

February 2007

Ohio Wetlands

What is a wetland?

Wetlands are:

Areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water often enough to support plants adapted for life in saturated soil conditions.

What are other names for wetlands?

Depending on their location and characteristics, wetlands are known by many names. Some of these include swamp, marsh, bog, fen, wet prairie, farmed wetland and wet meadow.

How are wetlands identified?

An undisturbed area must have *all* of the following to be considered a wetland:

1. Wetland hydrology

Wetlands have either saturated or flooded soils for some time during the growing season.

2. Hydric soils

Wetlands have poorly drained soils that are low in oxygen due to saturation or flooding.

3. Hydrophytic vegetation

Wetlands are dominated by vegetation that is adapted to life in saturated or flooded soil. The familiar cattail is just one of more than 1,000 plant species that commonly occur in Ohio's wetlands. Others include trees, annual and perennial herbaceous

plants, shrubs, vines and grasses, such as maple trees, rushes and buttercups.

Why are wetlands valuable?

Wetlands have been called "nature's kidneys" because of their ability to filter impurities from water. Sediment settles out of runoff and dissolved contaminants bind to plant surfaces or are transformed, resulting in improved water quality.

Wetlands provide a haven for rare and endangered plants, and one-third of the all endangered species depend on wetlands for survival. Many wetlands are important fish spawning and nursery areas, as well as nesting, resting and feeding areas for waterfowl.

Wetlands perform other valuable functions including reducing flood flow and shoreline erosion control. Wetlands also provide recreational opportunities such as canoeing, fishing, and birdwatching.

Since the late 18th century, 90 percent of Ohio's wetland resources have been destroyed or degraded through draining, filling or other modifications. Because of the valuable functions the remaining wetlands perform, it is imperative to preserve them.

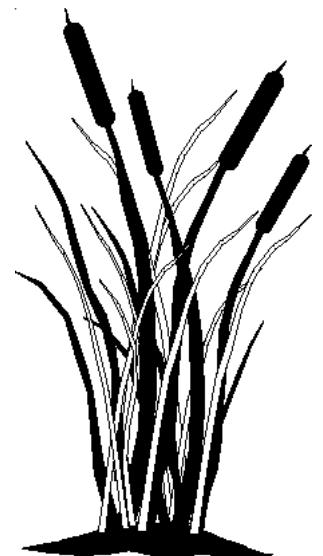
What must you do before performing work in wetlands?

According to the federal Clean Water Act, *anyone* (including private citizens, federal, state and local agencies) who wishes to discharge dredged or fill material into waters of the U.S., including wetlands, must obtain a permit from the U.S. Army

Corps of Engineers (Corps) and a water quality certification from the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA).

Examples of activities that may require a permit and a water quality certification include: construction of boat ramps; placement of riprap for erosion control; filling; grading; dredging; ditching; or mechanically clearing a wetland; building in a wetland; constructing dams or dikes; stream channelization and stream diversion.

If the county hydric soils list (available from your natural resource conservation district or via the Internet at http://soils.usda.gov/survey/printed_surveys/ohio.html) indicates you have hydric soils on your property, or you suspect there are wetlands on your property, and you plan to fill or dredge or conduct any other activity noted above in these areas, you should contact the appropriate Corps district office.



Ohio Wetlands

If the Corps determines that a permit is needed, you may need to hire personnel trained to identify wetlands and define wetland boundaries. Wetlands should be identified and delineated by a person familiar with the current delineation manual. This person should have knowledge of soil science and wetland plant identification as well as experience in wetland delineation.

What federal and state agencies review permit requests?

There are four Corps districts with jurisdiction in Ohio: Buffalo District (Lake Erie Basin), the Pittsburgh District (Mahoning River Basin), Huntington District (Muskingum, Hocking and Scioto River basins) and Louisville District (Little and Great Miami River basins).

As part of the permit review process, other state and federal agencies also are consulted. These include Ohio EPA, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

For further information contact:

**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Buffalo District**
1776 Niagara St.
Buffalo, NY 14207-3199
(716) 879-4330

**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Huntington District**
502 Eighth Street
Huntington, WV 25701-2070
(304) 399-5210

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
10557 Mckelvey Rd
Cincinnati, Ohio 45240
(513) 825-4518

**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Pittsburgh District**
William S. Moorhead
Federal Building
1000 Liberty Ave.
Pittsburgh, PA 15222-4186
(412) 395-7152

**Ohio Department of Natural
Resources**
Office of Real Estate and Land
Management or Division of Wildlife
2045 Morse Rd.
Columbus, OH 43229-6693
(614) 265-6565

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
6950-H Americana Parkway
Reynoldsburg, OH 43068
(614) 469-6923

U.S. EPA, Region V
Wetlands Protection Section
77 West Jackson Blvd.
Chicago, IL 60604
(800) 832-7828

Ohio EPA
Division of Surface Water
P.O. Box 1049
Columbus, OH 43216-1049
(614) 644-2001

Need more information about wetlands?

- For a copy of the 1987 Wetland Delineation Manual, go to <http://www.lrh.usace.army.mil/permits/wetlands/>.
- National Wetland Inventory (NWI) maps for initial indication of wetland locations and types, are produced by the U.S. FWS. To request a copy of the images, call ODNR at (614) 265-6776.
- Wetland Plants of the State of Ohio, a list of plant species that occur in Ohio wetlands, is produced by U.S. FWS and can be found at <http://wetlands.fws.gov/plants.htm>.

