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SOCIETY of WETLAND SCIENTISTS

*"an international organization dedicated to the conservation, management
and scientific understanding of the world's wetland resources"*

18 October 2007

H. Dale Hall, Director
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Room 3258
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 200240

Dear Director Hall:

I am writing to express the support of the Society of Wetland Scientists for the nomination of the Wilma H. Schiermeier Olentangy River Wetland Research Park (ORWRP) as a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance. The site deserves serious consideration because of the opportunities ORWRP offers for teaching, research, and outreach to the public. The Olentangy River Research Park is an outstanding educational resource. Thousands of citizens from a major US urban center tour the facility each year. This high use provides a unique opportunity to increase the awareness and knowledge of the general public on the importance of wetlands. Such efforts are particularly essential in a part of the country that has lost a high percentage of its historic wetland acreage and in an urban setting where access to open space and wetlands is often limited.

The Olentangy River Research Park is one of two research centers in the United States that are part of the Global Wetland Consortium. It is a dynamic laboratory that has been used to train a large and growing number of wetland ecologists. In particular, the research has contributed to our understanding of the wetland processes. This knowledge is critical to efforts to protect and restore wetlands worldwide and is reflected in the use of ORWRP by scientists from around the globe.

The Society of Wetland Scientists encourages serious consideration of the nomination of Wilma H. Schiermeier Olentangy River Wetland Research Park as a Ramsar wetland of international importance.

Sincerely,

J. Patrick Megonigal, President
Society of Wetland Scientists