

Vernal Pool Management

The loss of unique vernal pool landscapes puts pressure on attempts to manage these small and fragmented areas that have now become part of human-controlled landscapes. Much of the research has been shifted to support management. The articles in this section address the conservation of vernal pool landscapes in regions with very different interactions between human activities and natural landscapes.

Andrew Bohonak and Ellen Bauder discuss a functional assessment, as developed in Southern California vernal pools. The loss of vernal pool landscapes in the San Diego region has been extensive and conservation strategies are often directed to understanding the importance of individual pools. This presentation is interesting because it proposes techniques to use dry summer surveys to study regions where vernal pools form during the rainy season.

Tracy Schohr points out that many of the remaining vernal pool landscapes in the Central Valley persist only on lands in private ownership that are maintained for seasonal grazing. This paper discusses cooperation of owners of seasonal rangelands, which contain the vast majority of vernal pool landscapes, with government agencies and conservation organizations. This activity supports the preservation and active management of vernal pool landscapes. It is encouraging to know that many individuals owning critical natural landscape express an interest in preserving this heritage of native California.

The editors summarize Carol W. Witham's important oral presentation at the conference, which describes how the potential degradation of a large natural vernal pool landscape in the Central Valley was averted by compromise negotiations. This presentation illustrates how the proposed conversion of vernal pool landscapes was averted by a high level of public involvement, with advocacy planning between those proposing the establishment of a University of California campus at Merced and an assemblage of public and private agencies.

Research and Recovery in Vernal Pool Landscapes