

This web site is devoted to helping you better understand wetlands. Over the past eleven years, I will take you through a journey on how I became interested in wetlands and how you can better understand *what wetlands are and what they are not*.

In 1991, I began my employment with the Kentucky state government in the Department for Surface Mining, Reclamation, and Enforcement. Prior to this, I have received a Bachelor's Science degree from the University of Kentucky. I felt I had a good knowledge of forestry in general, having worked for the Fayette County government - Department of Parks and Recreation at the Raven Run Nature Sanctuary, in Fayette County and with the US Forest Service in the Somerset Ranger District in Somerset, Kentucky (please see my personal web site at: <http://www.swampy.org/pers/index.htm>).

When I began working in the new area of surface mining to extract coal, I went to an environmental consulting firm located in downtown Lexington Kentucky. As a spoke with the human resources contact, he stated that he had no openings unless someone had experience in "wetlands". I was fascinated by the term, as I had always been interested in trees and not "**weeds**". *At this point*, my research into the world of wetlands began.

I sent out several letters inquiring about each organization's involvement with wetlands. As one might expect, I received some responses that I thought were helpful and some that were not. Perhaps the best memory that comes to mind that opened my eyes to the expanse of my question was a response I received from someone working at a regional college. Their response was rather outlandish at the time, I felt as I rather innocently and stupidly (is there such a thing as a stupid question?) asked for information that was too general in nature. And with this being said, it now forms the infrastructure of this discussion on wetlands - when one seeks information on a subject such as wetlands, it is best to focus on one particular area of the broad topic in question.

But how does one do this? How can you understand the whole without knowing how it works or is arranged? With wetlands, this became a problem for me. *In this discourse, I will try to share with you my perspective on wetlands and hopefully save you time in helping you find out what areas of wetlands you're interested in, and who may be of help to you.*

Firstly, please check the following document that highlights my coursework and conferences attended, so that you will have some frame of reference as to my background([Gary's coursework & conferences](#))

In my initial research of wetlands, I learned that several organizations were interested in their welfare. I viewed three federal agencies to have specific concerns with wetlands. These were the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACE), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the U.S. Soil Conservation Service (SCS). Upon observation later, I should have included the U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources (FWS), as well. I have saved a wetlands cartoon for you to show a natural resource management dilemma entitled "[Wetlands Dogma Dilemma](#)" that uses the National Wildlife Federation as a bottom tier dog on the proverbial wetlands ladder.