

Continuing Conservation Initiative
Name of Practice: FORESTED RIPARIAN BUFFER MAINTENANCE PRACTICE
VACS Program Specifications for No. CCI-FRB-1

This document specifies terms and conditions for the Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practices Cost-Share Program's Continuous Conservation Initiative Forested Riparian Buffer best management practice, which are applicable to all contracts entered into with respect to that practice.

A. Description and Purpose

A riparian forest buffer is a permanent area of trees, usually accompanied by shrubs and other vegetation, that is adjacent to a body of water and is managed to maintain the integrity of stream channels and shorelines. A buffer also reduces the impact of upland sources of pollution by trapping, filtering and converting sediments, nutrients and other chemicals; to supply food, cover and thermal protection to fish and other wildlife (from Virginia's Riparian Buffer Implementation Plan; July 1998).

The purpose of this practice is to offer an incentive that will maintain land use change that has occurred within the last 15 years and maintain a riparian forest buffer to provide streambank protection and to control soil erosion, sedimentation, and nutrient loss from surface runoff to improve water quality. This practice will also maintain riparian forest areas to benefit wildlife and aquatic environments.

B. Policies and Specifications

1. This practice will maintain buffer areas as a forested zone along streams for protection and filtering of agricultural non-point source pollution from up gradient agricultural production land.
2. This practice must not be in lifespan from any other conservation program.
3. The minimum Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act or other local ordinance(s) required buffer is not to receive cost-share.
4. The acceptance of prior cost-share assistance for the establishment of the buffer (site preparation, seedlings, labor, etc.) does not render the site ineligible for receiving this payment, so long as the lifespan of the establishment practice has expired.
5. The land use change must have occurred within the last 15 years to be eligible.
6. Any forest management activities shall be pursuant to a Department of Forestry Cost Share Plan, at a minimum. The practice shall be maintained for a minimum of five years following the calendar year of implementation.

7. This practice is designed to maintain riparian forest buffers that are adjacent to and buffer cropland and pastureland that have been in production three of the last five years. Buffer areas that are coming out of an agricultural BMP practice lifespan are eligible. Forestland that has been replanted following timber harvest is not eligible.
8. Flash grazing (allowing livestock to graze the excluded riparian area) is not allowed as a management alternative during the lifespan of this practice. No mowing is allowed in the buffer area.
9. Strip Width - Minimum width of the wooded buffer will be the same as the NRCS Technical Guide as follows: A minimum width of 35 feet from the edge of the stream bank, not to exceed 100 feet is required.
10. This practice is subject to the specifications as outlined in NRCS 391 Riparian Forest Buffer Standard.
11. All practice components implemented must be maintained for a minimum of five years following the calendar year of installation. The lifespan begins on Jan. 1 of the calendar year following the calendar year of certification of completion. By accepting a cost-share payment for this practice, the participant agrees to maintain all practice components for the specified lifespan. This practice is subject to spot check by the District throughout the lifespan of the practice and failure to maintain the practice may result in reimbursement of cost-share.

C. Rate(s)

The VACS payment rate is a single payment of \$200.00 per acre paid up front for the maintenance and protection of a forested riparian buffer for the five year lifespan.

D. Technical Responsibility

Technical and administrative responsibility is assigned to qualified technical DCR and District staff in consultation, where appropriate and based on the controlling standard, with DCR, Virginia Certified Nutrient Management Planner(s), NRCS, DOF, and VCE. Individuals certifying technical need and technical practice installation shall have appropriate certifications as identified above and/or Engineering Job Approval Authority (EJAA) for the designed and installed component(s). All practices are subject to spot check procedures and any other quality control measures.

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