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**MEDIA CONTACT:** Heather Lauer, (614) 644-2160  
**CITIZEN CONTACT:** Mary McCarron, (614) 644-2160

### **Some Ohio Landowners Will Have Opportunity To Participate in National Wetland Survey**

As part of a first-ever national study to determine the overall condition of wetlands on a nationwide basis, Ohio EPA will be monitoring a subset of the state's wetlands, starting this summer. The study will include randomly selected wetlands of all types and from all parts of the state. Data from the survey will help scientists across the country better identify different kinds of wetlands and characteristics of the land that surrounds them.

Ohio landowners whose property contains the selected wetlands will have the opportunity to obtain valuable information about the size, type and condition of their wetlands. This type of data collection could cost thousands of dollars if done by a private consultant but will be provided at no cost to landowners willing to participate. No properties will be surveyed without landowner permission.

Rich and wet, teeming with a diversity of life, Ohio's wetlands include Lake Erie coastal marshes, calcareous fens, peat bogs, Oak Openings wet sand prairies, buttonbush swamps, forest seeps and vernal pools, among many others. At the time the first European settlers migrated across the North American continent, 95 percent of Ohio was forested and 20 percent was wetland, including the Great Black Swamp, which alone occupied 3 million acres in the northwest part of the state. Today it is estimated that Ohio's wetlands occupy less than 2 percent of the state's landscape, reflecting a 90 percent loss of wetland habitat.

Satellite imagery and sophisticated aerial photography have helped scientists remotely identify 160,000 wetlands across the state. While these methods provide an estimate of the numbers and acres of wetlands in the state, there is very little information on the ecological condition of these resources.

Eleven Ohio wetlands must be surveyed this year and will be used, along with other wetlands, for a total of 900 wetlands from around the United States, to comprise the [National Wetland Condition Assessment](#).

In addition to the basic national U.S. EPA study, Ohio will expand the data being collected to develop a true score card of the overall health of its wetlands. This will require that an additional 40-50 wetlands be studied between 2011 and 2013. Ohio EPA will also be using the nationally acclaimed Ohio field assessment protocols, which will allow for a much more in-depth evaluation of the wetlands included in the study.

Site surveys must be conducted between June and September and will take on average two full field days to complete. These surveys will include monitoring the plant community, evaluating the soils, and characterizing the buffers and surrounding land uses. Researchers will collect a minimal amount of water (less than one liter), sediment (less than one cubic meter) and vegetation (plant clippings from five, one meter square plots and a small amount of algae) per wetland sampled.

Results of the national survey are expected to be published in 2013. Ohio EPA will provide a report on the condition of Ohio wetlands shortly after that.