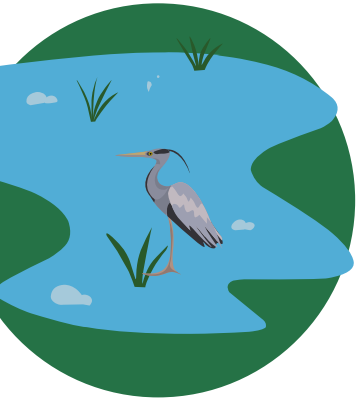


# Wetlands Factsheet

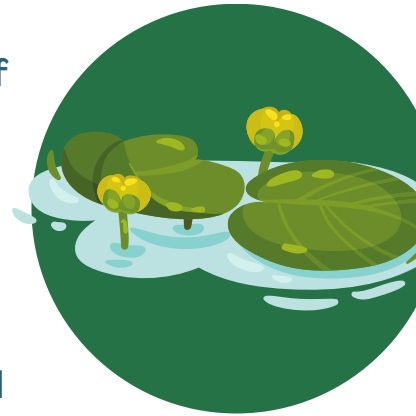


## What Is A Wetland?

- An area of land that is either permanently, seasonally, or intermittently flooded by water
- These ecosystems are typically defined by the presence of soil saturated by water, the presence of water-tolerant plants, or the presence of water itself

## Why Are Wetlands Important?

- Wetlands protect our homes from floods and soak up and slowly release floodwaters. This lowers flood heights and slows the flow of water down rivers and streams
- Wetlands also control erosion. Shorelines along rivers, lakes, and streams are protected by wetlands, which hold soil in place, absorb the energy of waves, and buffer strong currents
- Wetlands filter out contaminants, cleanse water, and trap sediment and sediment-carrying contaminants. They also store and process excess nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorous and filter out harmful chemicals from the water including pesticides and industrial chemicals



## How Are Wetlands Protected?

- If the US Army Corps of Engineers determines that wetlands or other water features are present, and determines that they are not regulated under the Federal Clean Water Act, then they are considered to be under state jurisdiction
- An Army Corps 404 permit under the Clean Water Act is required if the wetlands are federally protected
- State regulated wetlands are regulated under Indiana's State Regulated Wetlands law - Indiana Statute § 13-18-22-1
- Impacts to state regulated wetlands require a permit from the Indiana Department of Environmental Management

## Changes to Wetland Protection and Regulation

- Federally regulated wetlands are protected under section 404 of the Clean Water Act, which establishes a program to regulate the discharge of dredged or filled material into the defined "Waters of the United States", including wetlands
- Changes to this can happen at any time. In May 2023, the US Supreme Court ruled that wetlands protected under the federal Clean Water Act are those with "a continuous surface connection" to navigable waters, so most wetlands will not qualify for federal protection going forward. Their fate is now up to the states.



## Examples of Wetlands in Northwest Indiana



- There are many types of wetlands in Northwest Indiana, from bogs to swamps, marshes, fens, and more! Here are some places you can go to see wetlands in our region:
  - Springfield Fen Nature Preserve, La Porte (IN Department of Natural Resources)
  - St. Francis Nature Preserve, Michigan City (Shirley Heinze Land Trust)
  - Cowles Bog, Dune Acres (Indiana Dunes National Park)
  - Great Marsh, Beverly Shores (Indiana Dunes National Park)
  - Gordon & Faith Greiner, Hobart (Shirley Heinze Land Trust)
  - Miller Woods, Gary (Indiana Dunes National Park)
  - Ivanhoe South, Gary (Shirley Heinze Land Trust)

## Who Are We?

- Save the Dunes creates collaborative partnerships across the aisles, across sectors, and across the Northwest Indiana lakeshore to protect and defend the Indiana dunes from a variety of threats
- We work to enhance and protect the incredible biodiversity of our natural spaces through our work in Advocacy, Conservation, and Community Engagement

