

Welcoming Wildlife: Providing Water in Your Backyard Habitat




Garden for Wildlife[™]
by National Wildlife Federation

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS



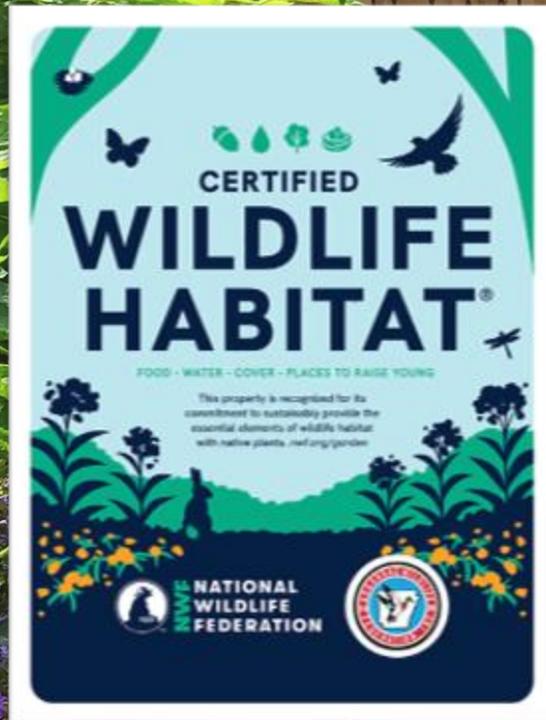
Sim Barrow

Director of Community Conservation

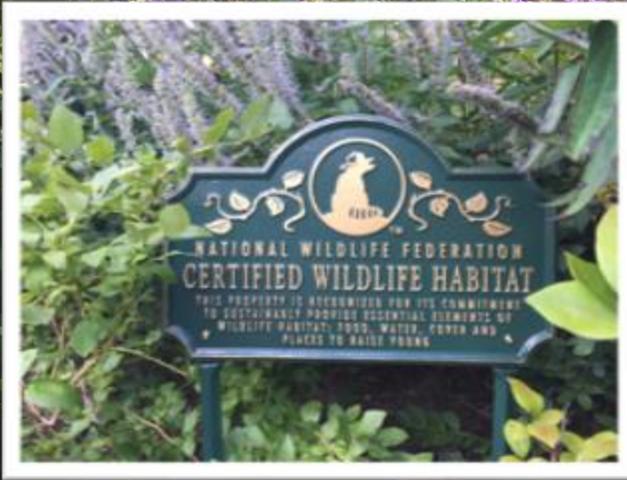
Arkansas Wildlife Federation



”Hey there – Sim here to say that these slides were originally presented to a live audience, but we wanted to make them available as an online resource. I’ve added comments to each slide as needed to make them more accessible for viewing online.”



“This presentation is part of a four-part series about how to participate in National Wildlife Federation’s Certified Wildlife Habitat Program, which provides a framework for creating a wildlife-friendly landscaping in residential and community spaces.”



**CERTIFIED WILDLIFE
HABITAT®**

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“All of these places are eligible for Wildlife Habitat Certification! Not only does certification benefit wildlife, but it also raises awareness about wildlife-friendly landscaping while improving quality of life for yourself and your neighbors.”

- Home
- Workplace
- Farm
- School
- University
- Apartment Rooftop
- Park
- Place of Worship



“Whether you’re just starting out or have been on your wildlife habitat journey for a while, these are a few helpful reminders to avoid feeling overwhelmed or discouraged. Expect incremental progress and don’t expect perfection!”

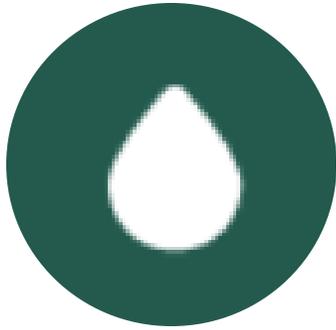
Keep in mind:

- **It’s a journey, not a destination!**
- **It isn’t all-or-nothing**
- **Progress over perfection**

All wildlife need four things to survive



Food



Water



Cover



Places to Raise
Young

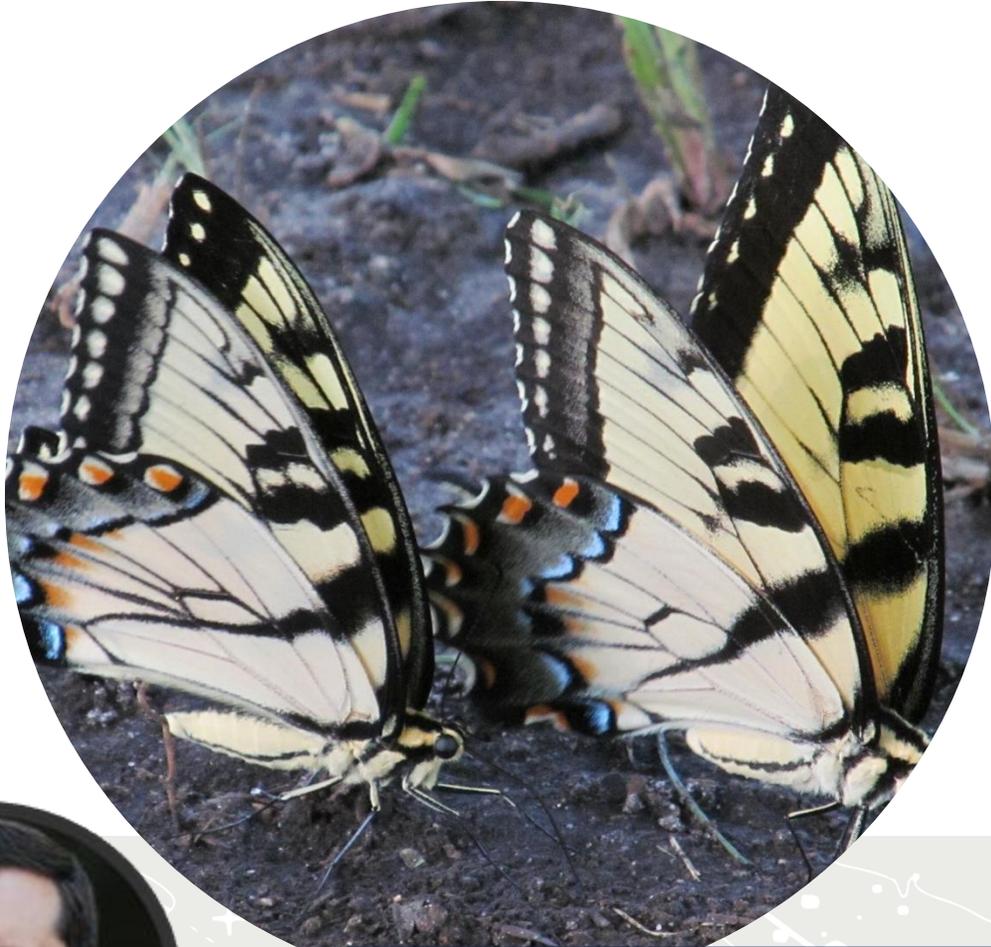
A lush garden pond with a multi-tiered waterfall made of large, light-colored rocks. The pond is filled with numerous bright green lily pads and a single white lily flower. In the background, a wooden fence and various garden plants are visible. A statue of a heron stands on the right side of the pond. The scene is set in a well-maintained garden with a gravel path and a stone table in the distance.

Water for Wildlife

All animals need water to drink or bathe



Different species access water in different ways



“Providing a variety of water sources is the key to supporting the greatest diversity of wildlife. For instance, butterflies drink water by **puddling**, where they drink from moist soil. On the other hand, birds prefer shallow water sources.”



“Water isn’t just for drinking! It also provides breeding habitat.”



Some wildlife need water for reproduction and development.



“Regardless of how you go about providing water for wildlife, consider these principles and how they can inform your approach.”

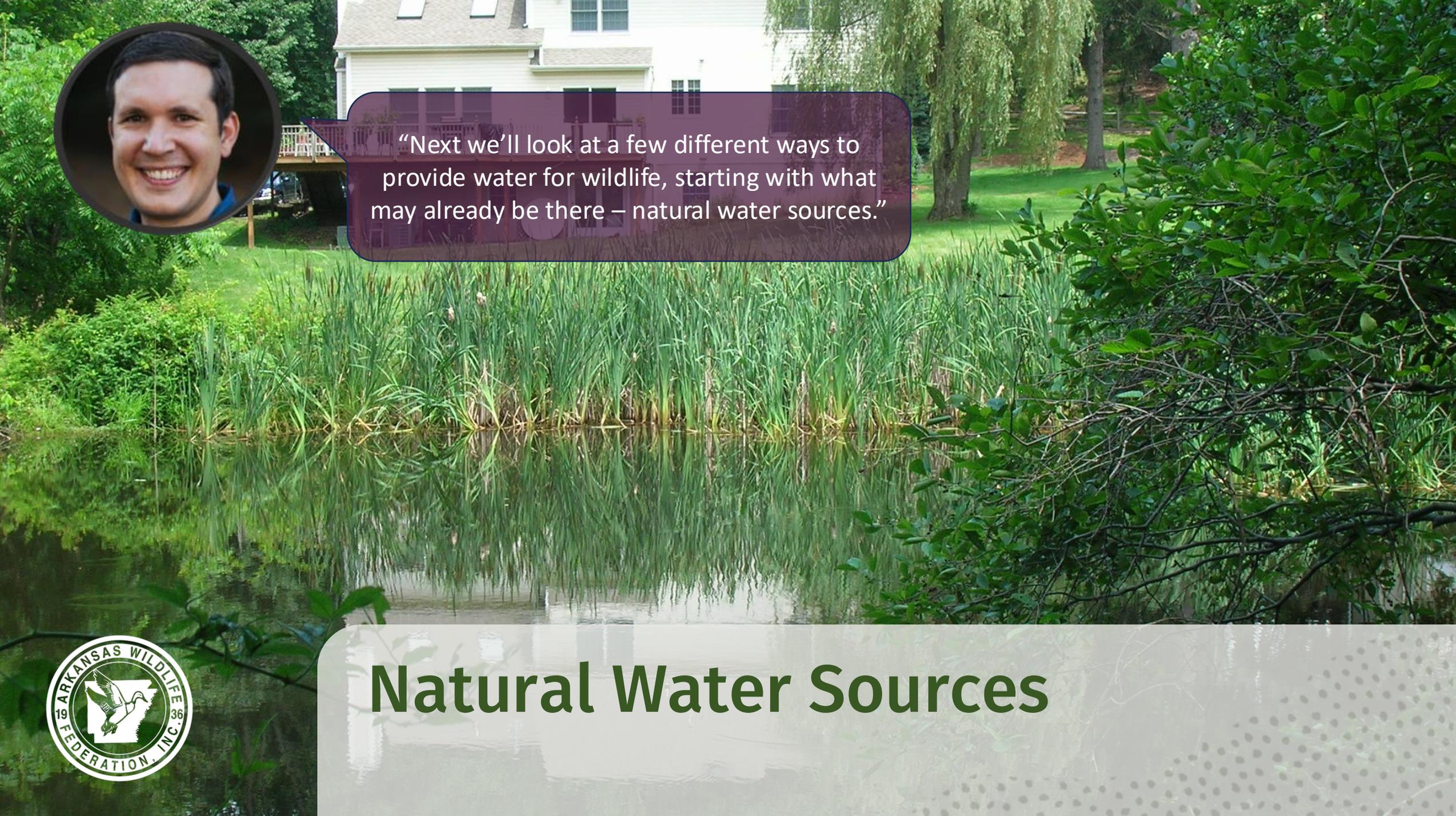


Key Considerations:

- **Ease of maintenance**
 - Cleaning and sanitation
- **Accessibility and safety**
 - For wildlife
 - For people
- **Pest prevention**
 - Mosquitos
 - Algae



“Next we’ll look at a few different ways to provide water for wildlife, starting with what may already be there – natural water sources.”



Natural Water Sources

Natural Water Sources

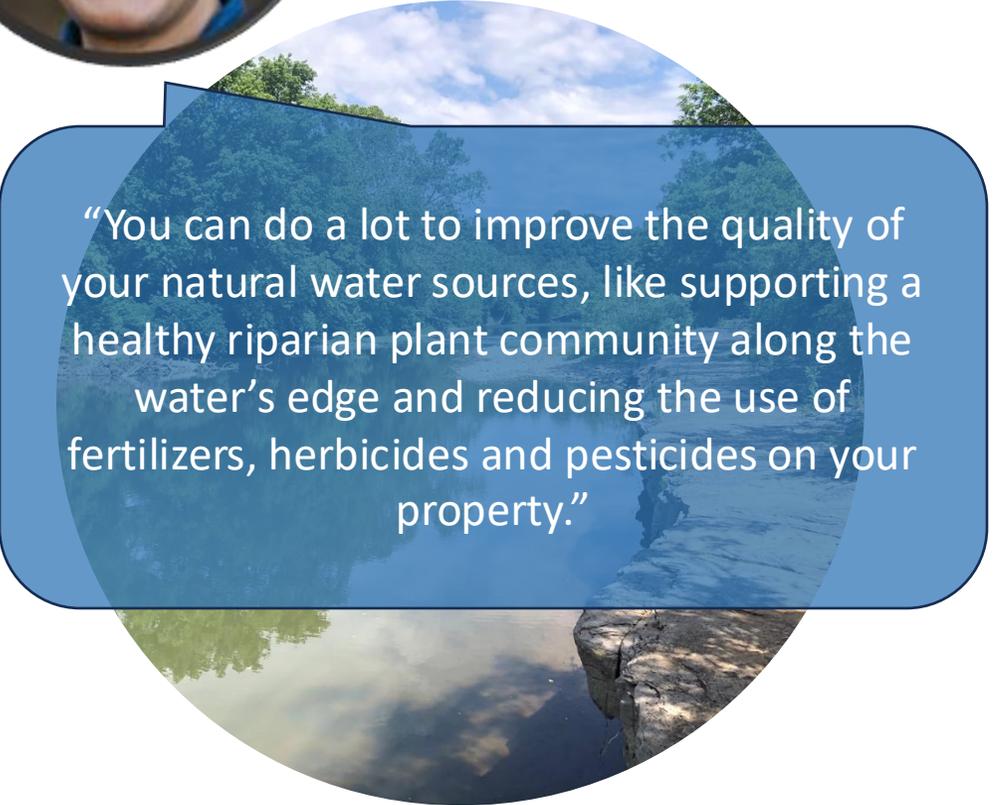


Perennial Water Sources

- Creeks, streams & rivers
- Lakes & Ponds
- Springs

Seasonal Water Sources

- Vernal Pools
- Puddles



“You can do a lot to improve the quality of your natural water sources, like supporting a healthy riparian plant community along the water’s edge and reducing the use of fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides on your property.”

Natural Water Sources

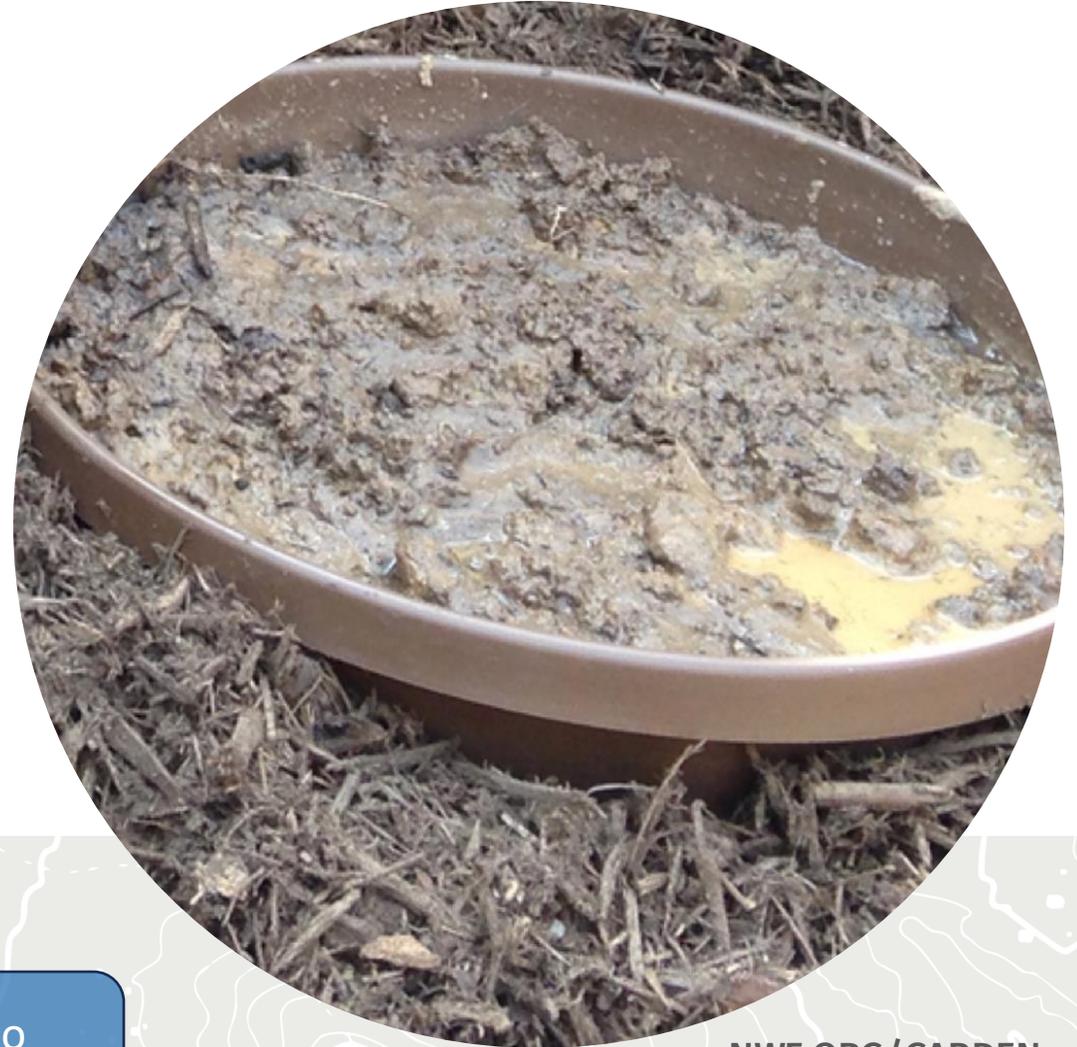
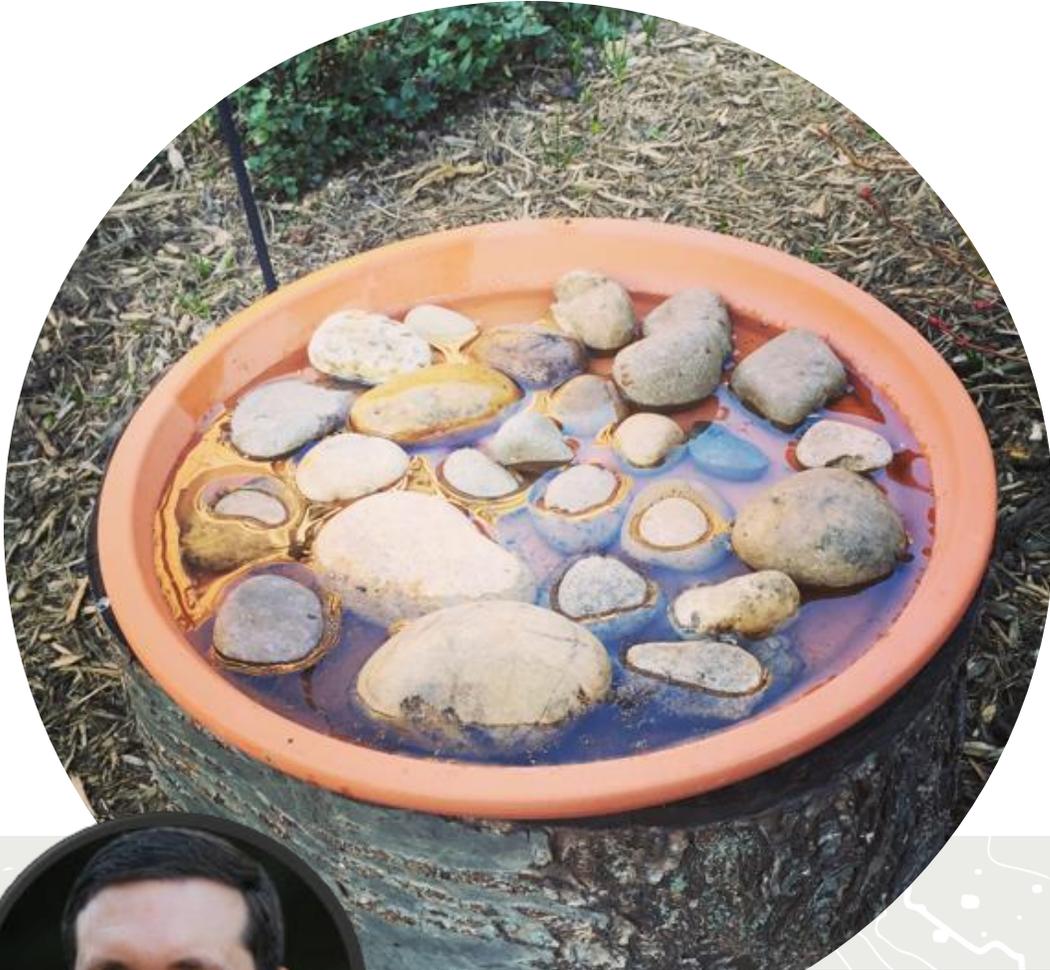
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Pebble Trays & Mud Dishes



“Pebble trays are a great low-cost way to provide water for both birds and pollinators.”



Small Water Sources

Pebble Trays

- Great for pollinators
- Reduces drowning insects

Mud Dishes

- Encourages “puddling” behavior
- Nesting material for mason bees and potter wasps

Bird Baths



Bird Baths

- Buy or build your own
- Shallow water best for small birds (<3" deep)
- Place near shrubs or trees for cover
- Place on ground or on pedestal
- Keep ice-free in winter
- Keep clean in warm weather
- Replace water frequently





“Moving water is easier for birds to find and is less inviting for mosquitos.”



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“Consider placement as well – for instance most bird baths are elevated which can restrict access for some ground-dwelling species like salamanders and toads.”



Water for Wildlife



"Wildlife ponds can serve as attractive landscape features that provide excellent habitat, especially when native aquatic plants are incorporated into the design."



Wildlife ponds

Wildlife Ponds

- Can use pond liner for structure
- Shallow entrance for access and escape
- Deep enough to avoid total freeze in winter

Balance is Key!

- Substrate: sand, gravel & rocks
- Native aquatic plants (smartweeds, duckweed, arrowhead, bull rush, jewelweed)
- Partial sun





Pest Control



“Anytime we introduce standing water into an area we increase the risk of mosquitoes. Thankfully, there are a few ways to manage them:

- When possible, empty, clean and refill birdbaths and other water dishes every few days.
- For ponds and other permanent water sources, incorporate a water circulator to discourage mosquitoes from breeding. Additionally, a well-balanced pond ecosystem will naturally reduce mosquito production.
- Organic mosquito dunks provide long-term prevention and have limited nontarget effects.”



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“Thanks for your interest in providing water for wildlife! Contact info@arwild.org with any questions.”

**Thank you!
Questions?**