USDA United States Department of Agriculture

CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY

E399A

Fishpond management for native aquatic and terrestrial species

Conservation Practice 399: Fishpond Management

APPLICABLE LAND USE: Crop (Annual & Mixed); Crop (Perennial); Pasture; Range; Forest; Farmstead; Associated Ag Land

RESOURCE CONCERN: Animals

ENHANCEMENT LIFE SPAN: 1 year

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Enhancement Description

Pond rehabilitation, buffer, and watershed management actions are taken to improve habitat for native species of fish, amphibians, and shorebirds.

Criteria

- The pond must meet the requirements of NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Pond (Code 378).

- Where feasible, retain features such as trees in the upper reaches of the pond and stumps in the pool area. If necessary, shape upper reaches of the pond to provide shallow areas and wetland habitat.

- Based on client objectives and local regulations develop a pond management plan that specifies species selection, stocking rates, and ratios. Develop species selection, stocking rates, and ratios with respect to the size, depth, water temperature, and water quality of the pond to be stocked.

- Use native species that are locally adapted for use in ponds, lakes, or reservoirs. Comply with state and local regulations when selecting species to be stocked. Control nuisance non-native species in compliance with state and local regulations.

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

- If needed, use of supplemental aeration equipment to improve gas transfer, water quality, and minimize fish stress within the impoundment.

- Protect the site from flooding, sedimentation, and contamination. Use erosion control and nutrient and pest management conservation practices in the watershed to maintain water quality and reduce sediment production.

- Establish a minimum 35-foot vegetated buffer around the pond. Improve the diversity of native or natural shrub and/or herbaceous plant species suitable for the site and appropriate for the riparian and aquatic species. Exclude livestock from the pond and the buffer area.

- Grassy cover around the impoundment that may provide nesting habitat should not be mowed until after the primary nesting season.

Documentation and Implementation Requirements

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Participant will:

☐ Prior to implementation, have a written plan detailing proposed actions, including proposed fish stocking and pond, pond buffer area, and watershed actions. Refer to NRCS Conservation Practice Standards Riparian Herbaceous Cover (Code 391) and Fishpond Management (Code 399). (NRCS will provide technical assistance, as needed.)

☐ During implementation, if necessary as per the plan, shape upper reaches of the pond to provide shallow areas and wetland habitat.

☐ During implementation, if necessary as per the plan, install aeration equipment.

☐ During implementation, as per the plan, stock the pond using native species that are locally adapted and that comply with state and local regulations.

☐ During implementation, establish a minimum 35-foot vegetated buffer around the pond. In this buffer, improve the diversity of native or natural shrub and/or herbaceous plant species suitable for the site.

☐ During implementation, notify NRCS of any planned changes to verify the planned system meets the enhancement criteria.

☐ After implementation, use erosion control and nutrient and pest management conservation practices and activities in the pond's contributing watershed to maintain water quality, reduce sediment production, and control pests.

☐ After implementation, protect the pool and buffer area from livestock, and do not mow the buffer area around the impoundment until after the primary nesting season.

NRCS will:

☐ As needed, provide technical assistance to meet the criteria of the enhancement.

☐ Prior to implementation, verify the pond meets the requirements of NRCS Conservation Practice Standards Pond (Code 378).

☐ Prior to implementation, provide and explain NRCS Conservation Practice Standards Fishpond Management (Code 399) and Riparian Herbaceous Cover (Code 390) as they relate to implementing this enhancement.

☐ Prior to implementation, based on client objectives and local regulations, help develop a pond management plan that specifies species selection, stocking rates, and ratios, and that complies with state and local regulations.

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☐ Prior to implementation, as needed, prepare specifications for applying this enhancement using NRCS Conservation Practice Standards Riparian Herbaceous Cover (Code 391) and Fishpond Management (Code 399), approved state implementation requirements, national technical notes, state technical notes, and other appropriate guidance.

☐ During implementation, evaluate any planned changes to verify they meet the enhancement criteria.

☐ After implementation, verify that fish stocking was done properly, that buffer vegetation was established to specifications developed for the site, and that appropriate erosion control, nutrient management, and pest management conservation practices are being used in the pond's contributing watershed.

☐ After implementation, verify the pond and buffer area is being protected from inappropriate mowing and livestock use

NRCS Documentation Review:

I have reviewed all required participant documentation and have determined the participant has implemented the enhancement and met all criteria and requirements.

Participant Name _____ Contract Number _____

Total Amount Applied _____ Fiscal Year Completed _____

_____ _____
NRCS Technical Adequacy Signature   Date