



Upper & Middle James Riparian Consortium

Virtual Meeting Summary

Thursday, May 19th, 2022

Executive Summary

The second general meeting of the Upper & Middle James Riparian Consortium (Consortium) of 2022 was held on Thursday, May 19th, 2022 as a virtual meeting. The purpose of the online meeting was to share and discuss findings around streambank stabilization from a recent interview and report writing process, address challenges and ideas around riparian buffer maintenance, and gather ideas for a fall Buffer Celebration event. An in-person plant walk and field visit was also held in the afternoon at James Monroe's Highland, with presentations by Joey Thompson of the Virginia Native Plant Society, Anne Marie Roberts with the James River Association, and Highland staff members.

During the virtual meeting, Amber Ellis with James River Association gave a brief overview of the Consortium and highlighted a native riparian plant. Emily Carlson and Lea Taylor with Dialogue + Design Associates gave a presentation around a recently developed [Key Issues Report](#) that focuses on streambank stabilization. Action Team leads also provided updates on their recent efforts. Amber shared updates on riparian maintenance and stewardship efforts within the Consortium, as well as potential next steps to continue these efforts. Finally, participants shared their ideas around specific events that could be held to celebrate the benefits of buffers during this year's Buffer Summit on October 20th. Presentations are linked in each section of the summary below, and [meeting participants](#) with affiliations are listed at the end of this summary.

Welcome and Introductions

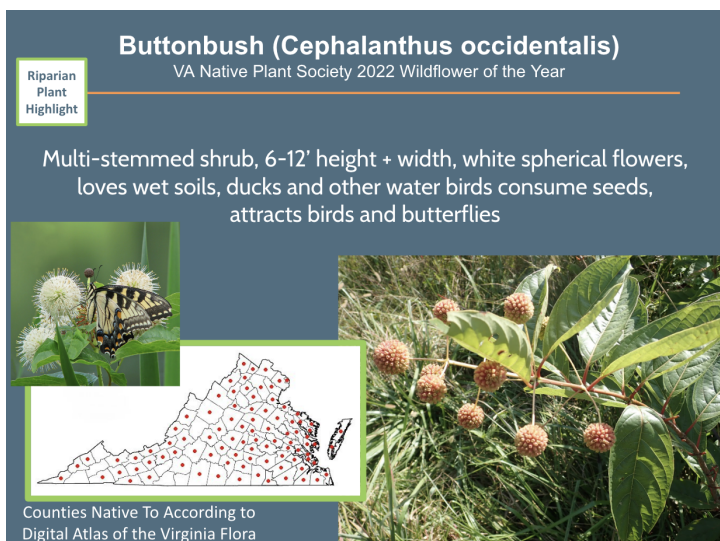
At the beginning of the meeting, Christine Gyovai with Dialogue + Design Associates, the Consortium facilitator, welcomed participants to the meeting and invited them to share their name and affiliation in the chat. A list of [meeting attendees](#) and affiliations is included at the end of this summary. Christine also previewed the agenda and Buffer Summit ideation process during the meeting.

Consortium Overview + A Riparian Tree Highlight

Amber Ellis with the James River Association then gave an overview of the Consortium. The goal of the Consortium is to “grow partnerships to create healthy streamside ecosystems for clean water in the James River today and tomorrow.” Geographically, the Consortium's work focuses on the Middle and Upper James watershed regions, with some buffer trainings working beyond these geographic boundaries.

The Consortium's mission states that "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." The Consortium's values that are integrated in meetings and priorities are collaboration, holistic, stewardship, and taking initiative. Amber shared that the partners involved in the Consortium include a mix of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, nonprofits, state agencies, private businesses, universities, as well as many partners on the call who are involved in Action Teams and the Steering Committee. Action is taken through the Planning Team, Steering Committee, and Action Teams (which include the Knowledge Network Team, Implementation Team, and Targeting & Outreach Team).

Amber shared a riparian plant highlight, which featured the Buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*). Buttonbush is native throughout the James watershed, and can be found in areas throughout Virginia where there is wet soil. Amber also shared some images of the progression of Buttonbush in a buffer project that was planted in 2018.



Participants shared some of their favorite riparian plants, including spicebush, marshmallow, *Hydrangea arborescens*, paw paw, bluebells, red osier dogwood, black willow, sycamore, cardinal flower, black gum, red bud, common milkweed, dogwood, persimmon, *Juncus effusus* (common rush), marsh hyacinth, swamp milkweed, and box elder. Christine noted that the afternoon in-person plant walk at James Monroe's Highland would feature further conversation around riparian plants on a walk.

Partner Updates

Meeting participants shared updates and events announcements in the chat:

- Anne Marie with JRA shared the Boats and Buffers field day event on May 26th. The event will feature a James Buffer Program project, as well as a river float and updates from the Lynchburg Department of Water Resources, Central Virginia Planning District Committee,

and VA Canals & Navigation Society. More information can be found at:

<https://thejamesriver.org/buffersandboats/>

- Kip shared that Ecosystem Services is hiring: <https://ecosystems-services.us/careers/>
- Shereen shared: "Urban Tree Workshop Harrisonburg Next Wednesday - limited space is available, please register here: <https://bit.ly/3LvRjcW>"
- Amber shared "Casey works hard to keep our Consortium calendar up to date, which we are happy to add partner events to <https://jamesriverconsortium.org/events/>"
- Jennfier shared: "America the Beautiful Challenge Grant Round <https://www.nfwf.org/programs/america-beautiful-challenge>"

Action Team Updates

Action Team leads shared the following brief updates on the activities they have been working on, upcoming meetings, and efforts the teams are focusing on this year.

Knowledge Network Team

Shereen Hughes with Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professionals (CBLP) and Wetlands Watch introduced Beth and Dave as co-leads of the Knowledge Network Team. The team is planning a series of roundtables this year, including a Business of Buffers roundtable that will take place in Scottsville on June 21st from noon to 4pm. If you know any contractors that are doing buffer work or interested in doing buffer work that would be interested in an informal Roundtable discussion, please email Shereen at shereen.hughes@wetlandswatch.org. Shereen also noted that CBLP Buffers workshops will be held in September, with one event taking place in Charlottesville and the other in Augusta. Register for the CBLP-Buffers Certificate Workshop at <https://certified.cblpro.org/product/cblp-buffers-certificate-course/> - needs based scholarships are available.

Dave Wise with Stroud Water Research Center shared that he will be coordinating a short list of folks to have discussions around what is working, challenges, and technical considerations for a Bay-wide roundtable to connect and share expertise.

Shereen also shared in the chat: "Regarding the Urban Tree Workshop, join us for a half-day workshop to discover the stormwater benefits of urban trees, get a crash course on their care, learn about local urban forestry programs and urban wood utilization and observe a portable sawmill demo. Contact me if you want to: shereen.hughes@wetlandswatch.org."

Outreach and Targeting Team

Casey Johnson with James River Association introduced Paula and Dave Jasinski with Green Fin Studios as co-leads of the Outreach and Targeting Team. The team met the previous week and

focused on the Annual Report that Green Fin develops every October. The focus of this year's Report will be the live staking workshop that was held in February, which many Consortium members have found useful and have adapted to install live stakes within their own projects. Casey also shared that the Native Riparian Plant Guide will be developed by the Outreach and Targeting Team, which is in the early planning stages. Email Casey at ljohnson@thejamesriver.org if you have any events that you would like to be featured on the Consortium [events page](#).

Implementation Team

Amber shared that Sammy Vest with Trout Unlimited is the team's co-lead. The Implementation Team met in person on May 12th, where the group heard updates from JRA's policy analyst on state and federal buffer policy updates, as well as the Department of Forestry's Forest Buffer Action Plan that is being developed. The group also tested out assessment forms that will be used to assess old buffer projects this summer through the pilot James River Stewardship Program. The next team meeting will be held virtually on August 18th; email Amber at aellis@thejamesriver.org if you would like to join. Amber also gave an update on the James Buffer Program, which started in 2019 and is administered by JRA, the Department of Forestry, and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. Since it was launched, 640 acres of riparian forest buffers have been installed across the Middle and Upper James watershed. Amber also shared that the Department of Corrections State Farm project is moving along; the team is thinking that the Goochland side of the project will wrap up this year, and will start working on the Powhatan side this summer.

Streambank Stabilization / Stream Restoration presentation

Next, Christine introduced Emily Carlson and Lea Taylor with Dialogue + Design Associates (D+D), who recently developed a [Key Issues Report](#) around the streambank stabilization process. In spring of 2022, D+D conducted 16 interviews with key stakeholders to learn more about key challenges, concerns, resources, and future needs regarding streambank stabilization in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, particularly in the Middle and Upper James watershed. A link to the presentation can be [found here](#). Key highlights include:

- Consortium members and Steering Committee members have elevated stream restoration and stabilization as a topic to be explored in depth with the hopes of providing some clarity around the challenges and approaches to use when a future or existing buffer project faces extreme stream bank erosion.
- There is an important distinction between stream restoration and streambank stabilization.
- Conducting streambank stabilization and intervening in a stream's function depends on variables of different phases of decision making.
 - The first phase of decision making is for the people that are involved in a project to clearly **define what the objectives** are in addressing erosion in a waterway.
 - The second phase is to **identify the cause and the scale of erosion** in a comprehensive analysis.

- Lastly is to **design the intervention** based on the objectives, cause of erosion, funding, and technical resources.
- Themes of projects that have made the biggest impact include restoring the floodplain function; working in small, upstream watersheds; clustering sites; effective design; maintenance; influence/presence of agencies in the watershed; and the involvement of landowners.
 - Restoring floodplain functions is related to buffer work and creates the best outcomes in terms of vegetation and water quality. This is a more incremental approach.
 - Working in smaller, upstream watersheds allows for more direct impact.
- There is a need for riparian practitioners to better understand stream functions, as well as a need for education so that people are empowered to make better decisions on how to interact with a stream. A coordinated approach across the watershed is needed in order to have the biggest impact.
- A concern that was voiced by interviewees was that crediting through the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) can drive projects that maybe don't have a strong enough rationale for the work, particularly as crediting for streambank stabilization projects have been based on urban contexts.

Questions and Discussion

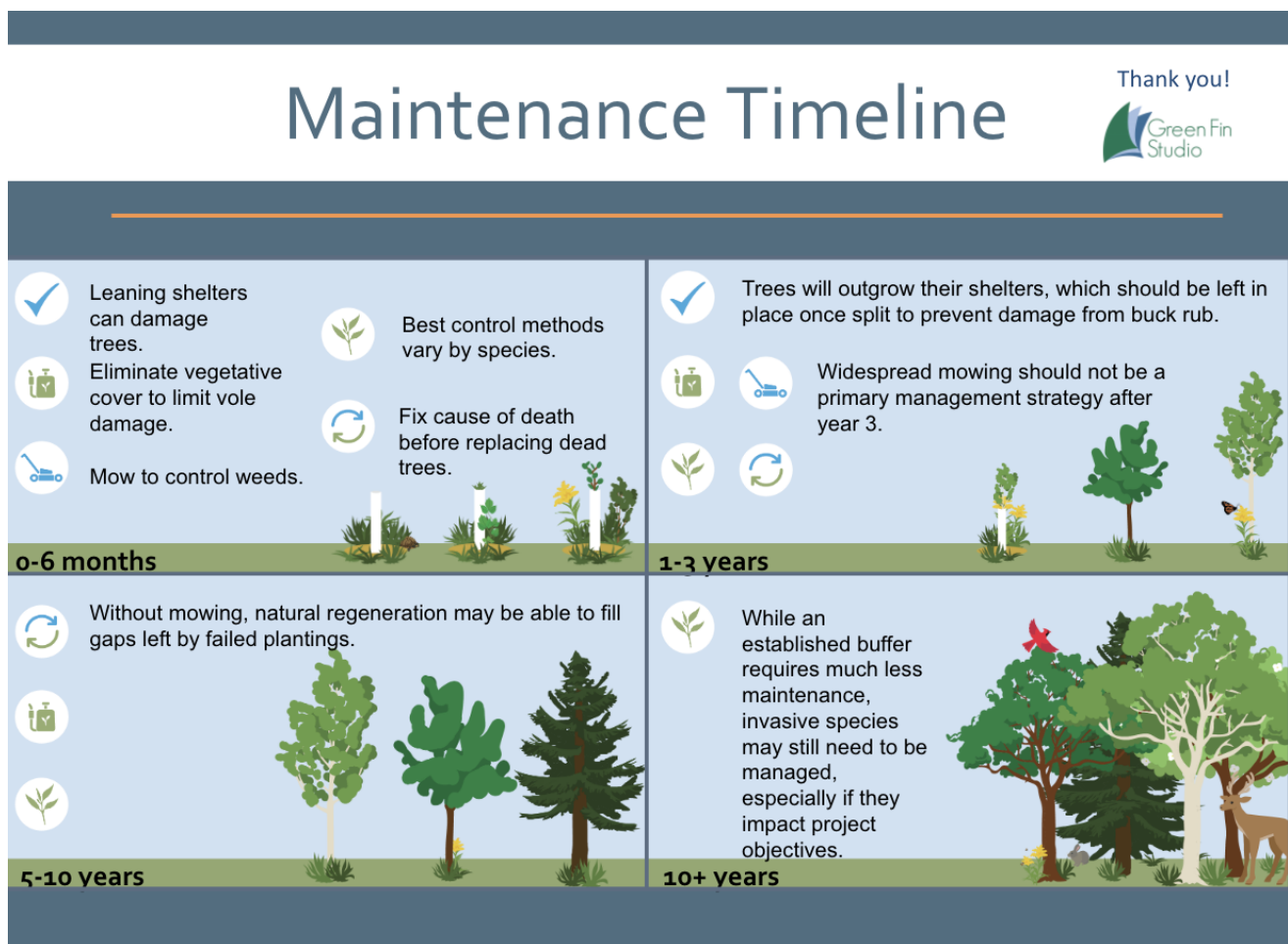
Following the presentation, participants were invited to ask questions and participate in an open discussion. The following questions and responses were shared:

- Shereen noted that she appreciated the importance of a larger watershed-scale perspective. It is good to consider the upstream impact, away from the buffer, and how storm water can be managed before it gets to the stream.
- What happens next in terms of the Consortium's next steps with the topic?
 - Christine responded that a major rationale for the creation of this Key Issues Report was to gather more understanding on the parameters and opportunities of streambank stabilization, in order to glean how much the Consortium and partners might invest in the practice. Christine was surprised to learn from the report that TMDL credits are based on urban situations and not rural situations, as these settings have different needs. A next step, for example, could be to have a training session on stream restoration design, including when to do it and how to use it.
 - Amber added that the Center for Watershed Protection has funding from the Consortium to do 2 roundtables next year around this topic. This report will inform these discussions. Some of the next steps identified in the report fit within the scope of the Action Teams. Amber shared that an initial thought is to do a study on a stream or river to explore upstream urban conditions. The immediate next step is to narrow down ideas with the Steering Committee.

- Amber also added that there is a bit of funding available to do a demonstration stabilization project that is connected to a buffer project. A goal is to have something identified later this year through the Implementation Team.
- Dave shared “Kudos for taking a broad and thoughtful view on a topic with many strong attitudes.”
- Jennifer shared “NASBLA has released a resource for river management. – A Guide for Multiple Use Waterway Management, Third Edition <https://www.nasbla.org/home>”
- Shereen noted “I feel like one of the outcomes of the Stream Stabilization Roundtables should inform training for experienced practitioners.”
- Are we free to share this report with external people in our networks?
 - Christine noted “We encourage folks to share this far and wide. We’ll add it to the website as well.”

The Consortium Approach to Riparian Buffer Maintenance

Christine shared that feedback from Consortium members has indicated that there is interest in learning more about what key topics should be considered regarding riparian buffer maintenance. Amber gave an overview of the Consortium’s approach to riparian buffer maintenance (a link to Amber’s presentation can be [found here](#)). Amber shared that one of the core values of the Consortium is stewardship. Common activities done for riparian maintenance include checking tree



shelters, applying herbicide, conservative mowing between rows of trees, spot treating for invasive species, and replacing the tree stock as needed. Green Fin Studios has created a graphic on maintenance, which is shown above and can be [found here](#), and which includes a timeline for maintenance work. There is also a [page on the Consortium website](#) for maintenance. The first three years of a project are the most crucial. After three years, natural regeneration is allowed to take place. After around 10 years, maintenance often entails spot treating for invasive plants.

Stewardship is a part of the Consortium's work across the different Action Teams. The Outreach and Targeting Team is planning on creating an event that focuses on maintenance for landowners. A more recent idea is to create a manual that focuses on proper maintenance, capturing data from field work. Information about the lessons learned about maintenance could be shared at a symposium, which may take place during the September 13th Consortium meeting. Amber noted that three years of maintenance is automatically part of any projects completed through the James Buffer Program. The 2022 pilot of the Stewardship Program will work within the NRCS Lexington office geography. Two seasonal stewardship assistants will assess 200 acres of buffer installed through the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). Based on their findings, recommendation reports will be developed for replanting needs and invasive species management. Funding is available to address these maintenance needs in the winter and spring. This process will be repeated next summer with more regions. Emily shared the following maintenance video link, created by the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cwSQipUQEE4&t=1s>.

Questions and Discussion

Following the presentation, participants were invited to ask questions and participate in an open discussion. The following questions and responses were shared:

- Dave Wise shared “Bravo for building maintenance right into JRA's buffer efforts. This is a critical investment in success. And for taking on maint of CREP buffers - starting early before the predictable losses is surely smart.” Dave added that losses would come fast without maintenance, and that it is important to do when the plantings are still alive. There is inefficiency in going back to failed buffers, and it is a lesson that many groups learn over the years. CREP is a great program to get buffers in the ground, but an emphasis on maintenance is needed.
 - Amber noted that the Virginia Environmental Endowment allowed the funding for maintenance to be included in the Buffer Program.
- David Hirschman wrote: “This may be a tangent to the CREP topic, but I have been to two sites just this week where people want to do buffer work but the existing buffer is 80% of more invasives. It's a head scratcher -- where do you even start?”
 - Beth noted “David, I would be happy to speak to you about this site.”
- Brian and Kim Hyland noted that they are landowners looking for educational opportunities for our riparian areas. Amber responded that they are welcome to reach out to her to talk about this further.

Envisioning a Buffer Celebration!

Amber shared that this year's Buffer Summit will be happening on October 20th, and will include an in-person Buffer Celebration component. There are many amazing benefits of buffers, as highlighted in [this graphic](#), and the Summit event is an opportunity to celebrate and make space for all of the co-benefits provided by buffers. Amber noted that the Planning Team is seeking feedback from participants on how to integrate an event with activities that are related to the different benefits. For example, when thinking about the shading that buffers provide, a celebratory event could be fishing in those areas. The provision of natural space could incorporate an event for human health in those spaces.

Participants had the opportunity to respond to a Zoom poll that asked 'Which benefits of buffers would you most like to see celebrated at the Buffer Summit?' The following benefits were ranked in the poll, with the results indicated next to each benefit (each participant had three votes):

1. Wildlife Habitat (64%)
2. Benefits to Property Owners (61%)
3. Air and Water Quality Benefits (46%)
4. Health and Recreation (43%)
5. Green Job Opportunities (39%)
6. Other (*add ideas to the chat roll*) (4%)
 - a. Additional suggestions in the chat roll included: shade under air and water quality; temperature as a water quality issue; and climate change.

Christine added that the Buffer Summit will be Thursday, October 20th. Everyone on the newsletter list should have a calendar invitation - if not, please let Christine know. Details will be shared via the newsletter and also on the website. The Summit is planned to take place in-person, with a virtual back-up.

Small-group Discussion and Report Out

Participants joined self-facilitated small group discussions to discuss the following:

What ideas do you have to celebrate buffer benefits across these themes (or other themes) for the Buffer Summit?

- Write down one possible activity that would celebrate a benefit of buffers and note which one it benefits the most across these possible themes:
 - Wildlife Habitat (*ex. fishing, birding, pollinators*)
 - Health and Recreation (*ex. nature meditation, yoga by river, art/ecotherapy, paddle, hike*)
 - Green Job Opportunities (*ex. workforce development, career day meet professionals*)
 - Air and Water Quality Benefits (*ex. macro testing, soils, fungi*)

- Benefits to Property Owners (*programs available to assist landowners, impact on property values*)
- Others

The groups used [this google note-taking document](#) as a place to record their discussion and top ideas, which are included in the [Appendix](#) below. After the small group break-outs, participants reconvened and shared their main ideas:

High-level ideas

- Have a Buffer Summit with different tracks people can join depending on interest.
- Include an educational component for a wider variety of people than are typically engaged with the Consortium.
- Guided walks in small groups and seeing on-the-ground success would be helpful.
- Include a testimonial of programs with a chance to mingle. It would be good to attract more people to the Summit, maybe with a daytime activity that is educational, followed by an evening 'reception' where landowners, members, etc. can meet, mingle, listen to music, etc.
- Host a gathering near a buffer, with a fire and food.
- Define the target audience. Multiple audiences means different types of activities!

Benefit-specific ideas

- **Wildlife Habitat** (*ex. fishing, birding, pollinators*)
 - Citizen science and educational opportunities for adults and kids would be great, maybe with a station for bug identification.
 - Have a fly fishing demo on how buffers help aquatic insects and trout.
 - Install bat boxes for buffers.
 - Tie healthy and diverse bird population to health, water quality, health, tourism, good land stewardship. (*A bird walk was mentioned several times.*)
 - Maybe have a group paddle with a sturgeon tour.
 - Invite pollinator/beekeeper experts to talk about native insect and honeybee benefits for buffers.
 - Host nature walks for birding, wildlife watching, plant ID, plant ID with a focus on edible plants.
- **Health and Recreation** (*ex. nature meditation, yoga by river, art/ecotherapy, paddle, hike*)
 - Organize and host races and walks for health and recreation along buffers.
 - A "Forage Feast" in October with acorns, spicebush berries, etc. would be suitable for the season. It wouldn't have to be the whole meal.
 - The Buffer Summit could include an ecotherapy session or forest bathing.
 - Art in buffers could include nature journaling, observations, sketching, paint what you see, or paint what you imagine, Music could include songs about trees and river (Riparian Ramblers ideal!).

- **Green Job Opportunities** (*ex. workforce development, career day meet professionals*)
 - Highlight what different jobs are involved with different aspects of buffers and the job opportunities.
 - Have different agencies/groups share about the various job opportunities such as installing water troughs and infrastructure with agriculture.
 - Host a job-fair focused event.
 - Featuring green job opportunities could engage youth, especially high school students for workforce opportunities. Have information about career opportunities, school options, job availability - this can be integrated into any event.
- **Air and Water Quality Benefits** (*ex. macro testing, soils, fungi*)
 - Have a fungus talk/ walk with Mark Jones.
 - Host a session on water quality education - different metrics used, and what data exists to illustrate benefits of riparian buffer improvements.
 - Demonstrate and share about streambank and ecosystem dynamics - fungus and bacteria in river/streams and how the riparian environment affects those populations.
 - Highlight ecosystem services of buffers in general in urban and rural environments.
- **Benefits to Property Owners** (*programs available to assist landowners, impact on property values*)
 - Many homeowners are interested in creating hunting habitat and food sources which could also create leasing income opportunities. Help homeowners create a plan for food plot buffers with native plants. (*The small group agreed this would be a hit.*)
 - A “hunting in buffers” session could also include how to build a living blind with live stakes!
 - The landowner could also grant hunting access to hunters in exchange for buffer maintenance from the hunter.
 - Host a food or medicine class on buffers for profit or just personal use. This could include food processing of acorns or jams.
 - Have a maintenance workshop for landowners.
 - An educational opportunity for landowners such as a FAQ session could be helpful.
 - Include education on impacts to property values - helping landowners understand flooding risks and how buffers mitigate risk.
 - Landowners coming would be a draw for professionals to attend.
 - Create a space for property owners to talk to each other from a landowner perspective that has participated in a buffer program.
- **Others**
 - Getting hands dirty as a big group and planting (or re-planting) trees was mentioned several times as a valuable experience for anyone.
 - The radio show with Mark Evans of DEQ “What’s bugging you?” could be integrated into the programming.
 - Kip Mumaw volunteered to lead a streamside walk to talk about stream dynamics for buffer practitioners.

- Have a public workshop that practitioners could replicate with landowners (with the worksheet) such as training the trainer. *(This was mentioned several times.)*
- Workshops around buffer maintenance for landowners and professionals teaching invasive plant management/control would be great.
- Sharing a review of available resources would be helpful.
- A native plant sale has been successful at other events.

Next steps and upcoming events

At the end of the meeting, Christine thanked participants for their ideas and reminded them of the in-person plant walk taking place at James Monroe's Highland later that afternoon. To stay up-to-date on events, please visit the website at www.jamesriverconsortium.org and sign up for the Consortium's monthly newsletter there! Finally, meeting participants were invited to complete an evaluation to share feedback on the meeting structure, content, and focus. The next Consortium meeting will be September 13th - stay tuned for details.

Meeting Participants

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Annemarie Abbondanzo, Ecosystem Services | 14. Casey Johnson, James River Association |
| 2. Delaney Beattie, Virginia Department of Forestry | 15. Matt Lawless, Town of Scottsville |
| 3. Kim Biasioli, Albemarle County | 16. Luke Longanecker, TJSWCD |
| 4. Andrea Bowles, Rivanna Water & Sewer Authority | 17. Suan Martin, Webbones |
| 5. Sarah Coffey, Chesapeake Bay Foundation | 18. Beth Mizell, Blue Ridge PRISM |
| 6. Amber Ellis, James River Association | 19. Martha Morris, Virginia Outdoors Foundation |
| 7. Jordan Fox, Center for Watershed Protection | 20. Kip Mumaw, Ecosystem Services |
| 8. Rebecca Hanmer, Friends of the Rappahannock | 21. Isabella O'Brien, TJPDC |
| 9. Courtney Harlow-Humphreys, Thomas Jefferson Soil & Water | 22. Teagan O'Brien, Virginia Department of Forestry |
| 10. David Hirschman, Hirschman Water & Environment | 23. Melissa O'Neill, James River Association |
| 11. Shereen Hughes, Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professionals and Wetlands Watch | 24. Deya Ramsden, James River Buffer Program, Department of Forestry |
| 12. Brian Hyland | 25. Erin Reilly, JRA |
| 13. Kim Hyland | 26. Anne Marie Roberts, James River Association |
| | 27. Stephanie Saccone, Webbones |
| | 28. Joey Shelton, James River Association |
| | 29. Karen Stanley, Boxerwood Nature Center |

- 30. Carl Thiel-Goin, Department of Conservation and Recreation
- 31. Caitlin Verdu, Virginia Department of Forestry
- 32. Jennifer Wampler, Department of Conservation and Recreation
- 33. Laurel Williamson, Albemarle County, Watershed Stewardship Manager
- 34. David Wise, Stroud Water Research Center
- 35. Christine Gyovai, Dialogue + Design
- 36. Emily Carlson, Dialogue + Design
- 37. Lea Taylor, Dialogue + Design

APPENDIX A

Small Group Note Taking Document - [document link](#)

Breakout Group 1

Facilitators and participants - list *HERE*:

Directions: 1) Each person in the group introduces themselves, then each silently writes their answers to the discussion questions below for 1-2 min. on their own; 2) Each person shares their 1 activity with their small group. 3) As a group, capture some recurring themes to share with the large group for top 2-3 activity ideas for the Buffer Summit. Lead of each group to share in the chat box in the main meeting room.

What ideas do you have to celebrate buffer benefits across these themes (or other themes) for the Buffer Summit?

Write down one possible activity that would celebrate a benefit of buffers and note which one it benefits the most across these possible themes:

- Wildlife Habitat (ex. fishing, birding, pollinators)
 - Birding, fly fishing demo and how buffers help macros and trout, Bat boxes for buffers~!
 - maybe not a great time of year for pollinators, hunting
 - Bat boxes for buffers~!
- Health and Recreation (ex. nature meditation, yoga by river, art/ecotherapy, paddle, hike)
- Green Job Opportunities (ex. workforce development, career day meet professionals)
 - Highlight what different jobs are involved with different aspects of buffers and the job opportunities.
 - Have different agencies/groups share about the different job opportunities - water troughs and infrastructure with ag, DEQ with
- Air and Water Quality Benefits (ex. macro testing, soils, fungi)
- Benefits to Property Owners (programs available to assist landowners, impact on property values)
 - Hunting habitat and food source- creating snag- leasing opportunities. Creating a plan for food plot buffers with natives. Build a living blind with live stakes! Barter: hunting access for buffer maintenance.
 - Food/medicine from buffers whether for profit or just personal use. Growing interest. Food forest.
 - Class: how to make food from buffers: food processing: acorns, jams,
 - How to make money off your buffers after - leasing to hunters or having hunters barter for use of land for maintenance.
- Others
 - Top 3 interests: pollinators, hunting, and food/medicine.
 - Have a public workshop that practitioners could replicate (with worksheet)
 - Radio show - Mark Evans DEQ what's bugging you
- **Top ideas:**

- Workshop on how buffers can create hunting habitat: native plant food plots, live staked hunting blind, long-term leases for income or barter hunting access for buffer maintenance
- Top 3 interests from landowners are pollinators, hunting, and food/medicine.
- Have a public workshop that practitioners could replicate (with worksheet)

Breakout Group 2

Facilitators and participants - list [HERE](#): Casey Johnson, Susan Martin, Caitlin Verdu, Laurel Williamson

Directions: 1) Each person in the group introduces themselves, then each silently writes their answers to the discussion questions below for 1-2 min. on their own; 2) Each person shares their 1 activity with their small group. 3) As a group, capture some recurring themes to share with the large group for top 2-3 activity ideas for the Buffer Summit. Lead of each group to share in the chat box in the main meeting room.

What ideas do you have to celebrate buffer benefits across these themes (or other themes) for the Buffer Summit?

- Getting hands dirty as a big group - planting (or re-planting) trees might be appropriate for late October?
- Invite contractors?

Write down one possible activity that would celebrate a benefit of buffers and note which one it benefits the most across these possible themes:

- Wildlife Habitat (ex. fishing, birding, pollinators)
 - Bird walk/ bird count
 - Paddle with sturgeon tour
- Health and Recreation (ex. nature meditation, yoga by river, art/ecotherapy, paddle, hike)
- Green Job Opportunities (ex. workforce development, career day meet professionals)
 - Could be a job fair-focused event, but may be hard to merge this idea with the other topics, Perhaps a stand-alone opportunity for another time?
- Air and Water Quality Benefits (ex. macro testing, soils, fungi)
- Benefits to Property Owners (programs available to assist landowners, impact on property values)
 - Maintenance workshop for landowners
 - Educational opportunity for landowners (ex. FAQ session, etc.)
- Others
 - Service-learning component
 - Review of available resources
 - Landowners coming would be a draw for professionals to attend

Breakout Group 3

Facilitators and participants - list *HERE*: Karen Stanley, Luke Longanecker, Amber Ellis, Courtney Harlow-Humphreys

Directions: 1) Each person in the group introduces themselves, then each silently writes their answers to the discussion questions below for 1-2 min. on their own; 2) Each person shares their 1 activity with their small group. 3) As a group, capture some recurring themes to share with the large group for top 2-3 activity ideas for the Buffer Summit. Lead of each group to share in chat box in the main meeting room.

What ideas do you have to celebrate buffer benefits across these themes (or other themes) for the Buffer Summit?

Write down one possible activity that would celebrate a benefit of buffers and note which one it benefits the most across these possible themes:

- Wildlife Habitat (ex. fishing, birding, pollinators)
- Health and Recreation (ex. nature meditation, yoga by river, art/ecotherapy, paddle, hike)
- Green Job Opportunities (ex. workforce development, career day meet professionals)
- Air and Water Quality Benefits (ex. macro testing, soils, fungi)
- Benefits to Property Owners (programs available to assist landowners, impact on property values)
- Others

Ideas

- Luke - diversity of group and landscapes. Highlight ecosystem services of buffers in general in urban and rural environment. General education from different sectors. Highlight benefits of sectors. General information on success stories from different groups. Bridging urban/rural landowners.
- Courtney - citizen science. Educational opportunities for people. Taking people birding, frog watch/amphibian monitoring, project WET for kids, teacher training opportunities. Curriculum training for Project WET or WILD. College student engagement
- Karen - really important to educate and hit college students or people just out of college, young families, stress need to involve young people who are making decisions about land.
- Amber - testimonial, programs that we have and able to mingle. Want more people there. Maybe daytime activity that is educational, then evening 'reception' where landowners, members, etc. can meet, mingle, listen to music, etc.

Themes – educational component, get new and different groups engaged, educating wide variety of people than we typically do, broader population. Guided walks (small groups), seeing on the ground success, Buffer summit with different tracks people can go on depending on interest.

Location Ideas –

Amber (after call) – [Hebron Hill \(Schuyler Springs\)](#) in Albemarle (JRA did buffer project there, they are open to group using property). [Wildrock](#) in Albemarle (JRA did buffer project there, there is also opportunity for children activities there, maybe opportunity from some help with buffer maintenance or planting). State Park like James River State Park, Powhatan State Park, or Natural Bridge State Park, which are all in James watershed and have water access or very close to water access. [Bundoran Farm](#) where JRA and TJSWCD have done projects. [Pippin Hill Vineyard](#) is there too. [Brewing Tree](#) in Afton (JRA and Alliance have discussed this as a potential venue before...would be great if they were on board with planting a buffer). Property in Amherst that Anne Marie worked with years ago. Visited during the fall and he was open to having an event on his property. Older buffer that was successful. On the Buffalo River I think.

Breakout Group 4

Facilitators and participants - list *HERE*: Shereen, Kip, Jennifer, Lea

Directions: 1) Each person in the group introduces themselves, then each silently writes their answers to the discussion questions below for 1-2 min. on their own; 2) Each person shares their 1 activity with their small group. 3) As a group, capture some recurring themes to share with the large group for top 2-3 activity ideas for the Buffer Summit. Lead of each group to share in chat box in the main meeting room.

What ideas do you have to celebrate buffer benefits across these themes (or other themes) for the Buffer Summit?

Write down one possible activity that would celebrate a benefit of buffers and note which one it benefits the most across these possible themes:

- Wildlife Habitat (ex. fishing, birding, pollinators)
 - Health and Recreation (ex. nature meditation, yoga by river, art/ecotherapy, paddle, hike)
 - Green Job Opportunities (ex. workforce development, career day meet professionals)
 - Air and Water Quality Benefits (ex. macro testing, soils, fungi)
 - Benefits to Property Owners (programs available to assist landowners, impact on property values)
 - Others
-
- The location of the event will influence what events can be done.
 - In urban areas, access to the water that allows for buffers to be present is a consideration
 - Kip has attended a river fest in Waynesboro, where they had a station for bug IDs (for kids and adults!) - wildlife habitat
 - In Waynesboro, there is a greenway; the water trail could provide access to a float from park to park
 - Races and walks for health and recreation
 - Lisa Wittenborn with Rivanna Alliance would likely have ideas for specific events
 - Green Job opportunities - engage youth, esp. High school students for job opportunities. Have information about career opportunities, school options, job availability - this can be integrated into any event
 - A show and tell for students to gather insights into the jobs that exist
 - Jennifer - had a native plant sale in Richmond that went very well (in Henrico - Shereen spoke at this). It was very well attended; information about plants themselves and highlighting plants (perhaps with signs on trees and pollinators, info on how animals are supported); highlight the benefits
 - Have a planting! Even just planting one tree can be a powerful experience.
 - Jennifer - Waynesboro parks and rec director (Dwayne Jones) would take on some organization. Space for vendors
 - Staff in Waynesboro are CBLP certified
 - Part of South River is in the watershed; Waynesboro is outside the watershed

Breakout Group 5

Facilitators and participants - list *HERE*:

Directions: 1) Each person in the group introduces themselves, then each silently writes their answers to the discussion questions below for 1-2 min. on their own; 2) Each person shares their 1 activity with their small group. 3) As a group, capture some recurring themes to share with the large group for top 2-3 activity ideas for the Buffer Summit. Lead of each group to share in chat box in the main meeting room.

What ideas do you have to celebrate buffer benefits across these themes (or other themes) for the Buffer Summit?

Write down one possible activity that would celebrate a benefit of buffers and note which one it benefits the most across these possible themes:

- Wildlife Habitat (ex. fishing, birding, pollinators)
- Health and Recreation (ex. nature meditation, yoga by river, art/ecotherapy, paddle, hike)
 - Getting more connected to the plants, not being removed from the buffer project and helps with the maintenance aspect/investment.
- Green Job Opportunities (ex. workforce development, career day meet professionals)
 - Riparian Volunteers sharing their story about nurturing and connecting to a project site.
- Air and Water Quality Benefits (ex. macro testing, soils, fungi)
- Benefits to Property Owners (programs available to assist landowners, impact on property values)
- Others

Breakout Group 6

Facilitators and participants - list *HERE*: Martha Morris, Delaney Beattie, Brian and Kim Hyland

Directions: 1) Each person in the group introduces themselves, then each silently writes their answers to the discussion questions below for 1-2 min. on their own; 2) Each person shares their 1 activity with their small group. 3) As a group, capture some recurring themes to share with the large group for top 2-3 activity ideas for the Buffer Summit. Lead of each group to share in chat box in the main meeting room.

What ideas do you have to celebrate buffer benefits across these themes (or other themes) for the Buffer Summit?

Write down one possible activity that would celebrate a benefit of buffers and note which one it benefits the most across these possible themes:

- Wildlife Habitat (ex. fishing, birding, pollinators)
 - Health and Recreation (ex. nature meditation, yoga by river, art/ecotherapy, paddle, hike)
 - Green Job Opportunities (ex. workforce development, career day meet professionals)
 - Air and Water Quality Benefits (ex. macro testing, soils, fungi)
 - Benefits to Property Owners (programs available to assist landowners, impact on property values)
 - Others
-
- ***Pollinator/beekeeper experts to talk about native insect and honeybee benefits for buffers***
 - ***Water quality education - different metrics used, what data exists to illustrate benefits of riparian buffer improvements***
 - ***Streambank and ecosystem dynamics - fungus and bacteria in river/streams and how does riparian environment affect those populations***
 - ***Education on impacts to property values - helping landowners understand flooding risks and how buffers mitigate risk***

Breakout Group 7

Facilitators and participants - list [HERE](#): Carl Thiel - Goin, Beth Mizell, Jordan Fox

Directions: 1) Each person in the group introduces themselves, then each silently writes their answers to the discussion questions below for 1-2 min. on their own; 2) Each person shares their 1 activity with their small group. 3) As a group, capture some recurring themes to share with the large group for top 2-3 activity ideas for the Buffer Summit. Lead of each group to share in chat box in the main meeting room.

What ideas do you have to celebrate buffer benefits across these themes (or other themes) for the Buffer Summit?

The Buffer Summit will be Thursday, October 20th. Everyone on the newsletter list should have a calendar invitation - if not, please let us know. Details will be shared via the newsletter and also on the website.

Jordan Fox: *Is the target audience existing practitioners or are we trying to broaden the audience and get new people excited about buffers? If we're trying to get new folks excited, I think that wildlife habitat and community benefits (e.g., access to nature for local communities and/or jobs for un- or under-employed community members) are important to emphasize. In terms of activity ideas—I love the idea of a “Career Day” that invites workforce development organizations (and their participants who are seeking employment) and local employers. I also like the idea of walking tours along buffers of various quality to drive home the importance of proper maintenance on buffer value. If we're trying to engage existing practitioners—I like the idea of focusing around tools and guidance/reference materials (like all of the great diagrams shared in today's meeting and the Key Issues Report).*

Beth Mizell: *Birds, Birds, Birds - tying healthy and diverse bird population to health, water quality, and health, tourism, good land stewardship, - developing workshops around buffer maintenance for landowners and professionals teaching invasive plant management/control*

Carl: *Different plantings for different purposes or uses, ie, wildlife but also types of wildlife focused on by the land owner, examples/photos of installed practices*

Write down one possible activity that would celebrate a benefit of buffers and note which one it benefits the most across these possible themes:

- Wildlife Habitat (ex. fishing, birding, pollinators)
- Health and Recreation (ex. nature meditation, yoga by river, art/ecotherapy, paddle, hike)
- Green Job Opportunities (ex. workforce development, career day meet professionals) Open job posting board
- Air and Water Quality Benefits (ex. macro testing, soils, fungi)
- Benefits to Property Owners (programs available to assist landowners, impact on property values)
Also, tips to promote benefits to owners
- Others

Breakout Group 8

Facilitators and participants - list *HERE*: Annemarie Abbondanzo, Sarah Coffey, Dave Hirschman, and Gabriel Irigaray

Directions: 1) Each person in the group introduces themselves, then each silently writes their answers to the discussion questions below for 1-2 min. on their own; 2) Each person shares their 1 activity with their small group. 3) As a group, capture some recurring themes to share with the large group for top 2-3 activity ideas for the Buffer Summit. Lead of each group to share in chat box in the main meeting room.

What ideas do you have to celebrate buffer benefits across these themes (or other themes) for the Buffer Summit?

Forage Feast - October time period (acorns, spicebush berries, etc.). Doesn't have to be the whole meal.

Ecotherapy Session - forest bathing

Art- Nature journaling, observations, , sketching, paint what you see, or pain what you imagine, Music - songs about trees and river (riparian ramblers)

Nature walks for birding, wildlife watching, plant ID, plant ID w/ focus on edible plants

Green Job Opportunities- talk from interns

Property Owners- talk from a landowner that has participated in the program

Write down one possible activity that would celebrate a benefit of buffers and note which one it benefits the most across these possible themes:

- *Wildlife Habitat (ex. fishing, birding, pollinators)*
- *Health and Recreation (ex. nature meditation, yoga by river, art/ecotherapy, paddle, hike)*
- *Green Job Opportunities (ex. workforce development, career day meet professionals)*
- *Air and Water Quality Benefits (ex. macro testing, soils, fungi)*
- *Benefits to Property Owners (programs available to assist landowners, impact on property values)*
- *Others*