

Chesapeake Riparian Forest Buffer 2022 Leadership Workshop Proposal

To be put on by Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) Management Board (MB) on April 27, 2022

Statement of Need: As a result of the Outcome Attainability meetings, the MB will hold a workshop focused on accelerating Riparian Forest Buffer (RFB) implementation. The workshop will attempt to address the scale and immediacy of the needed effort on a state-by-state basis. As part of the last Strategy Review System (SRS) review, the MB agreed that each state would develop an Action Strategy for Buffers. These Strategies will be at the core of the workshop. Immediate objectives for this workshop include 1) discussing state RFB Action Strategies for expanding forest buffers and 2) developing recommendations for specific roles for the Partnership in advancing buffer goals. The longer-term objective is to greatly increase forest buffers on the landscape.

Roles and Responsibilities: Each state will be expected to come to the workshop with a draft RFB Action Strategy. To develop actionable steps to increasing the rate of forest buffer plantings, it is important that we engage program leaders who have the ability to make changes to or increase implementation through existing programs. For that reason, the state Management Board representatives (or their delegate) should take the lead in coordinating the development of these strategies, with support from the Principals' Staff Committee (PSC) and other key program/policy personnel. Note the Forestry Workgroup (FWG) members are in a support role as subject matter experts but are not often in a position where they can influence or change program directions. For the workshop to be successful, the work of the Management Board should not be delegated to the FWG.

Proposed Process:

1. **Pre-workshop webinars:** The FWG will host two webinars to share relevant and timely information with the state leads and provide an opportunity to discuss ways this information could be incorporated into the Action Strategies. The webinars will be recorded, but state leads or their delegates should plan to attend to participate in the discussions.
 - a. Webinar 1 (March 14th 11-1): Technical assistance, outreach and social science
 - b. Webinar 2 (March 30th 10-12): Policy and funding/financing, including opportunities to better integrate forest buffers with land conservation efforts.
2. **Pre-workshop synthesis effort:** CBP has contracted with ERG to synthesize information from each watershed jurisdiction on current buffer programs and obstacles to improving or expanding buffer programs. ERG will be contacting state leads to set up virtual consultation meetings in March. In addition to key policy/program personnel, the state leads may also engage state FWG reps to ensure accurate information can be provided to the contractor. Findings from this synthesis effort will be provided back to the jurisdictions in advance of the April workshop to support Action Strategy development. It will also provide CBP with a cross-watershed perspective of how and where jurisdictions have been particularly effective with their buffer programs and where significant barriers exist.
3. **April 27 Workshop:** State leads should plan to attend the full workshop with their key policy/program personnel. The states will be expected to present their draft Action Strategies at the workshop and PSC members will be invited to attend. The workshop will also include facilitated discussions and breakout groups to support the states in identifying additional opportunities for strengthening their Action Strategies.

4. **Post-workshop strategy refinement and finalization:** Based on the information presented and feedback received at the workshop, the state leads should refine and finalize their RFB Action Strategies within 60 days. Ideally these strategies will then be presented and endorsed by the PSC members and would inform recommendations for where CBP funding and support is most needed to advance our collective buffer goals.