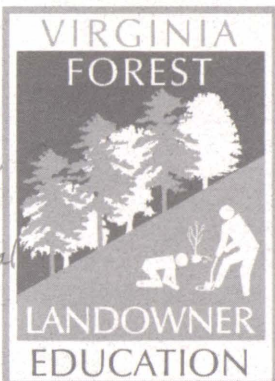


VIRGINIA FOREST LANDOWNER UPDATE

Events, news, and information promoting the stewardship of Virginia's natural resources.

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WELCOME to the *Virginia Forest Landowner Update!* You and your family or organization are invited to learn about your role in Virginia forest stewardship by attending the events listed within these pages. These programs will provide practical information to forest landowners, natural resource professionals, youth and other interested parties on the many components of sustainable forestry.

Update sponsors include:

- Virginia Department of Forestry
- Virginia Tech College of Natural Resources
 - Department of Forestry
 - Cooperative Extension
- Virginia Department of Game & Inland Fisheries
- Virginia Forestry Association

TO SUBMIT EVENTS AND INFORMATION....

If your organization is sponsoring a program or has information of benefit to landowners or natural resource professionals, please contact: *Dylan Jenkins*
 Virginia Cooperative Extension
 216B Cheatham Hall (0324)
 Blacksburg, Virginia 24061
 phone: 540/231-6391
 fax: 540/231-3330
 e-mail: dylan@vt.edu

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Riparian Forest Buffers Provide Unique Environments

Judith A. Okay
 Virginia Department of Forestry

Experiencing Riparian Buffers

Riparian forest buffers are special places and spaces. By definition they are the strips of vegetation that line rivers, stream banks, lakes, ponds and other waterways. They are often dismissed as unmanageable narrow strips of trees and shrubs that are doomed to be obstructions to stream flow. A closer observation of a healthy riparian buffer reveals a diverse ecosystem with vertical and horizontal structure. There are sights and smells that delight the senses in the remnant forests lining streams. Spicebush and sassafras abound, Pinkster azaleas, sweet bay magnolias and delicate shad bush are surprises that can be found even in urban stream landscapes.

Buffer Benefits

Within riparian buffer zones there are opportunities for passive recreation such as hiking, jogging, birdwatching, canoeing, and fishing. The riparian zones provide greenways that improve the quality of life for citizens. Scientific research has demonstrated often underestimated psychological and social benefits that green trees and shrubs provide. One only need walk from a parking lot on a summer day into a wooded stream zone and enjoy the cool, quiet calm with the backdrop of chirping birds and gurgling water to appreciate the benefits of a streamside forest ecosystem.

Some of the benefits that are not as sensual, or as obvious, but nonetheless valuable, also impact the quality of life for citizens. Trees along waterways moderate water tem-

perature and provide a comfortable cool environment for instream organisms such as insects, frogs, salamanders and turtles. Riparian tree and shrub branches provide a roughness that slows flowing water and allows for the deposition of sediment carried by the water. The roots of woody vegetation have the effect of a sponge soaking up water during storm events. Excessive runoff is sequestered in the litter of riparian forests and the plants utilize nutrients in the water. Urban riparian buffers are the framework for healthy streams and water quality.

Actions For Healthy Buffers and Water Quality

Promote natural regeneration: leave an unmowed buffer along rivers, stream banks, ponds, and lakes.

Use slow-release fertilizers: these prevent rapid loss of nitrogen.

Select landscape plants wisely: native species need less water and fertilizer and provide better habitat for wildlife.

Prevent erosion on your property: use splash slabs under gutters and good ground cover on slopes, particularly on stream banks.

Keep animal waste from streams: scoop up after pets and keep livestock out of streams.

Buffer Management

Urban riparian forest buffers are not easy to maintain because of constant land use pressures from increased population and decreased resources. Heavy populations of wildlife are over utilizing stream corridors because they are being confined into less space. Stormwater management facilities release large volumes and high velocity water into streams and this results in severe erosion problems. Land use practices for lawn care on public and private land contributes to excessive nutrient loading of stream water. For the good of the related community, assessment of riparian forest buffers by citizens, natural resource managers and local government

should be included in the management plans for private and public property.

One management tool that has proven useful in reducing the impact of stormwater runoff is the creation of a "rain garden." These are bioretention areas formed to capture water that drains from roofs, walkways, driveways, parking lots and other impervious surfaces. The removal of stands of forests results in a loss of concentration time for stormwater runoff. Water reaches streams through pipes or drains much faster than it would if it were cap-

Buffers continues on page 6

EVENTS CALENDAR

event contact	date/location	event/description (preregistration requested unless noted otherwise; TBA = to be announced)	time	fee
BS	April 13-14 Charlottesville	Growing Forest Products in Your Community. This program will assist Virginia communities in increasing forest products industry recruitment. Participants will gain information on industry resources, meet key industry contacts, and learn economic development strategies. Program involves presentations by forest industry representatives, panel discussions, and resource materials sharing. Tour nearby primary and secondary wood products manufacturers. <i>Website at: www.conted.vt.edu/forestry/community.htm</i>	8am-5pm each day	\$95.00
JP	April 29 Boyce	Dogwood Symposium. Flowering dogwood is a treasured species in our cultivated and natural landscapes. Since 1987, dogwood anthracnose has destroyed significant portions of the native dogwood populations in the mid-Atlantic and Appalachian regions. Symposium participants will hear from experts about dogwood anthracnose and other pests and diseases of dogwoods, how to care for trees in the landscape and about disease resistant cultivars currently being developed.	9am-5pm	\$65.00
GP	May 5-7 Norfolk Waterside Marriott	Virginia Forestry Association 2000 Annual Convention. Join forest landowners, resource professionals and others for informative educational programs and family fun. Convention theme is water quality issues, challenges and opportunities; sessions will focus on wetland issues and legislation, the TMDL Program, and water quality issues at the state and federal levels. Workshops offered include OSHA Compliance for Loggers, Project Learning Tree and Estate Planning for Forest Landowners. Other activities include golf tournament, ball game at Harbor Park and narrated Naval Base Tour.	8am-5pm each day	\$140.00 \$195.00 per couple
LC	May 12-14 Wintergreen Resort	17th Annual Spring Wildflower Symposium. Learn from field botanists, lecturers, naturalists and talented instructors during a weekend of guided hikes, workshops, and lectures on the region's native flora. Participants create their own schedules from over 50 field and lecture sessions and learn about native gardening, field identification, edible and medicinal plants, forest ecology, threatened and endangered species, and more. <i>Website at: www.twnf.org.</i>	all day each day	\$95.00
CC	May 13 Holiday Lake 4-H Center	Virginia 4-H Soils, Forestry and Wildlife Judging Contest. State contest for 4-H forestry, wildlife habitat evaluation, and soils judging. The winning teams represent Virginia at national contests.	all day	\$25.00
RO	May 16 Blacksburg	Global Positioning Systems. Global positioning systems are satellite-based alternatives to conventional surveying. Originally developed by and for the military, they are now being widely applied to all forms of geographic location and navigation. GPS has many applications to forestry and the increased availability of equipment makes them economically attractive. <i>Website at: www.conted.vt.edu/gps/gps-info.</i>	8am-5pm	\$175.00 (\$425.00 for GPS + AGPS)
RO	May 17-18 Blacksburg	Advanced Global Positioning Systems. A two-day intensive course covering theory and methods of GPS application to natural resources mapping. This class provides GPS hardware and software, and includes written class materials for the student's reference. Instruction will include classroom presentation of conceptual materials, field exercises with GPS receivers, and lab exercises with GPS post-processing software using fully functional, professional grade equipment.	8am-5pm each day	\$295.00 (\$425.00 for GPS + AGPS)
TH	May 18-20 Amherst Sweet Briar College	Managing to Create the Ancient Forest. Conference will provide a forum for forest landowners, forest managers, educators, conservationists, volunteers, and others interested in the long-term management of forests to learn about creating the ancient forests of the future. Topics will include characteristics of old-growth forests, improving biodiversity, return of the American chestnut, introducing missing species, caring for forest edge, and attracting forest birds. <i>Website at: www.lynchburg.edu/500yearforest.</i>	8am-5pm each day	\$95.00
VFPA	May 19-20 Richmond Virginia State Fairgrounds	East Coast Sawmill and Logging Equipment Exposition. The year's largest showcase of sawmill, logging, pallet, and related manufacturing machinery and equipment, supplies, and services in the Eastern United States. Over 12 acres of outdoor exhibit space and hundreds of indoor booths. No fee for pre-registrants.	9am-5pm each day	no fee (\$5.00 at the gate)
RO	May 24-25 Richmond	Statistics for Forest Inventory. Course is designed to give foresters and land managers the tools necessary to design, conduct, and analyze forest inventories that provide desired accuracy. For foresters who conduct inventories or interpret inventory data. <i>Website at: www.conted.vt.edu/forestry/inventory.</i>	8am-5pm each day	\$250.00

USING THE CALENDAR

For more information or to register for a specific event, identify the event contact (whose initials are to the left of the event), by referring to the "Event Contacts" information box (for example VT = Virginia Tech).

event contact	date/location	event/description (preregistration required unless noted otherwise; TBA = to be announced)	time	fee
RR	June 1-3 Roanoke	Advancing Community Sustainability. Those seeking to foster sustainability in their communities will interact with seasoned practitioners. Plenary and roundtable sessions will examine the practice of sustainability in adaptive reuse, sprawl prevention, alternative transit, waste management, energy systems, and industrial ecology. <i>Website at: www.conted.vt.edu/advcom.</i>	7am-7pm each day	\$150.00
DG	June 3 Halifax	Southside Spring Fling: Forestry and Wildlife Field Day. Tour the James Edmunds Farm in Halifax County and learn practical pine and hardwood timber and wildlife habitat management practices. Review a two-year old natural oak stand interplanted with loblolly pine. Wildlife food plots: what works, what doesn't and why. Other topics include pine thinning and proper pine seedling handling and planting.	9am-4pm	\$5.00
HH	June 8-9 Blacksburg	Estate Planning for Forest Landowners. Gain a working knowledge of the federal estate and gift tax and overview of state death tax considerations applicable to timberland in your estate. Implications of recent tax law changes for accumulating and protecting forestry assets are discussed. Strategies for intergenerational transfer of timberland are emphasized. <i>Website at: www.conted.vt.edu/forestry/estate.</i>	8am-5pm each day	\$275.00
RH	June 10-11 Roanoke Explore Park	Blue Ridge Garden Festival. Demonstrations by nationally known garden experts, display and idea gardens created by area nurseries, marketplace with wealth of garden-related merchandise, and delicious foods served by the historic Brugh Tavern; childrens activities. <i>Website at: www.explorepark.org/gardenfest.</i>	all day each day	\$10.00 (2-day pass)
RO	June 13-14 Virginia Beach	Getting More from Your Timber Cruises. Wood buying and land management businesses rely on cruise data for high dollar decisions. Timber cruisers must have confidence that they have the best data as well as know how to make the most of what they have. <i>Website at: www.conted.vt.edu/forestry/timbercruises.</i>	all day each day	\$275.00
DC	June 19-24 Holiday Lake 4-H Camp	Holiday Lake Forestry Camp for Youth. Campers ages 14-16 accepted by nomination/application from local foresters, school teachers, and SWCD's. Instruction by natural resource managers in forest management, tree improvement, fire control, tree ID, environmental protection, reforestation, and wildlife management.	all day each day	\$35.00
RO	June 26-27 Blacksburg	Faster Point Sampling. Point sampling is the most cost-effective means of obtaining volume estimates for forested areas. Course provides knowledge to better design, conduct, and analyze point samples for pulpwood and sawlog volume estimates. Techniques presented will allow timber cruisers to collect samples faster with no loss of accuracy. <i>Website at: www.conted.vt.edu/faster/point.htm</i>	8am-5pm each day	\$235.00
BL	June (TBA) Washington D.C.	National Arboretum Workday and Tour. Join the Community Forestry Network to assist the U.S. National Arboretum maintain one of their many plant collections. Dress coolly for moderate physical activity. Bring your lunch.	9am-2pm	no fee

EVENT CONTACTS

for more information or to register for a specific event, please contact:

event contact	name/affiliation	phone	fax	e-mail
BL	Brian LeCouteur, MWCOG - Community Forestry Network	202/962-3393	202/962-3201	blecouteur@mwkog.org
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CC	C.J. Conner, Pittsylvania County Cooperative Extension	804/432-7770	804/432-7777	cconner@vt.edu
DC	David Coffman, Virginia Department of Forestry	804/977-6555	804/296-2369	coffmand@dof.state.va.us
DG	Dan Goerlich, Halifax County Cooperative Extension	804/476-2147	804/476-7777	dalego@vt.edu
GP	Glenda Parrish, Virginia Forestry Association	804/741-0836	804/741-0838	vafa@erols.com
HH	Harry Haney, Virginia Tech Department of Forestry	540/231-5212	540/231-3698	hhaney@vt.edu
JP	Jen Peachey, The State Arboretum of Virginia	540/837-1758	540/837-1523	jlp4y@virginia.edu
LC	Laura Covert, The Wintergreen Nature Foundation	804/325-8169	804/325-1464	wtgfn@aol.com
RH	Regina Hopkins, Virginia Explore Park	540/427-1800	540/427-1880	jevans@explorepark.org
RO	Rich Oderwald, Virginia Tech Department of Forestry	540/231-5297	540/231-3330	oderwald@vt.edu
RR	Richard Rich, Virginia Tech Department of Political Science	540/231-6571	540/231-6078	urban@vt.edu
TH	Ted Harris, 500 Year Forest Foundation	804/384-2324	804/384-3268	highview@lynchburg.net
VFPA	Virginia Forest Products Association	804/737-5625	804/737-9437	

New Cost Share Program Provides Major Incentives for Water Quality Improvement

On March 8, Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Commonwealth of Virginia will launch a \$91 million program to restore up to 35,000 acres of environmentally sensitive land along the Chesapeake Bay and many of Virginia's streams and rivers. The programs were developed to help protect the Chesapeake Bay and other coastal estuaries from the effects of excessive nutrients and sediments resulting from agricultural runoff.

The total cost of the program is expected to reach \$91 million over 15 years. Of that amount, \$68 million will come from the federal government and \$23 million from Virginia. Virginia will also spend up to \$3.75 million to buy 8,000 acres of voluntary permanent conservation easements; 6,000 acres in the bay project and 2,000 acres in the Southern Rivers Project. The projects seek to reduce nitrogen contaminants in streams and rivers by more than 600,000 pounds per year, phosphorus by over 90,000 tons, and sediment by over 50,000 tons per year. Other objectives are restoring wetlands and providing wildlife habitat for species associated with riparian and wetland areas, especially threatened and endangered species such as the peregrine falcon and the Virginia big eared bat, as well as many threatened and endangered aquatic invertebrates and mollusks.

The CREP combines an existing USDA program, the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), with state programs to provide a framework for partnerships to meet specific state and national environmental objectives. The program provides for voluntary agreements with farmers to convert cropland to native grasses, trees, and other vegetation, in return for rental payments and other incentives.

What is the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program?

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program or CREP is a joint, Federal-State land retirement conservation program targeted to address State and nationally significant agriculture-related environmental effects. This voluntary program uses financial incentives to encourage farmers and ranchers to enroll in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) in contracts of 10 to 15 years duration to remove lands from agricultural production. The Virginia enhancement program consists of two components: the Chesapeake Bay CREP and the Southern Rivers CREP. When fully implemented, these projects will collectively restore up to 30,500 acres of riparian habitat and 4,500 acres of wetlands. The Chesapeake Bay CREP will target 25,000 acres within the Bay watershed, while the Southern Rivers CREP will target 10,000 acres in non-Bay drainage basins.

Goals and Benefits of the Virginia CREP

The goals of the Virginia CREP are threefold:

1. To help agricultural producers meet nutrient reduction goals in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed in addition to promoting voluntary nutrient reduction in non-Bay watersheds;
2. To achieve the following collective reductions in overall nonpoint source contribution due to agriculture in the affected basins:
 - Nitrogen - over 600,000 pounds per year;
 - Phosphorus - over 90,000 pounds per year;
 - Sediment - over 50,000 tons per year;
3. To provide substantial wildlife habitat enhancement for the preservation of natural diversity of the biological resources of the Commonwealth, including threatened and endangered species such as the peregrine falcon and the big-eared bat, associated with riparian and wetland habitats.

Eligible Lands

Producers can offer land in any part of the Chesapeake Bay watershed that meets the eligibility requirements identified for the Virginia CREP. The Southern Rivers CREP project area includes areas within drainage basins

outside of the Chesapeake watershed that meet at least one of the following criteria:

1. A "high" priority ranking for total agricultural pollution as identified in The Virginia Nonpoint Source Pollution Watershed Assessment Report, July 1997;
2. A "high" Natural Heritage Resource watershed ranking as identified in The Virginia Nonpoint Source Pollution Watershed Assessment Report, July 1997;
3. "Priority County" status in the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries Virginia Bobwhite Quail Management Plan;
4. Watersheds located within the New River Basin, which have been designated as an American Heritage River.

Virginia CREP Requirements and Sign-Up

Eligible producers will be able to enroll in 10- to 15-year CRP contracts. Producers may extend the benefits of the program through separate contracts with the State. Virginia will attempt to enroll up to 8,000 acres of eligible lands in permanent conservation easements. Enrollment for CREP will be on a continuous basis beginning immediately. The applicant must be able to offer otherwise eligible acreage that meets one or more of the following criteria:

- Filter strip within 100 feet from stream bank or drainage channel;
- Riparian buffer within 300 feet from the stream bank or drainage channel;
- Wetland restoration: entirely hydric soils or predominantly hydric soils, not to exceed 40 acres in size.

Applicants also must satisfy the basic eligibility criteria for CRP. Land must be cropland that has been cropped two out of the past five years that is physically and legally capable of being cropped. Marginal pasture land can also be eligible to be enrolled provided it is suitable for use as a riparian buffer planted to trees. In addition, producers enrolling the land must generally have owned or operated the land for at least one year prior to enrollment. Persons who have an existing CRP contract or an approved offer with a contract pending are not eligible for CREP until that contract expires. Haying and grazing will not be permitted during the CRP contract period unless the Secretary of Agriculture permits it for emergency purposes under normal CRP rules.

CREP is another option that a farmer may select to enhance their land; an applicant may still enroll in the regular general CRP or continuous sign up CRP. However, CREP provides additional benefits not available through the general and/or continuous sign up. The CREP enrollment process is on a continuous basis and payments are at a higher effective rate.

Landowner Payments under CREP

There are two types of payments for which participants in the Virginia CREP will be eligible: annual rental payments and cost-share assistance for the installation of the conservation practices on land that is retired. The annual rental payment will be based on the current soil rental rate, as calculated by the Farm Service Agency (FSA) for general CRP purposes. The gross rental payment will be calculated in accordance with the following schedule:

- On land enrolled as marginal pastureland, the rental payment shall be determined using the county average CRP rental rate within the respective county as the base rate; *or*
- On land enrolled as cropland, the rental payment shall be determined using the weighted average of the current CRP soil rental rates on the enrolled acreage; *and*
- A 120 percent incentive rate will be applied to the respective base rate; *and*
- A \$5 per acre additional amount will be allowed to reflect maintenance requirements.

The total annual per acre payment, including any State incentives, may not exceed \$100 on land enrolled in the Chesapeake Bay CREP and \$90 on

CREP continues on page 6

Trust Teams with Landowners for Water Quality Improvement in Southwest Virginia

John Hutchinson

Western Virginia Land Trust

The Western Virginia Land Trust (WVLT) will pay landowners in targeted watersheds to restore and permanently protect their stream banks in a new program starting this summer. The Southwest Streams Partnership will acquire permanent conservation easements on the riparian zone of streams in 12 hydrologic units (listed in the chart to the right) of the Upper Roanoke and New River Basins.

Using data from the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), WVLT has identified two concentrations of watersheds with high levels of nonpoint source pollution and "impaired" streams in the Roanoke River and New River Basins. Impaired streams fail to meet the Clean Water Act goals of supporting wildlife and being "fishable and swimmable." Many impaired stream segments and nonpoint source pollution are related to urban or agricultural land uses. These concentrated water quality problems occur where urban development and rural land uses meet in- and downstream from the Roanoke metropolitan area in the Roanoke River basin. Problems are especially acute in the Tinker Creek (Roanoke County) and Mill Creek (Montgomery County) watersheds, where urban and agricultural land uses interface and where agricultural and forest land are being developed at high rates.

Under the agreement, landowners will sell the right to conduct activities that degrade stream banks including new construction in the protected area. Each easement will be written to fit the property and needs of each landowner while protecting the impaired streambank. Easements will include an agreement to develop and implement a conservation plan to protect the riparian zone in consultation with Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), the local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), and other natural resource professionals.

Under the voluntary conservation plans, landowners will determine what best management practices (e.g., tree planting, maintaining existing forest buffers, limiting cattle access to streams, establishing stable stream crossings and alternative water sources) are needed to protect and restore stream health. The WVLT easements can be used in conjunction with CREP agreements and other soil and water conservation cost share programs to make temporary water quality gains permanent. The combined payments will make land conservation and stream restoration highly affordable to landowners.

For more information contact Chris Arthur at the Western Virginia Land Trust: 540/985-0000; wvlt@msn.com

Western Virginia Land Trust Riparian Easement Watersheds

Locality	Hydrologic Unit	Watershed Name
Upper Roanoke River Basin		
Roanoke County	L03	Upper Roanoke River
Roanoke City	L04	Roanoke River/Mason Creek
Roanoke City/County, Botetourt County, Vinton	L05	Tinker Creek/CarvinCreek/Glade Creek
Franklin County	L09	Maggodee Creek
Bedford County	L25	Big Otter Creek/Elk Creek
Bedford County	L26	Little Otter River/Machine Creek
New River Basin		
Grayson County	N02R	Upper New River/Wilson Creek
Galax, Grayson County, Carroll County	N06R	New River/Chestnut Creek/Brush Creek
Wythe County, Pulaski County	N08R	New River/Shorts Creek/Pine Run
Montgomery County	N18R	New River/Crab Creek
Floyd County	N20R	West Little Fork River
Montgomery County	N21R	Little River/Indian Creek/Brush Creek

Source: Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) 1998 303(d) Total Maximum Daily Load Priority List, Part 1 - Impaired Waters (1999) and Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Virginia Nonpoint Source Pollution Watershed Assessment Report (1998). NPS categories in which a hydrologic unit is ranked *high* or *medium* by DCR are listed.

Virginia's Forest Buffer Program

J. Michael Foreman

Virginia Department of Forestry

With millions of people living in Virginia's watersheds, protection of the forest land base is essential to maintaining the overall health and resiliency of our shared ecosystems. Streamside forests, or riparian areas, are one way to mitigate the loss of forest land and reduce the chance of degrading water quality. Although comprising only 5% to 10% of the land in a watershed, riparian areas fulfill one or more of the following basic roles:

- Protect fish and wildlife by supplying food, cover, and thermal protection;
- Help prevent upland sources of pollution from reaching surface waters by trapping, filtering, and converting sediments, nutrients, and chemicals;
- Maintain the hydrologic, hydraulic, and ecological integrity of stream channels and associated soil and vegetation.

Riparian areas may utilize a variety of vegetation types and are the most beneficial of any type buffer because of the multiple environmental benefits they provide. Riparian buffers vary in size, shape, vegetation mix, and management objectives. Forested buffers are estimated to be 70% to 100% effective in filtering nutrients and sediments from runoff. They also moderate runoff and protect stream banks and reduce the cost for water treatment plant operation.

Virginia's Buffer Program

Virginia's roots in the Riparian Buffer Program began in 1994 with the production of a Chesapeake Bay report on the importance of buffers. The Bay's Executive Council which consists of the Governor's of the Bay states, the Mayor of Washington D.C., and the EPA Administrator,

called for the formation of a Riparian Working Group to formulate program and policy options for the Bay Program. The Riparian Working Group, chaired by Virginia State Forester Jim Garner, worked for two years and produced a final report with six objectives; these objectives are as follows:

- Restore missing or inadequate buffers;
- Conserve existing buffers;
- Enhance coordination and accountability;
- Enhance incentives;
- Promote education and outreach;
- Target, track, and conduct research.

The overall goal of the multi-state program is to restore 2010 miles of new riparian buffers by the year 2010. Virginia's goal is 610 miles of that 2010 mile goal. Virginia's state and federal agencies are committed to continuing work in riparian buffer restoration. Governor Jim Gilmore signed Executive Order #48 outlining state agency responsibilities in the riparian buffer effort. The Virginia Riparian Working Group has been created to oversee the conservation and restoration of riparian forest and other buffers.

Do You Have a Need?

Virginia Department of Forestry staff as well as Soil and Water Conservation District and Natural Resources Conservation Service personnel are ready and able to assist landowners with their riparian restoration projects. Many different types of cost-sharing programs are available to help with this initiative. Technical assistance delivery is our number one goal with this program. You may have a simple need that you were unaware of such as fencing a part of your field off or enhancing an existing buffer.

Remember, riparian forest and other buffers connect the landscape for a variety of beneficial ecological and social reasons. Please take time to assess your land for restoration needs and contact one of the above listed agencies for technical assistance.

BUFFERS from page 1

tured in a forest buffer. The resultant damage is the severe degradation of stream banks and a threat to biological life within the stream.

Rain gardens have benefits common to riparian buffers. The plants selected for rain gardens are plants that grow well in riparian zones. They tolerate the exposure to extreme fluctuations in hydrology. The rain garden area can be used as a landscape focal point and a created habitat for wildlife. For more information about rain gardens visit the Virginia Department of Forestry website at <http://state.vipnet.org.dof/>

CREP from page 4

land enrolled in the Southern Rivers CREP. Virginia will offer one-time lump sum incentive payments based on the length of the CREP contract. For 10-year contracts, the incentive payment will be \$50 per acre enrolled. For 15-year contracts, the payment will total \$75 per acre enrolled. The State will also provide a tax credit to eligible landowners for costs borne as part of the CREP.

In addition to land rental rates, the Commodity Credit Corporation will pay up to 50 percent of the cost of installing conservation practices, i.e., installing new vegetation or fencing. In addition, Virginia will pay 25 percent of the eligible reimbursable costs of conservation practice installation for a total reimbursement of 75%. Qualifying conservation practices under CREP include filter strips, riparian buffers, and wetland restoration. For more information on CREP contact your county U.S. Dept. of Agriculture Service Center, Farm Service Agency local office, Soil and Water Conservation District, the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation.

inside the next issue:

- conservation easements: part 3
- controlling tree-of-heaven
- cost share update
- resource review

July 2000

CONTACT YOUR NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AGENCIES:



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