



WETLANDS

A Guide For Geauga County Landowners

What is a wetland?

Wetlands are identified as having a predominance of hydric soils, saturation and/or groundwater, and a presence of hydrophytic vegetation.

Activities of Disturbance

- Placement of fill and/or dredge material
- Ditching activities when the excavated material is sidecast
- Levee and dike construction
- Mechanized land clearing
- Land leveling
- Most road construction
- Dam construction

If any alterations or ground disturbing activities are going to be made in or around a potential wetland area, contact both the U.S Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA).

Agricultural producers should contact the U.S Department of Agriculture (USDA) - Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Ohio Environmental Protection Agency:
(330)-963-1298

U.S Army Corps of Engineers:
(716)-879-4330 or (330)-923-8197 (local field office)

USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service:
888-217-3947

Rules Regarding Wetlands

The Clean Water Act has certain provisions pertaining to wetlands that require permits for any work affecting wetland areas.

Work affecting wetlands can include dredging, filling, or drainage projects.

A 401 Ohio Environmental Protection Agency permit is required for those wetlands which are isolated from streams and rivers.

Any disturbance to a wetland which is connected to either a stream or river requires a 404 permit issued by the U.S Army Corps of Engineers.



Geauga REALink offers excellent resources available from the Geauga County Auditor's Office. The Geauga SWCD also has the U.S Fish and Wildlife National Wetlands Inventory Maps as a general guideline available for public use. Call Geauga SWCD at 440-834-1122 for this and other information.

Geauga SWCD utilizes REALink to verify hydric soils and their location within the county. Technical assistance is available from District staff in to identify potential hydric soils.

Indicators of Wetlands

A wetland can vary in type and degree of wetness. Some may be very easy to recognize throughout the year, while others exist due to saturation of the soil by groundwater and can be extremely difficult to identify. Wetlands can be confirmed by the presence of three criteria: hydric soils, hydrology, and hydrophytic vegetation.

Soil Indicators

Wetland soils are called hydric soils. Hydric soils are soils that are saturated, flooded, or ponded for a long enough time period during the growing season that anaerobic conditions develop in the upper part of the soil.

The following indicators may indicate a hydric soil:

- Soil has a layer of partially decomposed plant material on the surface
- Soil color below the surface is predominantly grayish, with or without orange or brown areas
- Soil has a "rotten egg" odor
- Soil is very sandy and has a black surface layer, or appears blotchy and has dark streak of organic matter

Hydrology Indicators

Wetland hydrology is the permanent or periodic inundation or prolonged soil saturation sufficient to create anaerobic conditions in the soil. Indicators of this can include:

- Standing or flowing water is observed on the area during growing season, or soils appear to be waterlogged
- Watermarks are present on trees indicating the approximate depth of standing or flowing water
- Drift lines or small piles of debris deposited by flowing water
- Thin layers of sediment coating leaves or other objects on the ground
- Plant roots or areas of soil around them have rust-colored coatings

Vegetation Indicators

Plants found in wetland areas are called hydrophytic vegetation. These plants have been classified by their frequency of occurrences in wetlands.

Examples of Hydrophytic Vegetation include; cattails, bulrushes, sedges, sphagnum moss, willows, baldcypress, cordgrass, American elm, red and silver maple, and tupelo gum.

Generally, wetland classification requires that more than 50% of the plants found on the site are predominantly (>50% probability) associated with wetlands.

Geauga County Soils

Hydric Soils

Ca	Canadice silt loam
Cf	Carlisle muck, ponded
Da	Damascus silt loam
Ho	Holly silt loam
Sb	Sebring silt loam
Sf	Sheffield silt loam
Wa	Wabasha silty clay loam, ponded
Wc	Walkkill silt loam, ponded
Wt	Willette muck, ponded

*Non-Hydric Soils with Hydric Inclusions

BgB	Bogart Loam, 2-6% slopes
BrF	Brecksville silt loam, 25-70% slope
CcA	Canaeada silt loam, 0-2% slopes
CcB	Canaeada silt loam, 2-6% slopes
CyD	Chili-Oshtemo complex, 6-18% slopes
DrA	Darien silt loam, 0-2% slopes
FcA	Fitchville silt loam, 0-2% slopes
FcB	Fitchville silt loam, 2-6% slopes
JtA	Jimtown silt loam, 0-3% slopes
MgA	Mahoning silt loam, 0-2% slopes
MgB	Mahoning silt loam, 2-6% slopes
MsA	Mahoning silt loam (shale), 0-2% slopes
MsB	Mahoning silt loam (shale), 2-6% slopes
MtA	Mitiwanga silt loam, 0-3% slopes
Or	Orville silt loam, frequently flooded
PsA	Platea silt loam, 0-2% slopes
PsB	Platea silt loam, 2-6% slopes
ReA	Ravenna silt loam, 0-2% slopes
ReB	Ravenna silt loam, 2-6% slopes
WbA	Wadsworth silt loam, 0-2% slopes
WbB	Wadsworth silt loam, 2-6% slopes

** These soils are not hydric as a map unit but have unmapped depression areas that are potential wetlands.*

If any wetland indicators are observed, assistance from both the USACE and the OEPA is advised before disturbing wetland areas.

To confirm a soil is hydric, landowners may employ a soil scientist to verify the map group and if the soil on a particular site fits the hydric soil definition. A wetland consultant may also be called to complete a delineation or an evaluation of a site for the presence of wetlands. Geauga SWCD has a list of these consultants for your convenience.