

**Vernal Pool Construction Workshop
Ephemeral Wetlands in the Piedmont:
Hands-On Establishment Techniques for Conservationists**

Sunday, March 11 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Join us at the field station for a rare and exciting opportunity to participate in a hands-on, step-by-step workshop on vernal wetland construction. We once again have the honor of hosting biologist Mike Hayslett, the Director of the Virginia Vernal Pools Program, Naturalist-in-Residence at Sweet Briar College, and lifelong vernal pool aficionado. Together we will visit a newly constructed wetland on ES property, then head to the ridge and build our own! Be ready to get dirty as we create a new pool from start to finish. In the process you will learn about soil profiles, location of pools, use of a transit, importance of leaf litter, etc.

The goal of our workshop is to encourage landowners, conservationists, and environmental educators to re-establish these vanishing habitats. Vernal pools are wonderful land management tools, their ecosystem services include decreasing stormwater runoff, establishing wildlife habitat, and providing an excellent outdoor learning lab for students and community members.

Vernal pools are essential components of a healthy environment, preventing flooding by holding rainwater and providing vital breeding and rearing habitat for amphibians, insects, and crustaceans. They also provide excellent outdoor classrooms that give students a unique and rewarding encounter with nature. Vernal pools encourage critical thinking and hands-on learning about biodiversity, watershed dynamics, life history processes, seasonal diversity, and the study of life cycles. This is a great workshop for educators because vernal pool creation is taking off in nearby school districts.

Workshop Schedule:

9:00 am | Introduction to Vernal Pool Construction: Mike Hayslett will present an overview powerpoint about vernal pool siting, tools and techniques, legalities, and step-by-step site construction. Coffee, tea, and bagels will be provided.

10:00 am | Breaking Ground: participate in the initial steps of developing an ephemeral wetland, including site selection, soil profiles, effective water retention techniques, woody plant clearing, and excavation.

12 to 1:00 pm | Lunch Break! Chili and cornbread will be included in the instruction fee. Vegetarian options available.

1:00 to 4:00 pm | Finishing Touches: learn about feathering the perimeter, kneading in leaf litter to stabilize the substrate, wetland plant selection, accelerating the site's biological productivity by loading organics from nearby locations, methods to monitor recruitment of new species, and long-term maintenance.

Instruction Fee: \$60

***Includes lunch and instructional materials. Please remember to bring sturdy rain or muck boots, water bottle, and hand shovel!**

Space is limited to 25 participants, so please call or email for reservations.

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