

Conservation Practice Standard Overview

Shallow Water Development and Management (646)

Shallow water development and management is the inundation of lands to provide habitat for fish and/or wildlife.

Practice Information

This practice is applied where water can be impounded or regulated by diking, excavating, ditching, and/or flooding. It can also be used to provide refuge habitats for native fish during high-flow periods.

The purpose is to provide habitat for wildlife such as shorebirds, waterfowl, wading birds, mammals, fish, reptiles, amphibians, and other species that require shallow water for at least a part of their life cycle.

Site selection is important for the success of this practice. Soils must have a low permeability or seasonal high water table. The site must be free of hazardous materials, and the water supply must be adequate to maintain water levels between 1 to 18 inches in depth over the majority of the area during the inundation period.

Operation and maintenance is very important to ensure that this practice functions as intended throughout its expected life and includes monitoring and management of structural components and habitat quality



provided. Waterfowl and shorebird feeding and resting areas may need to be burned, disked, or surface disturbed every 3 to 5 years to set back succession and control the growth of undesirable plants.

Common Associated Practices

Shallow Water Development and Management (646) is commonly applied with conservation practices such as Dike (356), Structure for Water Control (587), Irrigation Water Conveyance (428), Pipeline (516), Pond (378), and Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management (644).

For further information, contact your local NRCS field office.