

**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 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 the establishment of the riparian buffer.
 - a. Cost-share may be provided for additional filter strip width based on the CREP criteria below. Use the Extended Buffer Worksheet (SECTION III, #14).
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, CREP contracts 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) or for acres with a specific species wildlife plan.

- 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;
 3. The additional buffer width is HEL land; or
 4. If justified by a specific species wildlife plan.
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 animal units that regularly use or occupy the area being addressed.
 - b. If a minimum of **fifteen (15)** animal units (AU) are present, cost-share will be based on the applicable flat rates and project limits.
 - c. Operations with **one (1) to less than fifteen (15)** animal units (AU) may be eligible based on the animal unit pro-rated cost-eligibility formulas. (SECTION III, *Water Quality Project Application Instructions*, #44B).
6. The practice must reduce erosion and maintain or improve the quality of the receiving waters of the State.
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, for tree planting if existing vegetation is providing adequate protection, or 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 the 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 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. 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.
- 11. The applicant and the farm's Nutrient Management Plan must be in compliance with Maryland's Nutrient Management regulations (COMAR 15.20.08) at the time of Application. No Applications will be approved without a Nutrient Management Plan Certification Form submitted with the Application (SECTION III, #30).

COST-SHARE RATE

The State cost-share payment will not exceed 100% of the total eligible cost, not to exceed \$150,000 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 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.maryland.gov) 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 (SECTION III, #14).
6. Nutrient Management Plan Certification Form shall be submitted with the Application (SECTION III, #30).