

FY15 GIT Funding Project Form

Goal Implementation Team: Water Quality and Habitat

GIT Priority Ranking:

Proposal Tracking Number: (assigned prior to RFP release)

Table 1: Project Description

Project Title	Resources Needed to Increase Riparian Forest Buffers
Project Category	Workplan Development and Implementation
Goal/Outcome	Riparian Forest Buffer Outcome
Estimated Cost	\$55,000
Justification: Description of why this work is needed in support of a management strategy?	<p>Riparian forest buffers are one of the most important BMPs in the states' Watershed Implementation Plans for the TMDL. The best program to implement these practices is Farm Service Agency's Conservation Reserve Program/Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CRP/CREP)—the same program that also does land retirement and livestock exclusion — also critical in the WIPs. The Riparian Forest Buffer Initiative enumerated many specific improvements needed to CREP and other state and federal programs designed to implement these practices (see State Task Force reports). These were re-asserted in the RFB Resolution adopted at the 2015 Executive Council meeting. However, there is a reason these changes haven't happened over the past year of the Initiative or the past 20 years of CREP: <i>these changes take skilled negotiators, program policy and legal experts, who understand how the federal-state programs currently work in each of the 6 Bay states, and who know how to bring about timely and efficient program delivery at the state, region, or national level.</i> With this funding, we hope to enlist two program/policy specialists for work over a 12-month time span. The states benefited from such specialists during the RFB Task Force process and have said that the changes aren't likely to happen without the diligence of these specialists to work with them to package their existing needs into an umbrella delivery program which could easily extend to wetlands and other important cost-share programs. FSA is open to improvements but has been slow to respond (\$5 million announced in June 2014 hasn't been allocated yet) and could benefit from the same skill sets that the states have requested.</p>

Cross-Goal Benefits: What other goals may be advanced through this work?	Habitat (Brook Trout Outcome); Healthy Watersheds (Healthy Watersheds); Stewardship (Land Protection Outcome)
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Table 2: Project Details

Technical Lead	Sally Claggett
Detailed Statement of Work ^{(1),(2)}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translate RFB recommendations into draft CREP amendments, working with CREP agency partner(s); • Provide direct support to states (e.g., to Riparian Forest Buffer state leads designated by the PSC in 2015, or lead CREP state agency partner; • Draft supporting justifications, where needed, including economic justification (i.e., potential “paygo” costs); • Work with federal and state partners to develop the economic incentive package (SIP, incentives, etc.) to achieve the desired enrollment outcomes. Review and analyze the current enrollment trends and economic conditions to develop the total financial package that will achieve mandated environmental outcomes. • Work with CREP partners to revise CREP budget in accordance with draft amendment and maintaining State/local/NGO match requirements (must meet 20% match requirement); • Communicate need for CREP amendments with CREP partners as well as political leaders; • Negotiate revisions in proposed amendment language and CREP budget as needed to secure USDA approval of CREP amendment; • Track CREP amendment process to help expedite the process. • Assist in the development of outreach and training materials
Estimated Project Duration	1 year
Outputs and Due Dates	Help at least 4 states submit CREP Amendment; Direct negotiations with FSA on behalf of all 6 states; economic incentive packages for all 6 state; Develop and deliver 10 training modules
Description of Skills and Experience Required of awardee	A strong working and legal knowledge of the CRP and FSA and recent prior experience helping states with their RFB Task Force reports.

(1) Provide a description of background information, stakeholder participants, the sequence and purpose of work activities, and how the outputs are to be used in implementing CBP management strategies

(2) Indicate whether environmental data will be generated and whether a quality assurance plan will be required