

## DEC Announces Annual 'Buffer in a Bag' Program

### Free Seedlings Available to Qualified Landowners for Streamside Plantings

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Basil Seggos today announced that the application period for the Trees for Tribes' "Buffer in a Bag" Program is now open. Qualifying private and public landowners may apply for a free bag of 25 tree and shrub seedlings for planting near streams, rivers, or lakes to help stabilize banks, protect water quality, and improve wildlife habitat.

"Small-scale streamside plantings can help decrease erosion, slow floodwaters, and protect fish and wildlife habitat," **said Commissioner Seggos**. "We encourage New York landowners with waterside properties to participate in DEC's 'Buffer in a Bag' program to bolster our efforts to protect water quality and safeguard communities from flooding."

To qualify, landowners must have property in New York State with at least 50 feet bordering a stream, river, or lake, and provide photos or a map of the planting location. Previous recipients are encouraged to reapply to continue to build riparian buffers. Applicants are eligible for one bag of 25 seedlings and recipients are chosen on a first-come, first-served basis. A total of 350 bags will be available statewide for this round of applications.

Landowners in the [Hudson River Estuary watershed \(PDF\)](#) may be eligible for additional assistance with streamside planting projects. For details, visit the [Hudson River Estuary Program's webpage](#).

Seedlings are provided by DEC's Colonel William F. Fox Memorial Saratoga Tree Nursery. The Trees for Tribes program is managed by DEC's Division of Lands and Forests and supported by the State's Environmental Protection Fund (EPF). Governor Hochul's 2022-23 Executive Budget proposes increasing the EPF from \$300 to \$400 million, which would be the highest level of funding in the program's history. The EPF provides funding for critical environmental programs such as land acquisition, farmland protection, invasive species prevention and eradication, enhanced recreational access, water quality improvement, and an aggressive environmental justice agenda.

Visit DEC's website for more information about the Buffer in a Bag application process and requirements. Applications are due by 3 p.m. on April 11, 2022. Contact [treesfortribs@dec.ny.gov](mailto:treesfortribs@dec.ny.gov) with questions and visit [DEC's Trees for Tribes webpage](#) to learn more.

<https://www.dec.ny.gov/press/press.html>