



# OHIO STATE NEWS

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## **International recognition for Ohio State's Wetland**

*Olentangy River Wetland Research Park designated as 24th Ramsar Wetland of International Importance in USA*

Ohio State's Wilma H. Schiermier Olentangy River Wetland Research Park (ORWRP), has won designation as the 24th Wetland of International Importance in the USA. The designation will place the site on the internationally renowned Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance, the first Ramsar Wetland of International Importance in Ohio and one of the first in the midwest.

**Bill Mitsch, director of the ORWRP, will be available to discuss the importance of the recognition at 10 a.m. tomorrow (4/22)—Earth Day – at the wetland, located at 352 W. Dodridge St.**

To be added to the Ramsar List, the designation is made initially by the U.S. government and then confirmed by the Ramsar Secretariat, headquartered in Switzerland.

In his letter nominating the ORWRP, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service director H. Dale Hall said, "The ORWRP meets five of the nine Ramsar criteria for identifying Wetlands of International Importance. (Only one criteria is required for a wetland to receive the designation.) Located in a state that has seen more than 90% of its historic wetland base drained, the site contains riverine marshes that were once typical but are now rare. The site is also important for its significant wetland ecotourism and outreach within an urban community where few wetlands remain, as well as the high-quality university teaching and research related to wetland ecology and management conducted at the site."

The International Convention on Wetlands, signed in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971, is an intergovernmental treaty that provides a framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. There are currently 158 contracting parties to the Convention, including the USA, with 1,743 wetland sites, totaling 400 million acres, designated for inclusion in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance. Details of the Ramsar Convention are at <http://www.ramsar.org/>

The Wilma H. Schiermeier Olentangy River Wetland Research Park is a 50-acre facility at The Ohio State University on the Columbus campus designed to provide teaching, research, and service related to wetland and river science and ecological engineering. At the research park, scientists seek to understand: 1) how wetlands, rivers, and watersheds function in support of

flood control, wildlife habitat, and water quality improvement, and 2) if and how we can create and restore these systems to protect the environment in Ohio and around the world. There is no other facility of its kind on any other university campus in the world, so it also has as its mission the dissemination of wetland science and ecological engineering around the world. The wetland research park is a nature park too, providing habitat for a diversity of plants and animals for the residents of central Ohio to observe and enjoy. Details can be found at <http://swamp.osu.edu/>

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