



A non-profit Ohio organization

# Ohio Wetlands Association

## Newsletter - March 2016

### Our Mission

*Ohio Wetlands Association is dedicated to the protection, restoration and enjoyment of Ohio's wetlands and associated ecosystems through science-based programs, education and advocacy.*

### 2016 EVENTS

#### Vernal Pool Workshops

March 26 - Newark, OH

April 9 - Wilmot, OH

#### Annual Meeting & Garden Party

May 28, Amherst, OH

### Inside this issue:

Mike Wagner	1
Annual Meeting & Garden Party	1
What are Nationwide Permits?	2
Customers Shop. Amazon Gives	2
Donate your Native Plants	3
New Board Member, Brett Joseph	3
Explore Ohio's Hidden Wonders	4
2016 Events	5
Time to Renew Your Membership	6
What are Nationwide Permits? (Cont'd)	7
Graminoids	8 & 9
Salamander Dance	10
Ways to Support OWA	10
In Defense of a Swamp	11

### VISIT US AT:

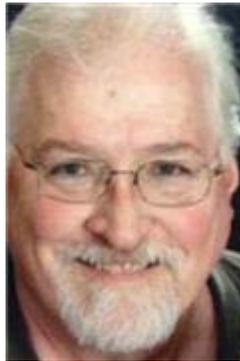
[www.OHWetlands.org](http://www.OHWetlands.org)

[www.Facebook.com/Ohiowetlands](http://www.Facebook.com/Ohiowetlands)

[www.Scoop.it/t/ohio-wetlands](http://www.Scoop.it/t/ohio-wetlands)

Ohio Wetlands Association  
P. O. Box 3  
Amherst, Ohio 44001

## MIKE WAGNER



When I got a call from Mike's identical twin Matt informing me of his sudden and untimely passing, I thought it was actually Mike calling. Not only was the voice identical, my caller ID said it was Mike. You see, Matt was notifying everyone in Mike's contact list. All we know is that he went home from work and suffered a severe heart attack. He was discovered after the loss of contact with his family and work.

Mike was a good friend and loyal supporter of Friends of Wetlands, and then, Ohio Wetlands Association. He was an active member of Black River Audubon Society. I worked closely with him for many years in support of the grand Jamboree FOWL events on the Huron River. He steadfastly worked through the transition into Ohio Wetlands Association where he has served as a board member in the position of Membership Director. Mike appreciated wildlife, birds and the diversity that wetlands provide. But I think that, more than anything, Mike liked being with people who shared these joys. Nature appreciation, for Mike, was a social experience as much as anything else.

At OWA we will miss his contributions to the essential management and logistics coordination of events. As a friend, I will miss his intelligent conversation and warm congeniality.

The obituary announcement asked that in lieu of flowers, donations be made to Ohio Wetlands Association where he had given so freely of his time and talents. We will accept donations in Mike's name and provide a special remembrance for him at the OWA Annual Meeting and Garden Party on May 28<sup>th</sup>.

## OHIO WETLANDS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING & GARDEN PARTY

Join us on Saturday, May 28, 2016

From 2 p.m. to 8 p.m.

190 Sipple Ave, Amherst, Ohio

*Festivities include: a fundraising Native Plant Sale, Silent Auction, Musical Entertainment, Meet OWA Board Members, Potluck Dinner, and a hand-painted Rain Barrel Raffle Drawing*

*Free Carnivorous Plant Poster*

*Special "Invasive Species Management" Give Away*

All are welcome!

## WHAT ARE NATIONWIDE PERMITS?



Lake Kelso. Photo by Ian Adams

Wetlands are protected by the Clean Water Act. When wetlands are to be impacted (that is filled and destroyed) a permit is issued and mitigation is normally required. To compensate for the wetland loss, other wetlands must be restored or created. Projects with larger impacts (exceeding 0.05 acres) require individual permits. However, the largest number of wetland impacts are authorized by a group of general permits known as Nationwide Permits. Nationwide Permits are general permits intended for projects that are similar in nature and cause minimal degradation to waters of the state. These permits are coordinated between the US Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) and state water quality agencies, like the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA), every five years.

### **According to the Corps:**

Permits issued by the Corps authorize various types of development projects in wetlands and other waters of the United States. The Corps' regulatory process involves two types of permits: Nationwide

Permits, also known as general permits, and individual permits for more significant actions including wetland impacts exceeding 0.05 acres of impacts to category B wetlands. The Corps uses general permits to minimize the burden of its regulatory program: they authorize landowners to proceed with a project without the time-consuming need to obtain standard individual permits in advance. About 90% of the Corps' regulatory workload is processed in the form of general permits.

There are currently 49 Nationwide Permits which go through a regular five-year review cycle.

The current Nationwide Permit program has few strong supporters, for differing reasons. Developers and other industry groups say that it is too complex and burdened with arbitrary restrictions that limit opportunities for an efficient permitting process. Environmentalists say that it does not adequately

*(Continued on page 7)*

## DONATE YOUR NATIVE PLANTS

Our next OWA Annual Meeting and Garden Party will be on May 28th from 2 to 8 p.m. Ray Stewart, OWA President will host it again at his home in Amherst. There will be live music, a potluck dinner, silent auction and native plant sale. All are welcome!



We are hoping for donations of the following and/or other Ohio natives for our Fundraiser Native Plant Sale:

Green Dragon *Arisaema dracontium*  
 Wild Ginger *Asarum canadense*  
 Swamp Milkweed *Asclepias incarnata*  
 Purple Milkweed *Asclepias purpurascens*  
 Sullivant's Milkweed *Asclepias sullivantii*  
 Butterflyweed *Asclepias tuberosa*  
 Wild Hyacinth *Camassia scilloides*  
 Purple Coneflower *Echinacea purpurea*  
 Spotted Joe Pye *Eupatorium maculatum*  
 Boneset *Eupatorium perfoliatum*  
 wild geranium *Geranium maculatum*  
 Swamp Rose Mallow *Hibiscus moscheutos*  
 Blue Flag *Iris versicolor*  
 Prairie Blazingstar *Liatris pycnostachya*  
 Savanna Blazingstar *Liatris scariosa*  
 Dense Blazingstar *Liatris spicata*  
 Michigan Lily *Lilium michiganense*  
 Cardinal flower *Lobelia cardinalis*  
 Great Blue Lobelia *Lobelia siphilitica*  
 Pale-spiked Lobelia *Lobelia spicata*

Wild Bergamot *Monarda fistulosa*  
 Obedient Plant *Physotegia virginiana*  
 Orange Coneflower *Rudbeckia fulgida*  
 Black-eyed Susan *Rudbeckia hirta*  
 Showy Coneflower *Rudbeckia speciosa*  
 Compass Plant *Silphium laciniatum*  
 Cup Plant *Silphium perfoliatum*  
 Prairie Dock *Silphium terebinthinaceum*  
 Swamp Goldenrod *Solidago patula*  
 Ohio Goldenrod *Solidago ohioensis*  
 Riddell's Goldenrod *Solidago riddellii*  
 Ohio Spiderwort *Tradescantia ohioensis*  
 Large-flowered Trillium *Trillium grandiflorum*  
 Blue Vervain *Verbena hastata*  
 Tall Ironweed *Vernonia gigantea*

Please share your native garden plants with OWA as it will improve our fundraising efforts. We do not encourage or condone removal of native plants from natural areas.

## NEW OWA BOARD MEMBER, BRETT JOSEPH



I think you will share my enthusiasm in welcoming our newest member of the OWA Board of Directors, Brett R. Joseph. He brings enthusiasm and a diverse set of skills to our organization. He is managing Director, **Center for Ecological Culture, Inc.**, Cleveland, Ohio. He founded a non-profit organization dedicated to empowering individuals, organizations and communities with sustainability education, action research and ecological design services, to support adaptive social change inspired by the patterns and processes of the Earth's natural systems.

He also teaches at **Lorain County Community College**, Elyria, Ohio where he is the Sustainable Agriculture Program Coordinator and Adjunct Faculty. He is teaching courses in permaculture, including its guiding principles, its basis in knowledge of natural systems and the development of design skills, and its applications through

various service learning projects involving design of food forests, natural building projects, regenerative systems for energy, water and waste management, and related social systems. Thank you for joining our effort to promote the mission of Ohio Wetlands Association.

## EXPLORE OHIO'S HIDDEN WONDERS

Join the Ohio Wetlands Association (OWA) for a day of exploring vernal pools and the creatures that inhabit them. This workshop will be held at the Wilderness Center in Wilmot, Ohio on Saturday, April 9, 2016 from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The morning starts with indoor presentations on vernal pool ecology, macroinvertebrates, and amphibians followed by a light vegetarian lunch. After lunch we will hear about vernal pool landscapes, how vernal pools are connected to streams, the Ohio Vernal Pool Partnership data collection and collaboration program, and finally visit and explore vernal pools nearby. A vegetarian lunch and a copy of *Ohio's Hidden Wonders: A Guide to the Animals and Plants of Vernal Pools* is included with registration.

Vernal pools are temporary pools of water that provide habitat for unique plants and animals. They are considered to be a distinctive type of wetland usually devoid of predatory fish, and thus allow the safe development of amphibian and insect species. They fill with water with the rising water table of fall and winter or with the meltwater spring snow. Many vernal pools in our area are covered with ice in the winter months. By late summer, a vernal pool often dries up. They are called vernal (spring) pools because they are at their maximum depth in the spring.

These special places are frequently overlooked yet contain a grand array of species diversity. We know that these wetlands often found in wooded areas contribute significantly to the health of the natural area they belong to. The Ohio Vernal Pool Partnership seeks to train and recruit people to

assess and evaluate the condition of vernal pools by recording the plants and animals that visit or make these places their home.



### THE WILDERNESS CENTER

**Join Ohio Wetlands Association and The Wilderness Center staff on Saturday, April 9, 2016**

#### Vernal Pool Workshop Schedule Includes:

- Welcome – Ray Stewart
- Ohio Vernal Pool Amphibians - Mick Micacchion
- Fairy Shrimp Ecology – Ray Stewart
- Vernal Pool Amphibian Research - Scott Thomas
- iNaturalist Data Collection – Ray Stewart
- Identifying Vernal Pools Using Soils and Topography - Gary Popotnik
- Connectivity between Vernal Pools and Streams - Mark Dilley
- Field Visit to a Vernal Pool

Registration price includes: A vegetarian lunch and a copy of *Ohio's Hidden Wonders: A Guide to the Animals and Plants of Vernal Pools* (\$25 value).



## Customers Shop. Amazon Gives

AmazonSmile is a website operated by Amazon that lets customers enjoy the same wide selection of products, low prices, and convenient shopping features as on Amazon.com. The difference is that when customers shop on AmazonSmile ([www.smile.amazon.com](http://www.smile.amazon.com)), the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the price of eligible purchases to the charitable organizations selected by customers. Link your Amazon account to the Ohio Wetlands Association today! Just go to [www.smile.amazon.com](http://www.smile.amazon.com).

## 2016 SPRING EVENTS

### **Marsh Monitoring Training**

We are seeking wetland enthusiasts to be trained to monitor amphibians and/or marsh birds (prior experience not necessary) and who are willing to spend about 10 hours per year as a volunteer surveyor of a local wetland.

### **Martin Center for Field Studies and Environmental Education**

#### **Bath Nature Preserve**

4240 Ira Road  
Akron, OH 44333-1140  
Saturday, March 5, 2016  
12 p.m. - 4 p.m.

### **Old Woman Creek State Nature Preserve**

2514 Cleveland Road  
East Huron, OH 44839  
Saturday March 19, 2016  
10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

### **Wetlands Will Save the World**

Presentation by Ray Stewart  
Sunday, February 20, 2016 at 2 p.m.  
Bainbridge Town Hall  
Chagrin Falls, Ohio

### **Vernal Pool Workshops**

The Ohio Vernal Pool Partnership will be offering the following workshops in 2016:

Saturday, March 26, 2016, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
Dawes Arboretum  
Newark, Ohio

Saturday, April 9, 2016, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
The Wilderness Center  
Wilmot, Ohio

### **Black Swamp Tour: Bell Woods Preserve, Goll Woods SNP, & Forest Woods Nature Preserve**

Saturday, April 30, 2016, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
Lucas, Fulton, Defiance Counties

### **Bald Eagle Fest at Mentor Marsh**

Sunday, May 1, 2006  
Noon to 5 p.m.  
OWA will have a table at this event.

### **Wetlands Walk at Kitty Todd SNP**

Saturday, May 14, 2016, 10 a.m.  
Green Ribbon Initiative  
Located in western Lucas County north of Old State Line Road.  
Lucas County  
Leader: Ray Stewart

### **Vernal Pool Expedition**

#### **Gahanna Woods State Nature Preserve**

Saturday, May 14, 2016, 10 a.m. - Noon  
Gahanna Woods State Nature Preserve  
Taylor Station Rd, Gahanna, OH 43230  
Franklin County

### **Edison Woods MetroPark**

Saturday, June 11, 2016, 10 a.m. - Noon  
Edison Woods Preserve  
10186 Ceylon Rd (SR 61)  
Berlin Heights, Ohio 44814  
Erie County

### **OWA Annual Meeting & Garden Party**

Saturday, May 28, 2016  
2 p.m. - 8 p.m.  
190 Sipple Ave., Amherst, OH  
Native Plant Sale, Silent Auction, Musical Entertainment, Meet OWA Board Members, & Potluck Dinner. All are welcome!

### **25th Anniversary Summit**

September 8, 9, 10, 2016  
Details coming soon.

## TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

Ohio Wetlands Association was first conceived by a handful of conservation-minded individuals in 1991 when we were known as Friends of Wetlands. In 2016 we are celebrating our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Education, protection and sharing the joy of wetlands are still the cornerstones of what we do.

In all this time it has been people like you who have made us great. OWA has been and remains a member supported all-volunteer non-profit. OWA is not supported by government, industry or foundations. We depend on the generosity of like-minded individuals who are able to contribute time and money to make Ohio a better place.

After losing an excess of 90% of its wetlands, they continue to be threatened by urban sprawl, big box stores, agriculture, development and climate change. Our wetlands need advocates, voices that say 'enough'. Your support of OWA in whatever way and in any amount is such a voice.

Wetlands are unique among our natural areas. They often blur the boundaries between our lakes and rivers and the uplands where we live and work. More than transitional areas, many rare and



### MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

- \$ 20 - INDIVIDUAL**
- \$ 15 - STUDENT**
- \$ 15 - SENIOR**
- \$ 30 - FAMILY**
- \$ 40 - ORGANIZATION**
- \$ 50 - BUSINESS**
- \$100 - HERON LEVEL**
- \$250 - RAIL LEVEL**
- \$500 - BITTERN LEVEL**
- \$1000 - SWAN LEVEL**

beautiful living creatures depend on wetlands. In Ohio, 1/4 of the plant species, 1/2 of the fish species, 2/3 of the bird species, and 3/4 of the amphibian species that are listed as threatened or endangered are associated with wetlands.

We are elated by the sight of a Lady's Slipper Orchid or a pair of Trumpeter Swans but we understand that wetlands also perform more prosaic tasks. Flood control and water purification not only prevent disasters they improve our quality of life. Your contribution will get the message out, that our wetlands must be protected, expanded and cherished.

Our membership year runs from June 1st to May 31st the following year. Please renew now for the 2016-17 membership year at the highest support level that fits your passion and capacity. We have sponsorship levels with special benefits for those who contribute at the Heron, Rail, Bittern or Swan levels.

## WETLAND TRUMPETER SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

We have lost 90% of Ohio's wetlands. Those that remain are critically important. By sponsoring Ohio Wetlands Association events, you will gain valuable positive publicity and help us protect the wetlands we have left. Your contribution will enable us to coordinate, promote, and grow wetland awareness and provide educational materials throughout Ohio. Thank you in advance for your support. We look forward to making Ohio better in partnership with you through wetland protection and awareness. Details can be found at [www.OHwetlands.org/wetlandfs-trumpeters-sponsorship-program.html](http://www.OHwetlands.org/wetlandfs-trumpeters-sponsorship-program.html)

## WHAT ARE NATIONWIDE PERMITS? (Cont'd)

protect aquatic resources, because the review procedures and permit requirements are less rigorous than those for individual or standard permits. At issue is whether the program has become so complex and expansive that it cannot either protect aquatic resources or provide for a fair regulatory system, which are its dual objectives. Controversies also exist about the use of specific nationwide Permits for authorizing particular types of activities, such as surface coal mining operations, transportation projects, and utility lines.

The regular five-year permit review cycle will come up in 2017. However, Ohio EPA has chosen to revise these Nationwide Permits a year early, in 2016. In this preemptive revision, a variety of problematic changes are proposed that could negatively impact the protection to Ohio's wetlands and other surface waters. Ohio Wetlands Association and other Ohio conservation organizations are working to assure that these Nationwide Permits do not reduce the level of protection that our surface waters currently enjoy. An OWA representative provided comments at the public hearing on January 11<sup>th</sup> and OWA submitted detailed written comments on January 19<sup>th</sup>.

### A brief summary of OWA's written comments:

**Category 3 Wetland Impacts** – No impacts to Category 3 wetlands should be allowed by any of the NWPs. These are Ohio's best remaining wetlands. Category 3 wetlands are estimated to make up only 22% of Ohio's Wetlands (based on Ohio Rapid Assessment Method for Wetlands (ORAM) results of a randomly selected, representative group of 50 Ohio wetlands). These wetlands are truly rare resources, should receive high levels of protection, and impacts to them should definitely not be authorized by NWPs.

**Director's Authorization** - The stated provisions are unlawful, unreasonable and should be eliminated. Empowering the director of the Environmental Protection Agency to allow any activity he or she determines qualified to be authorized through a general permit undermines the entire protection framework established in the Clean Water Act as well as state laws and regulations.

**Mitigation** – All wetland impacts, both permanent and temporary, should be mitigated, including impacts that are less than 0.10 acres. No impacts should be considered temporary unless monitoring results document no changes in conditions have occurred.

**ORAM Verification Process** – The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency should require Ohio Rapid Assessment Method (ORAM) documentation of wetland categories for all NWPs. The decisions on which categories wetlands should be assigned to must be agreed to or made by Agency personnel. Eliminating agency oversight will lead to the temptation for NWP recipients to relax their evaluation accuracy in an effort to have their activities meet the conditions of those NWPs.

**Stream Eligibility Determination Process** – The methodology proposed is unreasonable and unlawful – it violates legal requirements pertaining to certification, existing aquatic life uses, and antidegradation. The agency may not completely and categorically write-off untold numbers of high quality, though undesignated, tributaries merely because the respective downstream mainstems are not considered high quality.

**Culverts** - The draft certification document does not expressly require that culverts accommodate aquatic organism passage. The failure to accommodate aquatic organism passage is a significant design flaw seen far too often in the field and one that makes upstream improvements in water quality far less effective.

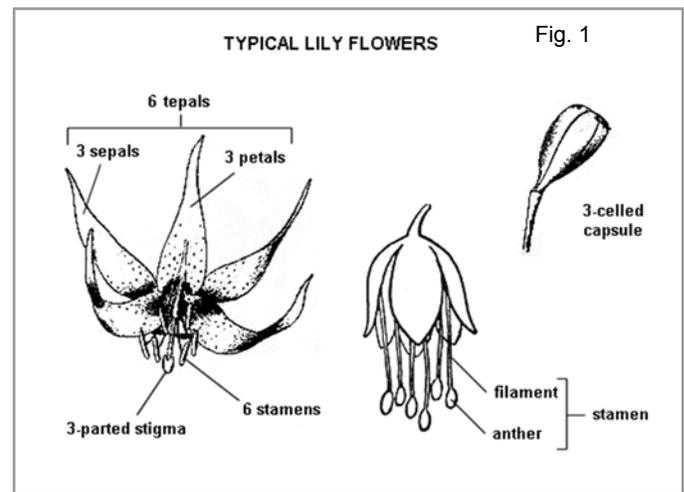
OWA has a highly qualified Policy Committee that works with like-minded partners to assure the highest quality of protection for Ohio's wetlands.

Wetland science looks very closely at plants because they are such good indicators of wetland conditions and quality. While many naturalists enjoy native flowering plants, many shy away from the simple and plain grass-like plants that don't sport large eye-catching flower petals. While this is easily understood from an aesthetic perspective, the graminoids (rushes, sedges and grasses) are important plants, a knowledge of which is essential to truly read the landscape and assess a wetland.

I was treated to a special private lesson on these plants at the Dawes Arboretum in Newark, Ohio taught by the renowned botanist, David Brandenburg. The title of the presentation was "It looks like a grass to me". Its purpose was to reveal the special anatomical characteristics of the graminoids and to make clear distinctions between rushes, sedges and grasses. Further lessons would be needed to do the field identifications of the individual species. In fact, it could take years of dedicated study to become fluent in these cryptic families of plants.

In plant ID work there are few generalizations. Exceptions are found to most every rule. If you think that 'Rushes are Round and Sedges have Edges' you will be mistaken much of the time. Worse still are the many common names that misidentify the plants family affiliation. Sawgrass, *Cladium mariscus*; nut grass, *Cyperus rotundus*; common spikerush, *Eleocharis palustris*; and river bulrush, *Bolboschoenus fluviatilis* are all names given to members of the Cyperaceae, the sedge family. Eastern blue-eyed grass, *Sisyrinchium atlanticum* is an iris. The scouring rush, *Equisetum hyemale* is more closely related to ferns, not even a flowering plant. This lesson pushed past simple platitudes to find the true distinctions of this largely misunderstood group of plants.

All three of the graminoids families are monocots. Monocots are flowering plants that tend to have parallel veins and flowering parts in 3s or multiples of 3s. Lilies are a good example of a showy monocot that has 3 petals and 3 sepals that are nearly identical. (See Fig. 1) When petals and sepals are so similar, botanists usually refer to them all as tepals so you don't need to tell which is which. Functionally, these colorful flower parts attract pollinators who serve as reproductive intermediaries.



The Juncaceae, the rush family, have long stalks that are often round but sometimes are flat. Their leaves are often only at the base where they are seldom seen. Flower clusters grow at the end of the stalk but in some species emerge to the side. Individual flowers have 6 tepals, just like lilies. They are small, and not showy unless you look very closely. Each flower can produce anywhere from 3 to many seeds. 75% of rush family species in Ohio are wetland dependent.

The Cyperaceae, the sedge family, sometimes have triangular stems but they can also be round. Flowers in this family are very small and simple. They are usually in clusters that are either tightly packed or in loose arrangements. Each flower consists of just one scale, one seed and 3 stamens. Within the genus *Carex*, the true sedges, flowers are segregated, often on distinct stalks as male or female.

The Poaceae, the grass family, is the most challenging to ID down to species, but rather easy to detect the family characteristics. Where a leaf blade emerges from the stem there is a node that is usually firm and swollen. Simply run your fingers along the stem to detect this grass family character. All graminoids have leaves that consist of a blade (free of the stem) and a sheath (wrapped around the stem). In grasses, where blade meets sheath, a small flap of tissue known as a ligule is present. The shape of the ligule is often used in species ID. The flowering unit of a grass is a small cluster of tiny flowers or florets called a spikelet. An inflorescence can be made of many hundreds of

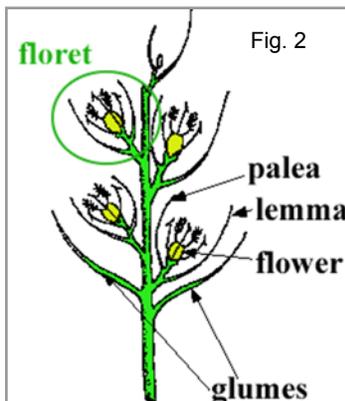
(Continued on page 9)

## GRAMINOIDS (cont'd)

(Continued from page 8)

spikelets. The bottom two florets on a spikelet are just a pair of bracts. All other florets have 2 bracts that surround an actual flower. (See Fig. 2) That flower will develop an individual seed. Very few grasses are found in wetlands.

While it may take an ambitious botanist to develop the skills needed for field identification of graminoids plants, it can be done. Patience, persistence and good magnification are critical to success. Plant identification is used in wetland identification. It has been determined which plants will grow in wetland conditions and which will not.



These clues are used to help identify wetland boundaries, areas which are protected by regulations. Good ID's can also tell quality of habitat, rare or endangered species and if a habitat is threatened by aggressive, invasive plant species.

In depth plant identification will also expose the botanist to marvelous world of detail, intricate patterns, colors and structures that few others get to experience. The anatomy and behavior of plants inspire the imagination. How did

they get this way? How do such tiny details help it survive, compete, cooperate? Mysteries of time and ecology may be discovered by a deep understanding of such small details.

## COALITION SIGN ON LETTER: SUPPORT \$300M FOR GLRI



The Healing our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition (HOW) has once again taken the lead to assure that Federal money continues to fully fund the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI).

With each federal budget there are opponents who wish to reduce or eliminate funding for GLRI. Frequently, the Obama administration has simply proposed funding \$50 million below the current rate. Areas of Concern (AOC's) will not get better on their own. The toxic legacy of the past industrial era and reckless development will continue to effect water quality until it gets fixed. In addition, new threats to water quality in the great lakes are emerging. Invasive species, nutrient run-off and climate change will continue to impact the Great Lakes for years to come.

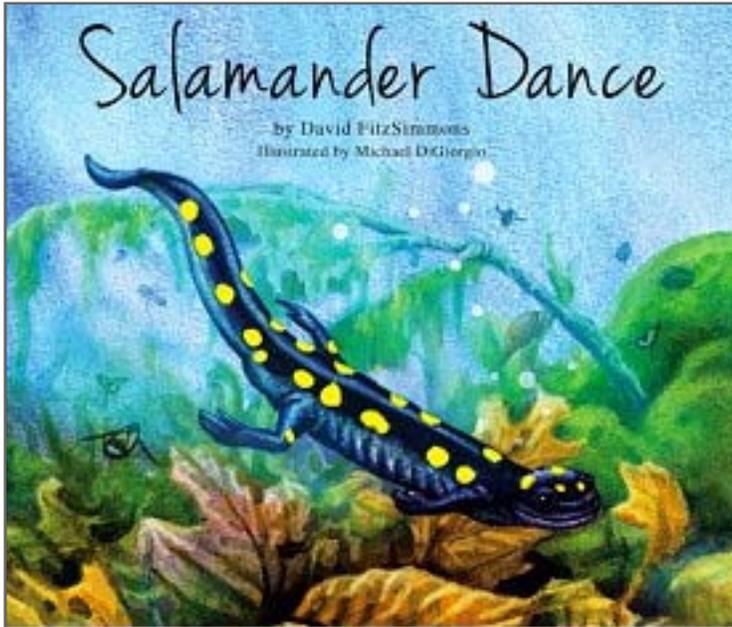
GLRI funding has supported nearly 3,000 restoration projects that are improving people's lives and benefiting communities in the region. The money is being used to dredge toxic sediment out of harbors, clean up streams and restore wetlands.

The coalition is also asking for support on other conservation measures in the Natural Resources Conservation Service's (NRCS) Regional Conservation Partnership Program.

This HOW letter is asking to maintain existing funding levels and fully support conservation practices that are already showing progress. The letter states, "A Brookings Institution report shows that every \$1 invested in Great Lakes restoration generates at least \$2 in return, making Great Lakes restoration one of the best investments in the federal budget." Where else can you get an immediate 100% return on your investment?

Considering how many lives and livelihoods depend on a Great Lakes with clean water, any less than full support could be detrimental for 10's of millions of individuals. Ohio Wetlands Association is proud to support the HOW effort and full funding of GLRI. We have joined their effort and signed on to their Fiscal Year 2017 funding letter.

## SALAMANDER DANCE



*Salamander Dance* written by David Fitzsimmons and illustrated Michael DiGiorgio is the latest in a series of books that bring audiences young and old to nature study by means of amazing imagery. *Salamander Dance* breaks from the close-up solitaire photographs of Fitzsimmons earlier *Curious Critters* series with stylized watercolor illustrations. These images portray detailed ecosystems above and below the water line. The writing appeals to young readers with succinct descriptions of salamander growth and behavior. The story takes you through an entire season in the life cycle of a spotted salamander. The engaging story presents natural history that is both factually accurate and curiously appealing.

Then, after the story ends, (actually, as the story begins anew), the final pages transition to a more text book like description of vernal pools and spotted salamanders, including a glossary. The style change provides an orientation and

background that enhance the story book with strong science based anchors.

*Salamander Dance* can be acquired at the official launch by the author celebration at North Chagrin visitors center on April 2<sup>nd</sup>. They can be ordered online through [www.salamanderdance.com](http://www.salamanderdance.com). OWA will also have them available at the OWA vernal pool programs on March 26<sup>th</sup> and April 9<sup>th</sup> and at other events.

### Ways to Support Ohio's Wetlands and the Ohio Wetlands Association



- \* Purchase an Ohio Wetland Habitat Stamp
  - \* Become a member
- \* Purchase an OWA Gift Membership
- \* Make a tax-deductible donation
- \* Attend an OWA event      \* Sponsor an OWA event
- \* Purchase an Ohio Wildlife Diversity Stamp

# IN DEFENSE OF THE SWAMP

An Opinion Piece By Ray Stewart

In February IKEA withdrew their proposed project in Brooklyn (Greater Cleveland), Ohio. The site contained about 15 acres of wet forest. It is thought that this site was desirable for high visibility from I-480. Commercial development in this area would benefit the local economy. This benefit would come at a cost that is seldom part of the public discussion. Ohio Wetlands Association, The Cuyahoga River Area of Concern, and others, including OWA, opposed this project with respect to its environmental impact. We consider the termination of this proposal to be a triumph.

The Clean Water Act (CWA) restricts the use of wetlands. The Army Corps of Engineers (ACE) is charged with overseeing the administration of possible impacts that would fill or drain wetlands. This has been true for 44 years. For those who forget why we have a CWA, there was a time when the powerhouses of our economy used our rivers as sewers for their waste products, Lake Erie was declared dead and Cuyahoga River burned. It sounds like some people would prefer a return to those days when nobody stood up for the environment, when our water and air was the cause of much pain and suffering and industry routinely took profits at public expense.

The patch of swamp that IKEA proposed to destroy is in the Big Creek watershed. This impaired tributary of the Cuyahoga River is highly impacted by its urban setting. Efforts are underway and progress is being made to improve its ecological condition. The health of Big Creek is critical to improvement in water quality of the Cuyahoga River. If IKEA had received a permit from the ACE to impact this wetland they would have been required to mitigate, restore or establish wetlands elsewhere. There are no suitable mitigation sites in the Big Creek watershed. Those ecological services provided by this swamp would be relocated far away.

A swamp is a wooded wetland. This little habitat is worth protecting. It does a lot to protect water quality. Rain water collects and is slowly released, far



different than the runoff from the hard urban surfaces that surround it. This simple hydrologic function has many benefits. It reduces the speed at which water moves down stream. Speed causes erosion. Erosion eats away at properties along the stream. Erosion carries soil, litter and pollutants down to the Cuyahoga and into Lake Erie.

A swamp allows water to percolate into the ground. Ground water remains to promote forest growth and slowly trickle into the steam bed where it maintains a steady flow of water. Especially in an urban setting, green spaces create islands that are cooler when it is very hot and milder when it is very cool. They soften the environment in terms of humidity and wind.

The community of fish and other stream life is improved by a gradual release of water. Other biological benefits are provided by swamps. Wildlife of all descriptions can be found in swamps. There are even benefits to human disposition. Green spaces make people feel better. Consider how the Emerald Necklace adds to the quality of life for residents throughout the county.

In terms of the arc of human civilization, we have a very poor track record on how we exploit natural resources. Our own industrial revolution is mirrored in the recent economic changes in China. Air and water pollution are serious public health concerns. We still have 'superfund' sites with such horrible contamination that recovery is not possible at any price. The human cost is seldom added to the economic balance sheet. The loss of biological capital is never subtracted from the business bottom line. The CWA is a sign of political and social maturity that begins to take these very real expenses into account.

Citizens need to be vigilant to monitor and respond to possible impacts to our common waters. We need to assure that commercial activity does not degrade our natural resources. Public pressure applied during the permitting process balances the influence of the vested interests. In this case, a variety of concerned individuals and conservation organizations weighed in to influence the decision-making process and resulted in a retreat by narrowly focused commercial interests.

**Ohio Wetlands Association**

P.O. Box 3  
Amherst, Ohio 44001  
www.OHwetlands.org



*Wetlands for a Better Ohio*

March 2016 Issue



# Ohio Wetlands Association

## ***RENEW OR JOIN TODAY!***

Membership Year: June 1 - May 31

### MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

- Individual \$20
- Student - \$10
- Senior - \$10
- Family - \$30
- Organization - \$40
- Business - \$50

### EVENT SPONSORSHIP LEVELS

- Heron Level - \$100
- Rail - \$250
- Bittern - \$500
- Swan - \$1000

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO OWA AND MAIL FORM WITH PAYMENT TO:**

**Ohio Wetlands Association, PO Box 3, Amherst, OH 44001**