Riparian Buffer Programs

Gene Crabtree
District Conservationist
Chesapeake USDA Service Center
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Benefits from Buffers....

Water Quality

Wildlife Habitat
Riparian Buffers

- **Herbaceous (grassed*) Vegetation**
  
  *filter strips, field borders,*
  
  *herbaceous riparian buffer*
  
  *native warm season grasses* (switchgrass, little bluestem, big bluestem, indiangrass,...)

- **Forested Vegetation**
  
  *tree planting, riparian forested buffer, hedgerow planting*
Conservation Buffer “Toolbox”

EQIP

CREP

WRP

CRP

WHIP
Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)

- Applications are ranked and accepted year round
- Eligible Lands: private and state / local government lands on a limited basis
- 5-10 year agreements
- Practices: filter strips, field buffers, tree/shrub planting, riparian forested buffer, riparian herbaceous buffer, hedgerow planting, pest management...
- Cost Share Rate: 75%
Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

- Continuous signup...no ranking
- Eligible lands: cropland or pasture
- Goal: to install buffers adjacent wetland features
- Practices: filter strips, riparian forested buffers, wetland restoration
- Contract Duration: 10 or 15 years
Payments:

1. Signup Incentive: \( \$10/\text{ac} \times \# \text{ of full years under contract} \)

2. Cost Share: 75% (50% from USDA, 25% from Virginia)

3. Practice Incentive: 40% of total cost of installing practice (s)

4. Annual Rental Payment: up to \$90/\text{ac/yr} (\$85 From USDA and \$5 from Virginia)

Federal and State Program
Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

- Continuous signup
- Eligible land: cropland
- 10 and 15 year contracts
- Practices: forested and herbaceous riparian buffers, filter strips, shallow wildlife impoundment...
- Cost Share: 50%
- Rental Rates: $35-50/ac based on soil types
- Practice Incentive Payment: 40% installation cost
Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

- “Fundamental” USDA Conservation Program
  ......has a wildlife component
- Competitive application ranking process
  ......wildlife practices improves overall ranking score
- Practices: field borders, riparian forested buffer, riparian herbaceous buffer
- Cost Share / Incentive Payment:
  - field border…50%
  - herbaceous buffer …$50/ac
  - forested buffer…$100/ac
Wetland Reserve Program (WRP)

- Purpose: restore and enhance wetlands
- Eligible lands: Cropland, pasture or woodland must have been fully or partially drained and hydrology can be restored. Must own land for at least 12 months.
- Restoration includes restoring hydrology and or planting hard mass trees.
- Easements: Permanent and 30 year
- Long term restoration agreements
- Easement value based on farm value
- Current permanent easement cap: $3285/ac
Wetland Reserve Program (WRP)

Easements:

**Permanent:** NRCS pays 100% of the permanent easement value and 100% of restoration costs and 100% legal/surveying costs.

**30 year:** NRCS pays 75% of perm. easement value and 75% of the restoration costs and 100% of the legal/surveying costs.

Long term restoration agreements:

*Usually a 10 year agreement, no easement, 75% cost share provided*
Other Buffer Programs....

- **Local Soil and Water Conservation Districts**
  *Virginia Dare Soil and Water Conservation District...*
  .....Roy Flanagan  757-385-4775

- **Partners in Wildlife**  *USFWS/DU*
  .....Will Smith  804-693-6694 x 124

- **Virginia Department of Game and inland Fisheries**
  .....David Norris  757-641-6698

Gene Crabtree
757-547-7172 x3
gene.crabtree@va.usda.gov
The End
"The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or a part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer."