



**Franklin Soil and Water  
Conservation District**  
Creating Conservation Solutions for Over 70 Years

## So you think you want a pond?

At the Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District, our phone never stays silent for long. Development brings in new residents, some of whom are new to larger lots and one of the more common requests for assistance we hear is, “Can I build a pond?”

There are many good reasons to build a pond. Fishing, beautification, wildlife habitat/watching, livestock water source, swimming, and irrigation are the most popular reasons.

Here are a few reasons not to build a pond:

1. **I don't want to mow the grass.** A user friendly and attractive pond requires maintenance. Think of a pond as a garden, where certain types and amounts of vegetation are desirable and beneficial, and some are not. Will you need to mow, spray, prune, or dig to keep your pond functioning and looking its best? A pond is not maintenance free! You might be better off with a pollinator planting or a rain garden, both of which cost considerably less than a pond.
2. **I don't like the neighbor's water draining on me.** Building a pond does not reduce the amount of water coming onto your property nor does it reduce the amount of water leaving your property. A pond is not the solution to a water problem. If you have a wet basement, pockets of standing water in your yard, or an erosion problem, a pond is not a corrective action. A more appropriate solution could include properly grading the soil away from your home's foundation, installing tile drainage, and/or constructing a grass swale.
3. **A pond is a good investment because it lasts forever.** A pond is not Peter Pan. It will grow old, and as we all know, it takes work to age gracefully. Ponds can fill with sediment if the watershed feeding into the pond has excessive erosion. Woody vegetation on the pond embankment is a serious threat to its ability to hold water. Likewise, muskrats, beavers, groundhogs, and snapping turtles can damage pond banks and dams.
4. **My property will sell for more if I have a pond.** Whether a pond enhances your property's resale value is dependent on many factors, and some of them are not within your control. Remember the idiom, “One man's trash is another man's treasure.” When it comes to ponds, the reverse can be true. Not everyone views a pond as an asset, particularly if your pond hasn't been given any care through the years.

If you really desire a pond, several assessments of your site will help you make the decision. First, how many acres of land would drain to your proposed pond site? A good ratio is roughly 10-15 acres of watershed to build a one-acre pond.

A second important consideration is the soils of your proposed site. You can research soils information at <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/oh/soils/surveys/>. Excavating in sandy and gravelly soils is an exercise in futility, since their ability to hold water is very low.

Our third recommendation is to know the land use in the watershed that drains to your pond. The best conditions are healthy grass cover, because there will be little to no sediment. And lastly, be aware that ponds are a significant outlay of cash. Under the most ideal conditions, we conservatively estimate a construction cost of roughly \$5,000 per one-quarter of an acre pond surface area.

The Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District has staff available to help you determine if a pond is right for you and your property. Call us at 614-486-9613 or visit <https://www.franklinswcd.org/ponds> for more information.