United States Department of Agriculture

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Conservation Practice Overview

Spring Development (Code 574)

A spring development collects water from a spring or seep that is used for livestock, wildlife, or other agricultural purposes.

Practice Information

A spring development can be installed where a spring or seep will provide a dependable supply of suitable water for the planned use.

Springs are developed by removing obstructions to the flow and collecting the water. The type of collection system used for the spring development is dependent upon the type of spring and site geology. Collection systems generally consist of a restrictive barrier that forces water to collect in a perforated pipe that flows to an outlet.

It may also be necessary to provide a means of storing the water if flow from the spring is not sufficient to meet the peak demand of the intended use. A spring box can be made of concrete, plastic, galvanized steel, or naturally rot-resistant wood. The spring box also functions as a sediment trap.

Installation of a spring development may have an effect on the nearby plant and wildlife communities. Consider options to minimize any adverse impacts.

This practice has a minimum expected life of 20 years. Operation and maintenance of a spring development includes periodic removal of sediment from the spring box, keeping outlets and overflow pipes clear, and repairing rodent damage and erosion from overflow pipes. It also includes keeping surface water diverted away from the spring.

Common Associated Practices

NRCS Conservation Practice Standard (CPS) Spring Development (Code 574) is commonly applied with CPSs such as Livestock Pipeline (Code 516) and Watering Facility (Code 614). It can also be used with some irrigation practices.

For further information, contact your local NRCS field office.