MARYLAND
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND / COLLEGE PARK • EASTERN SHORE

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Photo courtesy of Mark Seibert, NRCS District Conservationist in Frederick County

# Ask the Experts

**Q I'd love to put in a pond on my farm, but I have heard that Maryland is not allowing manmade ponds anymore. Is that true? If not, what do I need to know or do to install a pond?**

A Not true. Manmade ponds are allowed depending on type and location. Commonly, the issue with manmade ponds in many parts of Maryland is regulatory. The most common regulatory issue with manmade ponds occurs in areas with Use III or III-P streams. These are streams that support natural trout populations, and are listed in COMAR Title 26, Subtitle 08, Chapter 02. The relatively stagnant water in ponds can become heated during warmer weather and discharge the warm water into streams where temperatures are typically below 68 degrees F. This is known as thermal pollution, and is a problem because it can result in detrimental effects on aquatic life. This is especially true for native brook trout.

Potentially, ponds can be built to discharge into Use III waters without causing thermal pollution. One method is to create a side inlet/outlet pond. In this type of pond, water for the pond is drawn off the stream, flows into the pond, and then flows back into the stream at the outlet of the pond. The constant flow of water reduces the impact of surface water heating that occurs in stagnant water. Siting can be an issue with this method.

Another problem with manmade ponds is that many of the best places to build them are in existing wetlands, which are protected by law.

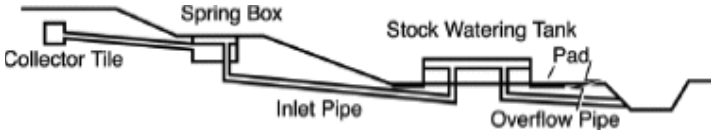
Your local Soil Conservation District office can help you determine if you have a suitable site for a farm pond.

-Steve Strano
USDA NRCS
Maryland State Biologist

**Q I've been told that gravity-fed waterers are not a good idea in Southern Maryland or on the Eastern Shore. What can you tell me about gravity fed waterers and their suitability to different areas in Maryland?**

Photo courtesy of James Harne, Montgomery Soil Conservation District Planner

A The primary issue with gravity-fed waterers is having enough topographic relief between the water source and the site of the watering facility. When land surface has a small slope, the distance required between the water source and the waterer is often too great to make it economically feasible. In some cases, such as on the Lower Eastern Shore, it may be nearly impossible to locate a good site for a gravity-fed waterer. You also need to have a large enough watershed at the source location to support year-round flow to the watering facility. This can be difficult in areas of the state with limited topographic relief. Gravity-fed waterers are most practical in Central and Western Maryland.

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