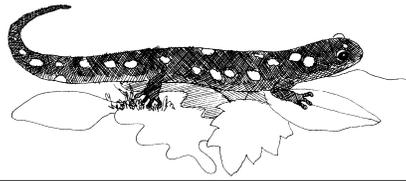


Woodland Pool Steward Program



Woodland Pools (also called vernal pools)

Woodland pools are a type of wetland that is usually associated with forest settings. They are ephemeral wetlands that are seasonally flooded and generally isolated from stream systems. These pools become dry annually, or at regular intervals and are generally absent of fish. Vernal pools are fed by rain, fill with water in late fall and remain wet until mid-summer before drying up. Not only are vernal pools wet for a small portion of the year, but they also tend to be extremely small, usually only fragments of an acre in size.

Sometimes called vernal pools, these wetlands provide a unique habitat that supports a diverse collection of organisms. Most of these organisms rely solely on this habitat for their life cycles. Although ephemeral wetlands are frequently overlooked in the regulatory arena, these special types of habitat provide a multitude of benefits that are necessary to a healthy functioning forest ecosystem.

Much of New York State has woodland pools that can be found on all parts of the landscape. They tend to fall into two categories, natural and man-made. The natural pools are natural depressions in the headwater forests for our watersheds. Others are found in the floodplain forests along larger streams and rivers. The man-made types are either designed and built to function as a natural depression or created for another purpose. In many parts of the watershed, we have abandoned pasture ponds that have evolved into habitats that support vernal pool species.

Woodland Pool Life

Organisms that are associated with vernal pools fall into two categories. Obligate or direct indicator vernal pool species are completely dependent on vernal pools for parts of their life cycles. They require this type of habitat in order to successfully breed and survive. If they are present then the habitat is classified as a vernal pool. Facultative or indirect indicator species are not solely dependent on vernal pools but commonly are found in and around them, though they will also use other wetland habitats for their various life cycles.

Obligate Vernal Pool Species

Spotted salamander
Jefferson salamander
Blue spotted salamander
Wood frog
Spadefoot toad
Fairy shrimp

Facultative Species

Eastern newt
Northern spring salamander
Four-toed salamander
Spring peeper
Gray tree frog
Green frog
Leopard frog
American toad
Pickerel frog
Spotted turtle
Wood turtle
Blandings turtle
Painted turtle
Snapping turtle

Woodland Pool Steward Program

Cornell's Biodiversity Program Work Team, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's Hudson River Estuary Program have created the Woodland Pool Steward Program with the goals of 1) educating the public about the importance of these habitats and the organisms that rely on them; and 2) creating a database of woodland pools in an effort to better document the status of woodland pools and woodland pool organisms. As a Woodland Pool Steward, you will be trained to understand and recognize these important habitats, and are encouraged to actively participate in monitoring by using our data sheets to document locations of woodland pools on your land or land in your community. Data sheets can be printed from our website www.woodlandpools.info We have a simple data sheet and a more extensive data sheet that asks for more detail. Please use whichever sheet you prefer.

Location Information

The location of the pools you find is very important. In addition to the general locational information and directions you provide on the forms, you may want to pinpoint precise locations, either by collecting location data with a GPS unit or by using a tool such as the New York State GIS Gateway.

GPS

If you collect location information using a GPS unit, please set the DATUM on your unit to NAD83 or WGS84 (preferred).

NYS GIS Gateway

The NYS GIS Gateway is an excellent site that contains high resolution aerial (orthoimagery) photos of the entire state. The web address for this site is <http://www.nysgis.state.ny.us/gateway/mg/> From the home page you can click on "view orthoimagery". This will take you to the interactive mapping gateway. By selecting the plus arrow on the left and clicking anywhere on the map, you can zoom in to see an aerial view of any location. Once you can view the location of the pool you have found, click on the target on the left hand side of the screen and then click on the location. On the bottom of the map, you will be able to see the latitude and longitude of the site you selected with the target.

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