Ephemeral Wetlands may also be referred to as ephemeral ponds, seasonal ponds, temporary ponds or vernal pools. Ephemeral Wetlands are depressional wetlands that temporarily hold water in the spring and early summer or after heavy rains. Periodically, these wetlands dry up, often in mid to late summer. They are isolated without a permanent inlet or outlet, but may overflow in times of high water. Ephemeral Wetlands are free of fish, which allows for the successful breeding of certain amphibians and invertebrates.
Although a wetland itself may not be altered, the surrounding upland habitat of the wetland will not continue to be productive and species such as spiders and amphibians will eventually be lost. Many creatures that depend on Ephemeral Wetlands for some part of their life cycle need the surrounding habitat just as much. Ponds, creeks and small water bodies in the wetland last generally, flood and dry out most of the year in the upland. Turtles will live in the wetland but require uplands for nesting.

Amphibians and reptiles that use Ephemeral Wetlands, such as the wood frog, leopard frog, and spotted salamander, spend most of the year in the upland. Turtles will feed in the wetland but require the surrounding habitat just as much - they have to find food, avoid predators, and begin to develop into adults. They have to find food, avoid predators, and begin to develop into adults. Wood frog tadpoles are also important for recycling nutrients in the wetland and bringing in new oxygen.

Ephemeral Wetlands are: 
- important for flood control and water quality. 
- often converted to other uses such as detention ponds, fish ponds, agricultural or mining sites. 
- being lost across the Midwest.

Ephemeral Wetlands are: 
- critical habitat for many amphibians and aquatic invertebrates. 
- linked to the surrounding upland habitat. 
- important for increasing local biodiversity.

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Protection Issues:
Ephemeral Wetlands are hard to define, identify and protect because they tend to be small, isolated and at certain times of the year do not hold water. These wetlands tend to be high production. They support a very high density and productivity of both plant and animal life. Ephemeral Wetlands are linked to the surrounding habitat and are known to significantly reduce successful breeding of amphibians and aquatic invertebrates. During rain storms pollutants are washed into these ponds. This not only eliminates habitat, but also increases the risk of local flooding.

Conversion Issues:
Many of our small Ephemeral Wetlands have been drained and filled to facilitate agriculture, building new subdivisions or other development. This not only eliminates habitat, but also increases the risk of local flooding.

Others have been converted to permanent ponds for raising fish and other forms of aquaculture.

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Ephemeral Wetland Conservation

**So, Who Cares? YOU SHOULD!**

This community is depending on you for protection.

**Things you can do to protect and preserve Ephemeral Wetlands:**

- **Support the protection of these wetlands and their surrounding habitat.**
- Visit Ephemeral Wetlands in your area — experience their uniqueness.
- Volunteer for local restoration efforts — contact local conservation organizations.
- Raise awareness in your local community to promote appropriate land use planning that will protect Ephemeral Wetlands and their upland habitats.
- Consider permanent protection options for wetlands on your private property such as conservation easements — contact your local land trust.
- Start a register of Ephemeral Wetlands in your area (for an example see www.vernalpool.org)
- Participate in local amphibian monitoring programs like frog calling surveys and amphibian and reptile projects coordinated by local conservation organizations.
- Join local conservation organizations involved in wetland protection.
- Visit USEPA Region 5 website at www.epa.gov/R5water/ephemeralwetlands on the Center for Noble and Amphibian Conservation and Management website: http://noble.epa.gov/wetlands/ephemeral/ for additional information on Ephemeral Wetlands and to obtain more copies of this brochure.

**For information on wetland regulations contact your state natural resource agency, county soil and water conservation district, or the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.**

**For general wetlands information visit the USEPA website at www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands or call the Wetlands Hotline 1-800-832-7828.**

**Photocredits:**


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**Ephemeral Wetlands**

**Fishing Spider**

**Fairy Shrimp**

**Little Green Heron**

**Blueflag Iris**

**Blanding’s Turtle**

**Caddisfly Larva**

**Planorbid Snail**

**Marbled Salamander**

**Spring Peeper**

**Leopard Frog**

**Gray Treefrog Tadpole**

**Deep Trenching Salamander**

**Ponds at Old Mill**

**Kincaid’s Lizard**

**MPR** 2001: Page 1 top: M. Redmer; bottom left: Michael R. Jeffords; bottom right: M. Redmer; bottom middle: M. Redmer; Pages 2-3: right column (from left): M. Redmer; runway scene; M. Redmer; runway scene; June bug; Page 3 bottom left: M. Jeffords; Page 3 bottom right: J. Jass; Page 4 bottom left: M. Redmer; Page 4 bottom right: M. Redmer; Page 5 top left: M. Jeffords; Page 5 middle: M. Redmer; Page 5 top right: M. Jeffords. **Produced by** The Conservation Foundation, www.theconservationfoundation.org

**For additional information on Ephemeral Wetlands and to obtain more copies of this brochure:**

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