

About The Million Ponds Project



A 50-YEAR PROJECT TO CREATE A NETWORK OF CLEAN WATER PONDS FOR FRESHWATER WILDLIFE

What is the Million Ponds Project?

The Million Ponds Project will create an extensive network of new ponds across the UK.

Ultimately the aim is to reverse a century of pond loss, ensuring that once again the UK has over one million countryside ponds.

A critical element of the project is that these new ponds will have *clean water*. This is important because most countryside ponds are now badly damaged by pollution, and evidence shows that pond wildlife is declining across the UK.

Making clean new ponds is one of the simplest and most effective ways to protect freshwater wildlife. New clean water ponds can quickly become exceptionally rich habitats, supporting sensitive plants and animals. Ponds are easy and cheap to make, and in the face of widespread pollution and climate change, pond creation is one of the quickest, simplest and most affordable things we can do to benefit freshwater wildlife.

Information on the scientific underpinning for the Million Ponds Project is available in Factsheet 9 of the *Pond Creation Toolkit*.

The first phase of the Million Ponds Project

Phase 1 of the Million Ponds Project runs from 2008 to 2012 and aims to create the first 5,000 clean water ponds in England and Wales. Around a quarter of the ponds will be targeted to support some of the 80 or so *pond species* that are a national priority for conservation action under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP).

Who's involved?

The Million Ponds Project is a collaboration of major landowners and land managers, co-ordinated by Pond Conservation. Partner organisations including Defence Estates, the Environment Agency, RSPB, Ministry of Justice and the Forestry Commission are creating hundreds of ponds on their land and elsewhere. The Tubney Charitable Trust, Natural England, and the Countryside Council for Wales are funding project officers to help provide training and advice. The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation is also supporting the project.

What's in this factsheet?

- Project aims
- Phase I (2008-2012)
- Who's involved
- Who can join in
- Resources available
- Funding sources
- How to get involved



Wildlife organisations like Buglife and the Aquatic Coleoptera Conservation Trust are providing information about pond creation for rare species. The Herpetological Conservation Trust is co-ordinating part of the project, in association with the Amphibian and Reptile Groups (ARGs), to encourage the creation and management of ponds for amphibians and the pond-loving grass snake.

New organisations are continuing to join the project – for an up-to-date list visit the *Million Ponds Project* website.

Can anyone join in?

Anyone who can create a new clean water pond can contribute to the Million Ponds Project. We want to encourage everyone who can to join in.

To contribute to the pond creation target, a new pond needs to fulfil three criteria. It needs:

1. a clean water source.
2. to be left to colonise naturally.
3. to be left to thrive without undue disturbance.

An explanation of why these factors are so important and how to achieve them is given in Factsheet 2 of the *Pond Creation Toolkit*.

Following these guidelines brings many benefits: not only will the ponds be very rich in wildlife throughout their lifetime, but most ponds will also be longer-lived and need less management than typical countryside ponds.

We hope many thousands of people will join in to bring wonderful and diverse small waterbodies back to the countryside. You can tell us about the ponds you've created that contribute to the Million Ponds Project targets on the *website*.

What help and resources are available?

The Pond Creation Toolkit

The Pond Creation Toolkit includes a range of factsheets available to download freely (Figure 1). During 2009 species dossiers will be developed, describing pond creation techniques for over 40 of our most threatened pond species.

Training and advice

In England and Wales, Project Officers can provide advice and training for larger organisations and pond creation projects. There is currently no funding to support this work in Scotland or Northern Ireland.

Training courses

Training courses will be available to major project partners between May 2009 and January 2011. A number of 'open-entry' courses will also be available, see the *website* for training information from May 2009 onwards.



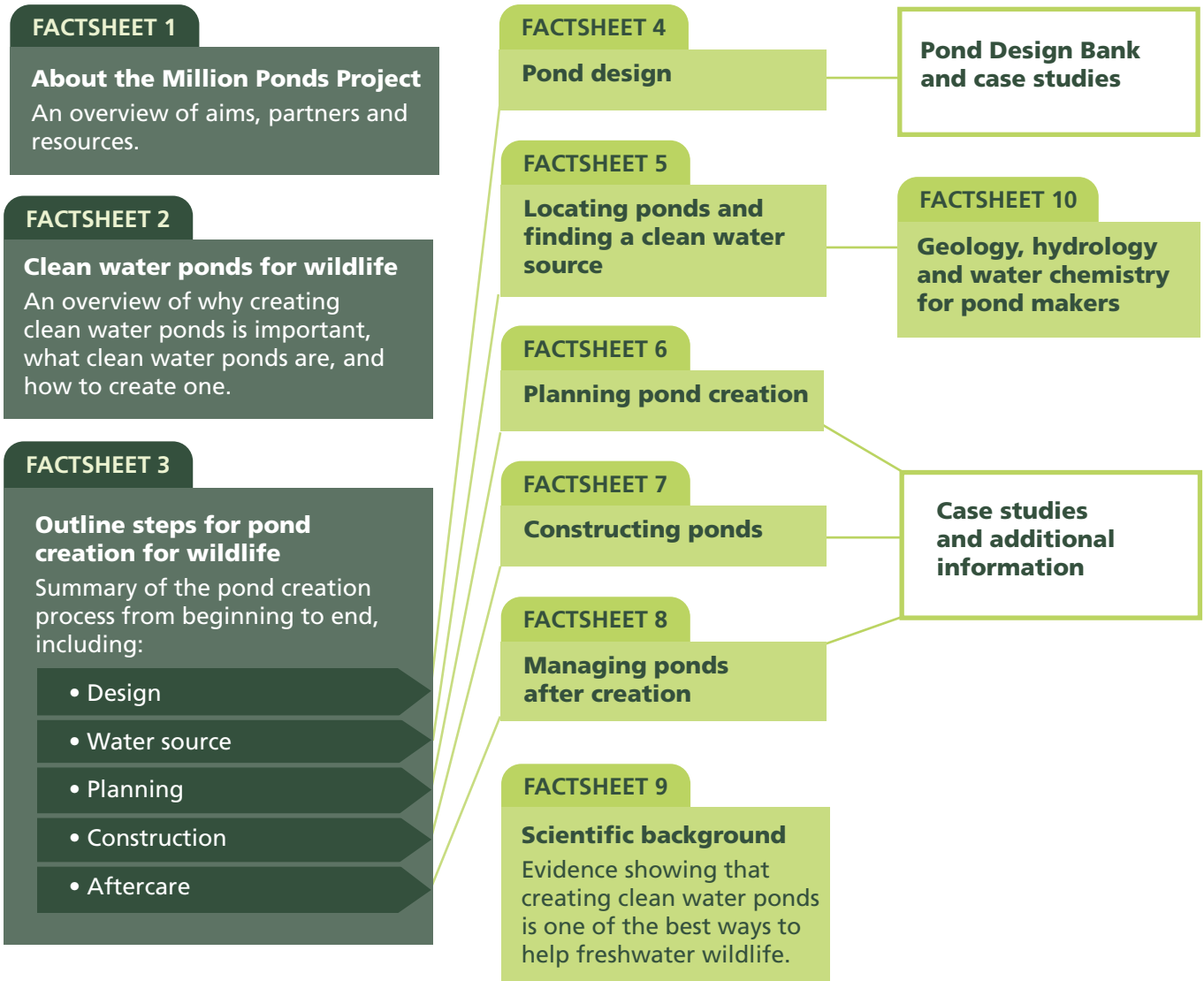


Figure 1. Content of the Pond Creation Toolkit. Summary factsheets are shown in dark green, detailed factsheets in light green. More information to support the project will continually be made available on the *toolkit website* including a Pond Design bank, case studies, a photo-guide to creating ponds, answers to frequently asked questions, and updates on the project.



On-site advice

On-site advice is available from Project Officers for larger pond creation schemes. Because the demand is so great and resources are limited, Project Officers can only make site visits to projects where:

1. Five or more new clean water ponds are planned, or
2. Ponds are being made for *BAP species*.

Learn more about clean water ponds and how to make them in the *Pond Creation Toolkit*. For pond creation enquiries, email info@pondconservation.org.uk.

Advice on amphibian and reptile BAP species

Pond creation for amphibians and grass snakes is an important component of the Million Ponds Project and this is being coordinated by *The Herpetological Conservation Trust (HCT)*. The HCT can provide advice and assistance on pond management for amphibians and grass snakes. If you would like assistance with the creation or management of ponds to benefit amphibians or grass snakes, please download the *application forms* and *guidance notes*.

Is there any funding for pond creation schemes?

Most ponds will be created by partners and individuals who raise their own funds. We are currently preparing a Pond Digging Fund for ponds with *BAP Priority species* with Biffaward through a Partnership Project (see below). We are also setting up funding for clean water pond creation in England through the Higher Level Stewardship agri-environment scheme with Natural England. A list of possible funding sources will be regularly updated on the *project website*.

Biffaward Partnership Project: pond digging fund for Priority Species

In association with Biffaward, we are developing a fund to support pond creation for plants and animals listed as *Priority Species* under the UK BAP. This fund is only available for projects in England and Wales. Grants will be available to support the cost of digging ponds from autumn 2009 to 2012. For more information about eligibility, see the *project website*. If you have an enquiry, email info@pondconservation.org.uk.

Get involved

Keep yourself informed: get updates on the Million Ponds Project, the Pond Habitat Action Plan and other freshwater conservation issues on the *Pond Conservation website*.

Contribute to the Million Ponds Project targets: tell us about the clean water ponds you've created on the *project website*.

Help create ponds for threatened pond wildlife by contributing to the Pond Digging Fund: every £1 donated will generate £10 of funding through the Landfill Communities Fund for the *Pond Digging Fund*.

If you have any enquiries about the Million Ponds Project or any other aspect of the conservation of ponds, email info@pondconservation.org.uk.

