

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE  
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD

**WATER HARVESTING CATCHMENT**

(No.)  
CODE 636

**DEFINITION**

A facility for collecting and storing precipitation.

**Scope**

This standard applies to the sealing of watersheds or contributing areas to increase, collect, and store runoff water for future use. It also applies to simple curbs and diversions constructed to collect and store runoff from such high runoff areas as rock outcrops or existing paved or impervious areas.

**PURPOSES**

To provide water for livestock, fish and wildlife recreation, or other purposes.

**CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES**

This practice applies to areas where there is a need for additional water. The contributing area must have a potential to furnish the quantity and quality of water required for the intended use.

**CRITERIA**

Each water-harvesting catchment must be designed according to a plan suited to the water requirements and the site conditions. The following points shall be considered in designing water-harvesting catchments:

1. Quality and quantity of water required for the planned use.
2. Probability of filling the storage area or basin.
3. Area of apron needed for the required water yield.
4. Materials and method required to insure that the apron is smooth and impervious. Earth, treated earth, wax, rubber, plastic, asphalt, concrete, steel, and other such suitable materials are acceptable for this purpose.

5. Provisions for diverting foreign runoff from the catchment area to prevent damage and excessive sedimentation.
6. Provisions for protecting the apron from damage by runoff in excess of that needed to maintain the design capacity of the conveyance system. An overflow pipe or an emergency spillway can be used.
7. Need for a sediment trap between the apron and the storage basin.
8. A storage basin that is adequate in size, impermeability, and durability for the required water. Earth basins and tanks of steel, concrete, Butyl rubber and similar facilities are acceptable. Earth dams must have at least 1 ft of freeboard above design high water. All storage basins must be protected from 10-year-frequency storms. An overflow device must be installed in all storage basins.
9. Need for evaporation repressants, such as rock filling and floating covers.
10. Adequate protection to prevent damage from weather, animals, vandals, wildlife, and traffic. Fencing may be necessary.
11. Provisions for maintaining the apron, the conveyance system, the overflow device, and the storage basin.

**CONSIDERATIONS**

**Water Quantity**

1. Effects of trapping or catching of water on surface and ground water. Factors include changes in evaporation, timing of releases from the catchment, and the impact of the type of on surface water versus ground water decreases.

### **Water Quality**

1. Potential improvement in surface water quality resulting from flow reduction's contribution to reducing erosion and sediment yield. Consider the size of the harvest area and the impact of associated structures, such as sediment traps.
2. Effects of reduced dilution water on water quality factor such as dissolved substances, waste assimilation capacity, and dissolved oxygen.
3. Effects of loss of ground water dilution and the reduction of input of dissolved salts and chemicals on ground water quality.

responsible for operating this practice. The plan should provide specific instructions for operating and maintaining the system to insure that it functions properly. It should also provide for periodic inspections and prompt repair or replacement of damage components.

### **Endangered Species Considerations**

Determine if installation of this practice with any others proposed will have any effect on any federal or state listed Rare, Threatened or Endangered species or their habitat. NRCS's objective is to benefit these species and others of concern or at least not have any adverse effect on a listed species. If the Environmental Evaluation indicates the action may adversely affect a listed species or result in adverse modification of habitat of listed species which has been determined to be critical habitat, NRCS will advise the land user of the requirements of the Endangered Species Act and recommend alternative conservation treatments that avoid the adverse effects. Further assistance will be provided only if the landowner selects one of the alternative conservation treatments for installation; or at the request of the landowners, NRCS may initiate consultation with the Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service and/or California Department of Fish and Game. If the Environmental Evaluation indicates the action will not affect a listed species or result in adverse modification of critical habitat, consultation generally will not apply and usually would not be initiated. Document any special considerations for endangered species in the Practice Requirements Worksheet.

### **PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS**

Plans and specifications for water-harvesting catchments shall be in keeping with this standard and shall describe the requirements for installing the practice to achieve its intended purpose.

### **OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE**

An operation and maintenance plan must be prepared by the Designer for use by the owner or other