



Riparian Forest Buffers for Farms and Communities

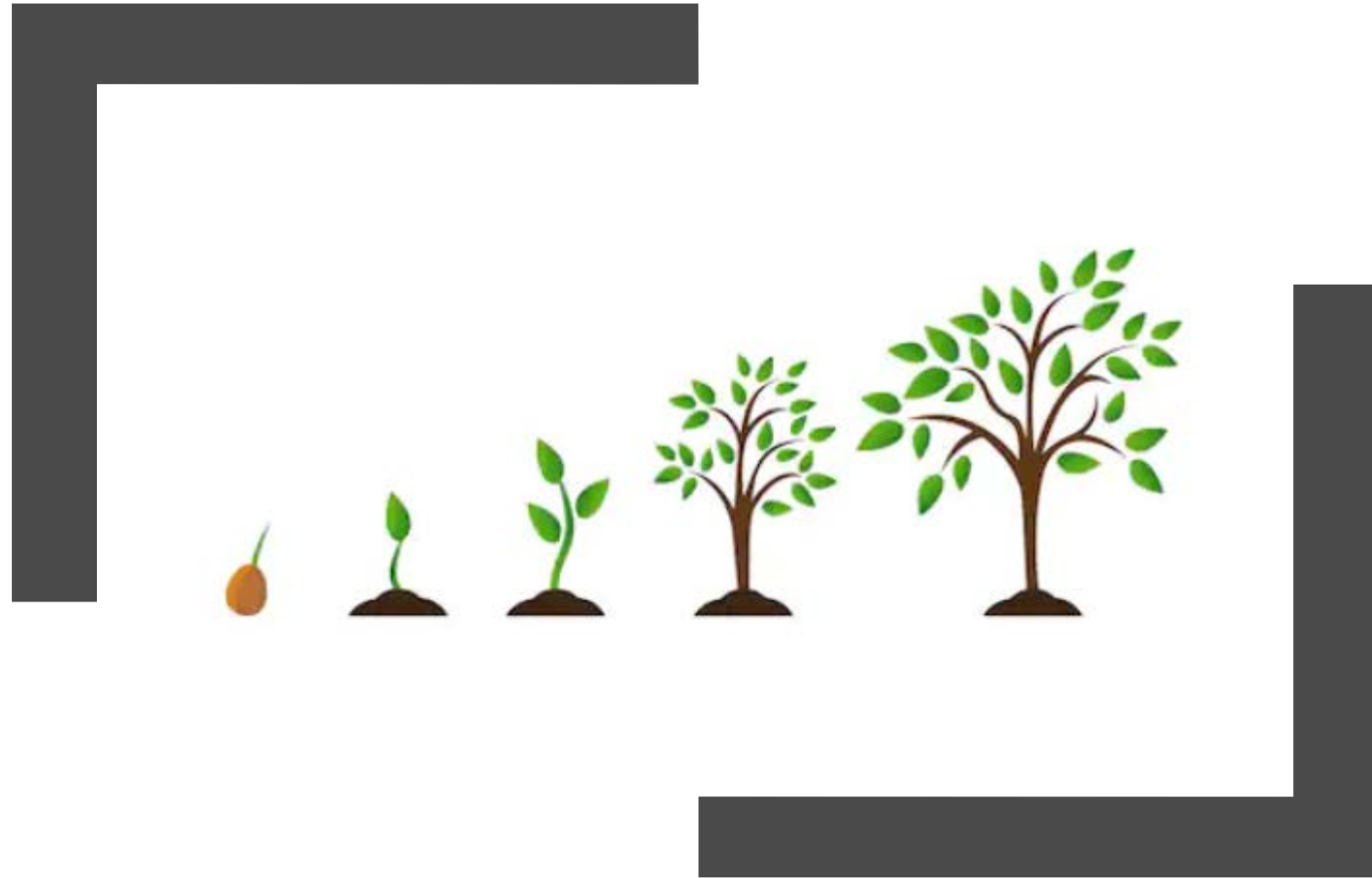
DCNR's RFB Program and Your Role as Local Conservation Leaders

Overview

- DCNR's Buffer Program
- Buffer Problems and Solutions
- Your Role in Achieving Buffer Success in PA



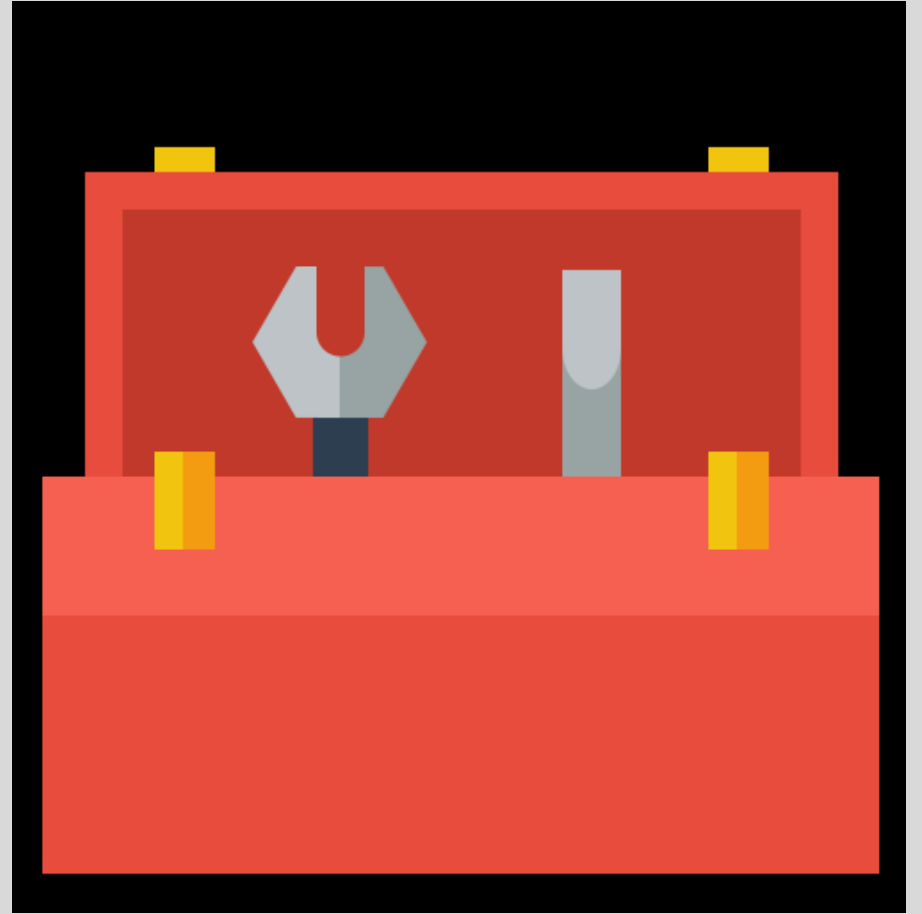
DCNR's Buffer Program



- Envisioned in 2014- Response to Call for States to Amplify Buffer Efforts.
- Launch Took Two Years, but in 2016:
 - New Grant Program (C2P2)
 - Developed Advisory Committee
 - Created 3 New Contract Positions
 - Buffer Summit
 - Prioritization/Outreach Tools

Funding

Buffers \neq CREP!





Funding

- **Every** streamside landowner across all landscapes, urban to ag, has a responsibility.
- Not all on farmers!
 - But farmers are a critical piece.

Funding

- Don't need to master every tool in the toolbox, just need to know that a fix does exist!
- Got a landowner that wants a buffer? We WILL find a way to fund it!
 - Call DCNR Buffer Team any time.
- Variety of flexible, accommodating funding available.
 - C2P2 Grants, EPA Funding, PACD's PENNVEST Funds, TreeVitalize Grants, K10... and many more!



A Quick Note on Multifunctional Buffers...

- One more tool in the toolbox.
- Not a prescription!
- Not a perfect fit everywhere, but might interest some new landowners.
 - No one expects people to survive on MRFBF income alone!
- Multifunctional = Potential to Produce Income
 - **Be Creative!**





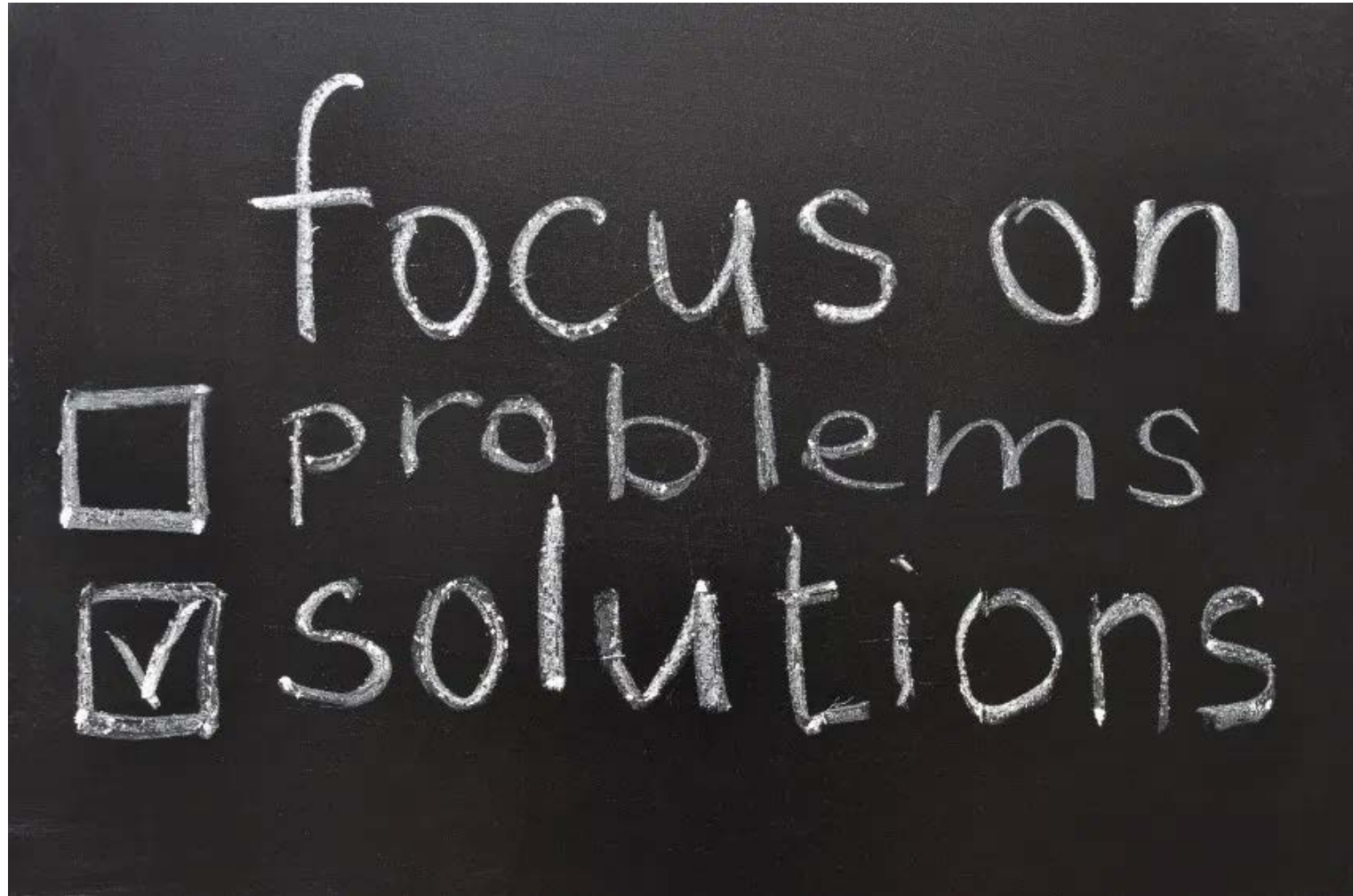
Basic Buffer Requirements

- Up to 300ft from Streambank (max buffer width).
- Minimum AVERAGE of 35ft **strongly** encouraged.
 - Can go down to 15ft at pinch-points to accommodate existing infrastructure, etc.
- Site prep, maintenance plan, and tree shelters required
 - Customizable from site-to-site.
- Minimum of 150 stems/acre planting density.
 - Percentage of trees/shrubs very flexible, customizable.
- Native tree/shrub species
 - Some flexibility in zones 2 and 3 for multifunctional buffers

Buffers are Great, But...



- **Taking farmland out of production**
 - Multifunctional Buffers, CREP
- **Tree Tubes**
 - Alternative sheltering methods/options
- **Aesthetics**
 - Clean Culture, Spaced to Mow, Shrubs for Preserving Viewsheds, Custom Designs, etc.
- **Existing Infrastructure**
 - Flexible Width, Non-Contiguous Plantings
- **Site Prep**
 - Money Up-Front, Wrap into Contracts
- **Maintenance**
 - Allowable Expense, Flexible Funding, Programs to Create Contractors





For the
Solutions
to Work,
We Need
Your Help!

Be the Messengers



- You are the Front Line.
- Trusted by Communities.
- Trusted by Farmers.
- Legislators Counting on You!



Acknowledge the Issues, But Move Past Them

- Validate landowner concerns and skepticism, but don't discount buffer importance.
 - “I understand why you see it that way. But don't forget...”
- Provide Alternative Options.
 - Remember, it's not just CREP anymore!
- Focus on New Audiences
 - Parks, Schools, Backyards...



Utilize Your Board of Directors



- Talk about buffers at Board Meetings.
- Make sure they know new, flexible options exist.
- Invite Board Members to Plantings.
- Ask your Service Forester to talk buffers at Board Meetings.



Incorporate Buffers in All Existing Outreach

- Fair Displays
 - Highlight success stories and provide take-home info.
- Farmer Breakfasts
 - Mention new program options
- Municipal Meetings
 - Mention new program options, MS4 credit opportunities
- Winter Meetings
 - Highlight a recent planting
- School Programs
 - Students have parents who might plant buffers.
 - Schools might be great places to plant!

Consider New Engagement Opportunities

- Host Buffer Field Days
- Engage the Community in Volunteer Plantings
- Try a new Prioritization Tool
 - DCNR's Prime Prospects, ConservationTools.org, Chesapeake Conservancy Gap Analysis, etc.
- Use New Outreach Materials!
 - Coming soon- announcement at Buffer Summit
 - Direct mailer, handouts, etc.



Support and Encourage Buffer Businesses

- Buffer Planting
- Buffer Maintenance
- Buffer Contract “Farmers”
- Create Demand
- Help Existing Businesses Expand
- Know an Entrepreneur? Share the opportunities!



Dispel Myths, Highlight Benefits

Myths

- Ticks
- Snakes
- Pests
- Ugliness
- Messiness
- Increased Cost

Benefits

- Shade
- Privacy
- Herd Health
- Increased Property Value
- Flood Reduction/Climate Resiliency
- Pollinators
- Wildlife Habitat
- Legacy
- Stewardship
- Reduced mowing expenses

Never, Ever, Ever, Ever, EVER Give Up!



- Mentioned a buffer to a landowner as an option at least a thousand times?
Better make it 1,001!
- When you start to get sick of hearing yourself talk about something is just when other people are finally starting to hear you.
- PLEASE never turn an interested landowner away! We will find a way to help them.

Challenge: **Talk to Three People about Buffers**





Blair County
Convention
Center

Altoona, PA



Questions?

Thank You!

Teddi Stark

Riparian Forest Buffer and
Watershed Forestry Program
Manager

DCNR Bureau of Forestry

c-tstark@pa.gov

814-335-5665- cell

717-787-0656- desk

