



Michigan  
Vernal Pools  
Partnership

# THE POOL REPORT

Date | Issue 6

## eNews & Updates

Brought to you by [the Michigan Vernal Pools Partnership](#)

**Save the Date!**



Michigan  
Vernal Pools  
Partnership

**Annual Meeting**  
Join us via Zoom on **Wednesday, December 7th, 2022**  
12:30-4:30

### Join us for our Annual Meeting

The Michigan Vernal Pools Partnership will be hosting its 5th Annual Meeting on **Wednesday, December 7th, 2022 from 12:30-4:30.**

Hear from vernal pool experts, educators, and enthusiasts on a variety of topics to get the latest updates on vernal pool work in Michigan and beyond. Agenda highlights yet to be announced!

[Register Here!](#)

**The MVPP Annual Meeting is a free, virtual event open to all!** Anyone interested in vernal pool conservation in Michigan or beyond, including researchers, scientists, state and federal agencies, local government representatives, businesses, members of the Vernal Pool Patrol (or those interested in monitoring/citizen science), teachers and students!

**Ask an expert!**

The MVPP Annual Meeting is our yearly opportunity to share and connect with the vernal pool community! Share your vernal pool, Pool Patrol, or MVPP related questions to be addressed in an engaging Q&A session.

Submit

## The Michigan Vernal Pools Partnership

Learn how you can advocate for the vernal pools in your area by checking out the resources below that highlight how local governments can protect their wetlands



### Wetland Protection Workshop Recordings Available Now!

In September, the Stewardship Network & EGLE hosted a series of online workshops intended to provide stewards and stakeholders with tools to protect their local wetlands.

Click below to watch.

[Click here for recordings](#)



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### Current Vernal Pool Protection in Michigan

MVPP's Conservation subcommittee has summarized how vernal pools are currently regulated in Michigan, and how under current legislation, vernal pools can be protected on a local level.

[Read the summary here](#)

## You can now find us on Instagram & Twitter!

Follow to learn more about what makes vernal pool ecosystems so unique.



**mivernalpools**

178 followers

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## Why are vernal pools critical breeding habitat?



[View More on Instagram](#)



**34 likes**

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An important feature of vernal pools is their lack of fish predators! In a year-round pond, amphibian and invertebrate eggs would be at risk of predation. Vernal pools dry out throughout the summer and into the fall, so they are unable to support a fish population. This makes vernal pools the perfect spot for species like the Blue-Spotted Salamander and Wood Frog to safely breed and lay eggs with greater success! In fact, many amphibians rely on vernal pools to complete this part of their life cycle, making them vernal pool obligate species. [#vernalpools](#)

[view all comments](#)

Add a comment...





# The Vernal Pool Patrol

## Share your experience with us!

Are you a Vernal Pool Patrol Volunteer? The MVPP & VPP are looking for Pool Patrollers who are interested in sharing their citizen science experience.

Have you taken your vernal pool knowledge outside of data collection? Have you shared your vernal pool experience with your community? We want to hear from you!

**If you are interested in sharing, please reach out to [mvpp@michigannature.org](mailto:mvpp@michigannature.org)**



Photo by Courtney Ross

## Vernal Pool Ecology Spotlight



### Identifying a Dry Phase Vernal Pool

Vernal pools are known well for their charismatic, burst-into-song come early spring. But as we enjoy our other beloved transition season of autumn, how do we identify quieter and drying vernal pools?

Vernal pools are often characterized by their variability, and can enter their dry phase in the summer and fall. Though easiest to spot when filled with water, here are some tips on how to identify a vernal pool in its dry phase.

#### 1. Zoom out

To recognize a vernal pool in its dry phase, it can be helpful to take a sort of “wide angle lens” approach. In comparison to a broader landscape perspective, dry vernal pools will look like a slight depression in the forest floor. While inundated or filled, vernal pools easily collect leaf litter, and as water levels drop, these leaves remain and will appear darkened, flat, and dull. If the pool recently dried up or the ground is still saturated, these leaves may also be wet.

#### 2. Look at the trees

Once you have identified a potential dry vernal pool, a good way to increase confidence is to examine the trees. Often, trunks or stems of trees and shrubs growing in vernal pools will appear water-stained or darkened up to the point that they were underwater in the spring. In addition to this, seasonally-flooded trees may be exhibiting adaptations such as growing on raised mounds called hummocks, or have wide, external roots on the soil surface called buttressing.

### 3. Practice your plant ID skills

While not all dry vernal pools will have vegetation, the plants that do grow in seasonally flooded areas will look different than the vegetation in the surrounding forest. Typically, plants growing in vernal pools will be wetland adapted plants that can survive in hydric, or very wet/saturated, soils. Pull out your plant identification guide or phone app to help you identify the trees and plants in the area. Plants that are obligate wetland or facultative wetland species can help you confirm whether that area is seasonally flooded. In Michigan, some examples of these species are silver maple, eastern cottonwood, buttonbush, or tag alder.

### 4. Take a closer look

Vernal pools are home to two groups of freshwater mollusks, including fingernail clams. These species are adapted to survive in dry vernal pools, and will remain in the pool throughout the year. You can check for the presence of fingernail clams by gently examining the leaf litter and looking underneath it. Finding fingernail clams is a great indicator of a vernal pool, as they do not occur in terrestrial or upland habitats that don't hold water.

**So, while you are out enjoying the cooler weather, look out for drying vernal pools on your fall hikes. Share your fall vernal pool identifications or get help with your ID by posting in our Facebook community!**

## News and Notes

- [Check out latest vernal pool research from Michigan Technological University.](#) Read how vernal pools are defined and mapped across the Great Lakes regions, as well as the impact of forestry practices on vernal pool ecosystems.
- For other resources on what is happening in dry vernal pools, check out the links below:
  - ["Dry Vernal Pools are Still Pools"](#)
  - ["Recognizing a Vernal Pool in It's Dry Stage"](#)
  - ["Guidance on the Field Identification of Vernal Pools When Dry."](#)
- Looking to teach your kids about vernal pools as the new school year gears up?
  - Check out the great resources from [Maine's "Of Pools and People" vernal pool program](#) and [Harvard Forest, "Vernal Pool Lesson Plans"](#)

- Don't forget to [register for the 2022 Annual Meeting!](#)

**MVPP**

**Pool Patrol**

**MNFI**

**MNA**

*The mission of the Michigan Vernal Pools Partnership is to increase awareness, understanding and protection of vernal pools through conservation, research & mapping, education & outreach and collaboration.*

*The Vernal Pool Patrol is a place-based education program consisting of classroom instruction and data collection in the field. Members learn how to follow a standard protocol to help identify and map locations of vernal pools within their local communities.*



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### Michigan Vernal Pools Partnership



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