

RFB Workplan and Update

Forestry Workgroup
April 6, 2016

Buffer Outreach

- Riparian Forest Buffer Forum, Feb 25-26
 - <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/calendar/event/23811/>
- BEES Webinar Series
 - http://na.fs.fed.us/watershed/Chesapeake_Bay_riparian_buffer_webinars.shtml
- Handbooks, Postcards, Displays and other products – done by May 31, 2016

Other RFB Projects

- New Riparian Foresters
- Buffer Monitoring
- Answering the question the fate of buffers not re-enrolling
- Prepare for Outreach projects 2017
- All items in the Workplan TBD

Buffer Training and Monitoring

--Work to be
done in
conjunction
with ARS and
PennState

- A. Develop a manual to be used as a resource in providing outreach, monitoring, and technical assistance;
- B. Adapt the USFS buffer decision support tool;
- C. Conduct riparian forest buffer 2-day training (Spring, 2016);
- D. Design and conduct assessment of buffer performance in the watershed.
- E. Conduct training to instruct riparian foresters on protocols for assessing buffer conservation performance;
- F. Review data and do quality control on 5 to 10 percent of the sites;
- G. Prepare a report on technical accuracy of forester monitoring efforts.

New RFB
Website TBA



**Four
Actions
All
Comment
ers
agreed
Are the
Highest
Priority**

- Meet with Riparian Forest Buffer (RFB) leadership within each state to develop a coordinated, riparian forest buffer strategy to boost enrollment.
- Improve tracking and spending of Technical Assistance funding provided by the Farm Service Agency
- Examine effectiveness of annual maintenance payments and evaluate if current rate is appropriate.
- Increase effectiveness of landowner education on riparian forest buffer establishment and maintenance.

Actions with some low- medium priority votes

- Most actions considered high priority by commenters except...
- Focus on acres to re-enroll
- Utilize RFB targeting tools
- Share local case studies of successful buffers--how to integrate with better overall environmental health
- Strengthen inter-organizational operations, including reporting, cross-training,
- Develop nutrient incentive payment practice

Other RFB Workplan Comments

- It seems more workable to buffer easements than to ease buffers. Finding ways to have ag land preservation reward inclusion/restoration of buffers seems like some low-hanging fruit. Public funds for ALP could/should be accomplishing more for public needs. ALP funds could/should drive buffers.
- Leveraging the power of other funding is needed for the scale of buffer work needed. CREP is just one place. The parties on the hook for bay cleanup should be hounding USDA to fix CREP, which is an entitlement program that presently folks can't effectively access. Other funding could/should help drive buffers (ex. ag land presv per above, ex. state grant making programs)
- If NRCS did the TA they're paid to do, and did it well, re-enrollment would be much less and issue. Central to buffer failure is lack of TA to get the practice established.

Other RFB Workplan Comments

- Until there is some scientifically valid assessment of the effectiveness of Forest Riparian Buffers from field verified monitoring, there should be no increase in efforts to implement this BMP. A true cost/benefit analysis is necessary because the benefits appear to be way overestimated.
- The importance of re-enrollment is predicated on how likely we think farmers are to take out the buffer...forested buffers may very well be kept in, even without CREP incentives. Might be nice to have some data on how many buffers convert back to cropland, if they are not re-enrolled.
- Need to address climate change, legacy sediment
- Explore RFB preservation policies to analyze their effectiveness/need for enforcement

FWG- specific actions to start 2016

1. Coordinate and support State Leads and other partners in achieving RFB goals - *IMPROVE FEEDBACK LOOP WITH STATES/PARTNERS*
2. For the scale of buffer work needed, make leveraging the power of other funding and programs a priority - *POLICY*
3. Support states in prioritizing funding for RFB and explore new funding options - *POLICY*
4. Consider climate change in future actions for RFB - *focus FWG*
5. Strengthen inter-organizational operations, including reporting, cross-training, and Verification for RFB BMP – *December FWG*

FWG- specific actions to start 2016

6. Consider fate of non re-enrolling RFB acres - *Project UNDERWAY*
7. Explore RFB preservation policies to analyze their effectiveness/need for enforcement - *Who could look into this?*
8. Suggest acceptable language standards for RFB easements - *Use PA's?*
9. Look for funding opportunities for local tree planting and conservation efforts, including RFB in developed areas – *Crossover with TREE CANOPY*
10. Meet to assess options, needs, of MS4 Permit holders and other stakeholders – *need FWG representatives*

Ideas for
Continued
work with
FSA on
Outreach
etc.
in 2017

- Your ideas here...