

Establishing Winter Water for Waterfowl

MS-WHIP-646-01 (JS)
Revised March 2004

Purpose

The purpose of this practice is to provide shallow water areas in early fall for migrating waterfowl by pumping. The earlier in fall water can be made available to migratory birds, the better the opportunity to attract early migrants.

Flooding

Prior to flooding the waterfowl area, the water control structure should be closed to the required height. To prevent water loss, boards in flash board risers should be secured with wooden wedges. Screw type gates should be lubricated and checked for obstructions that may prevent complete closure. In crop field situations, it is best to leave behind as much waste grain as possible by leaving the field unplowed. Fields planted to grains for waterfowl food plots or those managed for moist soil plants should be left undisturbed. The practice is considered established when 8" or more of water has been pumped onto planned area before the required date.

Cost-Share Requirements

Cost share is available to cover fuel, labor and other pumping costs. The average cost is based on flooding one acre to a depth of 8-9". Cost-share rates are set at 75% or below based on estimated food value of vegetation flooded and types of mechanical manipulation applied to make foods more available to waterfowl. Payment will be based on acres of water flooded and average crop rotation during the contract. Even though cost-share payment is based on volume, receipts from bills paid for fuel, pumps or well equipment must be submitted to the local NRCS office. When flooding has been completed, fill out the "Payment Worksheet for Establishing Winter Water for Waterfowl," attach all receipts and submit it to the local NRCS office.

Percent of cost share to be paid is based on a graduated payment schedule dependent on flooded habitat value. Flooding of areas managed for native plants beneficial to waterfowl will receive highest level of cost-share. Also grain crops (corn, rice, milo/grain sorghum, and millet) managed as food plots and rice fields with stubble that has been rolled or burned will be paid at the maximum percent of cost share. Grain crop and soybean fields with no fall tillage or minimum fall tillage and rice fields with unrolled or unburned stubble will be paid at declining, graduated percent of cost-share levels based on flooded habitat value. **Fall disked grain crops or soybeans, cotton, or timber are ineligible for cost-share payments.**

In addition to pumping of early water as a beneficial practice for waterfowl, cost share will be paid for labor to close water control structures to catch rainfall (This cost is only to be used when NOT pumping early water) from November 1 to February 15 (or later) due to concerns about the declining aquifer in the Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley in Mississippi. This practice will provide increased water quality and quantity benefits in addition to providing valuable wildlife habitat.

General Requirements

- A WHIP conservation plan must be prepared, including information about size of area to flood and required dates for flooding to be completed.
- **Areas must be flooded prior to November 15 if pumped. Boards must be placed by November 1 and not removed before February 15 for catching rainfall.**
- Impoundments must have a water control structure to facilitate draining for planting and subsequent reflooding.
- Current migratory game bird hunting regulations allow hunting of waterfowl over standing crops, flooded standing crops, and harvested croplands. These crops may not be manipulated except by normal agricultural practices used to produce and harvest the crop. Grain inadvertently scattered by entering and leaving the field, placing decoys, or retrieving birds is not considered baiting. Japanese millet can readily reseed in subsequent years and can be manipulated when naturally reseeded, but not during the establishment year. **Check with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks for current hunting and baiting regulations.**

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Payment Worksheet for Establishing Winter Water for Waterfowl

Contract Name: _____

Labor and materials costs for closing water control structure(s) \$ _____
(This cost is only to be reported when NOT pumping early water)

Description of Habitat Flooded for Waterfowl (check applicable box):

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Native Vegetation (\$10.00) | <input type="checkbox"/> Harvested corn, milo, or millet (\$8.00) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rolled rice stubble (\$10.00) | <input type="checkbox"/> Rice stubble - unrolled, unburned (\$6.00) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Burned rice stubble (\$10.00) | <input type="checkbox"/> Soybeans – harvested or food plot (\$4.00) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corn, rice, milo, or millet food plot (\$10.00) | <input type="checkbox"/> Closed structure – no pumping (\$2.00) |

USE THIS PORTION FOR EARLY WATER ONLY

Completion Date of Flooding: _____

Fuel Used to Operate Equipment (check one):

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diesel | <input type="checkbox"/> Gasoline |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Electricity | <input type="checkbox"/> Liquid Propane |

Cost of operating pump or well for one hour: \$ _____

Hours required to flood waterfowl area: _____

Total cost to flood waterfowl area: \$ _____

I hereby certify the aforementioned information is true and accurate to the best of my ability.

Participant Signature _____

Date _____

Attach all receipts for labor, equipment and/or fuel bills to this worksheet