

**NEW BOOK AVAILABLE:
A GUIDE TO CONSTRUCTING VERNAL PONDS**

Vernal ponds, otherwise known as ephemeral wetlands, are a great field trip destination for students. Excitement grows as young people net salamanders, dragonfly larvae and giant water bugs. One visit to a vernal pond may be all it takes to convince learners of the value of these ecosystems. Unfortunately, few students ever examine a wetland due to the high cost of bus transportation and reduced budgets. Fortunately, some teachers are so convinced of the value of wetland study in a science program that they construct vernal ponds on their own school grounds.

A Guide to Creating Vernal Ponds, published by the USDA Forest Service in cooperation with Ducks Unlimited, Inc. and the Izaak Walton League of America, is designed to help educators, private landowners and public land managers construct vernal ponds that look and function like natural wetlands.

The first chapter of the book describes the value of vernal ponds, explaining that these ecosystems are likely to dry annually. Fish cannot survive in vernal ponds because of their dry cycle, however, a wide diversity and abundance of amphibian, insect and crustacean species thrive in these fishless environments. As vernal ponds dry, exposed mudflats provide important feeding areas to migrating shorebirds; sites surrounded by oak trees can receive considerable wood duck use.

The second chapter explains how to plan a vernal pond construction project. One does not have to be a civil engineer or a land surveyor to be successful. You'll see how to identify a suitable location, test soils, and decide if a shaded or sunlit location works best for a project.

Chapter 3 helps you determine the best construction method to use and takes you step by step through the actual construction of a vernal pond. The book contains never before published techniques that can be used to successfully establish wetlands under a variety of soil conditions, thereby helping one avoid the common problem of wetland failure.

Soft cover, 5 x 8.5, 33 pages, 84 color photographs, 5 drawings, 1 map. Order by check from: SEEC-Vernal Pond Book, 2375 KY Highway 801 South, Morehead, KY 40351. Price: 1-19 copies (\$1.00/each), 20-99 copies (0.50/each), over 100 copies (0.25/each). Order form and online version available at: <http://www.southernregion.fs.fed.us/boone/>.