

## Vernal Pools

Vernal pools are a unique combination of climatic, topographic and geologic factors that result in a shallow, seasonal wetland. A subsurface clay layer causing water to pond on the surface is the all-important factor in the formation of these wetlands. These “pools” of water are inhabited with a set of plants and animals that only live in these ephemeral pools and



Photos: Brent Helm, May Consulting



saturated soils. The pool's appearance changes with the seasons. In summer, the pools are dry and look like dirt or clay depressions with dried vegetation and cracks along the pool floor. A distinctive grayish colored forb called coyote thistle may grow in the bottom of the pool. In winter the pools are full of water and support aquatic grasses and forbs and, in spring as these pools dry up, a series of --

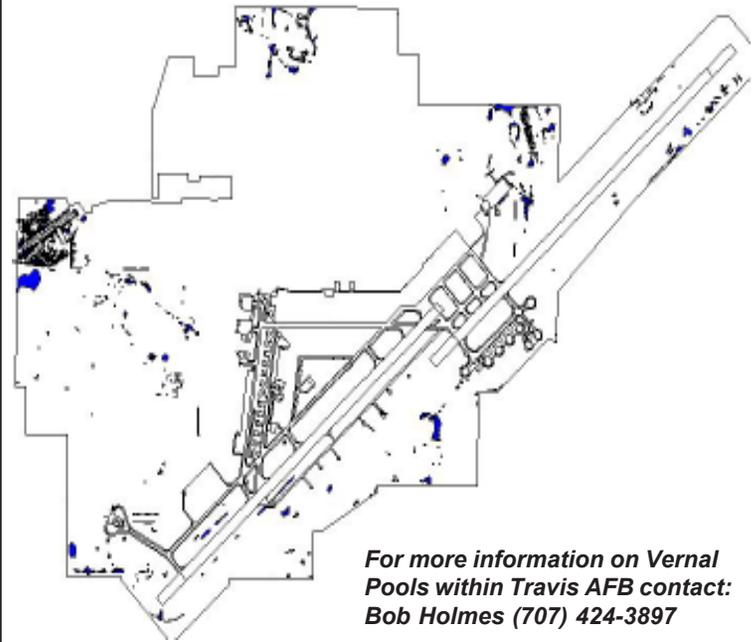


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California Department of Pesticide Regulation  
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Travis Air Force Base



## Vernal Pools in Travis Air Force Base



**For more information on Vernal Pools within Travis AFB contact: Bob Holmes (707) 424-3897**

-- different plants develop and bloom. Contra Costa Goldfields, and Endangered plant species, is one of these plants. Other non-endangered species include Brass Buttons, Popcorn Flower and Woolly Marbles.

In the past, California had large numbers of these small wetlands. Now much of this habitat has been destroyed by urbanization and farming activities.

Travis AFB has some 300 of these seasonal wetlands (see dark-shaded areas in map above), many of which are home to endangered plants or animals; and has ongoing programs to preserve and rehabilitate this sensitive habitat.