



Riparian Forest Buffers

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**What is the
value-add of
having this as
a Chesapeake
Bay Program
outcome?**



Successes

- Increased federal and state funding for RFB planting and maintenance
- Technical Assistance support increased
- Recent increases in planting rates
- Better data for understanding trends and targeting
- Leadership workshops/engagement
- State strategies and task force reports

Menti Responses: Value of the Forest Buffer Outcome

- **Core to stream health:** Key to stabilizing stream banks
- **Improves water quality:** The “gold” standard BMP for water quality due to their effective ability in reduce downstream erosion and pollutants
- **Supports resiliency:** Contributes to stormwater and flooding abatement thus helping communities adapt to increased rainfall/flooding events
- **Supports habitats and wildlife:** Provides healthier stream habitats for aquatic species
- **Localized and broad impacts:** Has direct impact in managing near-stream areas, but also helps to mitigates upstream development and hydrologic changes
- **Cost-effectiveness:** A trusted and economical BMP for water-quality



Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges

- Riparian forest loss
- Funding for long-term maintenance and stewardship
- Capacity
- Coupling riparian efforts with upstream forest restoration and conservation

Insights from Menti

- Additional landowner incentives needed to increase participation and engagement with buffers
- Consider how to better address invasive species
- Opportunities to better address permanent protection/conservation of buffers

What should we recommend to the Management Board for this outcome in a revised watershed agreement?



Recommendation options

- **Update:** Outcome intent is largely kept intact. Unique language may be necessary if it is more than just a SMART update. Key principle is maintaining the intent.
- **Consolidate** (i.e., Combine): Multiple Outcomes would be combined in a single Outcome, or activities contributing to an Outcome are dispersed across others
- **Remove:** The Outcome is removed from the 2014 Agreement.
- **Reclassify:** Outcome is changed to output or a different structure is adopted.
- **Replace:** This language suggests that a novel Outcome replaces a current one and that it relates in its intent or subject area.

**Could this
outcome be
improved? If so,
how?**

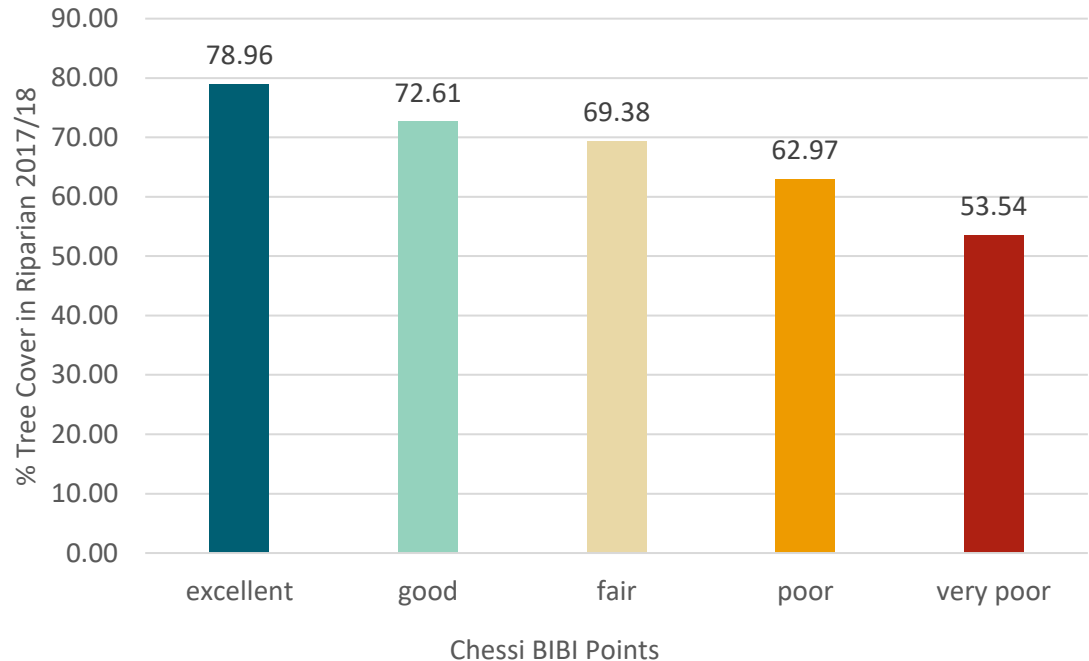
Opportunities to improve the Forest Buffer Outcome

- Strengthen the focus on conservation – consider adding language or targets specific to the maintenance and permanent protection of plantings
- Riparian forest cover target – consider whether to modify or focus in on sites suitable for planting
- Annual planting goals- consider whether to make this an output. If maintained, consider shifting to an acreage goal

Is the outcome appropriate for meeting restoration goals?

- 70% established by the partnership as the amount of riparian forest needed to maintain watershed health

Mean % Riparian Forest 2017/18



Outputs vs. Outcomes

- Outcome: At least X% of riparian areas throughout the watershed are forested
- Output or short-term outcome: Planting/conservation/stewardship targets to meet the outcome
- Should we maintain planting goals as part of our outcome?



Key Messages for the Management Board

FOREST BUFFER OUTCOME

OUTCOME DISPOSITION ADVICE TO
MANAGEMENT BOARD:

UPDATE

OUTCOME: Continually increase the capacity of forest buffers to provide water quality and habitat benefits throughout the watershed. Restore 900 miles per year of riparian forest buffer and conserve existing buffers until at least 70 percent of riparian areas throughout the watershed are forested.



RECENT PROGRESS
INCREASE



OUTLOOK
OFF COURSE

- GOAL: Vital Habitats
- LEAD: Water Quality Goal Team- Forestry Workgroup
- Outcome is foundational to meeting multiple Bay Program goals, including water quality goals under the TMDL
- Inclusion of forest buffers in the Agreement has driven increased investments and programmatic focus towards the practice, while enabling greater regional coordination
- Placeholder for input on whether to maintain annual planting targets (and if they are maintained, suggest converting to acreage targets)
- Updates are needed to re-establish reasonable targets and timelines that are grounded in science
- Updates may also reflect a need for increased focus on conservation and maintenance

Presented by: Katie Brownson



Discussion