

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE  
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**

**COMMERCIAL FISHPONDS**

(ha, acre)

**CODE 397**

**DEFINITION**

A water impoundment constructed and managed for commercial aquaculture production.

**SCOPE**

This standard applies to impoundments that store water and are managed for commercial aquaculture purposes. It applies to all types of ponds installed or modified for commercial production of fish and other animals and plants, including those for fee harvesting on the site. It does not apply to ponds used for noncommercial aquaculture products grown for home use or recreational purposes. This standard applies to Class (a) dams having a product of storage times effective height of dam of less than  $1.13 \times 10^6 \text{ m}^4$  (3,000 acre ft<sup>2</sup>) and effective height of dam less than 10.7 m (35 ft).

**PURPOSE**

To provide a favorable water environment for producing, growing, harvesting, and marketing commercial aquaculture crops to supplement natural food supplies, to control water quality, and for effective use of land, water, and related resources.

**CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES**

On land where soil conditions, climate, water resources, and topography are suitable for constructing a pond or reservoir for commercial aquaculture production that meets the following criteria and conditions:

1. Water quantity will be adequate considering evaporation, seepage, and need for water exchange.
2. Water quality will be suitable for use in aquaculture production or can be made satisfactory by suitable treatment.
3. Application of practical pond management techniques will achieve the desired level of production on a predictable basis.
4. Access to the site is available or can be constructed and maintained.
5. Provision will be made for any needed treatment of water released downstream from the pond.
6. Ponds will store the recommended depth and area of water needed for specific aquaculture products.
7. The location, design, and installation of ponds will comply with flood plain, wetland, and prime farmland regulations.

**PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

The owner/operator's objectives will dictate the level of development and management to be planned. The plan must be based on the limitations and potentials of available natural resources. A thorough aquaculture resource assessment must be made to determine the feasibility of the project. The planning is complete when all practice components essential to reaching the cooperators' management objectives have been identified.

<p>Conservation practice standards are reviewed periodically, and updated if needed. To obtain the current version of this standard, contact the Natural Resources Conservation Service.</p>
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## PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS FOR WATER QUANTITY AND QUALITY

### *Quantity*

1. Effects on the water budget, with emphasis on effects on volumes and rates of runoff, infiltration, evaporation, transpiration, deep percolation, and ground water recharge.
2. Effects on the volume of downstream flow or aquifers that might cause undesirable environmental, social, or economic effects.

### *Quality*

1. Effects on erosion and the movement of sediment, organics, and soluble and sediment-attached substances.
2. Effects on the visual quality of water resources.
3. Short-term and construction-related effects on the water resources.
4. Effects on the temperature of water discharged.
5. Effects on the movement of dissolved substances below the root zone and toward ground water.
6. Potential for redistributing toxic materials during earth moving.