



NY's Chesapeake Bay Buffer Program

Progress and Partnerships



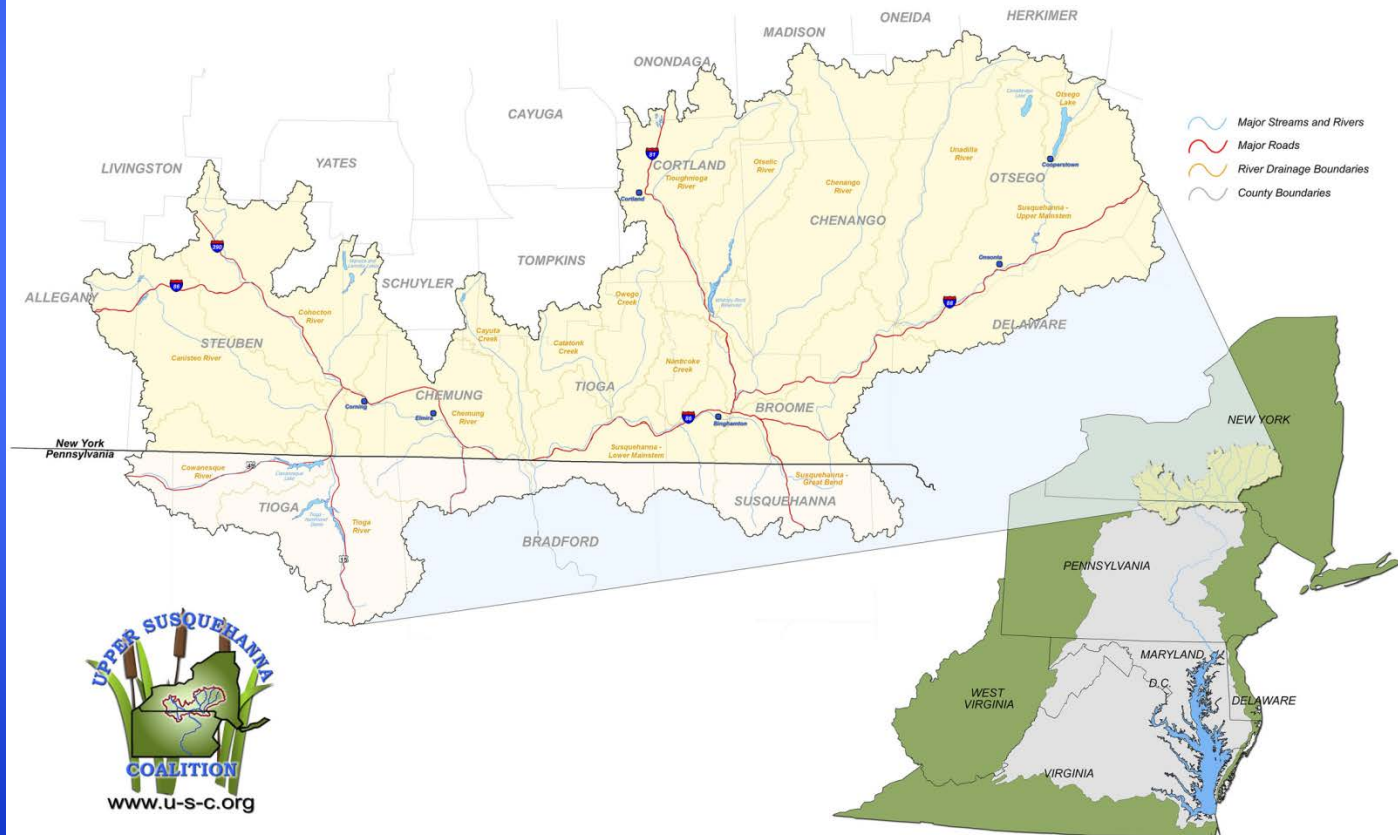
Department of
Environmental
Conservation

Upper Susquehanna Coalition

- Coalition of 20 SWCDs- PA and NY
- Goals: Facilitate education about water issues and implementation of water quality and quantity projects within the Upper Susquehanna River Basin. Focus on nonpoint source pollution.
- Big FOCUS is on addressing LANDOWNER NEEDS!!!
- Stream Team: All things stream, but not really buffers. Capacity within districts, but also few employees focusing on stream work.
- Wetland Team: Design, implementation, monitoring, ILF. Distinct team of employees- outside of districts.
- Agriculture Team: AEM framework- capacity within districts.

USC Geographic Scope

THE UPPER SUSQUEHANNA COALITION
HEADWATERS OF THE CHESAPEAKE BAY



USC Buffer Program Goal

- GET BUFFERS ON THE GROUND:
 - Provide tools to districts for buffer implementation;
 - Fill programmatic gaps with funding opportunities for buffer project; and
 - Provide education and outreach opportunities to landowners and district staff.



Current Projects and Initiatives

Personnel and Resource Needs

- Education and outreach:
 - **“Starting at the Stream: Interagency Collaboration on Water Quality”**
 - Focus on ecological and economical aspects of buffers and CREP.
 - New federal and state incentives were announced.

- Attendees:

FSA	36
District Staff	18
NRCS	14
Other	3
DEC	7
<u>Total Trainees</u>	<u>78</u>
Planners/Speakers	17
Total Attendees	95

Messages from Chesapeake Bay CREP Forum

- 1) CREP is our Program – FSA needs to own it!
- 2) PT's, CED's and COC's need to be fired up to promote Buffers
- 3) Farmers need a concierge service – we need to hold their hands
- 4) Find early adopters – let them be our spokesmen
- 5) Partnership is key – meet at least monthly to ensure contracts move from offers to contracts
- 6) Go out as a Team at first – become comfortable with your partners' skills and philosophy
- 7) Can't be a walk away practice
- 8) Maintenance is Key to success of practice



Current Projects and Initiatives

Personnel and Resource Needs

- **Buffer Implementation Event**

- Used Trees for Tributaries material to demonstrate using this program in concert with NFWF Natural Infrastructure funding.
- Over 600 plants planted.
- 3 districts; 11 people (Day 1)
- SUNY Morrisville Students (Day 2)





Containerized stock... site prep!
District engagement was essential:

Mowing

Moving cows

Coordinating with farmer and contractor

Planting this site will continue this year.



Utilizing CREP:

Where We Are and How We got Here

- ❖ February 27, 2015: request for Chesapeake Bay Riparian Forest Buffer Initiative was submitted to WDC
- ❖ October 1, 2015: approval letter from WDC for \$1 million with 20% matching funds received
- ❖ October 2, 2015 – August 1, 2016: Numerous meetings, teleconferences, emails and phone calls to discuss the CREP revision; develop criteria for matching funds; keep all partners up-to-date on issues; complete the CREP revision; complete New York CRP Amendment to correspond with CREP revision
- ❖ August 15, 2016: New York State Department Of Agricultural and Markets and New York State Soil and Water Conservation Committee signed revised CREP Agreement
- ❖ August 24, 2016: FSA Deputy Administrator signed the CREP revision on behalf of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Commodity Credit Corporation

Utilizing CREP:

Where We Are and How We got Here

- ❖ August 24, 2016: 2-CRP New York State CREP revision was approved by DAFP
- ❖ August 24, 2016: New York started sign-up under S/U 48 for contracts under the Chesapeake Bay Initiative
- ❖ September 14, 2016: First contracts were approved by County Offices
- ❖ **Huge part of New York being where we are today goes to Ginny Green and her efforts. Thank you Ginny!**

CREP Progress:

Chesapeake Bay Incentive Payment (CBIP)

- CRP-CBIP is one-time payment of \$25 for each eligible acre of CP22 Riparian Buffer enrolled or re-enrolled for each full year of CRP-1.
- 100% located in the New York State CREP, Chesapeake Bay Watershed only.
- CRP-CBIP is calculated by multiplying the number of eligible acres enrolled times the number of full years of CRP-1 times \$25.00.
- The total amount of all CBIPs made by CCC under this Agreement shall not exceed \$1 million.
- is contingent upon the State contributing a minimum of 20 percent matching funds (minimum \$200,000).
- CBIP funds issued to date: \$162,640 on 498.32 acres

State Practice Incentive Payment (SPIP)

\$200,000 state match to FSA's \$1 million CB RFB Initiative Award

Buffer Width (feet)	Soil Type	Practice Incentive Payment Soil Rental Rate* (SRR) Multiplier
35-50	Marginal Pasture Land (MPL)	5x SRR
35-50	Non-Irrigated Cropland	10x SRR
>50	Marginal Pasture Land (MPL)	10x SRR
>50	Non-Irrigated Cropland	15x SRR
*Soil rental rates are provided by FSA.		

Current Projects and Initiatives

Personnel and Resource Needs

- **NRCS Contribution Agreement**
 - 75/25 agreement for CREP Conservation Plan Development;
 - 40 plans focusing on CP 22 and CP 30;
 - Any USC SWCD can participate;
 - 18 plans committed so far; 5 districts.
- **Needs:**
 - Participating SWCDs communicate with NRCS DC's for workload allocation;
 - District commitments (aside from those already committed);
 - Contractors to implement projects; and
 - **Additional staff to create CREP plans.**

Current Projects and Initiatives

Personnel and Resource Needs

- CREP Conservation Plan Development Training
 - 11 districts; 40 attendees



Current Projects and Initiatives

Personnel and Resource Needs

- CREP Conservation Plan Development Training
 - SIGNIFICANCE
 - Adaptive approach and solutions
 - Streamline planning



Consistent Conservation Plan Verbiage

❖ Tool Kit Verbiage; Tool Kit Planning; Correct C/S rates

- One of the biggest barriers that New York has had to overcome.
- Consistent wording from County to County that meet CRP requirements.
- Tool Kit options allow NRCS to pull in various conservation planning narratives from the same technical code but not all narratives meet CRP requirements.
- Working with NRCS to develop narratives that meet CRP requirements and NRCS objectives.
- Completed work with NRCS to upload all CRP C/S components and rates into Toolkit.
- NRCS developed planning C/S worksheet for use by Soil and Water District planners to provide to NRCS offices for planning purposes.

Current Projects and Initiatives

Personnel and Resource Needs

- Alliance for the Bay Funding:
 - Mail letters for CREP re-enrollment contracts (FY 17, FY 18).



Current Projects and Initiatives

Personnel and Resource Needs

- **DEC's Trees for Tributaries Program**

- 5 Planting projects planned (mostly volunteer implementation)
 - About 10 acres;
- 9 assessments/maintenance projects with possible replanting:
 - Need to develop USC capacity; looking to provide funding to district staff.



Current Projects and Initiatives

DEC's Trees for Tributaries Program



Landowner with Tree Needs



Coordinator in a watershed



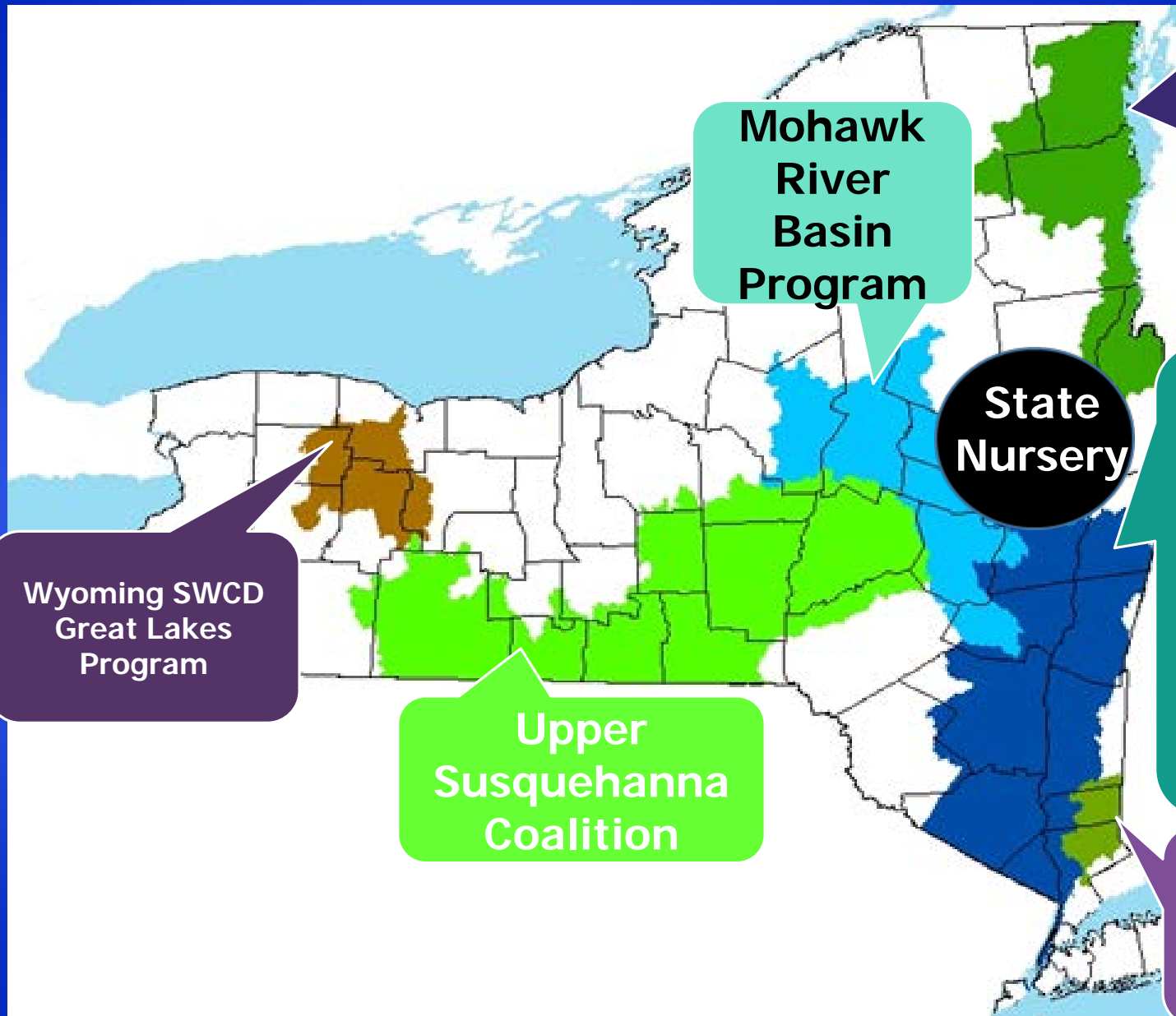
Planting Plan and Order Trees



Maintenance



planting event and collect site data



Wyoming SWCD
Great Lakes
Program

Mohawk
River
Basin
Program

Essex & Clinton
County SWCD

State
Nursery

Hudson River
Estuary
Program

NYS Water
Resources
Institute,
Cornell

Upper
Susquehanna
Coalition

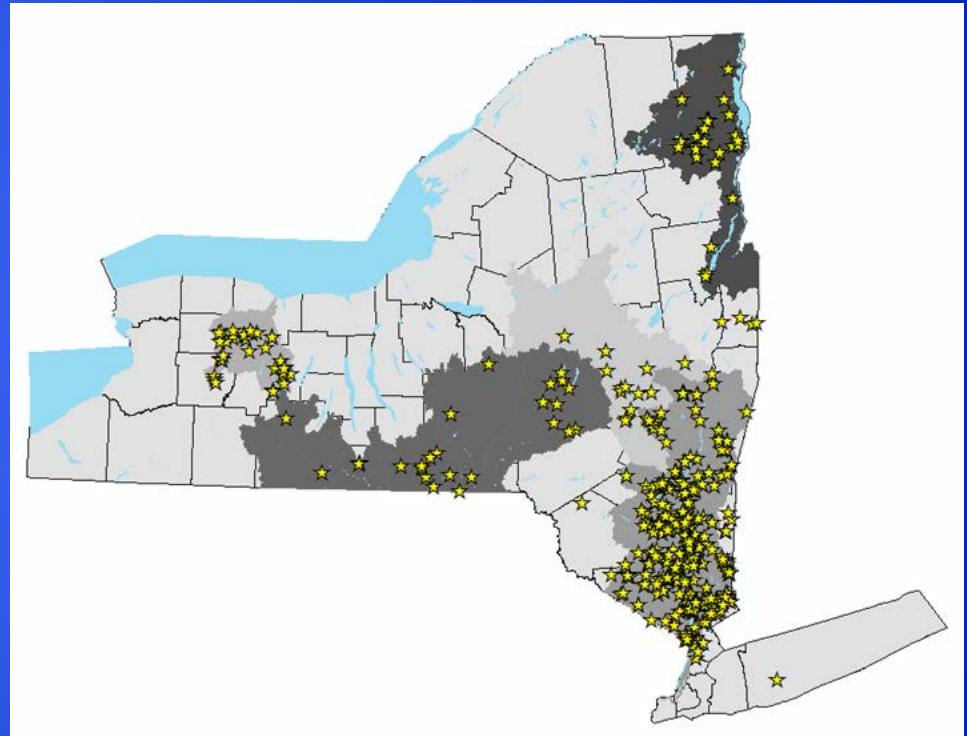
Watershed
Ag Council

NYC DEP

Current Projects and Initiatives

DEC's Trees for Tributaries Program

- 10 years
- Nearly 100,000 plants planted
- 590 sites
- ~1,000 volunteers/year engaged
- 30,000 plants in 2016
- Expanding to new watersheds



Current Projects and Initiatives

Personnel and Resource Needs

- **NFWF Riparian Buffer: USC Buffer Program Funding Application**
- Filling gaps by developing a program to fund buffer projects in sequence with CREP, and aside from CREP. Project examples may include:
 - Funding BMPs associated with buffer implementation (fence, crossings, etc.),
 - 50% cost share for CREP implemented buffers,
 - Funding for planting a buffer including plants and planting materials,
 - Funding for site preparation for buffer implementation.
 - Also seeking unique projects...

Buffer Program Strengths and Weaknesses

- Contractor involvement in planting is slim, at best.
- “Selling” buffers by SWCDs is tough- more information/ education is still needed.
 - How are buffers a NEED of ag producers?
 - Maybe not farmers...
- Agency leadership in prioritizing buffers
 - May be priority at local level though.

Buffer Program Strengths and Weaknesses

- A lot of interest by USC districts and partners:
 - USC Buffer Workgroup meetings are well attended,
 - Riparian Forest Buffer TASK FORCE- still meets quarterly,
 - Educational opportunities are well attended,
 - Programmatic feedback is robust, and
 - Need and opportunities for buffer implementation are realized by USC.
- Well funded to begin pilot projects;
- Many tools are available, or will be available soon:
 - CREP
 - Trees for Tributaries
 - USC Buffer Program Funding Application

Challenges

- CREP acreage cap- confusing and looming.
 - Lose momentum, lose trust, lose confidence... start and stop.... Start and stop.



Current and Prospective Partners

- NRCS, FSA, NYS DEC, NYS DAM;
 - Otsego Land Trust;
 - Schools: SUNY Oneonta, SUNY Cobleskill, Morrisville State College;
 - Youth Conservation Corp.
-
- FLLT- Looking to place conservation easements on riparian area. USC could provide riparian restoration. DEC Riparian Buffer Protection and Restoration Grant Opportunity.
 - CBF- Fill gaps with CREP Conservation Plan Development.
 - Trout Unlimited- current interest in Schenevus Creek.
 - Catskill stream buffer initiative- learning how they assess buffers.
 - Other colleges within the watershed for volunteers
 - USC Stream Team, NRDC, municipalities.

USC Buffer Program goals moving forward →

- Keep providing funding to districts for implementation;
- If tools prove to work well, then address an increase in needed capacity;
- Complete CREP plans to show a need;
- Focus on assessments and maintenance to achieve desired buffer functionality;
- Address incorporation of non-ag buffers in the Bay model; and
- Continue to engage partners to achieve desired programmatic and load reduction results.

A low-angle photograph looking up at the branches of a tree. The tree has distinctive white, peeling bark and is covered with numerous brown, spherical seed pods. The background is a clear, bright blue sky. The word "Questions?" is written in a white, cursive font across the center of the image.

Questions?