



HANCOCK COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

First Aid For Stocking Ponds



During the past few years, the lakes and ponds here in Maine have become warmer. This is especially true for small farm ponds. The result is often dead trout after a “hot spell” or drought. Does this mean that your pond is unsuitable for trout? Probably not, **IF** you are willing to help out. This help may be needed for only a day or two in order to keep your fish alive. Here’s how:

Before you stock your pond:

1. Keep nutrient sources such as leach fields, geese or ducks, and garden or lawn fertilizers away from your pond. Nutrients produce algal and plant growth. Algae and plants produce oxygen during the day which helps your fish, but at night they **use** oxygen leaving little for the fish.
2. Plant trees, especially conifers, near your pond to shade the water. This will help keep the water cool.
3. If you follow the stocking guide (located on the back of this sheet), there should be enough natural feed for your fish in an established pond. If you want to feed, catch insects for the fish, or feed very lightly with pellets. Overfeeding results in waste feed on the bottom of your pond. This waste feed uses oxygen in the decay process, and adds nutrients to the pond so that more algae or plants will grow.

During the hot spell:

1. Don’t feed the fish! Feed raises their metabolism and their need for oxygen. Trout will live for many weeks without food.
2. Don’t disturb the fish. Exertion also increases their need for oxygen.
3. Add cold water from a well if possible.
4. The warmer the water, the less oxygen it will hold. Therefore spraying water into the air (fountain aerators) heats the water, and there may be even less oxygen available for the fish. Therefore spray at night to keep the water cool.
5. Add oxygen to the water. A tank of compressed oxygen (welding tank) connected to a hose and an airstone will provide the very best system, but this can be expensive.
6. Add air to the water with a simple system as shown on the back page. This is especially important at night when plants and algae in the water are not producing oxygen.
7. It is not necessary to aerate the whole pond. Just provide a small area where the fish can gather to get oxygen.

**Hancock County Soil & Water Conservation District
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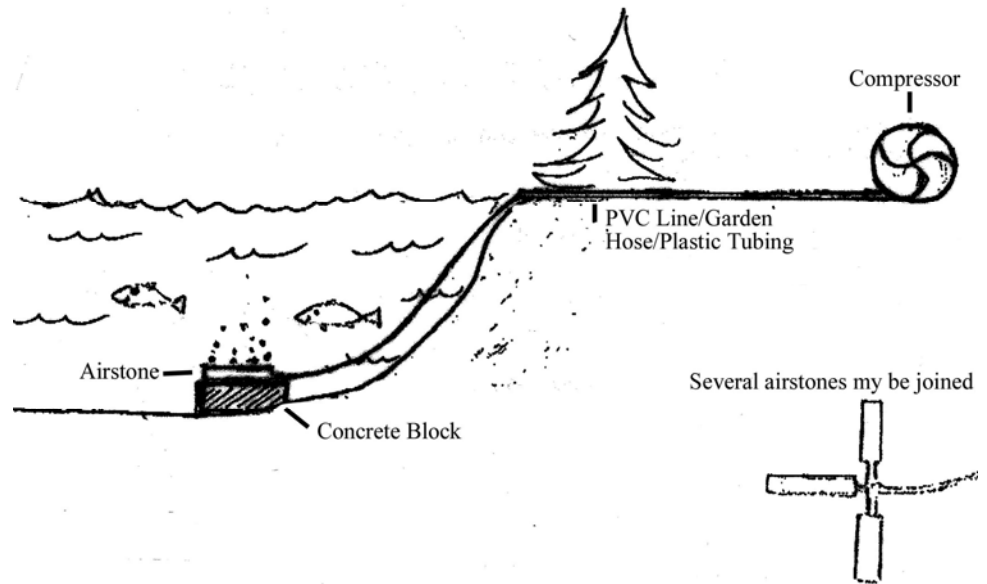
www.ellsworthme.org/soilandwater

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For a simple aeration system you will need:

- A small compressor (gasoline or electric)
- Garden hose, plastic tubing or PVC pipe
- Air stones (also called diffusers). The smaller the air bubbles from the diffuser, the greater the oxygen transfer. A garden hose with pin size opening will do, but commercially available airstones work better.
- Concrete blocks or other weights.



Stocking Guide

The number of fish a pond can support depends on many factors including water temperature, available food, flow of fresh water through the pond, depth, and surface area. Surface area is the best factor to use as an estimate, in addition to the following guide to stocking:

<u>Surface area of pond</u>	<u>Number of fish (5-6 inches and larger)</u>
1/4 acre	50 fish
1/2 acre	100 fish
3/4 acre	125-150 fish
1 acre	150-250 fish

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