It Pays to Save Wetlands

Landowners can...

- Get a higher price for homes next to wetlands
- See birds and other wildlife right out your back door
- Avoid soggy basements and shifting foundations
- Get financial and technical assistance to restore or enhance wetlands

Local communities benefit...

- Wetlands reduce flooding
- Wetlands filter polluted water, keeping lakes and rivers clean
- Wetlands provided recreational opportunities
- Wetlands provide nurseries for fish and homes for wildlife

For more information on locating and identifying wetlands please visit DNR's website at dnr.wi.gov/wetlands and click on *Getting Started*.

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WISCONSIN DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES

WRA Wisconsin REALTORS® Association

NOAA

WISCONSIN COASTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Waking Up to Wetlands
Know Before You Buy or Build

A helpful guide for determining wetlands

Wetlands may not be obvious. You can take some simple steps to learn if property you're interested in buying or building on has these valuable natural resources that are protected by law.

In addition, all the maps and other information you need can be found on DNR's website at dnr.wi.gov/wetlands. Click on *Getting Started*.

Step 1: Review Maps

If the maps show a wetland or a potential wetland, consult a wetland professional to verify that you have a wetland and to identify its boundaries.

Step 2: Put Boots on the Ground

Walk the property with this checklist*, and look for wetland clues. Photos of common plants, wetland soils and evidence of water can be viewed on DNR's website on the *Physical Clues* page.

*This checklist is not intended to represent an inclusive listing of all wetland characteristics, but is a rough guide. You must get a professional to verify a wetland is present and determine wetland boundaries.

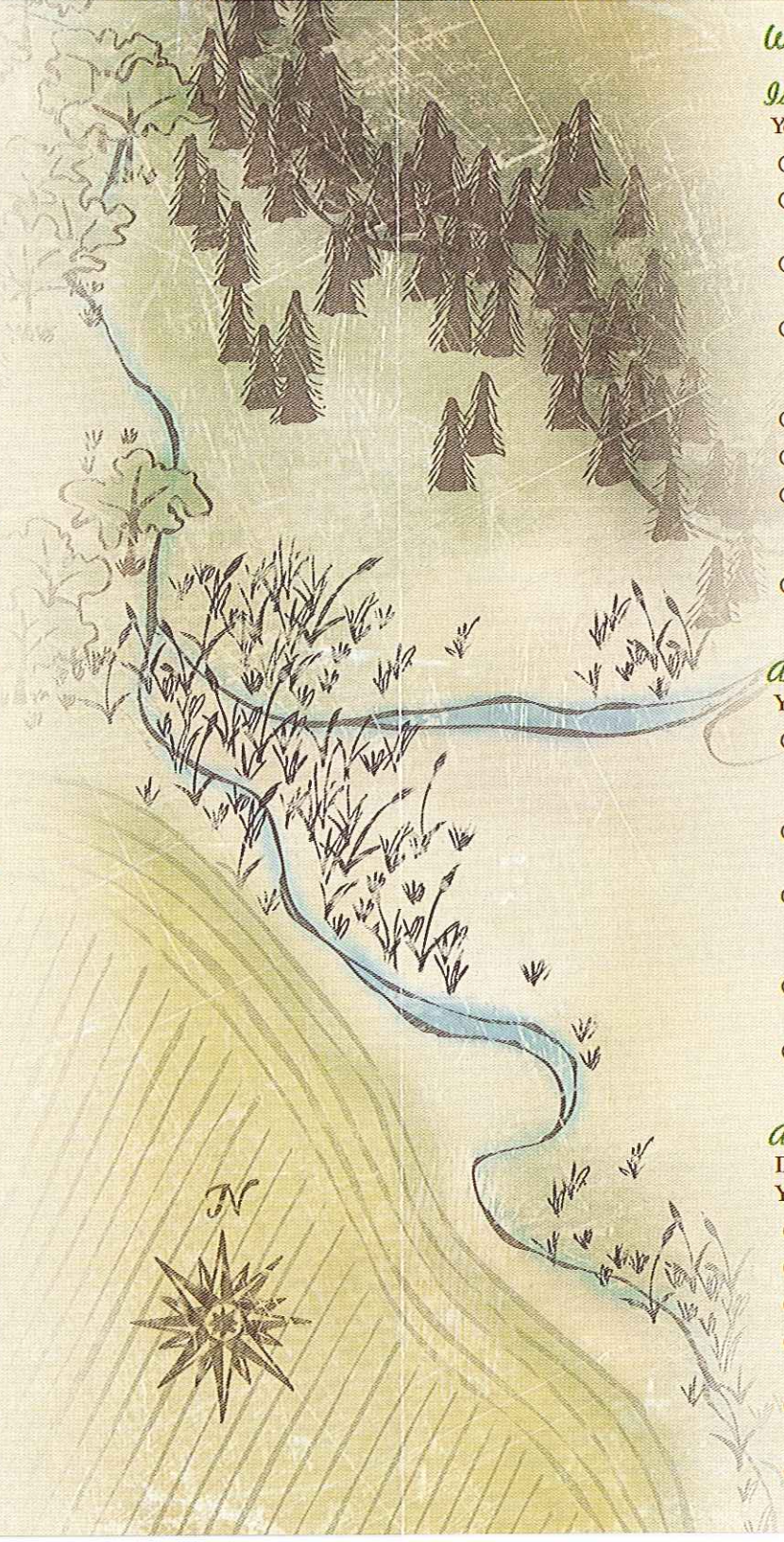
Step 3: Explore Your Options

If the maps indicate wetlands and/or you answered "Yes" to any wetland clue questions, a wetland is likely present.

If you're buying land, please consider completing a wetland real estate addendum, found at DNR's website and attach it to your offer to purchase. This addendum allows more time to consult with a professional to verify if a wetland is present and if so, you can renegotiate or rescind your offer.

If you're planning to build on land you already own, consult a wetland professional to verify wetlands and mark their boundaries so you can plan your project to avoid them. If you can't avoid them, apply for state and federal permits detailed on DNR's website and contact your local government to see if any local rules apply. Half of Wisconsin's original wetlands have been destroyed, so permit applications are reviewed carefully and are not automatically granted.

Wetlands are wonderlands that are great places to enjoy and explore. Some wetlands may be in poor health making them good candidates for landowners who want to restore or enhance them. To learn more visit DNR's website.



Wetland Clues Checklist

Is there evidence of water?

Yes	No	
○	○	Are there ponds, lakes, streams, springs or seeps?
○	○	Are there "low spots" where water collects or the ground is soggy for at least a week?
○	○	Are there drainage channels or has the site been ditched or tiled in spots to "dry it out?"
○	○	If the site is a farm field, are there areas where crops do not grow or the plants are stunted or yellowing during years with normal rainfall?
○	○	Are there water marks or stains on tree trunks?
○	○	Do trees have a shallow root system?
○	○	Are there areas where water has scoured away plants and leaves, flattened vegetation or where no vegetation is growing?
○	○	Are sticks, leaves, soil and other debris deposited by water in a line on plants and trees?

Are water-loving plants present?

Yes	No	
○	○	Are these plants present: cattails, reed canary grass, sedges, rushes, blue flag iris, joe-pye-weed, new england aster, sensitive fern, skunk cabbage or sphagnum moss?
○	○	Are these shrubs present: dogwoods, willows, alder, leatherleaf, spiraea or blueberry?
○	○	Are these trees present: willows, silver maple, box elder, black or green ash, cottonwood, elm, balsam fir, tamarack or spruce?
○	○	Do plants have roots growing from their stems above the soil?
○	○	Do trees have multiple trunks or are the trunks expanded or swollen at the base?

Are there wet soils or signs of them?

Dig a hole down 20 inches:

Yes	No	
○	○	Is the soil dark brown or black?
○	○	Does the soil feel moist or can you squeeze out water?
○	○	Is the soil primarily peat (decaying plants) or muck?
○	○	Does the hole fill partially with water or does water trickle down the sides?
○	○	Is the soil gray, gray-blue or gray-green or marked with reddish or yellowish spots or dark streaks?
○	○	Are there crayfish burrows – mounds of dirt with a hole?