



Izaak Walton League of America  
Opponent Testimony of (Richard Graham)  
House Bill 175

Presented to the Ohio Agricultural and Conservation Committee  
May (Date), 2021

“Clean Water” is a term that most of us identify with, but few understand what is involved to create and or keep it. Most of us identify only with the illusion that our primary water source for drinking is directly from the sky. The fact is nearly half of the water used by Ohioans is groundwater. Most water originates as precipitation in the form rainfall or snowfall falling on the land where it either runs off or percolates into the soil. We have had and continue to have to deal with many climatically generated precipitation events that are extremely high or nonexistent that impact water quality and can cause significant property impacts. Much of Ohio’s agricultural land is significantly tilled directly running into ditches, streams, and rivers. The tiling as well as the elimination of many wetlands is directly impacting groundwater quality and quantity.

Ephemeral waterways play a very important role in dealing with low, regular, and heavy precipitation events. They provide waterways that can help reduce run off rates, minimize soil erosion, and provide increased opportunity for water to infiltrate into the soil. In the process of infiltrating, the water can be cleaned and can eventually restore groundwater tables. They also serve an important role in sustaining healthy wildlife populations.

Interpretations of the Clean Water Act and the Waters of the United States (WOTUS) have recently changed in the last few months due to a lower court ruling set as the “Navigable Waters Protection Ruling”. Wetlands deserve a more appropriate determination regarding their protection. Ephemeral waterways exist in many areas and function consistently in the same way that wetlands do in reducing water flow rates, containing sediment, and absorption of nutrients from water runoff. H2Ohio program has established wetlands as one of the most effective and important ways to reduce runoff and prevent nutrients from getting into Ohio’s most important waters including Lake Erie and Ohio’s magnificent rivers in which water quality plays a very important role to our local communities and tourism.

Ephemeral waterways must be protected, and their function cannot be overstated in these brief comments.

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