

POLICIES AND SPECIFICATIONS FOR CREP  
RIPARIAN FOREST BUFFER

DCR Specifications for No. CRFR-3

This document specifies terms and conditions for the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program riparian forest buffer practice that are applicable to all contracts entered into with respect to that practice.

A. Description and Purpose

This practice is a protection method along streams to reduce erosion, sedimentation, pollution of water from agricultural nonpoint sources and provide forest areas for the benefit of wildlife and aquatic environments.

The purpose of this practice is to offer an incentive that will change land use and establish a riparian forest buffer under the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) to provide stream bank protection and to control soil erosion, sedimentation, and nutrient loss from surface runoff to improve water quality.

B. Policies and Specifications

1. Eligibility

- i. State cost-share and tax credit are authorized for:
  - a) Establishing a wooded buffer zone along streams for protection and filtering action from surrounding land.
  - b) Establishing shrubs along with forest tree species to promote wildlife habitat.
- ii. This practice is designed for cropland and pastureland that has been in production four out the past six years. Forestland being replanted following timber harvest is not eligible.
- iii. Cost-share or tax credit is a one-time incentive and can be utilized along with other cost-share programs for actual planting and site preparation costs. Cost-share for replanting may be authorized based on CRP policy.

2. Practice Development

- i. Wildlife and environmental consideration must be given when designing the practice.
- ii. Soil loss rates must be computed for all applications.

3. Practice Implementation
  - i. This practice is subject to the specifications outlined in the DOF Virginia's Forestry Best Management Practices for Water Quality, Technical Manual and NRCS 391 Riparian Forest Buffer Standard.
  - ii. Strip Width - Minimum width of the wooded buffer will be the same as NRCS, Technical Guide: Minimum width of 35 feet from the top of the stream bank, up to one-third of the flood plain not to exceed 300 feet.
  - iii. Type of Vegetation - DOF personnel will specify appropriate tree species for use. Filter efficiency will also be improved by the addition of low growing or ground cover vegetation. Herbaceous plantings and shrubs may be encouraged to provide soil stabilization and improve benefits for wildlife.
  - iv. A nurse crop of conifers may be cost shared and planted with the hardwood seedlings if recommended by DOF.
  - v. Plantings must be protected from destructive fire and destructive grazing.
4. All practice components implemented must be maintained for the lifespan of the CREP contract. By accepting either a cost-share payment or a state tax credit for this practice the participant agrees to maintain all practice components for the specified lifespan. Control of noxious and invasive plants to ensure the survival of the stand is the responsibility of the participant. This practice is subject to spot check by the SWCD throughout the lifespan of the practice and failure to maintain the practice may result in reimbursement of cost share and/or tax credits.

C. Rate(s)

1. For all CREP BMPs identified on approved farm conservation plans the CREP cost share rate is twenty-five percent (25%) of FSA approved eligible cost or one half of the FSA cost share for all CREP components.
2. As set forth by Virginia Code § 58.1-339.3 and §58.1-439.5, Virginia law currently provides a tax credit for implementation of certain BMP practices. The current tax credit rate, which is subject to change in accordance with the Code of Virginia, is 25% of the total eligible cost not to exceed \$17,500.00.
3. If an applicant receives cost-share, only the percent of the total cost of the project that the applicant contributed is used to determine the tax credit.

D. Technical Responsibility

Technical and administrative responsibility is assigned to qualified technical DCR and SWCD 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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