



Michigan
Vernal Pools
Partnership

THE POOL REPORT

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eNews & Updates

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



Vernal Pool Spring Training, Annual Meeting, and More!

It may be snowy and cold outside, but the vernal pool season is right around the corner! This issue of The Pool Report will get you thinking about warmer weather and these magical ecosystems.

Scroll down to find information on vernal pool training, a link to the Annual Partnership Meeting recording, and partner and species spotlights!

The Michigan Vernal Pools Partnership

MVPP Annual Partnership Meeting - Recording Available

The December 2021 MVPP Annual Meeting drew 200 partners from across the state and beyond, representing 80 organizations and agencies, 6 states, and Ontario!



On behalf of the MVPP Steering Committee, thank you again to our speakers Steve Faccio, Jim Hazelman, Laura Bourgeau-Chavez, Darren Bagley, and Courtney Ross for terrific talks on vernal pool conservation in Vermont, vernal pool restoration, mapping through remote sensing, keeping volunteers happy, and the latest from the [Michigan Vernal Pool Patrol](#).

Missed the meeting or would like to rewatch all or portions of it? Click the box below to access the recording. Watch for more information in a future Pool Report about the 2022 Annual Meeting. Hope you can join us then!

Click Here for the Recording

The Vernal Pool Patrol



Michigan Vernal Pool Patrol

It's that time of year again!

Spring Pool Patrol Training

You can help protect these fascinating ecosystems! The [Michigan Natural Features Inventory](#) (MNFI), in collaboration with the

Michigan Vernal Pools Partnership and other partners, will be providing virtual and in-person trainings on vernal pools and the [Michigan Vernal Pool Patrol](#), a statewide citizen/community science program to map and monitor vernal pools in the field using a standard protocol.

Vernal Pool Patrol Virtual Trainings Wednesdays, 6–8 pm | March 9, 16, 23

MNFI will be hosting a three-part virtual training series on Wednesday evenings, March 9, 16 and 23, from 6–8 pm. This virtual training (via Zoom) will provide information and resources to those who wish to participate in the Michigan Vernal Pool Patrol or who are just interested in learning more about these important wetlands.

Become a community scientist and a Vernal Pool Patroller by attending all three sessions! Participants who just want a refresher or wish simply to learn more about vernal pools and/or the Vernal Pool Patrol are welcome to attend one or as many sessions as you would like!

Get More Info and Register Here!

In-Person Vernal Pool Training Opportunities

The [Pierce Cedar Creek Institute \(PCCI\)](#) and the [Flint River Watershed Coalition](#) in partnership with MNFI will be hosting in-person training workshops from 10 am–3 pm on Saturday, March 26, at PCCI and on Saturday, April 9, at the For-Mar Nature Preserve & Arboretum's Visitor Center, respectively. To learn more about these training workshops and additional vernal pool training opportunities, please visit the [Vernal Pool Patrol](#) and/or the [Michigan Vernal Pool Partnership's](#) websites.

Spotlighting partners who advance vernal pool conservation across Michigan

Julie McLaughlin, Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy

Julie is the stewardship and outreach manager at the [Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy](#) (SMLC), as well as a [Program Coordinator](#) for the Vernal Pool Patrol. SMLC is a non-profit and conservation organization dedicated to

conserving and managing wildlife habitat. The Conservancy's efforts have led to more than 3,400 acres being protected in seven counties in southeast Michigan across 18 different nature preserves, most of which have forested wetlands. These nature preserves are cared for and maintained through monitoring and stewardship projects that rely heavily on volunteer involvement.

As the stewardship and outreach manager, Julie spearheads the volunteer activities that help conserve wildlife habitat and engages communities in land protection. One unique opportunity to volunteer with SMLC is by being a "Preserve Watcher" responsible for visiting a preserve to inspect it for issues. Julie values these watchers who adopt preserves as "additional eyes on the ground" to aid in preserve monitoring; she finds that the program develops "pride and connection to place" with these special areas.

In 2021, Julie started SMLC's first Vernal Pool Monitoring Program as another way for volunteers to get involved in conservation. She began learning about the Vernal Pool Patrol two years ago and decided that it would be a fun project for volunteers at the natural areas under her care. Julie was able to pilot the Vernal Pool Monitoring Program with her current volunteers this past year and is hopeful that it will be a way to get new, one-time volunteers engaged in the future as well.

As the only field staff member at the Conservancy, Julie created an intern position to monitor volunteers for the Vernal Pool Program and to learn the vernal pool monitoring field protocols along with her. This past year, the Vernal Pool Program monitored about 30 pools but were not able to see many vernal pool indicator species (i.e., species that are only found in or rely on vernal pools). Undeterred, Julie is excited to get out and master vernal pool indicator species identification this upcoming spring.

Thanks to Julie, the Vernal Pool Monitoring Program helps the Conservancy in supporting vernal pool conservation, improving stewardship, and making informed management decisions to come.

You can learn more about Julie's and SMLC's vernal pool work on the 2021 Annual Meeting recording (see above). Contact Julie at jmclaughlin@smcland.org.



Species Spotlight: Wood Frogs



photo: Michigan Nature Association

Many species call vernal pools home, and the wood frog is one of the more noticeable.

In the early spring, wood frogs are one of the first species emerging and breeding, sometimes when there is still ice covering the pools. The frogs travel across the forest floor from their hibernation sites to nearby vernal pools. They are most easily identified by the black mask-like markings around their eyes.

Upon reaching a suitable vernal pool, male frogs begin calling for females. After mating, female frogs lay thousands of eggs in clumps in the water. Eggs will hatch in a couple of weeks and become tadpoles. Unlike their mostly carnivorous parents, tadpoles primarily eat algae and plants found in the water. Only about two months later, the tadpoles will emerge as frogs. The adult frogs will spend their time in the forest around the pools until it is time to hibernate again. Here, the most interesting part of their life cycle happens.

During their winter hibernation, wood frogs allow their body to freeze, stopping their breathing and their heart. The frogs produce a natural "antifreeze" to keep their cells from freezing, and when it warms in the spring, they thaw out and go on with their lives. This adaptation allows them to live farther north than any other amphibian in North America, even in the Arctic circle.

Vernal pools are crucial for wood frog reproduction as they provide fish-free aquatic environments for eggs and tadpoles to safely develop. In Michigan, they are considered an indicator species for vernal pools. The next time you find a vernal pool in the spring, keep your eyes and ears open for this adaptable little frog.

Article contributed by Nathan Hilbrands, Huron Pines AmeriCorps

Member/Conservation Science Technician, Michigan Natural Features Inventory

News & Notes

Other news you might be interested in:

- Oakland Audubon is hosting a Young Birder's event in Davisburg--[Explore Vernal Pools and Birding, Davis Lake Overlook on April 9](#)
- Share your photos and findings with over 1,000 followers on [The MVPP Facebook page](#) !
- Coming soon--a new vernal pool video from the award winning team of [Fauna Creative](#). Watch for a special Pool Report in the coming weeks.

From other states:

- Want to get kids involved in vernal pools? [Check out the great resources from Maine's "Of Pools and People" vernal pool program.](#)
- "Big Night" Amphibian Migrations & Conservation Efforts in New Hampshire:
<https://lebanonnh.gov/1458/Amphibian-Crossing-Program>
<https://harriscenter.org/programs-and-education/citizen-science/salamander-crossing-brigades>
https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/roadblock-ahead-amphibian-crossing/2019/05/10/1dc8c55a-6d0b-11e9-8f44-e8d8bb1df986_story.html
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Vernal Pool & Amphibian Migrations Webinar Series – recordings available at:
<https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/120539.html>
- Influence of the Covid-19 Pandemic on Amphibian Road Mortality
<http://www.vernalpools.me/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/csp2.5353.pdf>

Connect with us:

Vernal Pools Partnership

- Julie Stoneman - jstoneman@michigannature.org

Vernal Pool Patrol

- Yu Man Lee - leeyum@msu.edu
- Courtney Ross - rosscour@msu.edu

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

*The **Vernal Pool Patrol** is a statewide program for community scientists and educators who want to learn more about these fascinating wetlands, participate in science and conservation, and enjoy spending time outside in nature! Members learn how to follow a standard protocol to help identify and map locations of vernal pools within their local communities.*

***The Pool Report** is a publication of the [Michigan Nature Association](#) on behalf of the Michigan Vernal Pools Partnership.*



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