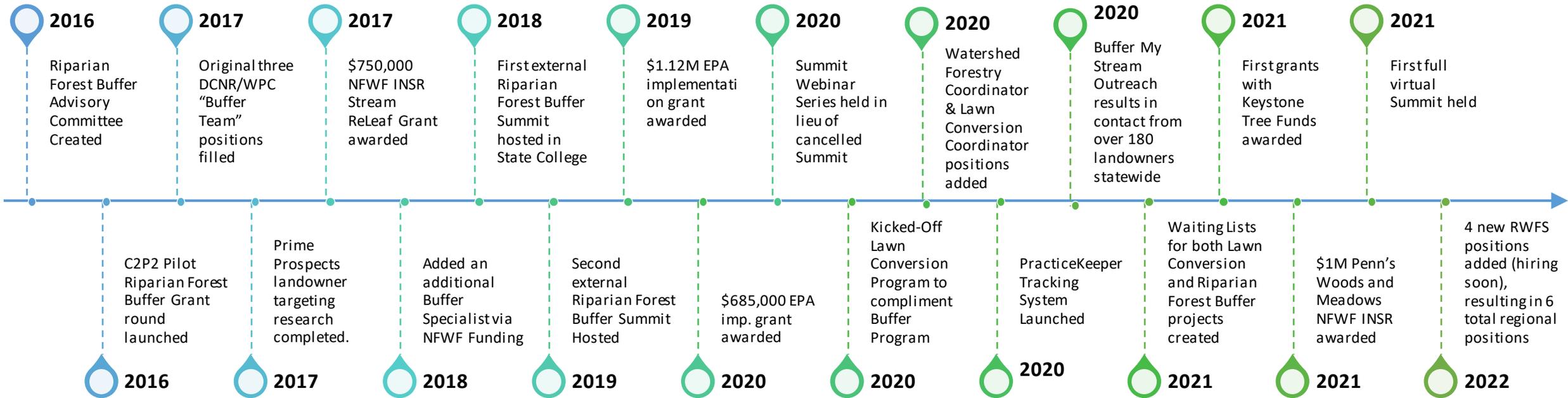


Pennsylvania's Plan

**Chesapeake Riparian Forest Buffer Leadership Workshop
April 27, 2022**

**Lauren Imgrund
Deputy Secretary, PA DCNR**

The Past Five Years: Milestones



Estimated Buffer Acres Planted in PA since 2015

**10,627.7
acres**



Looking Ahead &
Scaling Up:

**Moving
Forward with
PA's Plan**



PA's RFB Outcomes

- 83,000 acres of RFBs on agricultural lands
 - Goal set jointly by Ag Workgroup and Forestry Workgroup
- 2,650 acres of RFBs in developed areas
 - Goal set jointly by Stormwater Workgroup and Forestry Workgroup
- 7,255 acres of RFBs in Conowingo WIP
 - Goal based on 25% of the remaining unbuffered acres after goals in Phase III WIP met.
- **TOTAL PA RFB GOAL = 92,905 acres**



PA's Current Rate

- Need to plant **~23,000 acres/year** to get to WIP goals by **2025**.
- **Current** funding and partnership efforts are producing approximately **1,500 acres/year** of new riparian forest buffers (all funding sources and programs combined).
- **Focus on and integration of PA's five strategies** will help to increase this annual rate of installation, getting us closer to our overall goal.

Our Plan's Five Strategies:

- 1. Convening Partners and Stakeholders**
- 2. Communications and Outreach**
- 3. Financial Assistance**
- 4. Technical Assistance**
- 5. Engaging Leadership**

1. Convening Partners and Stakeholders

- **Riparian Forest Buffer Advisory Committee**
 - Primary stakeholders in PA working to develop programs, provide recommendations, share info, etc.
 - Purpose- hear about what is needed, what is working, share ideas/methods/research/case studies, develop new funding and outreach programs, etc.
 - Continue to foster RFBAC's excitement and energy.
- **Continue annual Watershed Forestry Summit**
 - Conference on watershed forestry implementation, outreach, science, etc.
 - Well attended by 100s each year from PA and other Bay states (any beyond).
- **DCNR Leadership Role in WIP Process**
 - Continued communication with partners and DEP; building trust.



Riparian Forest Buffer Advisory Committee Partners



An aerial photograph of a rural landscape. A wide river flows through the center-right of the image. To the left of the river is a dense forest. In the foreground, there is a large green-roofed building, possibly a school or community center, surrounded by a parking lot and some trees. The background shows more forest and a few scattered houses.

2. Communications and Outreach

- **Emphasize consistent messaging to normalize RFBs as a practice across PA**
- **Understand various audiences, and speak their language**
 - Bring in specialists on communications-marketing firms, human dimensions specialists, rural sociologists, etc.
 - Help develop robust support for RFBs amongst landowners, local leaders, etc.
- **Engage with local partners to avoid duplicating efforts**
 - Lancaster Clean Water Partners
 - South Mountain Partnership
 - Chesapeake Conservancy
 - CBF/K10

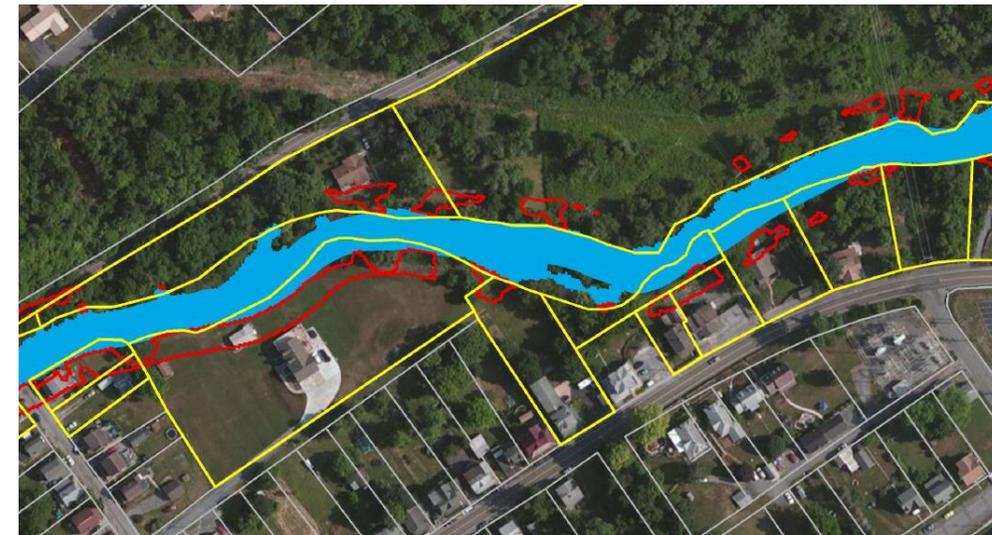
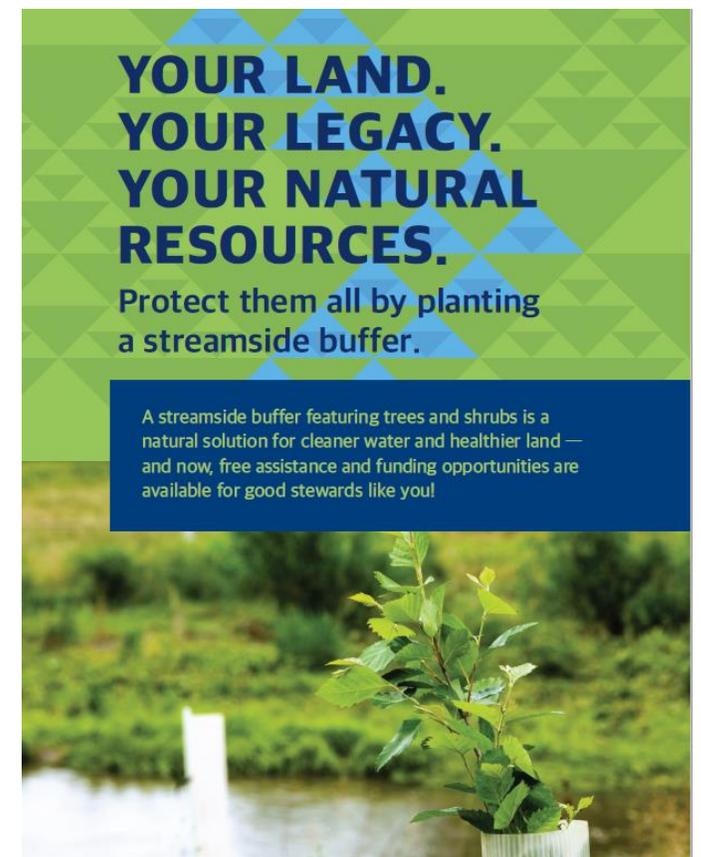
Continue Use of Innovative Outreach Strategies in PA

- **Prime Prospects Project**

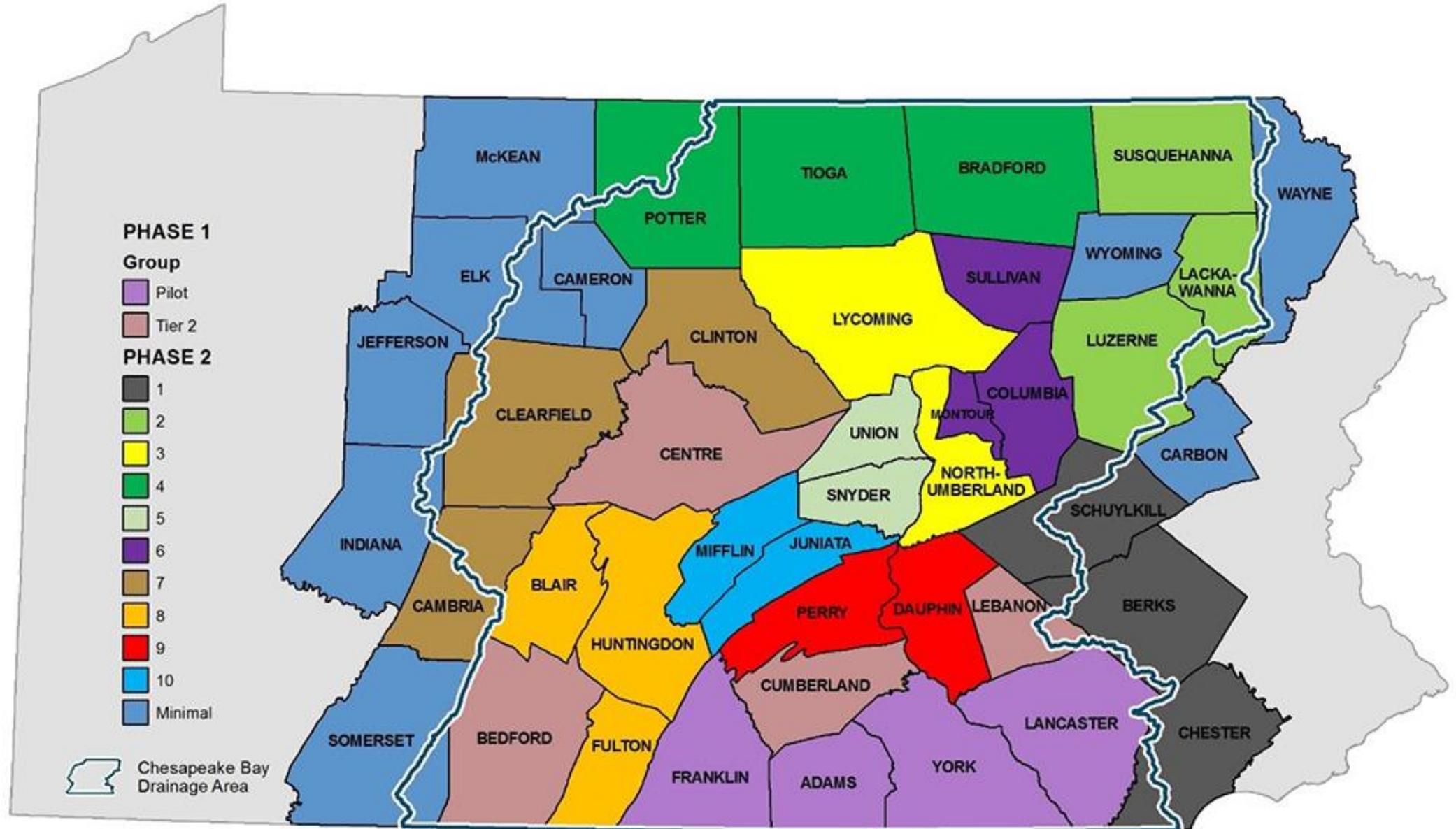
- Utilized tax parcel data, past buffer program participants list, and consume data to develop new outreach strategy based on human dimensions/social science.

- **Buffer My Stream Campaign**

- Worked with marketing firm to develop outreach materials based on consumed data analysis of past buffer program participants.
- Mailers sent to top Prime Prospects Candidates, resulting in above average response rates.



Targeting by PA Phase III WIP County Tiers/Phases





3. Financial Assistance

- **Utilize flexible funding**
 - Complimentary to CREP, EQIP, other federal programs; fills gaps.
- **Match landowners to the right funding**
 - Find funding that works for LOs and their properties.
- **Develop new, creative methods for funding**, while continuing to find funds to support tested methods
 - Flat-rate-per-acre funding; supported by NFWF; EPA.
- **Encourage partners to pursue variety of grants**
 - DEP, NFWF, USFS, DCNR, etc.

PA State Funding Provided for RFB Implementation

Approx. \$8,000,000
awarded since 2017 from:

- Environmental Stewardship Fund
- Keystone Rivers Fund
- Keystone Communities Fund
- Oil and Gas Well Lease Fund
- PennVest
- Keystone Tree Fund

*Provided to partners primarily through C2P2
Grants, but also contracting mechanisms.*



Federal Grant Funds Awarded to PA Since 2017

\$4,931,000.00

External Fed Grant
Funding Received

\$1,750,000
NFWF

\$1,376,000
USDA

\$1,805,000
EPA



Keystone Tree Fund

- Enacted by legislature in 2019
- Generating ~\$20k per month
- Allocated through C2P2
- Funds:
 - 60% Riparian Buffer grants
 - 40% TreeVitalize
- Enables:
 - \$3 donations on vehicle registration renewals
 - Checks received from donors
 - Appropriations of the legislature



PA DCNR Buffer Grant Program

Community Conservation Partnerships Program (C2P2)

- Incorporated funding for RFB in DCNR's annual grants program.
- NGOs, local govts, etc., are eligible applicants
- Funding for installation, post-planting establishment, staff time, contractors, outreach, etc.
- Min. award of \$50K/grant.
 - Larger partners providing mini-grant programs to others.
- Currently 1:1 match required.

\$908,591 awarded in 2021 that will result in an estimated 180 acres of new buffers planted

- Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay: \$500,000- approximately 71 acres
- Capital Area Greenbelt Association: \$54,600- approximately 12 acres
- Haverford Township: \$50,000- approximately 5 acres
- Wildlands Conservancy: \$120,000- approximately 10 acres
- Chesapeake Conservancy: \$50,000- approximately 7 acres
- Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts: \$100,000- approximately 15 acres
- Stroud Water Research Center: \$333,991- approximately 60 acres



Demonstrated Demand

- Waitlist of landowners who have reached out to DCNR directly, or through partners, hoping to get a buffer and are waiting for funding.
- Waitlist of partners who have projects to implement, but need funds without match req. or a heavy administrative burden.
- Strong support from RFB Advisory Committee for additional flat-rate-per-acre flexible funds.
- Able to move ~\$1M/year in flexible funds with current capacity in addition to C2P2 grant program; added TA capacity will result in increased demand.

Coming Soon: Funding RFBs through ITQ

- ITQ = Invitation to Qualify.
- Planting contractors qualify via commonwealth system.
- DCNR and partners ID landowners who want buffers.
- DCNR funds buffers through hiring pre-qualified contractor.
- NFWF funding from INSR grant to test method.



Financial Assistance Needs and New Ideas

- Clear, consistent feedback from partners suggests need to reduce administrative burden of funding available.
 - *Partnership needed with funders to reduce administrative burdens on both ends to get more RFBs planted.*
- External expertise needed to pursue conservation finance funding options for PA, P3, etc.
- Possibilities on the horizon: Clean Streams Fund, Growing Greener III



4. Technical Assistance

- **Increase overall TA capacity in PA**
 - Ensure TA providers understand ecosystems holistically, can make the best choices based on individual site location.
 - Ensure TA providers have thorough understanding of various funding sources; implications, rules, etc.
- **Set a standard of TA communication excellence**
 - Ensure TA providers speak the proverbial language of various LO types.
 - Train TA to understand issues faced by various LOs, LO motivations, etc.
- **Establish TA within a variety of organizations**
 - Provide TA at state, local, and non-profit agencies, so that LOs have access to the type of TA that suits them best.



Current TA Capacity in PA

- **DCNR Watershed Forestry Team**
 - Team has expanded from 3 members in 2017, to 9 by end of 2022
 - Beginning to move to a regional approach with Regional Watershed Forestry Specialist (RWFS) positions
- **DCNR Service Foresters**
 - Work with C2P2 grantees
 - Assistance with planting plan development
 - At capacity with other Service Forestry work
- **C2P2 Grants currently support some additional TA positions at partner organizations**
- **NGOs like Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, Stroud Water Research Center, etc. provide additional TA support in PA**
- **PA Watershed Forestry Summit**
 - Will continue hosting annually to train TA providers, continue to help build capacity and strengthen TA effectiveness at CCDs, amongst Service Foresters, and at various partner organizations
- **Additional TA Capacity is needed within PA to meet current demand, and to scale up**





TA Capacity Needs & New Ideas

- **Private Sector Technical Assistance**
 - Create demand to foster private sector to add TA for the right LOs.
 - Continue trainings with PA SCIs to develop skilled individuals ready to step into new positions.
- **Consider Planting Plan Reimbursement Program**
 - Similar to NY's existing program.
- **Utilize PA Outdoor Corps to Provide TA**
 - Continue to assist with buffer planting and maintenance on state lands.
 - Explore options for deploying Outdoor Corps or similar group as a "Strike Team".

Best Practices Discussion Takeaway:

Technical Assistance is PA's
Biggest Bottleneck

- **Need Increased TA Capacity at Multiple Levels**
 - TA to take advantage of grant funding and competitive applications; administrative-type TA
 - TA to execute new programs; boots-on-the-ground-type TA



5. Engage Leadership

- **Continue Engaging Leaders through Administration Transition**
 - Successful PA state actions described so far have come from engaged leadership
- **Solidify RFB Action Strategy**
- **Continue Collaboration between PA DCNR and PA DEP**
 - Phase III WIP and beyond
- **Make connections with leaders on issues that matter**
 - Budget and finances, human health, local/regional planning and decision-making.
- **Work with Chesapeake Bay Program Leadership**
 - Seeking continued support
- **Engage Legislative Leaders**



PA's Evaluation and Performance Indicators

PA will measure success through:

- Acres Planted (tracked via PracticeKeeper)
- Partners Engaged (RFBAC, C2P2 Grantees)
- Grant Funding Awarded to Partners
- Grant Funding Awarded to PA for RFBs
- Highlighting and Communicating Success Stories, Case Studies, and Local Testimonials from Buffer Champions
- Positive Press on PA Progress



Thank You
