

Delaware River Watershed BMP Cost Share Program

Program Summary

Delaware River WRAPS has cost share funding available for Best Management Practices (BMPs) to be implemented in the watershed in 2010. These funds are for projects that fall under the following 4 general categories:

1. Innovative Stream Buffer Program
2. Livestock Waste Management
3. Streambank Stabilization
4. Water Retention and Sediment Control

Cost Share Rates:

- Cost share rates will be based on county average costs (when available) for the county in which the practice will be implemented. These rates can be obtained from local conservation district and NRCS offices.
- The maximum cost share rate shall be up to 70% of actual cost of the project (not to exceed the County Average Cost Share Rate).

Standards and Specifications:

NRCS standards and specifications will be used for all practices under this program where one exists. However, this program also contains a demonstration component for which existing standards and specifications may not exist. In such cases where NRCS standards do not exist, acceptable best practices or modifications of existing standards will be used to the fullest extent possible. Where possible, demonstration practice standards will be developed with the goal of protecting the investment of cost share funds, guarding against failures and ensuring protection of water and soil resources.

Target Areas:

Funds will be targeted toward projects in high priority areas of the watershed. High priority areas include:

- Grasshopper Creek Sub-watershed – Bacteria and Phosphorus
- Mission Lake Sub-watershed – Eutrophication, Atrazine and Sedimentation
- Delaware River and Tributaries – Bacteria, Eutrophication and Sedimentation

Proximity to a stream or other protected water body will also be used to target resources. Other high priority areas in the watershed may be identified as TMDLs are developed or as monitoring and modeling data becomes available. Such priority areas will be added and

considered as applications are received at the discretion of the Delaware River WRAPS Stakeholder Leadership Team.

Eligibility:

- Projects must be implemented on land located within the boundaries of the Delaware River Watershed
- Landowners should be in compliance with a USDA approved conservation plan, but the lack of such a plan does not preclude eligibility for this program
- Operators/renters may apply for and receive cost share assistance; however the landowner of the property on which the proposed practice will be implemented must sign the project contract

Completion Period:

Practices must be completed in a timely manner after contracts have been approved. The following timetable will be used for each of the 4 BMP types in this Program. Contract extensions will be granted only when warranted at the discretion the Delaware River WRAPS Stakeholder Leadership Team:

- 6 months for Water Retention/Sediment Control and Livestock Waste Management practices
- 9 months for Innovative Riparian Buffer Program
- 12 months for Streambank Stabilization

Signup Period:

- The signup period opens on February 1, 2010 and shall continue through April 1, 2010.
- Should any unobligated funds remain after April 1, 2010, the signup period may be extended until all funds are obligated.
- In the event that funds are not completely expended after all approved projects are completed, the excess funds may be used on applications that are on hand or may be carried over to the following year, at the discretion of the Delaware River WRAPS Stakeholder Leadership Team.

Project Approval:

The Delaware River WRAPS Stakeholder Leadership Team is responsible for ranking and approval of applications for WRAPS cost share funds. Applications received between February 1, 2010 and April 1, 2010 shall be reviewed as soon as possible after the cutoff date. Approvals shall be based on benefits provided by proposed projects and on the merit of the application itself. A Project Rating Form will be used to assist with ranking and prioritization of projects. Decisions of the Stakeholder Leadership Team shall be final.

Program Descriptions

Innovative Riparian Buffer Program

This program is designed to increase the adoption of riparian buffers in the watershed. Features of the program include flexibility and fewer restrictions than traditional USDA riparian buffer programs. However, land enrolled in this buffer program will be subject to spot check to ensure that they are well-maintained. The buffers will also be monitored closely to assess their effectiveness in protecting water quality.

Cooperators may enroll cropland immediately adjacent to streams. The landowner will enter into a contract agreement which will require that the buffer be maintained for a 10-year period. During the contract period, the buffer will not be farmed or otherwise disturbed unless as specified in the contract.

Cooperators enrolled in this program shall receive an up-front lump sum payment. The lump sum payment amount shall be up to \$500/acre (unless otherwise noted). No additional cost share will be offered except as available from other programs. If a violation of the provisions of the 10-year contract occurs during the contract period, the cooperator will be required to repay the entire lump sum payment.

The area enrolled in the Innovative Riparian Buffer Program must be a minimum of 66 feet wide, with a maximum width allowed of 180 feet.

The cooperator has the option of choosing one of the following buffer options:

1. **Plant the area to a legume with inter-seeded grass:** The legume will be seeded at rates specified by the contract. An acceptable species of grass shall also be inter-seeded with the legume. The cooperator may harvest the buffer for hay after July 1, leaving a stubble height of at least 6 inches. No hay shall be cut from the buffer after August 15 to allow sufficient re-growth before the winter months. If the adjacent cropland fields are grazed after harvest, conditions a. through e. of option #2 will also apply.
2. **Plant the area to native grasses:** Following establishment, the grasses may be harvested for hay after July 1 (one cutting only, minimum stubble height of 6 inches) or left standing. There is no requirement to fence the riparian buffer to exclude livestock from the buffer when livestock is allowed to graze adjacent cropland fields after harvest so long as the following conditions are met:
 - a. Livestock access to the riparian buffer area occurs only after harvest of fall crops and is between October 1 and December 31.
 - b. Livestock have access to the buffer for no more than 60 days continuously during this time period.
 - c. A water supply (other than the stream) and shelter is provided for the livestock in a location that is as far removed from the riparian buffer area as possible.
 - d. Supplemental feed for the livestock is provided in a location as far removed from the stream as possible.
 - e. Livestock shall be removed from the field or otherwise excluded from the riparian buffer area if excessive livestock trampling of streambanks or loafing in areas immediately adjacent to the stream becomes evident during the grazing period.

3. Direct seeding of woody vegetation: Trees and shrub species native to northeast Kansas will be direct seeded into the buffer area to establish woody riparian vegetation. The Cooperator will work with the Kansas Forest Service and Kansas Wildlife & Parks to obtain adequate native seed, to develop a planting plan, and establish a management plan for the buffer strip. Costs for this type of seeding should be minimal; the only expense expected for the cooperator is the cost of seedbed preparation, disking in the seed and one or two herbicide applications during the establishment period. Livestock will not have access to the direct seeded riparian buffer until such time as the trees are well-established and the District Forester deems that damage to the integrity of the buffer is unlikely.
4. Natural regeneration/set aside: ***This option is not available at this time.***

Livestock Waste Management Program

This program will be used to implement practices that directly prevent livestock waste from entering streams and ponds from livestock lots, pasture, feeding areas or livestock loafing areas. It includes, but is not limited to, the following practices:

- Alternative livestock watering sources
- Hardened water crossings or watering points
- Fencing out riparian areas
- Mechanical windbreaks
- Others

Streambank Stabilization

This program will be used to implement practices that stabilize eroding or unstable streambanks on sites where significant reduction in sediment loading of the stream can be demonstrated. Practices eligible for this program include, but are not limited to:

- Bank re-shaping (in order to re-establish bank-protecting vegetation on the slope)
- Planting channel bank vegetation
- Installing rock vanes
- Installing bank toe protection structures
- Willow pole plantings
- Cedar tree revetments
- Others

Water Retention/Sediment Control

This program will be used to install practices or structures that control eroding lateral head-cuts and ditches along streams. The goal of this program is to control concentrated runoff and sediment that enters streams at specific points from adjacent fields or pasture. Eligible practices include:

- Sediment control basins
- Constructed wetlands
- Others

