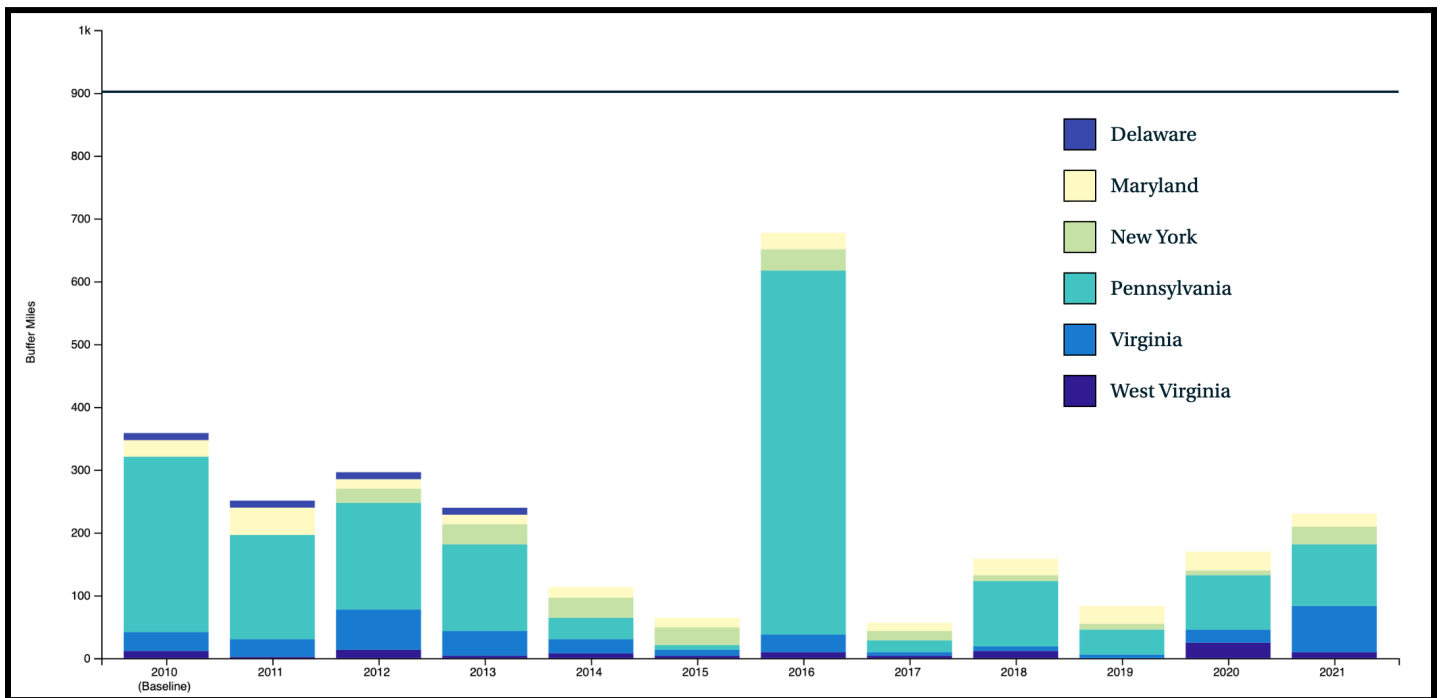


Outcomes Purchase Fund for Chesapeake Bay Riparian Forest Buffers

CONTEXT

Riparian forest buffers have long been recognized for the environmental benefits they confer in the Chesapeake Bay. Under the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement, the states established a Forest Buffer Outcome goal of restoring 900 miles of riparian forest buffer annually so that 70% of riparian areas in the Bay watershed would be forested by 2025.¹ In 2018, riparian areas in Maryland were estimated as 58% forested² and it and all the other states have not met the 900 miles per year target of riparian forest buffers restored/planted in the Chesapeake Bay since 2010 (Figure 1):

Figure 1: Miles of new riparian forest buffers planted annually by Chesapeake Bay states (2010-2021)



Source: Watershed Agreement-related data reported on [Chesapeake Progress](https://www.chesapeakeprogress.org/). Note: Buffers reported to the CBP range between 35 feet (minimum width to be credited) to 300 feet in width, with an average width of 95 feet.

THE PROBLEM

Several barriers are preventing sufficient investment in forest buffer planting:

- | | |
|---|--|
| Lack of regulatory drivers | Insufficient capacity at counties and MS4s |
| Insufficient technical assistance capacity | Public funding hurdles |
| Preference for other BMPs | Lack of contractors/planting capacity |
| Ineffective programs for private landowners | Lack of initial capital for new projects |

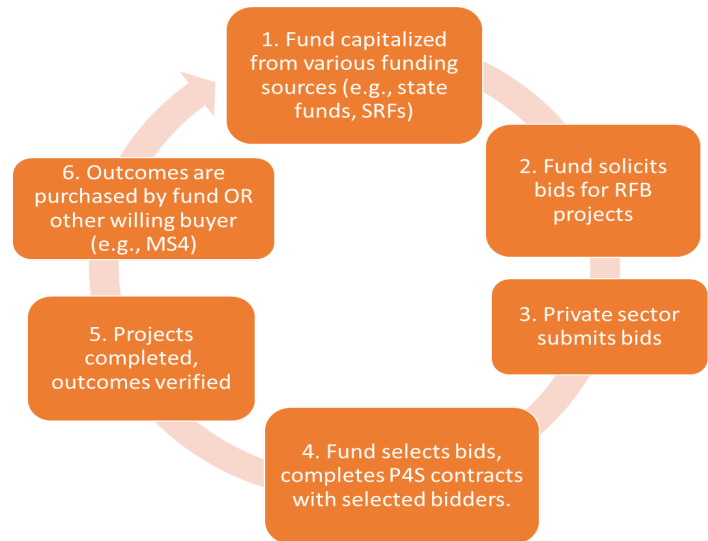
¹ <https://d18lev1ok5leia.cloudfront.net/chesapeakebay/Chesapeake-Bay-Watershed-Agreement-Amended.pdf>

² <https://www.chesapeakeconservancy.org/mdforeststudy2022>

THE SOLUTION

An outcomes purchase fund could address the lack of demand for riparian forest buffers by incentivizing accelerated riparian forest buffer planting through Pay for Success. The Fund will solicit project bids and select bids based on a scoring rubric (image on the right). After projects are completed and outcomes are verified, the fund will purchase outcomes measured in acres of riparian forest buffers established.

The scoring matrix was developed as a hybrid model, combining elements of the [Maryland Clean Water Commerce Act Application](#), Anne Arundel County's Stormwater Program and the need to address specific demands of the fund. We suggest the fund revisit the scoring criteria after the completion of a prototype phase to ensure it is creating incentives that deliver a balance of projects across urban and rural geographies and a range of project sizes, and that it does not exacerbate environmental injustices.



Solicitation Scoring Criteria	Max Points (total of 100)
Cost Effectiveness (price per acre per year, based on acreage, project cost and project term)	50
Bidder Qualifications (based on letters of reference, team leadership resumes, list of prior projects, other materials to substantiate bidder qualifications)	20
Co-Benefit 1: Alleviating environmental harms and risk by disadvantaged communities To be substantiated as projects located in communities identified by a Socioeconomic Score of 80 or higher using MDE's Environmental Justice Tracking Tool, and located on land owned or operated by a producer classified as historically underserved by USDA.	10
Co-Benefit 2: Enhancing adaptation against climate change Examples include flood control and mitigation, and disaster resilience	10
Co-Benefit 3: Contributing towards attainment of local water quality standards (i.e., to prioritize impaired waterways)	10

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