

Building your own lake or pond

2.1 million ponds had been built in the United States by land users on privately owned land. More will be needed in the future. The demand for water has increased tremendously in recent years, and ponds are one of the most reliable and economical sources of water. Ponds are now serving a variety of purposes, including water for livestock and for irrigation, fish production, field and orchard spraying, fire protection, energy conservation, wildlife habitat, recreation, erosion control, and landscape improvement.

This handbook describes embankment and excavated ponds and outlines the requirements for building each. The information comes from the field experience and observation of land users, engineers, conservationists, and other specialists. An embankment pond (fig. 1) is made by building an embankment or dam across a stream or watercourse where the stream valley is depressed enough to permit storing 5 feet or more of water. The land slope may range from gentle to steep.

An excavated pond is made by digging a pit or dugout in a nearly level area. Because the water capacity is obtained almost entirely by digging, excavated ponds are used where only a small supply of water is needed. Some ponds are built in gently to moderately sloping areas and the capacity is obtained both by excavating and by building a dam. The criteria and recommendations are for dams that are less than 35 feet high and located where failure of the structure will not result in loss of life; in damage to homes, commercial or industrial buildings, main highways, or railroads; or in interrupted use of public utilities.

Local information is essential, and land users are encouraged to consult with specialists experienced in planning and building ponds.

Recreation

A pond can provide many pleasant hours of swimming, boating, and fishing. The surrounding area can be made into an attractive place for picnics and games (fig. 7).

Many land users realize additional income by providing water for public recreation. If the public is invited to use a pond for a fee, the area must be large enough to accommodate several parties engaged in whatever recreation activities are provided. If a pond is to be used for public recreation, supply enough water to overcome evaporation and seepage losses and to maintain a desirable water level. A pond used for swimming must be free of pollution and have an adequate depth of water near a gently sloping shore. Minimum facilities for public use and safety are also needed. These facilities include access roads, parking areas, boat ramps or docks, fireplaces, picnic tables, drinking water, and sanitary facilities. To protect public health, most states have laws and regulations that require water supplies to meet certain prescribed standards if they are to be used for swimming and human consumption. Generally, water must be tested and approved before public use is permitted. There are also rules and regulations for building and maintaining public sanitary facilities. The state board of health or a similar agency administers such laws and regulations. Contact your local health agency to become familiar with those regulations before making extensive plans to provide water for public recreation.

Waterfowl and other wildlife

Ponds attract many kinds of wildlife. Migratory waterfowl often use ponds as resting places in their flights to and from the North. Ducks often use northern ponds as breeding places, particularly where the food supply is ample (fig. 8). Upland game birds use ponds as watering places.

Landscape quality

Water adds variety to a landscape and further enhances its quality. Reflections in water attract the eye and help to create a contrast or focal point in the landscape (fig. 9). A pond visible from a home, patio, or entrance road increases the attractiveness of the landscape and often increases land value. Ponds in rural, suburban, and urban areas help to conserve or improve landscape quality.

... for more information order the Building Your Own Lake or Pond Book Set - This set contains two valuable books for anyone interested in constructing their own pond or lake, for aquaculture, fishing, livestock or recreation. There are over 118 pages contained in the set, with detailed information, illustrations, and figures. This is the first time this set has ever been offered together to give you the best information available for getting started building your lake or pond.

-

Water Needs

-

Investigation and Planning

-

Location Selection

-

Construction Cost

-

Storm Runoff

-

Embankment Ponds

-

Excavated Ponds

-

Pond Sealing

-

Vegetation

-

Operation and Maintenance

-

Pond Safety

Since the beginning of human kind we have always been drawn to water's life sustaining substance. Whether its buying a beach front home, a ranch house with a farm pond, or a condo with a koi pond, we all love water. So can the desire to build your own lake or pond be fueled by many reasons, whether it for livestock, agriculture needs, or just plain recreation, every reason boils down to the basic need for water.

For many years farmers and ranchers have been building ponds for livestock water and for irrigation. By 1980 more than 2.1 million ponds had been built in the United States by land users on privately owned land. More will be needed in the future. The demand for water has increased tremendously in recent years, and ponds are one of the most reliable and economical sources of water. Ponds are now serving a variety of purposes, including water for livestock and for irrigation, fish production, field and orchard spraying, fire protection, energy conservation, wildlife habitat, recreation, erosion control, and landscape improvement. This handbook describes embankment and excavated ponds and outlines the requirements for building each. The information comes from the field experience and observation of land users, engineers, conservationists, and other specialists.

{!jomcomment}