

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**

WILDLIFE WATERING FACILITY

(no.)

CODE NY648

DEFINITION

Develop, improve, or modify watering places and systems for wildlife.

PURPOSE

- To provide adequate drinking water, during critical periods, for wildlife.
- To create or expand suitable habitat for wildlife.
- To improve water quality and accessibility for wildlife.

CONDITIONS WHERE THIS PRACTICE APPLIES

In areas where new, additional, or improved watering places are needed to increase the range, distribution, improve the habitat of, or attract wildlife by meeting their water requirements.

Where lack of adequate water has been identified as the limiting habitat component.

CRITERIA

General Criteria Applicable to All Purposes

- Facilities shall be designed and installed in compliance with all State and federal laws including water rights and permits if needed.
- Because each facility is unique to species, habitat, topography, and climate; watering facilities must be planned and installed according to a plan and adapted to the specific site.
- Methods used will be designed to protect the soil resource from erosion.
- Pesticides shall be prevented from drifting onto the watering facility.

- Design shall be sized to accommodate the expected and/or anticipated consumptive rates of target and non-target species.
- Facilities shall be protected from livestock damage by excluding them with a permanent fence constructed at least 20 feet from the waters edge.
- The facility must provide permanent, accessible, dependable, and suitable quality water for the critical period. Generally this is considered to be April 1 to December 1.
- Facility shall be located away from areas of intense human activity.
- The distribution and spacing of facilities shall be based on topography, required travel distance to water and the home range, territory size, and distribution of the target species.
- Facilities needed for wildlife habitat shall be no closer than 3/8 of a mile (2000') from any permanent supply of surface water, natural or artificial. Intermittent streams that contain pools of water the year around shall be considered a permanent supply of water.

Where attracting or concentrating wildlife for general enjoyment is the objective, it is not necessary to consider distance to existing sources of water.

Songbird watering facilities may be located where concentrations of birds are desired.
- Adequate wildlife escape cover suited to the species to be benefited shall be nearby. Woody vegetation is desirable.

- Ramps shall be installed in open water troughs and tanks when necessary for access and escape.
- An earthen watering facility shall provide at least 750 gallons (100 cu. ft.) of water. It will have a surface area no larger than 0.10 acres, 4,356 square feet. At least ¼ of the shoreline will be graded to a 3:1 or flatter slope.

Where watering facility is to be created by excavation and/or diking, it must be constructed according to the conservation practice standard for Pothole (NY774) or Wetland Enhancement-Low Embankment (NY659), as appropriate.

Naturally occurring pools etc. can be enlarged or modified to meet the specified criteria herein.

- Small concrete pools of any dimension capable of holding at least 1 gallon may be installed to attract songbirds. Water may be piped in from natural sources or from domestic supplies, and sprayed or dripped into the pool during the summer. A valve and/or spray nozzle is needed at the outlet end of the water supply to control the flow.
- Design shall include appropriate safety features to minimize the hazards of the facility.
- Management measures shall be provided to control invasive species and noxious weeds.
- Disturbed areas shall be vegetated according to a revegetation plan using native plant materials.

CONSIDERATIONS

General Considerations

- Consider the effects on the target species and the ecosystem by concentrated grazing, predation, hunting etc.
- Consider the accessibility of the site for installation and maintenance.

- Consider locating the facility 1/2 mile (2600') from any permanent supply of surface water, which is considered the ideal distance.
- Consider any effects upon natural springs and associated unique flora and fauna.
- On small concrete pools, consider having water dripping into basin or pool area to attract certain species of songbirds.
- Consider the aesthetics of the installation.

Water Quantity Considerations

- Consider the effects on downstream flows or groundwater that could affect other water users or associated aquatic sites.

Water Quality Considerations

- Consider the effects on wetlands or other aquatic sites.
- Consider the existence and maintenance of suitable water quality for the target species.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Plans and specifications shall be prepared in accordance with the criteria of this standard and shall describe the requirements for applying the practice to achieve its intended use.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Facilities shall be checked periodically 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 deposition. Correct as needed.

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

Periodically monitor water quality to insure acceptable water quality. Maintain as needed.