

**RIPARIAN HERBACEOUS COVER  
(CODE 390)**

**DESCRIPTION**

A strip or area of herbaceous vegetation situated in the transitional zone between terrestrial and aquatic habitats.

**PURPOSE**

To protect and improve water quality, reduce erosion from wind and water and to prevent pollution from nutrients, sediment, organic materials or agricultural chemicals from reaching the waters of the State.

**CONDITION**

Apply this practice on land adjacent to water courses, water bodies and wetlands where bank stability is adequate to support the practice and areas where water quality is impaired or where there is a high potential of water quality impairment.

**POLICIES**

1. Riparian Herbaceous Cover used as a riparian buffer (CP21) shall not be less than 35 feet in width or more than a maximum average of 100 feet wide.
2. NRCS Standards and Specifications for Riparian Herbaceous Cover (Code 390) shall be followed when applying this practice.
3. Riparian Herbaceous Cover shall be at least 35 feet wide if dissolved contaminants (e.g. nutrients, pesticides) in surface runoff or in shallow ground water are identified as a resource concern.
4. Concentrated flow erosion or mass soil movement shall be controlled in the up gradient area prior to establishment of the riparian buffer.
  - a. Cost-share may be provided for additional filter strip width based on the criteria that follows. Use the Extended Buffer Worksheet, Section III, page 16. (Regional CREP acreage caps apply and may affect eligibility for extended buffers or riparian herbaceous cover.)
    - i. In the region covering Cecil, Kent, Queen Anne, Caroline, Talbot, Dorchester, Somerset, Worcester and Wicomico counties combined, CREP offers for these buffer practices wider than 100 feet, up to a maximum of 250 feet, based on average width, will only be eligible for land determined to be Highly Erodible Land (HEL)

## Riparian Herbaceous Cover 390-2

- ii. In the region covering Harford, Baltimore, Carroll, Howard, Montgomery, Anne Arundel, Prince George's, Charles, Calvert, St. Mary's, Frederick, Washington, Allegany and Garrett counties combined, CREP offers for these buffer practices wider than 100 feet, up to a maximum of 250 feet, based on average width, may be eligible where additional water quality benefits can be derived such that:
  1. The soils in the additional width are at least 50% hydric;
  2. The additional buffer width is occasionally or frequently flooded; or,
  3. On HEL land, where the cost-effectiveness of the additional width is \$40/ton of soil saved or less. If the cost-effectiveness of the practice exceeds \$40/ton of soil saved, use the variable rate formula to determine the amount of cost-share funds the applicant could receive from all funding sources.
5. Riparian Herbaceous Cover used as a Marginal Pastureland Wetland Buffer (CP30) shall not be less than 35 feet in width or more than a maximum average of 100 feet wide. Animals must be present or a water quality condition must exist. Only the components/area of a Riparian Herbaceous Cover that relate to the buffer may be eligible for cost-share. Cost-share eligibility is determined as follows:
  - a. Animals must be present on the pasture and will be excluded as part of the practice. Cost-eligibility will be based on the number of animals units that regularly use or occupy the area being addressed.
  - b. If a minimum of 15 animal units are present, cost-share will be based on the applicable flat rates.
  - c. Operations with 8 to 14 animal units will be based on the animal unit cost-effectiveness: (number of animal units) x (\$25/year) x (maintenance life) minus USDA cost-share. (See Section III, Page 13, 44B.)
  - d. Operations with less than 8 animal units are not eligible for MACS unless they meet the HEL cost-effectiveness criteria.
  - e. On HEL land, the cost-effectiveness of the additional width must be \$40/ton of soil saved or less. If the cost-effectiveness of the practice exceeds \$40/ton of soil saved, use the variable rate formula to determine the amount of cost-share funds the applicant could receive from all funding sources.
6. The practice must reduce erosion and maintain or improve the quality of the receiving waters of the State.

## Riparian Herbaceous Cover 390-3

7. Cost-sharing ***is authorized*** for the following measures:
  - a. Practices needed to stabilize a source of sediment including grading, shaping, filling, seeding, liming, fertilizing (to establish grass), or similar measures which the SCD determines practical for the solution of the problem.
8. Cost-sharing ***is not authorized*** for the following measures:
  - a. Destruction of vegetation in order to plant trees, nor for tree planting if existing vegetation is providing adequate protection, nor for tree planting.
  - b. The purpose of establishing filter areas for removing sediment, organic matter, pollutants, and for utilizing nutrients from wastewater. Use the Wastewater Treatment Strip practice (Code 635) for this purpose.
  - c. Where wildlife habitat is identified as the primary purpose or eligibility is not justified by water quality benefits.
9. Site preparation and planting to establish vegetative cover shall be done at a time and in a manner to ensure survival and growth of the selected species. Supplemental moisture shall be applied if and when necessary to assure early survival and establishment of selected species. Site preparation is eligible for cost-share provided if it is an area of light infestation, i.e. less than 20% of the site is covered by Multiflora Rose or other invasive woody species. The maximum cost-share available for site preparation is \$600 per acre.
10. Applicants are required to be in compliance with Maryland Nutrient Management Program requirements and regulations.
11. This practice must be properly maintained for a minimum of ten (10) years. The applicant agrees to provide all equipment, labor and materials needed to meet this requirement.

## **COST-SHARE RATE**

The State cost-share payment will not exceed 87.5% of the total eligible cost, not to exceed \$50,000 per project.

USDA shares will be considered co-cost shares and entered accordingly on the Water Quality Project form and Claim for Payment.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

***Applicant(s) with an outstanding Unsatisfactory On-Farm Status Review of BMP Maintenance and Use of previous project(s) may be ineligible for further MACS Cost-Share funding. When a previous project expires with outstanding unsatisfactory status, the applicant is ineligible for any future MACS funding.***

*The following items are needed:*

1. A copy of a recorded deed(s) for the parcel(s) where the BMP is located. If the current, appropriate deed is already on file in the MACS Office, then record both the agreement number of the file where the deed is kept and the liber/folio numbers in the General Comments section of the application.
2. A copy of the Real Property Data Search page from the Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation's website ([www.dat.state.md.us](http://www.dat.state.md.us)) indicating the Maryland Property View Account ID Number and owner information.
3. An aerial photograph indicating the property lines as well as all existing and proposed BMPs. For sediment control practices, indicate the drainage area and the direction of flow.
4. A plan view sketch graphically demonstrating the layout and details of the proposed BMP. The sketch should also distinguish buffer widths.
5. The Extended Buffer Worksheet, if applicable.