



Michigan  
Vernal Pools  
Partnership

# THE POOL REPORT

Summer 2021 | Issue 2

## eNews & Updates

Brought to you by the Michigan Vernal Pools Partnership



### Reflections From the 2021 Vernal Pool Season

Welcome to the second issue of the Pool Report! The Michigan Vernal Pools Partnership (MVPP) is honored to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of our partners and volunteers. Though we were still limited by a mostly-virtual world this spring, we are thrilled to see so much success in the collection of data during the vernal pool monitoring season. Continue reading to learn more about that success and to catch up on vernal pool related news.

## The Michigan Vernal Pools Partnership



### Partner Spotlight: Meridian Township

*In each issue of the Pool Report, the MVPP will spotlight one of our partners and the work that they are doing to advance vernal pool conservation.*

The Meridian Township (located in Ingham County) brings the Vernal Pool Patrol to its citizens through the help of program coordinator Emma Campbell. Campbell is the Land Stewardship Coordinator for the township, making her responsible for carrying out decisions on land management and stewardship across all the preserves and parks within it, totaling approximately 1700 acres of land. She also works

diligently to connect members of the community to government conservation efforts through initiatives such as her Conservation Corps program in which members partake in stewardship activities on Saturdays, learning about invasive species, vernal pools, and helping the community reach conservation goals.

Campbell's interest in advancing wetland conservation efforts predates her position with Meridian Township. In the past, she worked at Burcham Park, also in Ingham County, and the hands-on experience she received working at this floodplain park initially sparked her interest in vernal pools, and eventually the Vernal Pool Patrol program specifically. When she began her Land Stewardship Coordinator role at Meridian Township, she was sure to make an effort to help the township develop more wetland protection. This included trying to protect vernal pools specifically within township ordinances, adding signage, and educating the public. Getting her Conservation Corps program connected with the Vernal Pool Patrol turned out to be a great way for Campbell to promote wetland education and protection opportunities to the community.

The Vernal Pool Patrol itself has been connected to Meridian Township for years, serving as a former host location of initial pool patrol training sessions. This history, in combination with Emma Campbell's personal passion for wetland conservation, formed a natural relationship between the Vernal Pool Patrol program and Meridian Township Parks and Recreation. This past vernal pool monitoring season in the spring of 2021 was especially exciting for Campbell, being the first year where groups of volunteers from the community were able to get out into the field with monitoring kits and collect important data on vernal pools in the area. Campbell described the process of implementing the vernal pool patrol into her Conservation Corps as smooth and straightforward, citing the great communication with Yu Man Lee, lead coordinator of the Michigan Vernal Pool Patrol, as a main contributor. She stated that everything from becoming a program coordinator, to sending out dates to volunteers and giving out supplies, was made easy by the open and responsive line of communication between herself, Lee and other Vernal Pool Patrol leaders.

Campbell believes that the best way to engage other local governments in the Vernal Pool Patrol, based on her personal experience doing so, is to tell a story that really shows how much volunteers love the work. She suggests using stories from other volunteers and good clear media from vernal pools to promote the experience as not only successful in terms of the impact on conservation, but especially rewarding for the citizens who participate. As a program coordinator, the most rewarding aspect of involvement in the Vernal Pool Patrol for Campbell is that moment when volunteers get to see fairy shrimp for the very first time. According to Campbell, when volunteers first spot a fairy shrimp with their own eyes, the vernal pool transforms from just a puddle that frogs live in to something truly magical. "I think it's that moment that people actually realize what a vernal pool is," says Campbell.

Campbell believes the most important thing for everyone to know about vernal pools is that "there's no such thing as just a puddle!". As someone who educates kids, she knows just how important it is to show no matter how small something is, it is just as important as everything else.

Interested Pool Report readers living in Meridian Township, or those who would like to see similar programs in their own communities, can receive more information about community conservation efforts by visiting the official Meridian Conservation Corps website at [www.meridian.mi.us/MCC](http://www.meridian.mi.us/MCC). More information on the Conservation Corps itself and how to sign up is available online. Emma Campbell also encourages those with questions to reach out to her directly by phone or by email.

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# The Vernal Pool Patrol

Get up to date with the latest Vernal Pool Patrol news featured below!



## Report from the Vernal Pool Monitoring Season

Having reached the end of the 2021 vernal pool season, The Michigan Vernal Pools Partnership is excited to celebrate a successful monitoring season for the Vernal Pool Patrol. Over the past several months, our amazing partners and community scientists have contributed greatly to vernal pool conservation efforts. Below are some statistics from the Vernal Pool Database highlighting those efforts:

*Vernal Pool Database Summary as of July 9th, 2021*

- **123 pool visits** have been submitted to the database.
- About **25 new pools** have been added to the database.
- Vernal Pool Patrol volunteers have helped survey around **100 pools** throughout Michigan.
- There are now **693 verified vernal pools** and 4,538 potential vernal pools that remain as status uncertain, not surveyed, or insufficient data.
- Indicator species were present in about **half of the pools** surveyed (16 with fairy shrimp).

We appreciate and commend everyone who was able to participate in this year's vernal pool monitoring season. Thank you for all of your hard work!



## Roldan at the Vernal Pool: Pool Patrol Volunteer Story

*Roldan is a 16 year old student from Northern Michigan whose passions include designing and building LEGO art, sailing, and exploring the natural world. He has a keen interest in learning about the plants and animals of his region and beyond.*

*Roldan shared the following story about his experience in the Pool Patrol program, published originally in Little Traverse Conservancy:*

"The world is full of unique plants and animals. If you go outside to a natural area and look in the right places, you will observe the lives of many small animals. I have always been interested in the little creatures of the world and tried to watch them whenever possible. I am interested in plants, also, and if they can be eaten or used for medicine.

When I heard about the vernal pool program, I thought it would be the type of activity I would like to do. I like getting in the water and searching to see if there are frog or salamander eggs, scanning the leaf litter for wood frogs, and discovering leeks and fiddlehead ferns. So I decided to try it out, and now, starting my third year, I want to continue visiting this unique place."

Read the full story at [Little Traverse Conservancy](#).



*Photo by Leo Kenney*

### **Species Spotlight: Fingernail Clams**

*by Emma Kull*

Vernal pools are home to several hundreds of different species, including some fan favorites like the spotted salamander and the wood frog. Not all of these pool dwelling creatures are quite as well known--or as easy to identify--as the amphibian ones. One in particular, known as the fingernail clam, is so small that it is easy to miss at first glance. However, if you look a little closer at the pool floor, you'll find thousands of them!

The fingernail clam is a lesser known, yet tremendously fascinating, inhabitant of the vernal pool wetland. There are many different species of fingernail clams, but the differences are so minute that it takes a serious clam expert to tell them apart. They are aptly named for their similarity in size to a pinky fingernail, with the largest of the species measuring at no more than a half an inch. Fingernail clams are bivalves, meaning their body is protected by two shells hinged together. They thrive in vernal pools, which can have calcium rich bedrock that provides optimal conditions for building strong shells. They have one foot which they use to navigate their surroundings as they feed on the pool's algae and debris.

[Read the full story here](#)

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# News & Notes

## Other news you might be interested in:

- [Vernal Pool Conservation Videos from the Vermont Center for Ecostudies--Series of eight videos \(to date\)](#)
- [Inside the Alien Worlds of Vernal Pools, The Nature Conservancy, Summer, 2021.](#)
- [Breeding Effort and Hydroperiod Indicate Habitat Quality of Small, Isolated Wetlands for Amphibians Under Climate Extremes: Recent Vernal Pool Research.](#)
- [The MVPP FaceBook page has reached over 800 followers! We encourage those with vernal pool photos and findings to share them on our page.](#)

## Connect with us:

*Vernal Pools Partnership*

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[MVPP](#)

[Pool Patrol](#)

[MNFI](#)

[MNA](#)

*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.*



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