

GUIDELINES

Riparian Buffer Sub-Grant for Conservation Districts

Application Deadline: *June 30, 2025.*

Pennsylvania's conservation districts are encouraged to apply for funding to install riparian forest buffers in conjunction with landowners. Multi-functional riparian forest buffers are encouraged but conventional buffers are accepted as well. This grant is first come first served. The grant round will stay open until funds are used up or June 30, 2025, whichever comes first.

Multifunctional riparian buffer specifications:

A riparian forest buffer that provides opportunities for harvesting products such as nuts, berries, woody florals, forbs, and potentially woody biomass. Inputs such as fertilizer or manure would not be permitted, and harvesting would not be permitted in the first 15 feet of the buffer from the edge of the streambank. An overall minimum width of 35 feet is recommended. Click here for more information on multi-functional buffers:

<https://elibrary.dcnr.pa.gov/GetDocument?docId=1743756&DocName=Multifunctional%20Stream%20Buffer%20Program.pdf>

Buffer Planting Plan:

A written planting plan is required and must be reviewed and signed by a DCNR Service Forester and submitted prior to using any sub-grant funds. Include a layout plan of the site including details on soils and site preparation; buffer width and length, tree/shrub species, size, and spacing; specific materials and planting methods; seedling protection; and any other details, photos, or specifications necessary to adequately explain the buffer design. Considerations for multifunctional buffer should show details appropriate for managing multifunctional buffers, including access (foot, mechanized etc), maintenance, or anticipated harvest practices.

A template document will be provided by PACD.

Buffer Maintenance Plan:

A written maintenance plan is required and must be reviewed and signed by a DCNR Service Forester and submitted prior to using any sub-grant funds. Details regarding post planting establishment activities (roughly 1-3 years) such as invasive species control and herbicide use; and long-term maintenance (roughly 3+years) to meet the grant requirement of ensuring the buffer's continuance for at least 25 years. Target survival rate should be at least 70%. The plan shall also include who will perform the



activities and what is expected of the landowner. A buffer maintenance plan template document will be provided by PACD.

Landowner Agreements:

- Properties owned by the Grantee require a Certification of Title form
- Properties controlled by the Grantee through a long-term lease or easement require a Certification of Title form and a copy of the lease or easement
- Properties that are not owned or controlled by the Grantee require an executed landowner agreement. Grantees are encouraged to use the DCNR Landowner Agreement template.

The DCNR Template Landowner agreements are required prior to using any sub-grant funds. Template agreements will be provided by PACD.

Eligible Expenses:

Costs not covered include staff time for landowner outreach and education, legal or advertisement fees, site prioritization and design, and purchasing equipment. Staff time for actual installation of the buffer can be covered by this grant as well as hand tools and herbicide application equipment.

Budget

A written budget estimating the cost of buffer materials, labor, and post planting establishment related to the site. The budget should include all cash and non-cash costs to be considered for grant funding.

Modifications:

Modifications to the project budget or project must be approved in writing by PACD to maintain funding eligibility. Submit requests for changes, indicating the reason for the change to Holly Miller, PACD Program Manager at hmiller@pacd.org.

Timeline

A written schedule for major project milestones such as outreach, site design, site preparation, buffer planting, and post planting establishment.

Procuring Labor and Materials:

Grantees are reminded that labor and materials for all riparian forest buffer projects included in the grant agreement scope of work must be procured openly and competitively.

Match: A 50:50 match is required for this grant. Penn State's Master Watershed Steward Program and Chesapeake Bay Foundation's Keystone 10 Million Trees Program will provide volunteer hours and trees for conservation district projects. Match may also be provided from the conservation district.

We strongly encourage conservation districts to contact the PSU Master Watershed Coordinator for your county to organize tree plantings with Master Watershed Steward volunteers. Follow this link to find your county coordinator

<https://extension.psu.edu/programs/watershed-stewards/counties>

We also advise conservation districts to contact the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's 10 Million Trees Partnership to secure trees and other materials for projects. Please fill out the form to become a partner here

<http://www.tenmilliontrees.org/partners/internal/partner-application.html>

Tree orders can then be placed with Joe Hallinan at jhallinan@cbf.org

Example: A district needs \$10,000 to install 2 acres of buffers. The district applies for a \$10,000 sub-grant from PACD and is required to show \$10,000 in match in their application. The district reaches out to Penn State's Master Watershed Steward Program to request their help in installing the buffer. The district and the Watershed Steward Program are able to together estimate the number of volunteers and the number of hours that will be contributed by the Master Watershed Steward Program and count it as \$2,000 to the match. The district next contacts Chesapeake Bay Foundation's Keystone 10 Million Trees Program and requests trees, other materials, and volunteers to assist with the planting. The district and CBF determine that \$7,000 match could be contributed. The district determines that \$1,000 in conservation district staff time will be contributed as the final match needed.

Payments:

The conservation district will receive 45% of grant funding upon approval of the application and receipt of all signed landowner agreements and signed planting plan. 45% will be paid to the conservation district after submitting the mid-term report to PACD; and the final 10% after submitting the final report to PACD.

Refund:

Unused grant funds, cancelled grant projects, or funds used for ineligible expenses must be refunded to PACD within 60 days of the project end date.

Mid-Term Report:

A mid-term report is required at the estimated half-way point of your project. A report template will be provided by PACD.

Final Report:

A final report must be submitted within 60 days of the project end date. The final report must be submitted electronically. A report template will be provided by PACD.

Inspection Report Form:

A final inspection report must be submitted approximately 6 months after planting. This inspection will be conducted in coordination with a service forester. A template form will be provided.

We hope you will consider applying for a buffer sub-grant. Please visit www.pacd.org for more information or to download an application. Applications will be reviewed/approved as they are received. Projects must be completed in enough time to have the final report submitted to PACD by October 31, 2025.

Contact Holly Miller, PACD Program Manager, at hmiller@pacd.org or 717-794-6105 with any questions.

By signing these Guidelines, you certify that the proposed projects are eligible, meet the requirements stated, and that the landowner(s) are committed to the project(s).

Signature of authorized person

Title

Date