United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Animal Enhancement Activity –*ANM12*- Shallow Water Habitat

Enhancement Description
Construct, manage or renovate small, shallow wetland sites to encourage water to remain seasonally, generally from late winter through early summer (e.g., vernal pools).

Land Use Applicability
This enhancement is applicable on cropland, pasture land, rangeland and forest land.

Benefits
Shallow water habitats are used by amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals and other species in completing their life cycles. Most species of amphibians need shallow water areas to lay their egg masses. These seasonal pools of water do not provide year-round water habitat that would support fish that could prey on the egg masses.

Criteria for Shallow Water Habitat
This enhancement is intended for the construction, management, or renovation of existing shallow water areas to enhancement their benefit for wildlife.

Soil & Site Considerations Shallow water habitat sites should be located where water can be impounded or regulated by diking, ditching, flooding, pumping, or excavation. Soils must have low permeability or seasonal high water tables to inhibit subsurface drainage and allow for maintenance of proper water levels. These aquatic habitats must be located adjacent to or within wildlife-friendly cover or natural habitats. This activity does not apply on existing wetlands.

Size/Depth/Season/Composition There are no area limitations, although larger aquatic habitats provide greater ecological benefits.

- Maximum depth shall not exceed 30 inches and the average depth should be between 6 and 18 inches.
- These aquatic habitats must be designed and managed to hold water at a minimum from late winter through early summer, however it should not hold water all year long.
- Irregular substrate surfaces are preferred over smooth substrate surfaces to create diverse plant communities and habitat structure.
- A combination of open water and natural vegetation, including moist soil and wetland plants, is desired within the wetted perimeter.
- A ratio of about 50% open water to 50% vegetation is ideal (acceptable range is 30-70%). Habitat complexity can be enhanced by the addition of logs or rocks that provide resting and basking sites.

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Refer to Conservation Practice Standard, Shallow Water Development and Management (646) for additional management information and Dike (356), or Water and Sediment Control Basin (638) for additional information on water impoundment structures for this enhancement.

Operation and Maintenance The contributing watershed and/or water supply shall provide clean water free of harmful pollutants. Apply conservation treatments to the contributing watershed to ensure minimal erosion and sediment delivery. Buffer these aquatic habitats with wildlife-friendly perennial vegetation dense enough to retard erosion and trap sediments before entering the water.

Manage water levels by artificially raising or lowering in order to produce desired habitat conditions. Manage the areas to control reed canarygrass, purple loosestrife and other undesirable invasive plants. Manage dense vegetation such as cattails and prairie cordgrass so that 50-70% open water is maintained.

Documentation Requirements for Shallow Water Habitat

- Site description including a location map, a detailed map or sketch including surrounding land uses, with dimensions, water depth and estimate of area.
- Description of management activities and dates completed.
- Maintenance plan.

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Participant Acknowledgement Statement:
I agree to apply this enhancement under the terms and conditions of my CSP contract and understand the requirements of the activity.

Compensation will be on a per acre basis as described in my CSP contact.

Fields	Habitat Area (sq ft)	Habitat Area (acres)	Description Management Enhancement Activities	Date(s) Management Enhancement Activities Completed

I certify that the shallow water habitat management meets these specifications including the following documentation as applicable:

1. Site description including a location map, a detailed map or sketch including surrounding land uses, with dimensions, water depth and estimate of area.
2. Description of management activities and dates completed.
3. Maintenance plan.

Certified by: _____ Date:_____