

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
CONSERVATION PRACTICE SPECIFICATIONS**

WILDLIFE WATERING FACILITY

(no.)

CODE 648

SPECIFICATIONS

- I. Distribution – Wildlife watering facilities shall be spaced one-quarter mile apart or no closer than one-quarter mile to a dependable, perennial source of water.
- II. Protection – Watering facilities will be fenced if the area is grazed by livestock. See Use Exclusion (472).
- III. Types of facilities – Facilities can either be embankment or excavated catch basins, a combination of the two, or improvements of small water supplies, such as springs, seeps, and small runs.

Each site will be different and the planner must use individual judgment of the method of construction, size, available water sources, evaporation losses, etc., which are necessary to meet the purpose of this practice.

Serious consideration shall be given to soils and planned water depth to maintain water throughout the year.

- A. Embankments and excavated catch basins - Embankments and catch basins in dry woodland sites shall have a surface area of at least 2000 square feet and no more than 5000 square feet, and a water depth of 36 inches or more over half the area. A minimum depth of water shall be 6 feet over at least 100 square feet. At least one slope must permit wildlife to enter and leave the water easily: 4:1 – 6:1 slope.

Surface runoff catchments with small,

earthen embankments intended to store more than 3 feet of water against the embankment shall be designed according to the Standard and Specification for Pond (378), with the exception of size and depth.

- B. Springs and seeps - The reliability and quantity of flow will be checked before development of a spring or seep to serve as a wildlife watering facility. Intermittent springs will be developed only if adequate checks show that water is available for the intended period of use. It is advisable to provide a large capacity storage to assure an adequate water supply when the intermittent spring or stream stops flowing.

Springs and seeps will be dug to firm ground or rock to obtain the maximum flow and all sources should be directed to a central collection basin. Livestock will be excluded from this area. Normally, a spring or seep needs a protective installation such as a spring box to catch and store water. The water is then piped to a trough or other type of drinking basin. When collected and conserved, springs with very small volumes can often supply sufficient water to maintain wildlife. Improvements involving intermittent springs will contain a minimum of 50 gallons of water. See the Standard and Specifications for Spring Development (574) for additional information.

- IV. Disturbed Area Treatment - Upon completion of the necessary excavation, the spoil will be disposed of according to plan. The disturbed area and sparsely vegetated areas will be treated and seeded and/or planted. If frequent overflows are expected, an appropriate

outlet shall be provided. A pipe may be necessary to protect the spillway.

Herbaceous and woody plant materials used on disturbed areas shall be selected from those listed in the Wildlife Upland Habitat Management (645) or Critical Area Planting (342) Standards and Specifications.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Plans and specifications for this practice shall be prepared for each site. Plans and specifications shall be recorded using approved specification sheets, job sheets, technical notes, or narrative documentation in the conservation plan or other acceptable documentation to describe the requirements for applying the practice to achieve its intended use.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

The purpose of operation, maintenance, and management is to insure that the practice functions as intended for the life of the practice.

Facilities shall be checked annually to insure proper function. Repair and maintain as needed. Inspect the area adjacent to the facility to make sure the area is well protected with desirable vegetation and not subject to erosion or sediment deposition. Correct as needed.

Facilities not designed to withstand or operate during freezing weather will be winterized prior to winter conditions.

Any use of fertilizers, pesticides, and other chemicals shall not compromise the intended purpose.

- A. Springs - Remove loose rock, sediment, accumulated leaves, vegetation, limbs, and logs to insure free discharge of the spring.
- B. Embankments - Periodic removal of woody vegetation from the fill and spillway area will be necessary. Remove debris as needed to insure free flow.

Repair erosion to the spillway area.