

**NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION SERVICE  
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**

**POND  
CODE 378M**

**OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE  
PLAN**

You, the owner (or operator) are responsible for the maintenance of your pond. All ponds designed by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) are based on the best available technology but their actual lifespan still depends on proper maintenance.

Well maintained ponds will last for many years.

The NRCS has prepared the following guidelines for pond maintenance:

Inspect your pond after the first significant rainfall and again after each rainfall until it reaches the full mark. Thereafter it should be inspected each spring while vegetation is still dormant. Problems can be concealed under a lush growth of vegetation so any weaknesses are more easily identified early in the year.

Inspect your pond after the first growing season to determine if the new seeding is becoming established. If the seeding is unsuccessful, reseed it during the next seeding period, using the original seeding mixture specifications. Thereafter, inspect the vegetation annually and fertilize or reseed if necessary. Weeds will also need to be controlled to enhance the success of the seeding.

When applying herbicides on land adjacent to the pond embankment, consider the effects on the grass seeding vegetation and use caution to prevent damage. Control weeds on your pond embankment with herbicides that are non-injurious to grass or mow/clip if possible (Refer to current Cooperative Extension guides for herbicide use in Nebraska). Remove volunteer trees and shrubs as they appear.

Minor rilling can be expected until the grass gets well established. These rills will usually heal themselves unless the embankment or other

disturbed areas are overgrazed. Livestock also leave trails which concentrate erosion. If your conservation plan calls for fencing out the structure, the fences need to be kept in good repair. If your conservation plan does not call for fencing it should be considered if livestock trails and overgrazing are beginning to cause excessive erosion.

Avoid using the auxiliary spillway as a travel lane for vehicles or farm machinery. These trails are starting points for gully and rill erosion in the event that a large storm causes auxiliary spillway flow.

Inspect the embankment for rodent damage. Burrowing animals create holes which cause "underground pipes." Water can flow through these underground pipes causing internal scouring of the pond embankment and can eventually lead to failure of the embankment.

Structural features to watch for:

1. Unusual seepage high on the back side of the dam.
2. Trash accumulation plugging the pipe inlet.
3. Scour hole around the pipe inlet.
4. Unusual sink holes on the back side of the dam.
5. Water flowing underneath the pipe at the outlet.
6. Water flowing into the pipe but not coming out.
7. Water flowing out of the pipe but none coming in.
8. Deterioration or breakup of concrete and/or pipe.
9. Drawdown valve, check for proper operation.

Conservation practice standards are reviewed periodically, and updated if needed. To obtain the current version of this standard, contact the Natural Resource Conservation Service.

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10. Silt bars in outlet channels.
11. Rock riprap damaged by freeze-thaw action.
12. Excessive erosion in plunge pool.
13. Excessive erosion due to wave action on the front side of the embankment.
14. Safety features such as fences, signs, etc, check for needed repair.

If your inspections of the above items suggest problems that need special attention, consult your local NRCS Field Office.