

Action Plan

Upper and Middle James Riparian Consortium

2019-2024

Last Update: June 11, 2021



This Action Plan serves to outline the goals, action strategies, and implementation plan for actualizing these priorities within the Consortium. Additional information about the Consortium may be found at the website: www.jamesriverconsortium.org.

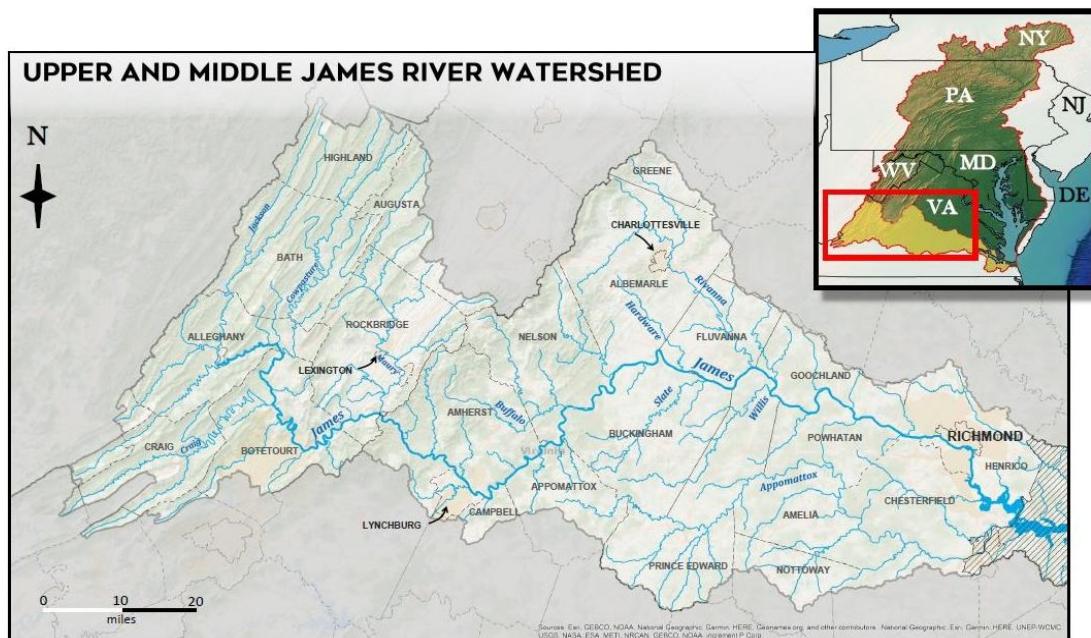
VISION

The Upper and Middle James Riparian Consortium (Consortium) is a group of partners that have a vision of “**Growing partnerships to create healthy streamside ecosystems for clean water in the James River today and tomorrow.**” Several Consortium partners work together in this collaborative effort with a Steering Committee guiding decision making, active action teams working on priority strategies, and an open door to new members and ideas. The Action Plan is a working document, updated biannually.

MISSION

The Upper and Middle James Riparian Consortium is a network of private, non-profit, and public partners. We share expertise and resources to increase implementation, as well as awareness of riparian buffers and their value to landowners, with a priority focus on riparian forest buffers, across the Upper and Middle James watersheds.

GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE



The geographic focus for the Consortium is the Upper and Middle James River Watershed.

VALUES

Collaboration -- We can go further together and seek opportunities to support, collaborate with, and learn from diverse partners both within and outside the James River watershed.

Stewardship -- We care for our existing riparian buffers and believe that stewardship is vital to sustained improvements in water quality and successful buffers.

Holistic -- We integrate practices such as livestock exclusion fencing, streambank stabilization, grass and forest buffers, and conservation easements that respond to landowner, landscape, and habitat needs.

Initiative -- We are proactive and take initiative to create solutions that respond to the needs of Consortium partners and our streamside ecosystems for long-term health of the James River and our communities.

GOALS

1. Increase collaboration and strengthen partnerships through developing an effective network of Riparian Consortium members.
2. Build knowledge and capacity about best practices and innovation to ensure the use of the best researched methods for the greatest success of riparian restoration.
3. Build awareness of the importance of riparian areas and deliver outreach based on identified partner priorities, landowner interests, and restoration opportunity areas to increase strategic riparian investments.
4. Coordinate implementation and fill funding gaps to support a holistic approach to riparian restoration projects that leverage partner resources and expertise.

The goals of the Consortium are carried out through four Action Teams: 1) Planning, 2) Knowledge Network, 3) Outreach & Targeting, and 4) Implementation. Each has associated strategies with key actions, timelines, and partners as follows.

ACTION TEAM 1: PLANNING

GOAL: Increase collaboration and strengthen partnerships through developing an effective network of Riparian Consortium members.

LEADS: James River Association, Dialogue + Design Associates (D+D)



ACTIONS	TIMEFRAME	PARTNER(S) RESPONSIBLE	RESOURCES	MEASURE OF SUCCESS
Strategy 1: Facilitate virtual and in-person meetings.				
A. Consortium Meetings to update the larger Membership of Action Team projects, share information, and get feedback.	2019-2021 (2022-2024)	Planning Team	NFWF-INSR (Support Needed 2022-2024)	Meetings held: 4 in 2019, 4 in 2020, and 6 in 2021 (3 per year in 2022-2024)
B. Steering Committee Meetings for Action Teams to give updates, make decisions around upcoming events, budgets, and projects, and guide structure and process.	2019-2021 (2022-2024)	Planning Team	NFWF-INSR (Support Needed 2022-2024)	Meetings held: On average, 10-12 meetings/year
C. Annual James River Buffer Summit to understand emerging challenges and opportunities, brainstorm needs and potential solutions, and celebrate successes of the year.	2019-2021 (2022-2024)	Planning Team	NFWF-INSR (Support Needed 2022-2024)	Summit held: Typically held in October
Strategy 2: Connect and align partners through shared documents and communication methods.				
A. Guiding Document to outline processes, structures, and partner roles within Consortium.	2019-2021 (2022-2024)	Planning Team	NFWF-INSR (Support Needed 2022-2024)	Complete version 1 by December 2020 and then update annually

B. Action Plan to outline goals, action strategies, and implementation plan for Consortium.	2019-2021 (2022-2024)	Planning Team	NFWF-INSR (Support Needed 2022-2024)	Complete version 1 by June 2021 and then update twice/year
C. Newsletter to give updates on upcoming meetings, project highlights, team updates, and potential funding for riparian restoration.	2019-2021 (2022-2024)	Planning Team	NFWF-INSR (Support Needed 2022-2024)	Sent monthly
D. Key Issues Report to identify specific barriers and challenges to riparian restoration.	2019 2022	Planning Team	NFWF-INSR (Support Needed 2022-2024)	Riparian Buffers one was completed in 2019. Plans for one on streambank stabilization and restoration planned for 2021 based on funding.

Strategy 3: Develop Resilient Collaborative Model.

A. Research and outreach around support structures and funding models of similar long-term collaboratives	2021 (2022-2024)	Planning Team	Feedback from S.C. and models from other collaboratives	Funding model determined and refined collaborative model
B. Develop funding matrix for Consortium strategies (resources needed, potential support, who is best suited to get that support)	2021 (2022-2024)	Planning Team	Feedback from S.C. and models from other collaboratives	Develop funding matrix and cultivate sustaining funding resources
C. Long-term self-facilitation plan with SC	2022-2024	Steering Committee and Planning Team	Decision-making by from S.C.	Plan developed

ACTION TEAM 2: KNOWLEDGE NETWORK

GOAL: Build awareness of the importance of riparian areas and deliver outreach based on identified partner priorities, landowner interests, and restoration opportunity areas to increase strategic riparian investments.

LEADS: Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, Stroud Water Research Center, Chesapeake Conservation Landscape Council

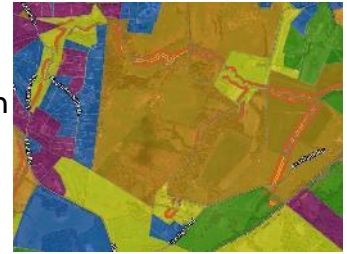


ACTIONS	TIMEFRAME	PARTNER(S) RESPONSIBLE	RESOURCES	MEASURE OF SUCCESS
Strategy 1: Build knowledge and capacity about best practices and innovations in riparian restoration for experienced and expert practitioners.				
A. Select test plot locations for riparian restoration methods	2019	JRA, Stroud	NFWF-INSR	

B. Install riparian buffers on test plots at selected properties in Middle and Upper James and track progress	2020	JRA, Conservation Services, Shannon Farm	NFWF-INSR	
C. Host Roundtables on Riparian Buffer Methods for the Middle and Upper James Watershed: through test plots and compiling partner experience in the region, the identification of the most cost-effective and successful methods for site preparation, planting methods, species selection, and establishment needs for region	2021	ACB, Whole team	NFWF-INSR	
D. Understand and address the barriers to adopting new and innovative practices in riparian restoration.	2022-2024		(Support Needed 2022-2024)	
E. Create a digital repository for articles/studies.	2021-2024	Stroud, ACB, PA DCNR, Conservation Services, VT	NFWF-INSR	
Strategy 2: Train businesses, practitioners, and volunteers in the best and cost-effective practices in riparian restoration, including planning, implementation, and maintenance.				
A. Develop regional-specific trainings in both the Middle and Upper James watershed	2020-2021	CBLP, ACB	NFWF-INSR	
B. State Farm Workforce Development - Testing Buffer training pilot at the State Farm Correctional Facility	2021	CBLP, VCE	NFWF-INSR	Pilot training completed
C. Train and employ interns and volunteers in buffer verification and stewardship (e.g., riparian stewards)	2022-2024	CBLP, JRA, ACB, DOF	(Support Needed 2022-2024)	
D. Identify sustainable and long-term approaches to hosting and funding regional-specific trainings.	2022-2024		(Support Needed 2022-2024)	
Strategy 3: Increase capacity of businesses to integrate riparian restoration into their business models.				
A. Facilitate and demonstrate the workforce pipeline of riparian restoration trainees into employment at restoration companies.	2022-2024	CBLP, Conservation Services, Stroud	(Support Needed 2022-2024)	
B. Exploration of the business model that makes riparian restoration work.	2022-2024	CBLP	(Support needed 2022-2024)	

ACTION TEAM 3: TARGETING & OUTREACH

GOAL: Build awareness of the importance of riparian areas and deliver outreach based on identified partner priorities, landowner interests, and restoration opportunity areas to increase strategic riparian investments



LEADS: GreenFin Studio, Center for Watershed Protection

ACTIONS	TIMEFRAME	PARTNER(S) RESPONSIBLE	RESOURCES	MEASURE OF SUCCESS
Strategy 1: Develop and implement system to strategically prioritize landowner recruitment.				
A. Pilot landowner recruitment strategy in two NFWF priority subwatersheds	2019-2021	CWP	NFWF-INSR	1 Strategy developed for 2 NFWF priority subwatersheds
B. Establish criteria for utilizing analysis for implementation in priority sub-watersheds	2020	CWP	NFWF-INSR	Hold meeting with users to utilize findings and note results
C. Expand analysis to select counties within Middle and Upper James	2022-2024	CWP	(Support Needed 2022-2024)	Identify counties of interest to partners for analysis
D. Understand partner needs for targeting areas for streambank stabilization and restoration and implement solution to assist	2022-2024	CWP	(Support Needed 2022-2024)	Review Key Issues Report
Strategy 2: Hold Consortium Outreach Events to raise awareness of riparian buffers and connect citizens to assistance.				
A. Hold 4 Field Days (or outreach events): 2 Middle James, 2 Upper James	2020-2021	Each event will have different leads	NFWF-INSR (\$4,000)	4 events held (120 attendees total)
B. Determine process for selecting outreach event locations for future years	2021		NFWF-INSR	Process for outreach events developed
C. Hold 6 Outreach Events (2 per year) to raise awareness of riparian buffers and increase adoption of practice	2022-2024	Each event will have different leads	(Support Needed 2022-2024)	Events Held: 2 events/year
Strategy 3: Host online hub for landowners and practitioners to explore programs, learn, and connect.				
A. Create and maintain Consortium website to serve as a hub for information.	2019-2021 (2022-2024)	JRA, Webbones	NFWF-INSR (Support Needed 2022-2024)	1 website created (www.jamesriverconsortium.org) and updated as needed
B. Create and maintain James River Buffer Program website to provide simple, consistent messaging, host central application process, and	2019-2021 (2022-2024)	JRA, Webbones, DOF, CBF	NFWF-INSR (Support Needed 2022-2024)	1 website created (www.jamesriverbuffer.org) and updated as needed

connect volunteers to opportunities.				
C. Create Streamside Program Report tool to connect landowners and practitioners to available riparian programs. User can enter a few questions about the property and the report provides a narrowed down list of potential riparian programs and local contact information.	2019-2024	Chesapeake Conservancy	NFWF-INSR (2019-2021), VEE (2022-2024)	1 tool created (https://jamesriverconsortium.org/programs/) and then updated quarterly
D. Website audit to identify strengths/weaknesses of current website, recommendations for content and for information architecture of the site to enhance messaging and engagement.	2021	GreenFin Studio, Webbones	NFWF-INSR	1 summary report with findings

Strategy 4: Cohesive outreach strategy for riparian outreach across Consortium partners.

A. Develop outreach/marketing strategy for Consortium based on partner needs.	2021	GreenFin Studio	NFWF-INSR	1 Plan. Update annually based on emerging audiences.
B. Inventory and catalog existing outreach resources (landowner highlights, how tos, etc.)	2021	GreenFin Studio	NFWF-INSR	Spreadsheet of existing resources including links to those materials. To be updated quarterly as new materials become available
C. Develop marketing tools and outreach material to fill identified gaps (i.e. videos, photos, social media packages for partners, etc.)	2021	GreenFin Studio	NFWF-INSR	Revisit once gaps are identified.
D. Develop promotional video and landowner highlights for James River Buffer Program	2021	Filmspire, JRA, DOF, CBF	NFWF-INSR	1 promotional video, 2 landowner story videos, high res photos
E. Develop an outreach and engagement toolkit.	2021	GreenFin Studio	NFWF-INSR	Handbook, brochure, fact sheets list of TSPs and funding resources

Strategy 5: Support coordination across Consortium Outreach and Targeting partners.

A. Hold quarterly team meetings	2019-2021 (2022-2024)		NFWF-INSR (Support Needed 2022-2024)	Meetings Held: 4/year
B. Find Team Lead to coordinate team meetings, keep track of team members, and worksheet.	2021		NFWF-INSR	Team Lead secured

C. Engage new partners, especially those focused on outreach, targeting, and marketing for partner organizations	2021	All partners	NFWF-INSR	At least 5 new partners engaged
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ACTION TEAM 4: IMPLEMENTATION

GOAL: Coordinate implementation and fill funding gaps to support a holistic approach to riparian restoration projects that leverage partner resources and expertise.

LEADS: James River Association, Trout Unlimited

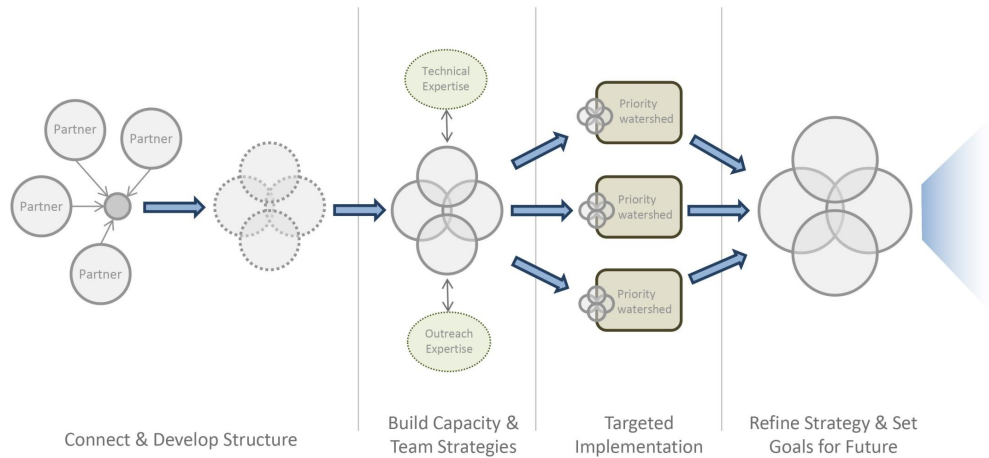


ACTIONS	TIMEFRAME	PARTNER(S) RESPONSIBLE	RESOURCES	MEASURE OF SUCCESS
Strategy 1: Implement the James River Buffer Program to fill gaps in riparian forest buffer programs				
A. Install riparian buffer projects in Middle James through hardwood with shelter method	2019-2024	JRA	VEE-JRWQIP	242 acres (2019-2021) + 235 acres (2022-2024)
B. Install riparian buffer projects in Middle James through natural regeneration techniques	2019-2021	DOF	VEE-JRWQIP	700 acres (2019-2021)
C. Install riparian forest buffers in Upper James	2021-2023	CBF	VEE-JRWQIP	200 acres
D. Explore opportunities and understand barriers for additional local organizations to get involved	2021	JRA	NFWF-INSR, VEE-JRWQIP	Pilot engaging 1 local organization in JRB
Strategy 2: Implement streambank stabilization and habitat improvement programs				
A. Implement Upper James River Home Initiative	2019-2021	TU	VEE-JRWQIP	Metrics from Sammy- to be added
B. Identify opportunities and barriers for this work in other areas of Upper and/or Middle James	2022-2024		(Support Needed 2022-2024)	
Strategy 3: Administer flexible funding to support implementation of priority riparian restoration projects				
A. Select and implement projects in NFWF priority sub-watersheds (James in Goochland/Powhatan, Maury, or Slate) or NFWF priority brook trout and black duck habitats)	2020-2021	Action Team	NFWF-INSR	50 acres of buffer
B. Determine criteria for ongoing Implementation Fund to implement projects that integrate Action Team strategies and Focus Areas	2021	Action Team	NFWF-INSR	Criteria developed

Strategy 4: Protect riparian buffer investment through a James River Stewardship Program				
A. Case studies on other programs that support stewardship activities	2020-2021		NFWF-INSR	At least 3 case studies
B. Identify which areas to implement Stewardship Program: for example, across the entire watershed or in certain key areas based on data	2021		NFWF-INSR	Areas for pilot Stewardship program selected
C. Identify key local partners to coordinate effort and refine role of Consortium in serving as central hub	2021		NFWF-INSR	Roles and leads developed for Stewardship program
D. Launch JR Stewardship Program that includes additional entry level/intern level support for verification and maintenance checks and funding to support maintenance activities (replants and invasive management)	2022		(Support Needed 2022-2024)	
E. Perform stewardship activities on existing buffers including tree replacement and invasive species management	2022-2024		(Support Needed 2022-2024)	Assess 200 acres/year, provide maintenance activities on 100 acres/year
Strategy 5: Support coordination between implementation partners				
A. Coordination Tool and online hub for partners to coordinate efforts for holistic riparian restoration that tracks buffer progress, catalogs existing tools for project prioritization, shows partner work areas, and other information.	2019-2024	Chesapeake Conservancy	NFWF-INSR (2019-2021), VEE (2022-2024)	1 Tool launched in 2020 then updated quarterly
B. Hold Quarterly meetings (Jan/Feb, March/April, July/August, November)	2019-2021 (2022-2024)	JRA/TU		Meetings Held: 4 meetings/year

CONSORTIUM CREATION & SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

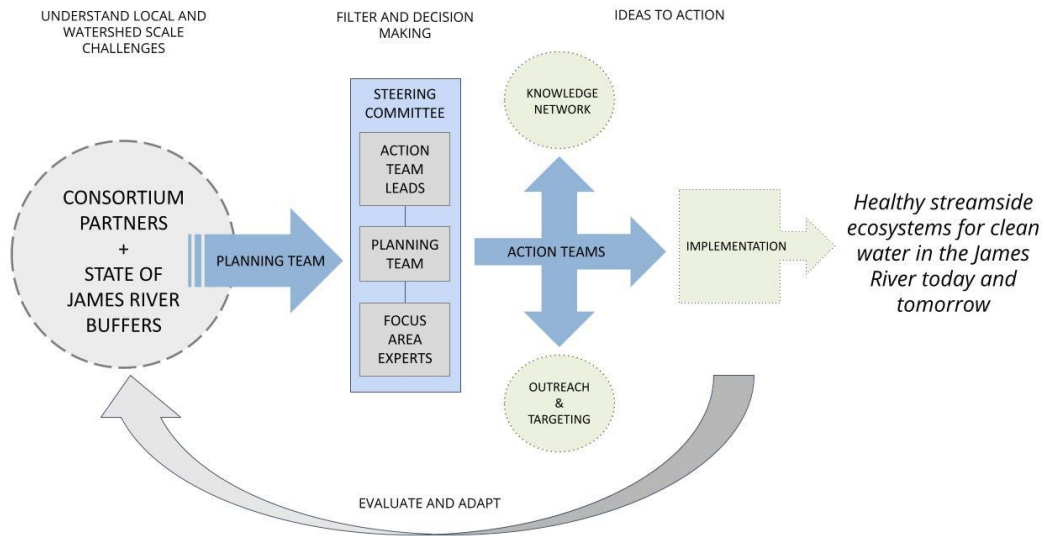
2019-2021: JRA received funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) to support the development of the Consortium between January 2019-December 2021. The Consortium will go through a three year process of formalizing a structure, testing out strategies, and refining as the partnership moves forward. To view Progress Reports from 2019-2021, visit this [link](#).



2022-2024: Continued support for facilitation is necessary in order for the Consortium to succeed due to the large land area, diversity of partners, and innovative solutions needed to reach the riparian buffer goals for the James River. Consistency in support is key to sustained momentum, thus reinforcing the need to develop a resilient model that is not dependent on grant funding. Over the 3-year period, D+D will lead the Consortium through a resilient collaborative model building process that includes: building on and deepening funding analysis and planning initiated in 2021 with SC; research and outreach around support structures and funding models of similar long-term collaboratives; develop a funding matrix for a resilient collaborative model and long-term self-facilitation plan with SC; and develop evaluation tool. This approach may include bringing on a coordinator position for the Consortium.

STEERING COMMITTEE

- Amber Ellis, James River Association
- Charlie Simmons, Natural Resources Conservation Services
- Deya Ramsden, Department of Forestry
- Jenny McGarvey, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay
- Joey Shelton, James River Association
- John Munsell, Virginia Tech
- Keith Burgess, Monacan Soil and Water Conservation District
- Kelly Snoddy, Peter Francisco Soil and Water Conservation District
- Lee Cummings, Natural Bridge Soil and Water Conservation District
- Luke Longanecker, Thomas Jefferson Soil and Water Conservation District
- Louise Finger, Department of Wildlife Resources
- Matt Ehrhart, Stroud Water Research Center
- Sammy Vest, Trout Unlimited
- Sarah Coffey, Chesapeake Bay Foundation
- Paula and Dave Jasinski, GreenFin Studio
- *Christine Gyovai and Sierra Gladfelter, Dialogue + Design Associates, facilitators*



The diagram above illustrates how the Consortium is organized to respond to emerging issues in riparian restoration and move ideas into action. The Consortium provides both a space to listen to the current needs of partners and to assess the overall state of riparian buffers across the Upper and Middle James watershed. For more information about the Consortium's structure and organizational tools please see the [Riparian Consortium Guiding Document](#).