

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**

FISHPOND MANAGEMENT

(Acre)

CODE 399

DEFINITION

Managing impounded water for the production of fish or other aquatic organisms (non-commercial use).

PURPOSE

1. To provide favorable habitat for fish and other aquatic organisms.
2. To develop and maintain a desired species composition and ratio.
3. To develop and maintain a desired level of production.

CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

In warm and cold water ponds, lakes, and reservoirs.

CRITERIA

General Criteria Applicable To All Purposes

Structures will meet or exceed the requirements of the appropriate [conservation practice standard](#); i.e. a constructed pond will meet or exceed the requirement in Pond (378).

Do not recommend species that are considered invasive or may become invasive in surrounding waters.

[Use filter strips or other practices to ensure that discharges from ponds, lakes, and reservoirs will meet state water quality standards.](#)

All Federal, State and local regulations will be followed and necessary permits obtained prior to stocking, etc.

In Massachusetts, the following regulatory authorities control the permitting process of inland aquaculture operations:

- Inland Fisheries and Game and Other Natural Resources, MGL chapter 131. Regulations governing inland aquaculture in [321 CMR section 4.09](#). (Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MDFW)).
- Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act, MGL 131:40. (Conservation Commissions).
- Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA), MGL chapter 30:61-62H; regulations in 301 CMR section 11.00.
- Federal and State Clean Water Acts: Surface and Ground Water Discharge Permit Program; regulation 314 CMR 3.00 (Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MDEP)); and National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)).
- Water Management Act, regulations in 310 CMR 36.17: Water Withdrawal permits (MDEP).
- 401 Water Quality Certificates (MDEP) for altering bordering vegetated wetland, land under water, isolated wetland or Outstanding Resource Water.
- Federal Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1344) section 404; and section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899: Programmatic General Permits (Army Corps of Engineers).

Additional Criteria To Provide Favorable Habitat For Fish And Other Aquatic Organisms

The site will be protected from flooding, sedimentation, and contamination.

Aquatic vegetation shall be controlled.

Additional Criteria To Develop And Maintain A Desired Species Composition And Ratio

Species for stocking will be limited to those that are adapted for use in ponds, lakes or reservoirs in [Massachusetts \(see Table 2, Summary of Aquaculture Regulations\)](#).

Species selection(s) and stocking rates shall follow the appropriate state policy and guidelines ([see Summary of Aquaculture Regulation; and Massachusetts Aquaculture White Paper](#)).

Stocking rates and species selection and combinations shall depend upon the size, depth, water temperature, and water quality of the area to be stocked.

To maintain the desired species composition and species ratios a plan will be developed with the client to evaluate future species composition and species ratios through observations, seining and catch records.

Additional Criteria To Develop And Maintain A Desired Level Of Production

The desired level of production shall be maintained through liming, fertilization or supplemental feeding.

CONSIDERATIONS

Consider the use of native species.

Consider liming acidic soils in the watershed to achieve a neutral pH for best production.

Consider alternatives to the use of pesticides in the drainage area above the site, which may have negative impacts to water quality.

Consider methods to prevent the fish in the pond, lake, and reservoir from escaping into adjoining waters ([see 321 CMR 4.09](#)).

Consider methods to prevent introduction of non-native species into adjoining waters where native species might be adversely affected or non-compatible species from entering the pond, lake or reservoir ([see 321 CMR 4.09](#)).

Consider using only species of fish or aquatic organisms that are specifically adapted to impounded waters.

Consider providing additional fish and wildlife habitat within or around the impoundment for cover and breeding purposes that will not compromise the integrity of the structure or the purpose of this practice.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Plans and specifications for fish and other aquatic organism management will be in keeping with this standard and will describe the requirements for applying this practice to achieve its intended purpose. Specifications for this practice will be prepared for each site. Specifications will be recorded using approved specifications sheets, job sheets, narrative statements in the conservation plan, or other documentation.

Requirements for the operation and maintenance of this practice shall be incorporated into site specifications.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

The client will receive a plan and specifications describing the following management and corrective actions that are required for the successful management of the pond, lake or reservoir ([refer to Summary of Aquaculture Regulations; and Massachusetts Aquaculture White Paper](#)).

1. Managing fish or other aquatic organism populations.
2. Supplemental feeding.
3. Removing undesirable and overpopulated organisms.

4. Aquatic plant control.
5. Fertilizing.

REFERENCES

Massachusetts Aquaculture White Paper,
September 1995. Massachusetts Department
of Food and Agriculture.

Summary of Aquaculture Regulations, January
1995. Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and
Wildlife.