



University Forests: Demeritt Forest Field Tour Handout

Vernal Pool Habitat Management Guidelines & Expanding Gap Silvicultural System

Tour Stop 2: Vernal Pool Habitat Management Guidelines

Background: A collaborative effort involving state and federal agencies, forest managers, and the conservation community produced a set of Habitat Management Guidelines (HMGs) for Vernal Pools. The guidelines, ([Calhoun & deMaynadier 2004](#)), provide managers with details about both vernal pool ecology and recommendations for appropriate silviculture and harvesting practices in the vicinity of vernal pools.

Vernal Pool HMG Details: 3 VP Zones

Zone 1: VP Depression

Description: Site of amphibian breeding and predator feeding

Guidelines: Do not Disturb

Zone 2: VP Protection Zone -100ft from VP-

Description: Critical upland staging habitat for juvenile amphibians

Guidelines: Limited harvest retain >75% canopy cover & retain abundant CWM

Zone 3: Amphibian Life Zone -Area between 100ft & 400ft from VP-

Description: Important upland habitat for pool breeding amphibians

Guidelines: Limited harvest retain >50% canopy cover & retain/recruit abundant CWM

University Forests HMG Implementation:

Adapted expanding gap approach to satisfy the Vernal Pool HMGs

- Designed gaps and expansions to maintain habitat connectivity between pool and upland habitats (loosely organized like spokes on a wheel)
- Treated all of stand (outside zone 2) as if within Zone 3
- Used area control method to maintain >50% of stand in desirable habitat (table 5)
- Retention tree selection focus on CWM maintenance and recruitment (table 6)
- No machine entry into Zone 2
- Reserve/control area designated to foster connectivity goals

Gap Sizes over 5 Entry Periods

(Table 4)

Stand	Mode Gap Size (Ac)	Min Gap Size(Ac)	Max Gap Size (Ac)
I77	0.40	0.32	0.92
I73	0.40	0.28	0.85

(Table 5)

Stand I77

Entry Period	Acres non Habitat	Percent of Stand Area
1	3.0	23%
2	5.1	39%
3	5.3	41%
4	5.2	40%
5	4.8	37%
Average		36%

(Table 6)

Retention Tree Selection Criteria
Species diversity
Snag/CWM current
Snag/CWM recruit.
Seed production
Crown spacing
Crown form/class
Stem form/quality
BT sprout suppress