



WETLANDS – WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW BEFORE YOU BUY OR BUILD

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

BUILDING STRONG®

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) define wetlands as follows, *“Those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas.”*

Wetlands are areas that are covered by water or have saturated soils for long periods (a minimum of 14 consecutive days) during the growing season. Plants growing in wetlands are capable of living in saturated soil conditions for at least part of the growing season. Wetlands such as swamps and marshes are often obvious, but some wetlands are not easily recognized, often because they are dry during part of the year or “they just don't look very wet” from the roadside. **Caution: Most wetlands lack both standing water and saturated soils during at least part of the growing season.**

The USACE has no definitive maps of federally regulated wetlands or waterways. Therefore, it is often difficult to determine USACE’s jurisdiction based solely on an in-office review. In most cases, a site inspection is the only definitive means of determining the presence or absence, and extent of waters of the U.S., including wetlands on a parcel. USACE consults the following to evaluate the potential for wetlands or waterways to be present on a site:

- U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) quadrangle maps – <http://www.usgs.gov/pubprod> or <http://www.topozone.com>
- National Wetland Inventory (NWI) maps – <http://www.fws.gov/wetlands>
- The NWI maps are published by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, are based on aerial photography, and are not ground verified or necessarily consistent with the USACE Wetland Delineation Manual. **Many federally regulated wetlands in northwest Ohio are not on the NWI maps.**
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) web soil survey which has replaced County Soil Surveys - <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/HomePage.htm>
- Aerial photographs (various websites – see attached)

Mapped indicators implying that wetlands or waterways may be present on a given parcel include, but are not limited to the following:

- Wetland or waterway symbols on the USGS maps
- Identified wetland types on the NWI or other wetland maps
- Hydric soils or partially-hydric (a non-hydric soil with hydric inclusions or components) indicated on the NRCS soil survey. Hydric soils are poorly and very poorly drained soils typically occurring in wetlands.
- Streams, drainageways, ponds or other water bodies indicated on the USGS map or NRCS Soil Survey.

If any of these indicators are mapped within a project site, the USACE recommends further investigation to determine if regulated wetlands or waterways exist and whether a Department of the Army (DA) permit may be required for work on the property. **In general, if a hydric soil or partially hydric soil is mapped within the project site and the area is in an undeveloped “natural” state (e.g. wooded, scrub shrub, meadow, etc.), or is not currently being cropped and designated as “Prior Converted” (PC) cropland by the USDA-NRCS, then wetlands are likely present on the site. At this point an on-site wetland delineation and jurisdictional determination would be needed to verify the presence of waters of the U.S.**

These preliminary reviews do not need to be completed by USACE personnel. In fact, members of the general public can expedite the review process, by conducting the initial evaluation using the mentioned resources. In order to facilitate the review a list of multiple resources is included below, all of which are readily available to the public.

If after consulting these resources, it appears that wetlands or waterways may exist on the project site, an individual familiar with the Corps Wetland Delineation procedures, such as an environmental consultant, should perform a wetland delineation and identify all streams, ditches, drainageways, etc. Wetlands should be identified and delineated in accordance with the *1987 Corps of Engineers Wetlands Delineation Manual* and the appropriate Supplement Manuals to the Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual. For the most recent versions in Northwest Ohio the Regional Supplement Manuals include the *Midwest Region* or the *Northcentral and Northeast Region*. Copies of the 1987 Wetland Delineation Manual and the Regional Supplement Manuals can be obtained at:

http://www.usace.army.mil/Missions/CivilWorks/RegulatoryProgramandPermits/reg_supp.aspx

Upon the completion of the wetland delineation study a Permit Application will need to be submitted to the USACE along with a copy of the wetland delineation report. A Permit Application and instructions can be found on the USACE Buffalo District website at: <http://www.lrb.usace.army.mil>

After a wetland and waters delineation has been completed, the report should be submitted to USACE for review and verification. **The wetland and waters of the U.S. delineation should be verified by the USACE prior to finalizing any project design for the site in question to ensure that no further modifications of the project plans would be needed to comply with 404(b)(1) Guidelines. The 404(b)(1) Guidelines require that all practicable steps are taken to avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts to waters of the U.S., including wetlands. The USACE is the only regulatory agency authorized in determining the presence/absence of jurisdictional waters of the U.S., including wetlands on a given property.**

Questions should be directed to the USACE Buffalo District at either:

Oak Harbor Ohio Field Office
240 Lake Street, Unit D
Oak Harbor, Ohio 43449
(419) 898-3491

Buffalo District Office
1776 Niagara Street
Buffalo, New York
(716) 879-4330

Additional Resources

Location Maps:

<http://maps.google.com>

<http://www.mapquest.com>

<http://bing.com/maps>

US Geological Survey (USGS): <http://www.usgs.gov/pubprod>

Ohio EPA Division of Surface Water: <http://www.epa.state.oh.us/dsw>

U.S. EPA: water.epa.gov/type/wetlands/index.cfm

The following County websites contains aerial photographs and parcel information.

Allen County Auditor - <http://www.co.allen.oh.us/auditor/auditor.php>

Auglaize County Auditor - <http://www.auglaizeauditor.ddti.net/Map.aspx>

Crawford County Auditor - <http://www.crawfordauditor.info/disclaimer.html>

Defiance County Auditor - <http://defiance.ddti.net>

Erie County Auditor - erie.iviewauditor.com

Fulton County Auditor - <http://fultonauditor.ddti.net/>

Hancock County Auditor - <http://hancock.iviewauditor.com>

Hardin Auditor- <http://www.hegis.com/>

Henry Auditor - <http://www.co.henry.oh.us/default.html>

Huron County Auditor - <http://www.huroncountyauditor.org>

Lucas County – <http://maps.co.lucas.oh.us/areis/areis.asp>

Marion - <http://gis.co.marion.oh.us/website/viewer/viewer.htm>

Mercer County Auditor – <http://www.mercercountyohio.org/auditor>

Ottawa County Auditor – <http://www.ottawacountyauditor.org>

Putnam County GIS – <http://www.putnamcountygis.com>

Richland County Auditor – <http://www.richlandcountyauditor.org>

Sandusky County GIS - <http://www.sanduskycountygis.org/sandgis>

Seneca County Auditor - <http://www.senecacountyauditor.org>

Shelby County Auditor - <http://co.shelby.oh.us/Auditor/index.asp>

Van Wert County Auditor - <http://www.co.vanwert.oh.us>

Williams County Auditor - <http://www.williamsco.ddti.net>

Wood County Auditor - <http://auditor.co.wood.oh.us>

Parcel information but no aerial photographs

Wyandot County Auditor – <http://www.co.wyandot.oh.us/auditor/default.html>

Plat maps available on-line

Paulding – http://www.pauldingcountyengineer.com/maps_information.htm

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS – BUFFALO DISTRICT

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www.lrb.usace.army.mil