



**MA Department of Conservation and Recreation
Office of Regional Planning
Best Management Practices**

Vernal Pool Certification on DCR Lands

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Goal: These guidelines have been developed to help identify and protect the sensitive resources found in vernal pools, including rare species. See NHESP website (<http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/nhosp/nhosp.htm>) for required state Vernal Pool (VP) certification materials and instructions.

Guidelines for Certifying a vernal Pool:

- You must contact the DCR Ecology Program and the parks' supervisor prior to any VP certification activity on DCR land, as specific instructions may apply.
- The vegetation and banks surrounding a pool are sensitive to disturbance and are often used by wildlife species observed in the pool. Please respect the plants and soils surrounding the pool and minimize any impacts;
- No Bug Spray on your hands or body parts touching the water. This is important for protection of water quality and the species in the pool. Mosquito netting and layering of clothing can help, but bug spray is damaging to sensitive pool species;
- If there are large pieces of trash (i.e. tires, oil drums) please take note of it, but don't move them. These objects may be used by species in the VP or may pose a hazard. Large trash items should be reported to the DCR for future removal;
- Do not disturb, pick up, or remove any eggs, plants, or wildlife observed. Disturbance of amphibian eggs or other vernal pool species often results in mortality, is not allowed, and is not necessary for vernal pool documentation.
- If you travel to different properties for similar work, please clean equipment (waders, nets) with a 10% bleach solution and allow the gear to dry before entering your next site, in order to potentially reduce the spread of disease and invasives;
- Finding a rare species is FUN and a wonderful educational experience. Do not disturb or move plants or wildlife found on DCR properties. In addition, rare species information is often sensitive and should not be shared beyond the MA Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program and the DCR;

- Your hard work should not go unnoticed! Send a copy of your data sheets and maps to the DCR Ecology Program to help us expand our knowledge for planning and resource protection efforts. Even pools that do not meet certification criteria are important to report. Also, please inform DCR of the number of volunteer hours you have worked with these efforts.

Please send paperwork to: DCR Ecology Program Director, 251 Causeway Street, Suite 700, Boston, MA 02114, or email nancy.putnam@state.ma.us

** vernal pool certification guidelines are subject to change**