

Wildlife Watering Facility

Job Sheet

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
 Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC)
 MU Extension – School of Natural Resources

For:	County:
Field(s):	Farm #:
Date:	Tract #:
Designed By:	Contact Information:

PURPOSE: Wildlife Watering Facilities (WWFs) are small constructed ponds used to provide supplementary water sources for wildlife and shallow water habitat for amphibians and reptiles. They are built with a shallow depth and are not intended to support fish and fish should not be stocked. Woodland amphibians such as salamanders, frogs, and toads usually cannot reproduce in ponds stocked with fish. Other species of wildlife need water from a surface source daily. A lack of water may decrease wildlife use in areas that otherwise have good habitat. Wildlife watering facilities should be placed one-quarter mile apart or no closer than one-quarter mile to a dependable quality water supply. This will ensure that drinking water is not a limiting habitat factor on your land. Anecdotal accounts indicate that many historical sources of water such as springs, seeps, and small streams have dried up or disappeared over the last century, especially in the Ozarks. WWFs can help to restore water sources to an otherwise dry landscape.



Wildlife Watering Facility
in forest opening



Wildlife Watering Facility
along field edge

SPECIFICATIONS:

Location

Wildlife Watering Facilities have small surface areas and require only small watersheds. They are **not typically built in or across a prominent drainage feature** and are certainly not built towards the bottom of slopes. Instead, build WWF just 50-150' horizontally off the top of the ridge and only 6-12' lower in elevation. Do not make the mistake of moving too far down a draw and trying to build a typical pond.

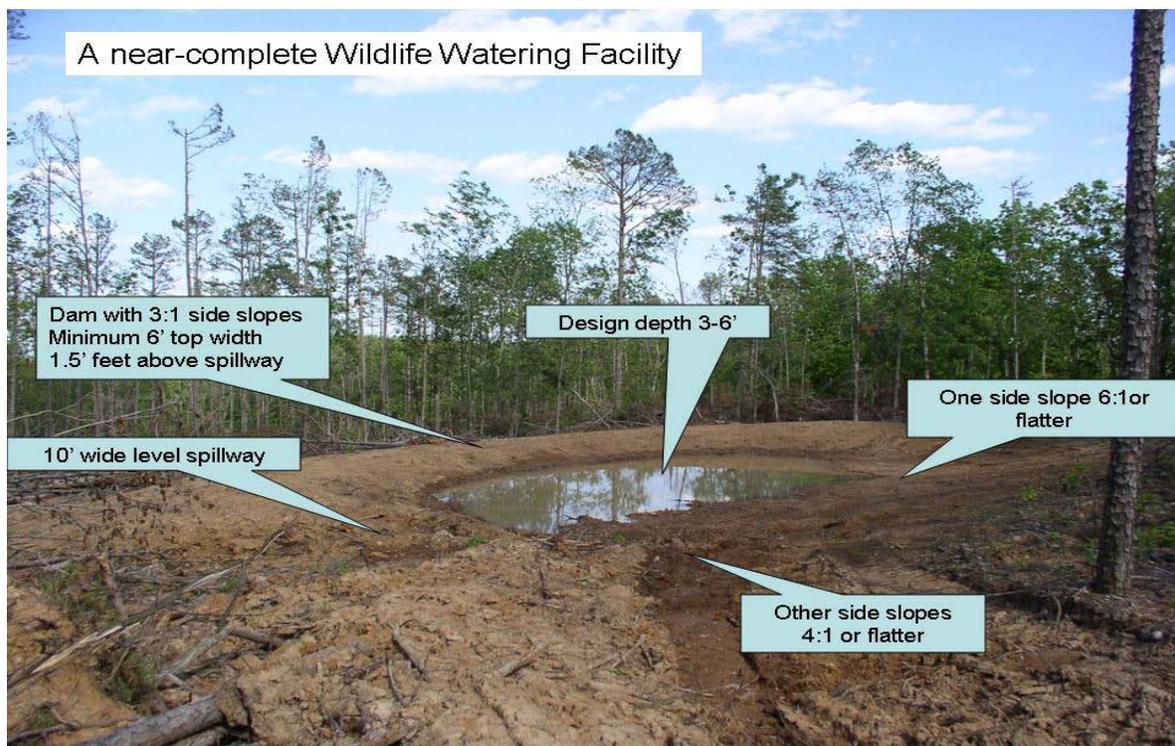
Wildlife Watering Facilities are most successful when constructed on broad, gently sloping ridgetops. It may not be possible to construct a successful facility on a "razorback", rocky ridge with little soil. Determine site characteristics, especially soil suitability, before construction. In areas with poor or gravelly soils, it is especially important to build the facility close to the

top of a ridge, where there is typically a “cap” of better soils. Facilities built in soils known for leakage will be designed on north or east facing slopes and will be constructed in February, March, or April. Late winter construction has been shown to be best for constructing sideslope ponds in leaky soils due to basin sealing that occurs during construction in wet soils. Do not allow sideslope ponds to be constructed from June through October on soils that have leakage problems.

- Drainage area should be 1-3 acres and no larger than 5 acres
- Minimum pool size is 150 square feet and maximum pool size is .2 acres
- Half of the pool area should have a minimum water depth of 3 feet
- Maximum water depth is 6 feet
- Minimum dam top width is 6 feet and the dam should have minimum 3:1 side slopes
- Pool side slopes should be 4:1 or flatter, with one side having 6:1 slopes for wildlife access
- Core trenches are not required but the use of high-clay fill is encouraged for the embankment and bottom
- Pipe spillways should not be used
- No more than 3 feet of water should be stored against the dam. Remember that these are primarily dugout structures.
- A 10' wide grassed spillway is needed on one end of the dam if there is more than 3' of water against the constructed embankment
- Top of dam will be 1.5' above the grassed spillway, if used
- Avoid planting vegetation around the WWF that could impede wildlife access, like fescue or reed canary grass.
- Legumes may be added around the WWF to benefit wildlife.
- Drop a tree into the pond to provide amphibian habitat

If the facility is designed for amphibians, drawdown capability is required as annual late summer drawdowns are used to eliminate unwanted bullfrog populations. The drawdown pipe is typically a 1.5" water line and valve.

See NRCS Standard – WATERING FACILITY (614) for seeding specifications/methods.



This is a recently completed WWF. Some additional smoothing is needed as well as removal of brush and debris from the spillway area. After smoothing the area will be seeded.

SEEDING:

The following generic seeding can be used if planted in the fall, on a per-acre basis:

- 3.0 pounds PLS Ladino Clover
- 3.0 pounds PLS Timothy
- 1.8 pounds PLS Redtop
- 18 pounds Winter Wheat

IF seeding is cost-shared, an alternative planting mix specifically designed for the soils, location, and time of year will be required, according to 342 Critical Area Seeding standard.

MAINTENANCE:

- Exclude livestock from wildlife habitat and WWFs.
- Maintain vegetation so dam and spillway are not subject to erosion.
- Annual late summer drawdowns can be used to remove bullfrog populations.

PRIMARY HABITAT CONSIDERATIONS:

- Provide water sources for targeted wildlife species and/or shallow water fishless pools for amphibians.

Consult with NRCS or MDC wildlife biologists and private land conservationists for additional recommendations. Contact University Extension for additional information on wildlife management.

Comment:



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