

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE  
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**

**WILDLIFE WATERING FACILITY**

(No.)  
CODE 648

**DEFINITION**

Constructing, improving, or modifying watering places for wildlife.

**PURPOSE**

To provide drinking water for wildlife.

**Conditions where practice applies**

In areas where new, additional, or improved watering places are needed to increase the range or to improve the habitat of wildlife.

**Specifications guide**

Spacing of water facilities, construction details, and methods of protection.

**Planning considerations for water quantity and quality**

**QUANTITY**

1. Effects on the water budget, especially on volumes and rates of runoff, infiltration, evaporation, transpiration, deep percolation, and ground water recharge.
2. Effects on downstream flows or aquifers that could affect other water uses or users.

**QUALITY**

1. Effects on erosion and the movement of sediment, and soluble and sediment-attached substances that would be carried by runoff.
2. Effects on the movement of dissolved substances to ground water.
3. Effects on wetlands or water-related wildlife habitats.

**SPECIFICATIONS**

**Planning**

Wildlife watering facilities will be planned to supplement existing habitat conditions and to meet the water requirements of the wildlife species being managed.

Facilities will be designed to provide water at the approximate ground level, or by containing overflows from tanks and troughs at ground level.

Fencing will protect facilities, which may be damaged by domestic livestock.

Facilities with deep water or steep side slopes, which would create a drowning hazard to wildlife, will have an escape ramp incorporated.

**Suitable types of facilities include:**

- a. rain traps - impervious catchments with storage link and drinking trough;
- b. dugouts, pits or drinking troughs supplied by surface runoff, stream diversion, spring flow or pumped well; and
- c. Drinking troughs supplied from a pipeline.

Conservation practice standards are reviewed periodically, and updated if needed. To obtain the current version of this standard, contact the Natural Resources Conservation Service.
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Facilities will be planned to supply the following water requirements:

- 1 mule deer - 1 to 2 gallons per animal day
- 2 antelope - 1 to 2 gallons per animal day
- 3 elk - 5 to 8 gallons per animal day
- 4 quail - 750 gallons per covey on yearlong basis
- 5 wild turkey - 500 gallons per flock on summer range
- 6 mourning doves - 2 to 5 gallons per day for each facility during period of migration, or yearlong where resident
- 7 songbirds - 1 to 2 gallons per day for each facility on yearlong basis

Watering facilities will be planned to meet the habitat requirements of the primary wildlife species on the unit of land being managed.

Spacing of facilities generally will not exceed:

- 1 mule deer - one facility per 1 to 2 square miles
- 2 antelope - one facility per 2 to 3 square miles with at least one facility in each fenced pasture
- 3 elk - one facility per 1 to 3 square miles
- 4 quail - one facility per 2 to 4 square miles
- 5 wild turkey - one facility within 2 miles of feeding or roosting areas on summer range
- 6 mourning doves - one facility within 4 miles of feeding or nesting areas.
- 7 songbirds - one facility within 1/4 to 1/2 miles of feeding or nesting areas, or where concentrations are desired.

**Construction** - A plan will be prepared for each wildlife watering facility. The plan will specify the following items, as they are needed to meet the planned management objectives:

- 1 location of the facilities
- 2 wildlife species to be benefited
- 3 water source
- 4 spacing between facilities or between facility and natural water source
- 5 amount of water storage or delivery capacity
- 6 method of livestock exclusion
- 7 list of construction materials
- 8 design of proposed facility or applicable job sheet.