

QUARTERLY PROGRESS MEETING – December 2022  
*Chesapeake Bay Program*



# Riparian Forest Buffers

*Katie Brownson, USFS,  
Acting Forestry Workgroup  
Coordinator*

*Through the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement, the Chesapeake Bay Program has committed to...*



## Vital Habitats Goal

**Riparian Forest Buffer Outcome: *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.

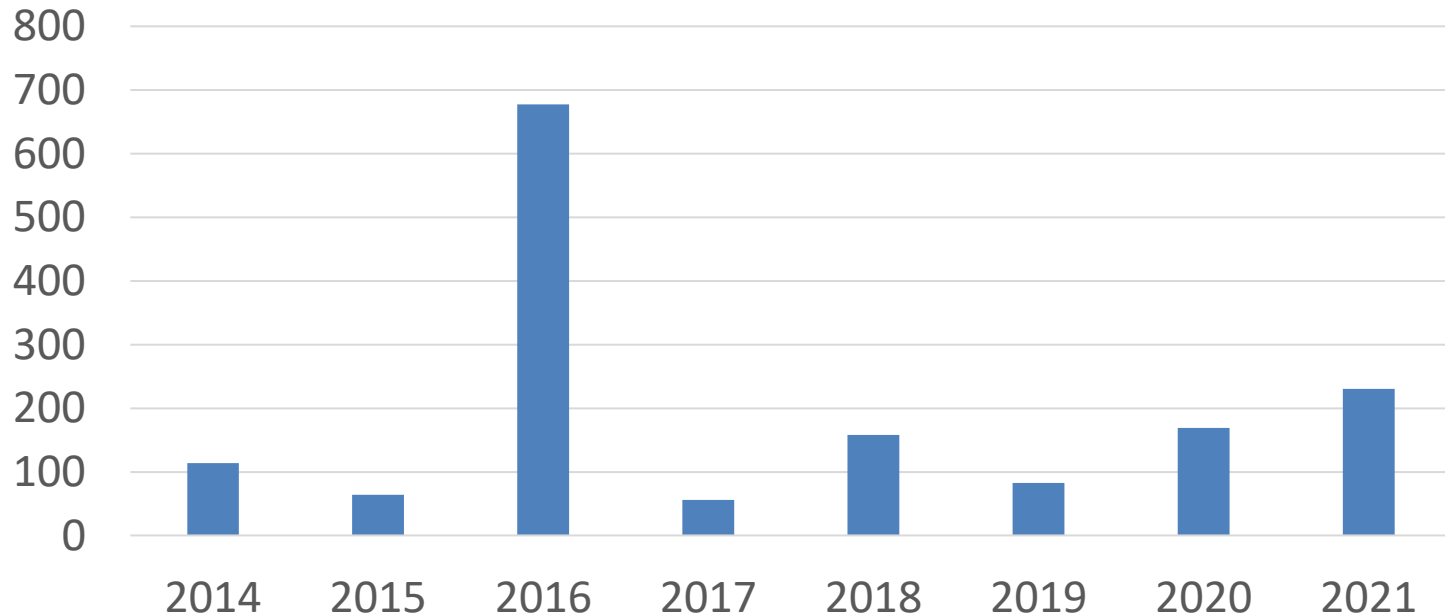


## What is our Expected and Actual Progress?

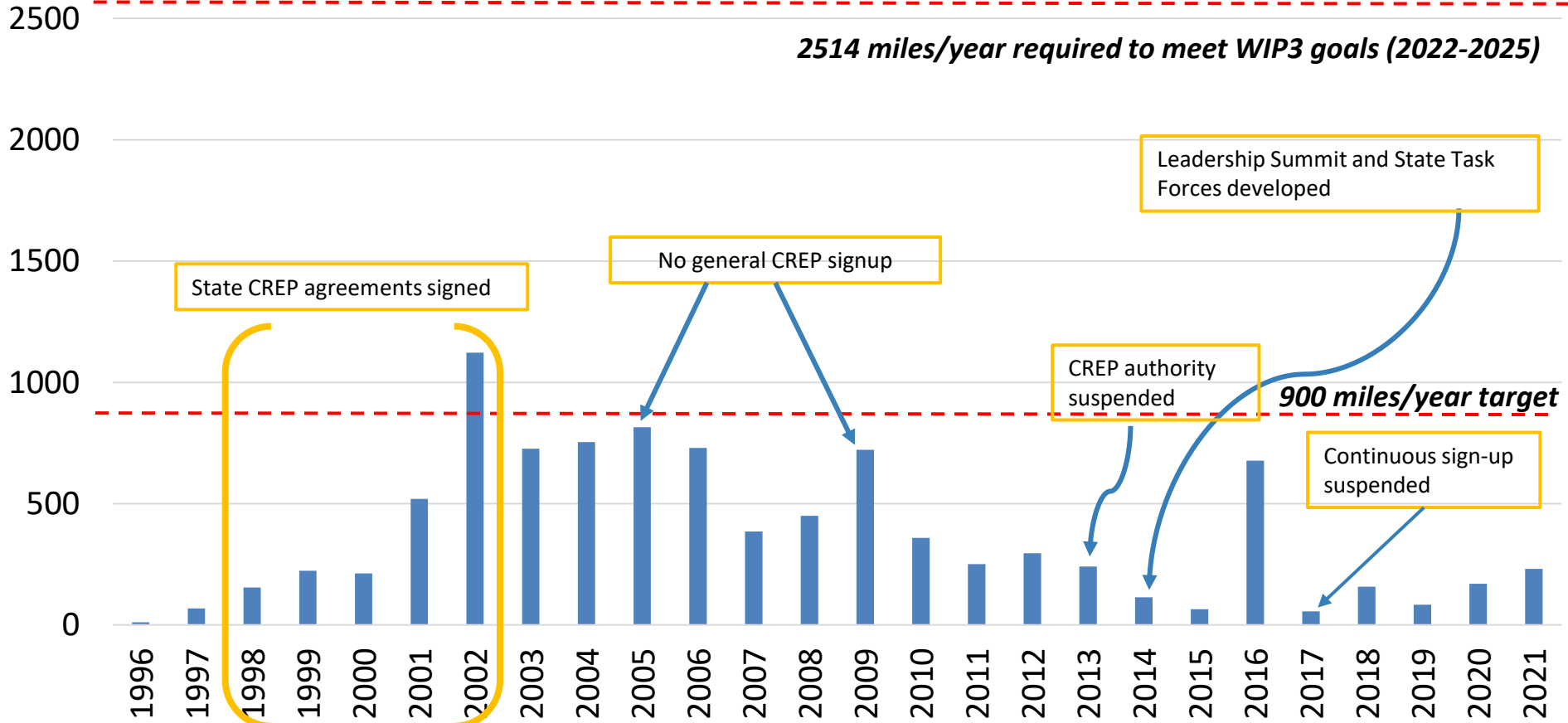


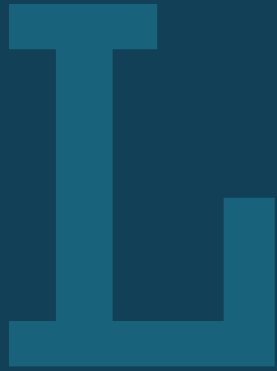
RECENT PROGRESS  
**INCREASE**

Miles of RFB planted since 2014 Agreement



# Miles of Riparian Forest Buffers Planted in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, 1996-2021





# Learn

*What have we learned in the last two years?*



## Successes

- 2022 Leadership Workshop
- State RFB Action Strategies
- Standalone flexible buffer programs
- Filling information gaps: STAC Rising Temperatures workshop, Maintaining Forests in Stream Restoration project, Forestry Communications study

## Challenges

- Maintaining leadership engagement
- Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)
- CAPACITY!



## On the Horizon

- Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funding
- New Farm Bill
- Climate change



A large, stylized, blue letter 'A' is centered on a dark blue background. The letter has a thick, blocky font with a slight shadow effect. The background is divided into horizontal bands of color: a dark blue band at the top, a medium blue band in the middle, and a light green band at the bottom.

# Adapt

*How does all of this impact our work?*



**Based on what we  
learned, we plan to ...**

- Implement RFB Action Strategies and track progress
- Support flexible buffer programs
- Direct BIL/IRA funds towards buffer planting and maintenance
- Build capacity in staff, contractors and outreach
- Conserve mature buffers



## Equitable and inclusive restoration ...

- Integrating forest buffers into communities
- Improving equity in access to federal funding for buffers
- Implementing new FS Equity Action Plan
- Support workforce development in historically underserved communities

A large, stylized, light blue letter 'F' is positioned on the left side of the slide. The background behind it is a dark blue vertical bar, which is part of a larger design consisting of horizontal bands of dark blue, dark green, and light green.

# Fill the Gap

*How can the Management Board  
help achieve the Outcome?*



## Filling the Gap

- **BECAUSE** of the recent influx in funding for restoration and our recently completed state Action Strategies
- Over the next 2 years, we **PLAN** to focus on strategically using those funds for buffer planting, maintenance and conservation
- **BUT** – to fill the gap –



## Filling the Gap

We need help to...

- 1. Commit to a tracking and accountability framework for the state Action Strategies:**
  - Report on progress in 2-year programmatic milestones.
  - Provide annual updates on plan implementation at MB meetings between now and 2025.

## Filling the Gap

We need help to:

**2a. Support investments in effective, standalone flexible buffer programs (existing and new programs).**

**2b. Improve grant and funding provisions to better support building capacity in staff, contractors and outreach.**



# Discussion