



December 18, 2014

Natural Resources Assistance Council (NRAC)—District 7  
c/o Geauga Soil and Water Conservation District  
PO Box 410  
14269 Claridon Troy Road  
Burton, Ohio 44021

RE: Bloomfield Swamp—Clean Ohio Application

To the Members of the District 7 Natural Resources Assistance Council:

On behalf of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Partners for Fish and Wildlife (PFW) Program, I am writing to express our support for Western Reserve Land Conservancy (WRLC) in their application for Clean Ohio funding to protect the 491-acre Bloomfield Swamp property located in Orwell Township, Ashtabula County.

The protection of critical and unique habitats such as those present at the Bloomfield Swamp property is in the spirit of the USFWS's mission "to work with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people." The USFWS's PFW Program mission is to efficiently achieve voluntary habitat restoration on private lands, through financial and technical assistance for the benefit of Federal Trust Resources, which includes migratory birds; interjurisdictional fish; federally-listed, threatened, and endangered species; and critical habitat support of these species.

Preservation of Bloomfield Swamp will help further the goals of the USFWS's PFW Program by preserving high quality habitat for numerous native species. The acquisition and preservation of this property will protect approximately 440 acres of Category 3 wetlands and 23,000 linear feet of Rock Creek tributaries. Numerous wetland types occur on site, including forested, shrub/scrub, wet meadow, and emergent types. This diversity of wetland habitat makes this project vitally important to a multitude of plants and animals including several Ohio Endangered plant and animal species, which have been identified on the property: Northern Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*), Fireweed (*Epilobium angustifolium*), Sandhill Crane (*Grus canadensis*), and American Bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*).

The Bloomfield Swamp project has excellent preservation value, both for local biodiversity and for the Ashtabula County community in which it is located. The USFWS through the PFW Program fully supports WRLC in their efforts and urges the District 7 NRAC to fully fund the Bloomfield Swamp project. If you have any questions regarding the PFW Program or our level of commitment to this project, please feel free to contact me at the number and email listed below.

Sincerely yours,

Donnie Knight  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program  
Ohio Private Lands Office  
Newark, OH 43055