



## Middle & Upper James Riparian Consortium Buffer Summit Summary Thursday, October 20th, 2022

### Executive Summary

The fourth annual Buffer Summit of the Middle and Upper James Riparian Consortium was held on October 20th, 2022 as an in-person gathering at Wildrock in Crozet, Virginia. The Buffer Summit included several informative panel presentations and celebratory events to highlight the benefits of buffers. Panel presentations shared knowledge and resources surrounding state buffer goals and initiatives, challenges and opportunities surrounding buffer work for private businesses, and how a Watershed Conservation Corps can be leveraged to fill gaps in capacity. During the Buffer Summit and afternoon Celebration, participants had the opportunity to engage with presenters and each other through robust discussions and networking time, attend outdoor workshops, listen to music by Holy River and enjoy wild-crafted beverages made with riparian plants at the end of the event.

For more information about the Upper and Middle James Riparian Consortium (the Consortium), visit the website at: [www.jamesriverconsortium.org](http://www.jamesriverconsortium.org). A list of [meeting participants](#) is included at the end of the meeting summary. Finally, the event program with speaker bios and the Summit agenda can be found [at this link](#).

### Welcome and Consortium Overview

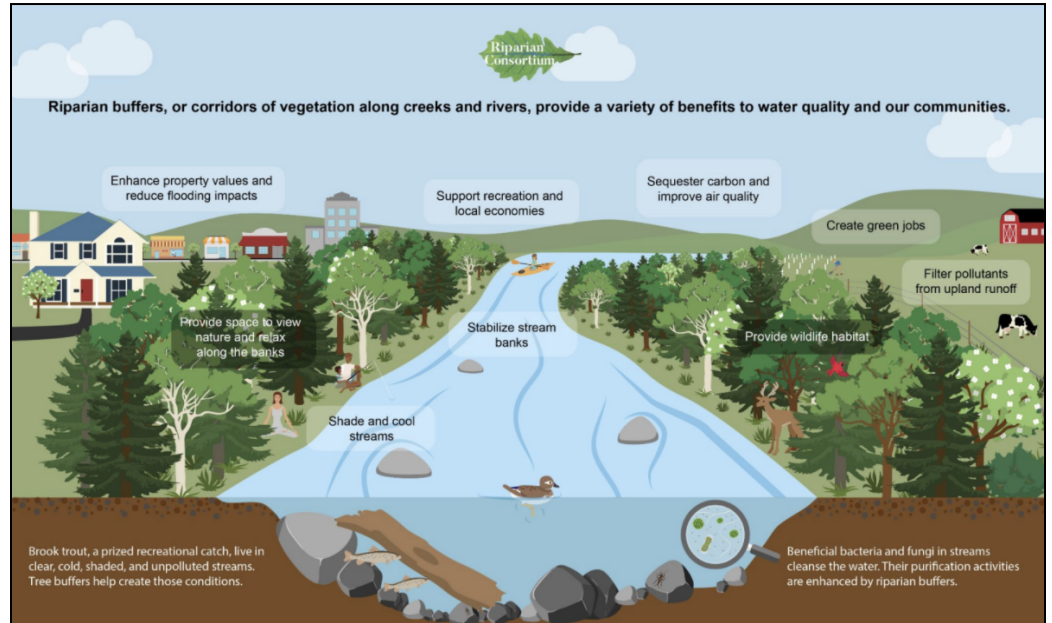
At the beginning of the Summit, Christine Gyovai of Dialogue + Design Associates (D+D) welcomed participants to the meeting, established and welcomed meeting guidelines, gave an overview of the Summit agenda, and introduced Lea Taylor and Philippa Belsches with D+D. Christine acknowledged that the Summit is the annual keystone event for the Consortium, and that the event's participants represent a broad range of experiences with buffer and conservation work. For a [list](#) of Summit participants and affiliations, please see the end of this summary.



Amber Ellis of the James River Association (JRA) - the Consortium convener - shared a brief overview presentation about the Consortium, which can be found [at this link](#). The Consortium started in 2019 thanks to funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). Amber shared a map of the Upper and Middle

James watershed that the Consortium operates in, and acknowledged that a lot of work extends outside this geographic area as materials and work done by the Consortium can be applied elsewhere. Riparian buffers, the focus of the Consortium, provide a variety of benefits to water quality and our communities. The afternoon sessions of the Buffer Summit celebrated the many benefits of buffers.

Amber shared the vision statement of the Consortium: “Growing partnerships to create healthy streamside ecosystems for clean water in the James River today and tomorrow.” The missions and values of the Consortium are:



**Vision:** Growing partnerships to create healthy streamside ecosystems for clean water in the James River today and tomorrow.

**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.

### **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.

The Consortium's membership is made up of many partner organizations. Amber gave an overview of the Action Teams: The Planning Team, the Knowledge Network Team, the Targeting &

Outreach Team, and the Implementation Team. If anyone has questions about Action Teams, feel free to reach out to Action Team leads via Amber or Christine.

Amber highlighted the riparian plant of the day, River Birch (*Betula nigra*), and shared how it might grow in the field at a buffer planting. More information about River Birch can be [found here](#).

Amber also gave an overview of the achievements of the Consortium so far this year. There have been 28 Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professional (CBLP) Buffer Certificates granted so far this year, bringing the total since the start of the program to 86. Efforts in 2022 have also brought the total number of acres of forested buffers installed through the James River Buffer Program to 662. Two seasonal interns assessed 207 acres of Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) buffers through the Stewardship Program Pilot this summer.

The Consortium also developed a Key Issues Report on Streambank Stabilization. In depth findings of the Key Issues Report were covered at the May Consortium meeting. One of the prioritized next steps identified in the Report is to create engaging learning opportunities around streambank stabilization, and Amber noted that Kip Mumaw would lead a stream walk as part of the afternoon's Buffer Celebration events which would cover this topic in part.

More information about the Consortium can be found at <https://jamesriverconsortium.org/>.

## **Session 1: Riparian Forest Buffers in Virginia - State of Our Buffers in the James Watershed**

*Presenters: Kevin McLean, Dept. of Environmental Quality and Caitlin Verdu, Dept. of Forestry*

After the Consortium overview, Amber introduced Kevin McLean of the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and Caitlin Verdu of the Department of Forestry (DOF) to talk about how we're reaching our state goals and strategies to get more buffers on the ground, including the Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) III goals and a vision for the work that needs to be accomplished. Amber shared that riparian buffers are a powerhouse for water quality in the James River and are a key activity of the Chesapeake Bay Cleanup Plan. Kevin gave an overview of how the James River watershed is doing in reaching WIP goals, comparing it to the overall Chesapeake Bay watershed, and Caitlin shared how DOF is enhancing its buffer-related efforts. Kevin's slideshow can be found at this [link](#), and Caitlin's slideshow can be found at this [link](#).

### **Key Presentation Points from Kevin McLean, Dept. of Environmental Quality**

- Kevin's responsibility is to ensure all data is recorded and reported to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and reminded participants to report their data for projects in the watershed (*see the presentation [link](#) for additional information*).
- Regarding the state of buffers in the James watershed, Kevin drew attention to the percentage of the whole state goals that has been achieved in the watershed region. The percentage of the state goal that has been reached in the James watershed ranges from 1-5%, and Kevin noted that these percentages are made up of efforts in smaller watersheds across the James River watershed.

- It is helpful to look at what other buffer projects are already out there and haven't been captured in the reported data, especially the ones that have expired in the reporting system after 10 years.
- Kevin acknowledged that Virginia will probably not meet the 2025 state milestone for acres of buffers implemented. He noted, however, that it is important to open the discussion around this; 2025 milestones are not intended as the end point, and continuing to accelerate the goal beyond what is being done is a helpful direction. The important thing is that the work is continuing to be done, and Kevin added that the progress towards the milestones should not be a distraction from the good work that is happening.
- Kevin gave an overview of the nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment loads and the progress of reductions. The charts are divided into agricultural, developed, and other land types and sources. The overall trend shows that nitrogen loads are being reduced.
  - The charts also demonstrate good progress in phosphorus and sediment reductions.
  - The pie charts break down the progress that needs to be made, and Kevin pointed out that progress is needed particularly in the agricultural sector; forest buffers can play a huge role in this area.

### ***Comments and Discussion***

- From the chart in the slideshow, it looks like we are well on the way to reach sediment requirements; why are we meeting that goal compared to the others?
  - Kevin responded that when the planning target for reductions was set, the state was already leading the charge on BMPs to reduce sediment loads. The WIP III goals are the milestones for all of the reduction targets, which we are trying to overshoot. Kevin added that there is always more work that can be done.
- One participant asked if only state funded BMPs are being reported.
  - All state and federally funded BMPs are required to be reported. Ultimately, however, it would be ideal to have all BMP types reported. The lion share of BMPs that are being reported are those that are funded. Kevin and Caitlin added that if you are implementing a BMP, please get it reported.
  - There are a lot of BMPs that currently exist on the landscape, but may be aging out of the reporting model.
  - A major effort currently is to try to get existing BMPs that have aged out re-verified.
- What is the status of the buffer modification mitigation manual update?
  - Reach out to Kevin to follow up on this, as he can connect you with the correct resources and/or contacts.
- Christine noted that the Consortium serves for providing collaboration on needs, and welcomes continued feedback from Consortium members.

### **Key Presentation Points from Caitlin Verdu, Dept. of Forestry**

- Caitlin shared that with DOF's new watershed program, extra funding is available to pay extra attention specifically to riparian forest buffers.
- The Virginia Buffer Action Plan that is most current was the 2006-2010 version. DOF is currently working on updating the Plan, and there is an RFP out now for a facilitator to involve all partners for the creation of a new plan moving forward. The key topics that the Plan should capture are:



- Coordinating outreach to landowners to better match landowners to the best-fit programs.
- Increasing capacity to ensure there are folks working who can get buffers in the ground.
- Setting realistic goals: the progress data can feel disheartening when you're doing the work, so breaking it up into bitesize tools is helpful.
- Improving recording: Caitlin asked participants if they have implemented a buffer. Many hands were raised, but when Caitlin asked if they then reported it to the BMP Warehouse, most hands dropped.
  - Buffer projects are often collaborative; check who you work with to see if they have recorded the project you worked on together and call Caitlin or Kevin to ensure it was reported.
- The New Kent Nursery is reopening to add to seedling stock.
- Capitalizing on funding; this is a good time to get into buffers - there is increased opportunity for urban tree planting projects.
- Caitlin gave an update on what DOF's Watershed Team is working on:
  - Conducting assessments of internal needs.
  - Building an inventory of partners.
  - Creating training opportunities.
  - Ensuring reporting is being done internally at DOF.
  - Planning a study of past plantings.
  - Clarifying cost-share opportunities.
- Caitlin reminded participants to report their buffer projects to the BMP Warehouse!
- Lastly, Caitlin noted that DOF is excited for new capacity, funding, and energy - reach out to Caitlin regarding buffer work!

### ***Comments and Discussion***

- One participant asked Kevin how many watersheds are defined by EPA/DEQ in the Chesapeake.
  - There are 8-10 hydrologic unit codes (HUCs); there are hundreds of smaller ones.
- For reporting to DEQ, do you have to be with an organization, or can individuals report to the BMP Warehouse?
  - People have to be assigned an account to log into the Warehouse. Usually this happens with organizations. Kevin encouraged participants to work with organizations to get a BMP reported. Bill Keeling at DEQ can likely connect individuals with an organization for reporting purposes if needed.
- One participant asked about an existing Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) project that has been in the ground for more than 10 years and is functioning. What is the procedure for a homeowner to get such a BMP back in the program?
  - The duration that a buffer stays in the system has recently increased from 10 to 15 years. This question comes up a lot; departments are focused on getting BMPs back in the system. There is not a clear answer to this yet, but DEQ is moving toward getting buffers re-verified in the program.
  - DOF will look at CREP sites close to their expiration date. It may depend on what the landowner wants to do with the BMP.

- If you want to re-enroll your CREP project, Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) have options to get credit. Check with your SWCD about this.
- A DOF representative (Patti Nylander) noted that Caitlin reports for DOF, so there is often a designated person at organizations that will report a BMP to the Warehouse.
- Are remote sensing tools being used to monitor projects? To “count the uncountable,” is technology being used?
  - There are new high resolution data systems to capture things rather than sending people out to sites. Progress with this is moving slowly, but they are moving forward with this tech system. DEQ is exploring methods and ways to get projects back in the system. There is currently a pilot program with DCR to reinspect BMPs.
- Christine welcomed any new topics that the Consortium should explore.



## Flash Networking Session

After the presentation, participants broke out into small groups to introduce themselves, and discuss a person or partner that has been supportive of their work in buffers this past year and how. After small group discussions, participants brought their top organizations and themes back to the main group. Highlights included:

- Some organizations that were called out include James River Association, Blue Ridge PRISM, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Conservation Services, foresters, Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professionals (CBLP), and Master Naturalists.
- Top conversation themes included collaboration, long term riparian protection, fun, learning, invasive, advertising in the newspaper, and grassroots efforts.

## Session 2 - Business of Buffers

*Presenters: Shereen Hughes, CBLP and Wetlands Watch; W. Lowrie Tucker, Conservation Services; and Aaron Linas, Future Habitats*

Amber Ellis introduced the Business of Buffers panelists and the theme of the session presentations. Getting more buffers on the ground takes increased capacity across sectors, including the private sector. The session served to provide a glimpse into the barriers and challenges for existing and new businesses for increasing their capacity and availability for riparian forest buffer work, and to join the discussion for inspiration on how we might engage and support

new and existing private businesses and workers. The presentation slides from this panel are available at this [link](#). Shereen Hughes is the lead for the Consortium Knowledge & Network Action Team, which led a Business of Buffers roundtable this summer to understand how to form more engagement with small businesses in buffer work. W. Lowrie Tucker is with Conservation Services, a targeted buffer business, focused on large scale acreage of buffer installation, maintenance, planning consulting and wholesaler of supplies. Lowrie participated in the summer roundtable. Aaron Linas is with Future Habitats, a new small business focused on small-scale residential and business property for invasive removal and naturalized landscaping. The goal for Future Habitats is to be a full service design, installation, and maintenance firm. Aaron is exploring buffer business opportunities through CBLP-Buffers certificate training.

### **Key Presentation Points from Shereen Hughes, Wetlands Watch & Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professionals (CBLP)**

- Shereen recognized the partners in attendance that have helped to develop CBLP. The vision for the creation of CBLP was to engage and train the private sector to do work on projects such as buffers.
- The inspiration for CBLP was a talk that noted that we need to take advantage of the innovation in the free market to meet conservation goals. Impact and implementation can take place through the ideas that come up in private businesses, and Shereen acknowledged the difficulty of doing the work, and shared appreciation for the opportunities to make connections.
- Shereen shared observations from the June roundtable that was part of the Knowledge & Network Team's efforts. The goal of the roundtable was to understand how to form more engagement of small businesses to get them involved. How do buffers get implemented? The private sector is hired to do the work, and part of the roundtable was to figure out how to support businesses that are doing the work.
- There were 20 organizations or individuals invited to the roundtable, and only 4 people were able to attend. Shereen and the team are finding out how to use small group discussions and partnerships. They are still reaching out to organizations.
- Shereen emphasized working with organizations that have the pipeline for work set up.
- People are in it because they are passionate about the work. The way they work and the models vary depending on the type of buffers they implement and work on.
- Buffer work falls into categories; there are different companies that provide varying services and have different specializations within the field.
- Shereen noted that there are opportunities for sub-contractors in local areas.
- Be creative when working to get people engaged; one method is to offer a new skill and hands on experience. Shereen noted you may have to look outside the circle and think of other groups that have cross over skills to reach out to for training and resources.
- It is important to understand the challenges in getting organizations engaged.
- An idea to explore to engage the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) for CBLP-Buffers events.



## Key Presentation Points from W. Lowrie Tucker, Conservation Services

- It is important to have a sense of humor for this work - when working outdoors and implementing projects, you have to be able to crack jokes!
- Conservation Services has been working for many years, Lowrie has learned a lot and continues to learn about buffer work.
- A goal of Lowrie's is to create a manual that serves as a vessel of knowledge for others.
- Labor has been a critical need - the biggest barrier to this work is the lifestyle that is required. Lowrie acknowledged that people often hold different notions of what planting trees is like.
- The work is tough and there can be costs to personal life as well, but many rewards too.

## Key Presentation Points from Aaron Linas, Future Habitats

- Future Habitats is a small landscaping company that is trying to target areas that are affecting the watershed, focusing on invasive plant removal and native planting.
- Future Habitats was inspired by the lack of this kind of work in the landscaping world; traditional landscaping has been a learning experience for Aaron.
- Aaron and his team are currently trying to figure out funding mechanisms.
- A current potential project is at a school that has a program with the state for an urban farm. The project has the complications of a creek with a power line overhead, and Aaron's team is thinking of doing a shrub layer under the power lines and integrating that with the urban farm.

## Comments and Discussion

- For many years, there have been regional native plant guides to market native plants, building capacity for native plant nurseries. How difficult or easy has it been to source native plants?
  - Lowrie noted it has gotten worse; capacity of current stock is dictated by what happened two years ago. COVID has messed up the supply, and he is facing having to purchase plants for current projects one year in advance.
  - Aaron noted that they are trying to focus on natives to plant; it has been difficult to source them, but there have been more native plant nurseries that have shown up. Once a landowner has chosen the plants to plant for a site from the list, however, they may not be available anymore from the source.
  - Another consideration is what stock do people need? A strategy that was revealed at the roundtable is starting with early succession plants, then going back and adding diversity. How can we come up with a friendly competition strategy?
- One participant asked about a grocery store in Waynesboro that planted thousands of trees.
  - This was likely through a partnership in the Southern US to plant in marshes.
- With issues of scaling and getting ahead of needs for nurseries, is there a trade association for businesses? How can someone get started?
  - There aren't any trade associations for nurseries.

- There is the Virginia Nursery & Landscape Association (VNLA); CBLP has partnerships with them.
- Calling and reaching out to nurseries can be a helpful first step.
- The Virginia Native Plant Society has a list of recommended nurseries; they can get in contact with nurseries through them.
- Christine shared that the Virginia Small Business Development Center (SBDC) will assist with growing small businesses sectors that are in demand.
- Have there been changes in how much people are willing to pay for services?
  - Lowrie shared that in 2001, each plant cost \$4-6; now, the price is \$12-20 per plant. Another new trend is using 5 foot stakes instead of 2 foot stakes, and while there aren't any "biodegradable" stakes, there are materials coming onto the market that are transforming into carbon and natural materials over time.
  - The cost of business overall is going up, so even if they are charging more, the profit stays the same.

### **Session 3 - Partnering with a Conservation Corps to Advance Restoration**

*Presenters: Elwood York and Zach Foster with Conservation Legacy*

Amber Ellis introduced the Conservation Corps as an entity that can create a pipeline for young adults looking to enter the restoration workforce. This session served to share about existing efforts in Virginia, how a Conservation Corps works, and efforts to develop a Watershed Conservation Corps. Elwood York is the CEO of Conservation Legacy, and Zach Foster is the Corps Director. A link to the presentation can be found [here](#).

#### **Key Presentation Points from Elwood York, CEO of Conservation Legacy**

- Elwood is from Richmond, VA, and is a former Forest Service staff member.
- With regard to why organizations should partner with the Conservation Corps; they are a one stop shop for technical training, lobbying, and other work.
- Elwood noted that the government has funds available, and while the Forest Service has a state/community division that can't spend money on federal lands, the funding has to be spent on state and/or private land.
- Conservation Corps has the ability to hire and place interns, and they have interns in all states and territories.
- Conservation Services is also a pipeline for jobs. Federal agencies want to hire trained individuals.
- The program is a way to place people with environmental technical knowledge at other organizations.

#### **Key Presentation Points from Zach Foster, Corps Director at Conservation Legacy**

- The Appalachian Conservation Corps (ACC) works to connect young people to critical conservation service projects across the Appalachian region and neighboring communities. Work primarily involves people ages 18-26.
- Some of the partners ACC works with include the National Park Service, US Forest Service, NRCS, Virginia State Parks, National Park Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, Appalachian Trail Club, and more.



- A goal of the work is building local capacity through partnerships with JRA, DOF, and others.
- The program model follows a crew program, wherein residential crews are working 9 days on 5 days off.
- The Corps can provide training to crews depending on project and partnership needs.
- Through an individual placement program, Corps individuals are placed in a job embedded within an organization.
- The Corps offers services for projects to stay in compliance with funders.
- One of the services provided is forestry practices. ACC is doing some of the awkward projects that aren't profitable for private contractors, and the Corps is doing the projects that are not profitable for private businesses to take on.
- Another service provided is tree stand improvement - for example, to preserve commercial value or to build out salt creeks.
- Tree planting just started at scale last year with Friends of the Rappahannock (FOR). The Corps is doing this work in a non-competitive way, through projects that are federally subsidized, and don't compete with private companies.
- 60% of the Corp's work is on recreational assets, such as trail work.
- ACC trains recently retired veterans to experiment with jobs such as prescribed burning, and trying for different crews if one job is not a fit.
- The turnover of the program is low - less than 1 out of 20 people leave the program.
- The Corps takes on fencing projects where they don't compete with contractors, but rather in those places that it just needs to be done.
- The Watershed Corps looks to recent high school graduates that don't have the capacity or knowledge to give them an opportunity to try this line of work out.
- Components of the Corps are:
  - Get crew members trained that may enter the private workforce afterwards.
  - People work hard - a bit slower than a private crew, but the work is efficient and will be done.
  - Partnerships are needed locally.
  - Workforce, training, and the ability to try stuff out is the point of the program.
- Zach laid out some of the hurdles of the Corps program including funding at scale and accessing technical expertise. Other hurdles include:
  - It can be hard to contract with Virginia sometimes.
  - Finding funding that recognizes the Corps are a bit hybrid, when funding usually falls into specific buckets.
  - Providing external training to get Corps members hungry to work somewhere else at the end of it. There is a need to teach Corps members.
- Zach noted that people are motivated by the ethics of wanting to give back to the landscape. It is important to meet people where they are and to give them something to buy into.
- Zach shared his contact information, noting that they are about to double down on big initiatives.



### ***Comments and Discussion***

- One participant noted a botanical garden in Charlottesville that is removing invasive plants and is trying to create trails. If they are able to get a grant, could they work with ACC? They want to offer green job training.
  - Zach shared that the easiest way to do it is through grant funding. In-kind matching can be provided as they are part of AmeriCorps. They take on projects as small as two weeks.
  - ACC can also help them find the money and to find out what is available in terms of funding.
  - Regarding the grant cycle process, it is much better to reach out before writing the grant rather than after. If a partner such as ACC is written into the grant in the beginning, that is better.
- There is a challenge increasing diversity in the work crew. Money has been an issue in the past, but they are getting money now; what are you doing to help with diversity?
  - In terms of racial and gender diversity, the Corps recognizes that the communities often have other responsibilities at home. They are trying to start with these communities earlier. They are focused on a living wage and embedding with the community. This is slow work, but they are focused on this approach and to 'authentic change'.
  - The Corps is working on seeking the 'honest broker' to reach out to these communities, working with trusted partners to build relationships and opportunities.
- Christine noted that the Consortium has worked to center equity and belonging, this is an ongoing conversation, and we are welcoming hard conversations.
  - A summit on diversity, equity, and inclusion was proposed by one attendee. Those that were interested include Carol, Virginia, and Isabella.
- The Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission is involved in finding all grants and can share that information. They are also organizing a stakeholder advisory group around goals related to the Rivanna River.
- Are there opportunities for mentors with the Master Naturalist to help young folks involved with Corps?

- Yes, but they need/want to build capacity to do that.
- How are you planning on taking advantage of Build Back Better, the America Outdoors Act, and the Infrastructure Bill?
  - The bills are sending lots of money to federal agencies, but the agencies don't know how to get it out and they must spend it. You have to figure out how you want to spend it, in the way you want to spend it. If you get to it early, you can determine your work. Elwood encourages people to get in touch with Conservation Legacy and other nonprofits to continue the conversation.
- Amber plans to have some 1:1s to understand what funds are available and to understand the process.
- It was noted that these are often four-to-five-year funding opportunities.
- It was shared that we need to incorporate diversity, equity and justice (DEI) into everything that we are doing and into the discussion about raising funds.
  - Federal agencies will require that you do this. But if you don't know that, you won't have the pieces in place.
- The Corps provides job training for youth and is feeding into the pipelines and gently introducing them to outdoor experiences.
- In terms of legislation that would be helpful, if there is anything else you need in terms of legislative and regulatory solutions, it would be great if the Consortium could come up with legislative priorities, not related to funding.
- Participants met over lunch to discuss using AmeriCorps and Conservation Legacy to vet and train the entry level workforce and separately to discuss using the large amount of funding coming through the implementers.
- Christine noted that ideas need legs to move forward ideas for the Consortium, so we are tracking all the ideas, and the names associated with ideas, and she welcomes follow up from attendees to help move ideas forward.

## Closing

After the final panel presentation, Christine noted that a summary of the Summit will be available in the near future, Amber and Christine thanked all participants and presenters for joining and provided an overview of the Buffer Celebration sessions, including food and music, taking place in the afternoon. Additional information about the Consortium is at: [www.jamesriverconsortium.org](http://www.jamesriverconsortium.org).

## Buffer Celebration

Sessions were offered in the afternoon to celebrate the benefits of buffers. Sessions included:

- **Stream Walk with Kip Mumaw, Ecosystem Services:** Enjoy an educational walk along the stream at Wildrock to learn about stream dynamics and the benefits of buffers in stream health.
- **Buffer Tour + Maintenance, Joey Shelton and Anne Marie Roberts, JRA:** Tour a riparian forest buffer installed at Wildrock through the James River Buffer Program and get your hands dirty planting a few trees and performing a little TLC to this young forest buffer.
- **Ecotherapy, Carolyn Schuyler, Wildrock:** Take a breath and reconnect to the trees, earth, and water at Wildrock through guided ecotherapy practices.
- **Bird Walk, Steve Living, Dept. of Wildlife Resources:** Birds and other local wildlife love riparian forests! Learn about species typically found in these areas and what type of habitat they depend on.







## Gathering with Music + Bonfire

Participants enjoyed music by Holy River and explored wildcrafted (non-alcoholic) beverages that feature native riparian plants concocted by The Elderberry in Charlottesville.

### Meeting Participants

1. Aaron Linas, Future Habitats
2. Alston Horn, CBF
3. Amber Ellis, James River Association
4. Anne Henley, Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professional
5. Anne Marie Roberts, James River Association
6. Ashley Mock, Virginia Department of Forestry
7. Bill Sweeney, Virginia Department of Forestry
8. BJ Teeple, PFSWCD
9. Caitlin Verdu, VDOF
10. Carol Heiser, CBLP-1 and James River Master Naturalist
11. Caroline, Wildrock
12. Carolyn Schuyler, Wildrock
13. Casey Johnson, James River Association
14. Charlie Simmons, NRCS
15. Christine Gyovai, Dialogue + Design Associates
16. Dani Wise Johnson, Blueline Environmental
17. David Hirschman, Hirschman Water & Environment, LLC
18. Delaney Beattie, VDOF
19. Deya Ramsden, VDOF
20. Eli Podyma, Community Forestry Specialist - VA Dept of Forestry
21. Erin Reilly, James River Association
22. Gareth Hunt, Virginia Master Naturalist
23. Hunter Landis, VA DCR
24. Isabella O'Brien, Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission
25. Jason Woodle, Highland
26. Jill Trischman-Marks, Botanical Garden of the Piedmont
27. Joe Toolan, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
28. Joey Shelton, James River Association
29. John Harb, landowner, has riparian buffer through Chesapeake Bay Foundation program
30. Katie Neal, Future Habitats
31. Kayla Li, JRA
32. Kelly Jones Snoddy, Peter Francisco SWCD
33. Kevin McLean, DEQ
34. Kim Biasioli, County of Albemarle
35. Kip Mumaw, Ecosystem Services
36. Laurel Williamson, County of Albemarle
37. Lea Taylor, Dialogue + Design Associates
38. Lowrie Tucker, Conservation Services
39. Matt Lawless, Town of Scottsville
40. Meg Phillips, Wildrock
41. Meghan Mulroy-Goldman, VDOF
42. Melissa O'Neill, JRA
43. Patti Nylander, Virginia Department of Forestry
44. Peter Stutts, RES
45. Philippa Belsches, Dialogue + Design Associates
46. Rob Jennings, CBF
47. Rob McGinnis, Piedmont Environmental Council
48. Sammy Vest, Trout Unlimited
49. Sarah Coffey, Chesapeake Bay Foundation
50. Shereen Hughes, Wetlands Watch and CBLP
51. Sierra, Wildrock
52. Silas Elwood York, Conservation Legacy
53. Stella Bradford, Glendale Farms LLC
54. Steve Living, Virginia DWR
55. Tad Williams, Virginia Tech
56. Teagan O'Brien, Virginia Department of Forestry
57. Virginia Rockwell, CCLC
58. Zach Foster, Appalachian Conservation Corps
59. Highland representative - 2
60. Highland representative - 3