

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**

WILDLIFE WATERING FACILITY

**(No.)
Code 648**

DEFINITION

Constructing, improving, or modifying watering places for wildlife.

according to a plan and adapted to the specific site.

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.

- Methods used will be designed to protect the soil resource from erosion
- Design shall be sized to accommodate the expected and/or anticipated consumptive rates of target and non-target species.
- The facility must provide permanent, accessible, dependable, and suitable quality water for the critical period.
- 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.
- 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.
- Facilities shall be designed and installed in compliance with all state and federal laws including water rights and permits if needed.
- Disturbed areas shall be vegetated according to a revegetation plan using native plant materials.

CONDITIONS WHERE 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.

Wildlife watering facilities shall be established where year round water is not available within ½ mile of the area under consideration. For natural water bodies the U.S. Geological Service quadrangle maps provide a good base of information for this analysis. Also consider as water source the manmade structures such as spring development or troughs and tanks.

CRITERIA

General Criteria Applicable to All Purposes

- Because each facility is unique to species, habitat, topography, and climate, watering facilities must be planned and installed

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

Criteria for spring and trough or tank wildlife watering facilities

Wildlife watering facilities using spring development or troughs and tanks shall be designed in conformance with the NRCS Caribbean Area conservation practice standard Spring Development Code 574 or Watering Facility Code 614.

Capacity of tanks or troughs shall be based on the expected number of wildlife to use the facility and expected water consumption. Trough or tank shall have a minimum capacity of 100 gallons and have a dependable water supply.

Troughs or tanks used for small birds and small animals shall be fitted with an access ramp and an escape ramp. The ramps shall be made of material that is rough enough to provide footing for the animals. As an option, trough or tanks may be placed in the ground with access provided at ground level.

Livestock shall be excluded from trough or tanks.

Earthen wildlife watering facilities

Earthen wildlife watering facilities shall be designed in conformance with Caribbean Area NRCS conservation practice standard for Pond, Code 378.

The exposed surfaces of all areas disturbed during construction shall be seeded or sodden as necessary to prevent erosion. Areas requiring vegetation shall be vegetated in accordance with NRCS Caribbean conservation practice standard for Critical Area Planting, Code 342.

Site Investigation: Site suitability and design shall be based on adequate investigations and surveys as described in the National Engineering Field Handbook for conservation Practices, Chapter 11, Ponds and Reservoirs. Watering facilities shall be constructed in soils that are capable of maintaining a supply of water during normal rainfall years.

Side slopes: Remember the edges should slope gradually, allowing wildlife easy access in and out. Add rocks, logs, and plant material around the edge of ponds to add cover.

Place several flat rocks or sand to give footholds for birds and to allow for gradual entry. Keep the water supply dependable and clean since unpredictable sources will not be visited as often. The sound or dripping or running water may also draw more attention.

CONSIDERATIONS

- Wildlife watering facilities will have minimal effect on the water budget
- Wildlife watering facilities may impact the downstream flows or aquifers that could affect other water uses or users.
- Wildlife watering facilities may effect the erosion and the movement of sediment and soluble and sediment-attached substances that would be carried by runoff.
- The use of native vegetation may be the best alternative to vegetate disturbed areas.
- 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 any effects upon natural springs and associated unique flora and fauna.
- Consider the aesthetics of the installation.
- 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 for installing wildlife watering facilities shall be in keeping with this standard and shall describe the requirements for applying the practice to achieve its intended purpose.

The plans shall include as a minimum, spacing of watering facilities, construction details including depth, minimum cross sections, and vegetated requirements.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Facilities shall be checked weekly to assure that the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito eggs and larvae are not present. The *Aedes aegypti* mosquito is the most important transmitter or vector of dengue viruses

Wildlife watering facilities must be adequately maintained if their purposes are to be realized through the expected life. An operation and maintenance plan will be made for each wildlife watering facility and given to the land user.

Special considerations shall be given for maintenance needs during the planning, design, and construction of the facility.

The wildlife watering facility should be inspected after heavy rains and during

prolonged dry periods to determine whether it is functioning properly.

Access should be checked periodically to ensure adequate wildlife access to the watering facility.

Areas subject to erosion shall be checked periodically to ensure adequate vegetation is maintained to prevent erosion. Repair eroded areas and revegetate as needed. The use of native vegetation may be the best alternative to revegetate disturbed areas.

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.

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

Watering facilities shall be monitored to determine the presence of non-desirable species.

Reference

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