

# Community Partners for Clean Streams Monthly eMonitor



Volume 3, Number 3

**March 2006 Issue**

*A Publication of the Washtenaw County Drain Commissioner's Office  
Janis A. Bobrin, Drain Commissioner*

## In This Month's eMonitor

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## Up Front

The eMonitor is designed to keep our Partners and friends updated on CPCS, stormwater management issues, provide helpful information to reduce stormwater and nonpoint source pollution, recognize new Partners, highlight upcoming events, and create networking opportunities. We hope you enjoy each edition of the Monthly eMonitor and welcome any comments, concerns, or suggestions.

## Wetlands Q and A for Community Partners

**Q:** What are wetlands?



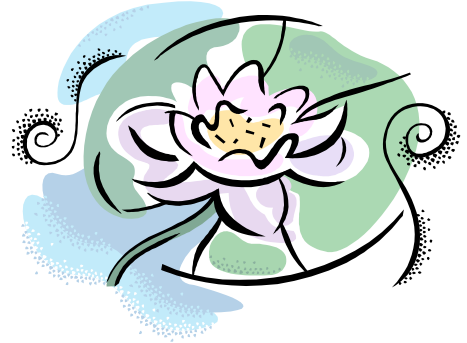
**A:** Wetlands are areas of land that are typically covered with water at least part of the year and are composed of flora and fauna that are specifically adapted to this unique ecosystem. You may typically think of a wetland as a marsh or swamp, but wetlands may also be identified by the soils, plants and animals present since standing water is not always present. In fact, many wetlands are 'wet' on only a seasonal basis, but do contain the saturated soils that indicate a wetland.

In Michigan you can find marshes, swamps, bogs, vernal ponds, fens, shrub-scrub and forested wetlands. These may have different "looks", plants and animals, but their basic functions and benefits are the same.



## Q: Why Be Concerned About Wetlands?

**A:** Wetlands have many important functions that benefit the built and natural environments. They improve water quality, prevent flooding, provide recreation opportunities, and create habitat for a diverse community of plants and animals.



### **Flood Control**

Wetlands absorb and store water, prevent floods and assist in groundwater recharge. They prevent damage and loss to property by providing flood prevention through stormwater “storage”

### **Pollution Reduction**

Wetlands also serve as natural filters for pollution, sediment and excess nutrients. As water runs off roofs, streets, parking lots and sidewalks, it picks up sediment, fertilizers, pesticides and many other pollutants. Wetlands can “settle out” or remove these particles and allow the water to percolate naturally into groundwater or other nearby waterways.



### **Recreation Opportunities**

Wetlands provide many recreational opportunities that include hunting, fishing, bird watching, hiking and canoeing. Many people find the characteristics of wetlands intriguing and also visit them for aesthetic appreciation and spiritual endeavors. They are also fantastic places for viewing wildlife that may only be found in a natural wetland.

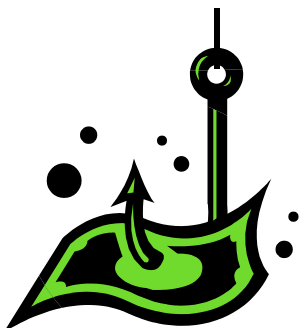
### **Plant and Wildlife Habitat**

According to the Michigan DNR, wetlands produce more wildlife and plants than any other Michigan habitat type. In fact, 50% of the identified 2300 native plant species are wetland plants and 25% of those species are threatened or endangered. 40% of the 575 vertebrate wildlife species in Michigan live in or utilize wetlands for habitat or food sources. These extraordinary numbers indicate the importance of protecting wetlands for the health of Michigan’s environment.



### **Commercial and Economic Benefits**

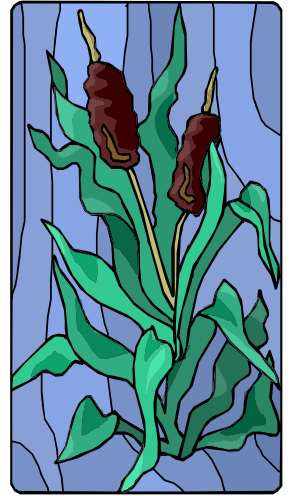
Dollar values and economic benefits can be attributed to habitat and water quality functions of wetlands. Fishing and hunting fees for species and sales of fish that rely on wetlands is a direct benefit. Another is recreation and tourism income generated by visitors attracted to wetlands, particularly in a natural resource rich state like Michigan. Flood mitigation also reduces property damages.



## Q: How do I know if I have a Wetland on My Property?

**A:** The most obvious way to tell if you have a wetland is the presence of water at least part of the year. This often occurs on a low spot on the property. The presence of certain plants, animals and soils is also an indicator of a wetland. Call your local government for access to adopted maps and other resources.

If you are contemplating a construction project in the proximity of a designated wetland area, please discuss the project with your local building official regarding needed approval.



## Q: How can I help protect wetlands?

**A:** There are many simple actions you can take at your business or home to prevent run off from polluting sensitive wetlands. If you have a designated wetland area located on your site, take special care to protect them by following the basic steps below. Even if you do not have a wetland on your own property, you can still protect nearby wetlands by preventing polluted runoff.

### **To Prevent Polluted Runoff:**

- Reduce or eliminate the use of fertilizers and pesticides on your property.
- Never dump anything down a storm drain. Drains discharge directly into wetlands, streams and other waterways.
- Pick up pet waste quickly and every time you walk your pet. It can cause health human problems as well as ecological harm as it washes off the landscape and into local waterways.
- Wash your vehicles on the lawn. This prevents soaps and debris from ending up in a storm drain. Better yet, take your car to a carwash.
- Do not power wash sidewalks and driveways. Sweep up excess dirt and debris and place in the trash.
- Tune up your vehicles. Leaking fluids can contaminate waterways, and a well maintained vehicle will last longer!



### **If you have a wetland on your property**

- Identify and protect wetlands on your site.
- Maintain buffer strips around the wetland as a “final filter” opportunity for runoff.
- Encourage neighbors to help protect the wetland.
- Avoid wetland degradation and alteration during any construction projects.
- Call your local government for necessary permits and resources.
- Community Partners for Clean Streams can install catch basin markers (see image at left) on your property to remind others of the nearby sensitive wetland.

## [CPCS News](#)

### **New and Renewing Partners**

Webster Township is the newest Partner of Community Partners for Clean Streams! We commend their efforts to help protect Washtenaw County's waterways.

### **Upcoming Community Partner Events**

#### **Waste Knot Awards Ceremony**

Washtenaw County's Waste Knot Program is hosting the 2006 Waste Knot Awards Ceremony on Thursday, April 20, 2006. Come join the festivities at Weber's Inn, 3050 Jackson Road from 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. Community Partners for Clean Streams will be hosting an informational booth at this annual event.



#### **City of Ann Arbor Earth Day**

Please join us on April 22, 2006 from 12:00 – 4:00 at UM Matthai Botanical Gardens for a day of fun and educational activities. Community Partners for Clean Streams will be hosting a table along with many other organizations and topics. It will be a great day for the whole family! For more information, contact Michelle Aldridge from the City of Ann Arbor at 734-994-4722.

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### **Community Partners for Clean Streams**

705 N. Zeeb Road, PO Box 8645  
Ann Arbor, MI 48107-8645

Michelle J. Bononi, Senior Environmental Planner (734) 222 – 6833 [bononim@ewashtenaw.org](mailto:bononim@ewashtenaw.org)

Or

Vicki Kalkirtz, Environmental Planning Intern (734) 222 – 6813

[kalkirtz@ewashtenaw.org](mailto:kalkirtz@ewashtenaw.org)

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