

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE CONSERVATION PRACTICE SPECIFICATION

WETLAND CREATION

(acre)
Code 658

GENERAL SPECIFICATION

Procedures, technical details and other information listed below provides additional guidance for carrying out selected components of the named practice. This material is referenced from the conservation practice standard for wetland creation and supplements the requirements and considerations listed therein.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this practice is to meet two of New Mexico's major wetland needs. Providing nesting habitat for waterfowl, shorebirds, is one major reason, but the planner should understand that waterfowl will not tolerate other nesting ducks in close proximity. To expect hundreds of ducks nesting in one small area is unrealistic. Care should be taken to provide cover for the nest and open water for hatchlings.

The second scenario is to provide food and resting site for fall/winter migrating waterfowl. The emphasis here is to insure plantings of food sources are available and safe undisturbed resting areas. Islands become important in both situations.

A wetland can serve double duty with water being available year-round. Other wildlife species and groups are also attracted to wetlands. If trees are planted many Neotropical migratory birds will use the area.

WATER DEPTHS

Water depth is critical to discourage mammal predators. Skunks, bobcats, coyotes, cougars, house cats, and most dogs are all discouraged if they are forced to swim, especially during cold weather.

Young ducks need open water to escape danger after hatching when they are flightless.

Water control structures will be needed to maintain adequate depth and flexibility for management. Minimum depth should be 18 inches in fall/winter and 24 inches spring/summer. Maximum depth should not exceed 5 feet. At least 50% of the water should be shallow (18 - 24 inches deep). The outside perimeter should be maximum depth and as steep slope as the soil texture will allow.

Open water should be maintained on at least 60% of the wetland.

PLANTING REQUIREMENTS

Plants used around the perimeter, in the water or at waters edge must be hydrophytic native plants. Consideration must be given to food needs in the fall/winter as well as spring/summer. Nesting cover should be at least 18 inches tall for protection from aerial predators and for winter cover for pheasants or quail. If trees are planned at least one tree should be placed on the island.

ISLANDS

Islands are highly recommended for nest protection and a safe place to rest.

Conservation practice general specifications are reviewed periodically, and updated if needed. To obtain the current version, contact the natural resources conservation Service.

Specification - 658-2

Islands should be sloped to a 5:1 or 6:1 grade.

EARTH MOVING

Perimeter slopes should be steep (1.5 to 1 if possible or 2 to 1) and islands should be 5 or 6 to 1.

Equipment adequate to perform the task is necessary. Many times this will require small equipment rather than large. Topsoil should be saved to backfill and compact the bottom for a tight seal.

WATER MANAGEMENT

Maintain maximum depth in April, May and June for protective open water during nesting season.

A depth of 18 - 24 inches is probably adequate in fall/winter.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATION

Specifications for this practice shall be prepared for each site. Specifications shall be recorded using approved specifications sheets, job sheets, narrative statements in the conservation plan, or other documentation.

Requirements for the operation and maintenance of the practice shall be incorporated into site specifications.

APPLICABLE PRACTICES

- Pond Sealing
- Structure for Water Control
- Wetland Development
- Diversion
- Dike
- Fence
- Riparian Forest Buffer
- Tree/shrub establishment
- Tree Planting
- Brush Management
- Pipeline
- Wildlife Wetland Habitat Management

**NRCS, NHCP
April, 1999**

- Woodland Direct Seeding
- Others

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

The following actions shall be carried out to insure that this practice functions as intended throughout its expected life. These actions include normal repetitive activities in the application and use of the practice (operation), and repair and upkeep of the practice (maintenance).

Undesirable plant growth will invade the wetland sooner or later and will need to be controlled. Waterfowl will bring plants into the wetland such as cattail.

Some thought for drainage, dry out and rejuvenation must be discussed with the landowner during planning. Disease vectors such as mosquitoes may be a problem and some contingency for this is needed. Eutrophication is the gradual filling in of the wetland by sediment, plant material, etc. and will have to be dealt with after some time.

Only pesticides and herbicides registered for use in aquatic places can be used.

Mechanical means of weed control such as raking or chopping are highly useful when plants get thick enough to cover the water.

Burning is a tool to use in conjunction with dry out periods.

Biological controls may be available for a limited number of problem plants.

If waterfowl diseases become a problem the wetland should be drained immediately and kept dry for six months.