

Continuing Conservation Initiative
Name of Practice: HERBACEOUS RIPARIAN BUFFER – MAINTENANCE PRACTICE
VACS Program Specification No. CCI-HRB-1

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

A. Description and Purpose

Herbaceous riparian buffers are communities of grass-like plants and forbs located along the banks of water courses, that filter runoff, anchor soil particles, and protect soils from scour and erosion. Herbaceous riparian buffers trap eroded soil, help keep sediment out of streams, and improve water quality by filtering out fertilizers, pesticides, and microorganisms that otherwise might reach waterways.

Incentive payments will be provided to maintain herbaceous riparian buffers that are located adjacent to streams and water bodies.

B. Policies and Specifications

1. The herbaceous riparian buffer must be maintained in a manner to filter sheet flow, rather than concentrated flow, and that will not degrade the quality of the environment or interfere with the proper functioning of the buffer.
2. The 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. Hay land is not considered cropland for implementing this practice.
5. Herbaceous riparian buffers planned for sediment and related pollutant control must be a minimum of 35 feet wide from the edge of the stream bank, not to exceed 100 feet.
6. Flash grazing (allowing livestock to graze the excluded riparian area) is not allowed as a management alternative during the lifespan of this practice. Mowing of the buffer area shall not occur between April 1 and August 15 to protect wildlife.
7. The buffer area cannot be used as a roadway or equipment turning area.
8. Control of non-native invasive species is allowed; avoid damaging buffer area with herbicides or other controls.

9. 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 up front of \$50.00 per acre of buffer for 35' to 100' wide buffers.

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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