

Protecting Vernal Pools

Buffer for Certified Vernal Pools in Jurisdictional Wetlands



A certified pool is located on plans for a proposed project (red line). The line is based on field indicators of hydrology, and represents the approximate mean annual boundary of the pool.

The regulations state that vernal pool habitat includes the basin and the area within 100 feet of its mean annual boundary, to the extent that such habitat is within an area subject to the Act (310 CMR 10.04).



This pool can be protected because it is located within a jurisdictional Boring Vegetated Wetland (BVW, green shaded area). Any pool is protected under the WPA if it is contained within ILSF, BLSF, or other jurisdictional wetlands.

To determine how much of the pool and its surroundings are protected, a 100-foot “buffer” is drawn from the mean annual boundary of the pool (outer red line).



Like a classic Venn diagram, the “vernal pool habitat” protected by the Wetlands Protection Act regulations includes the pool and only the portion of its 100-foot “buffer” that is contained within a WPA jurisdictional wetland (purple shaded area).

The BVW has its own 100-foot buffer zone, which encompasses the entire 100-foot zone associated with the vernal pool basin. However, that does not change the amount of protected “vernal pool habitat.”