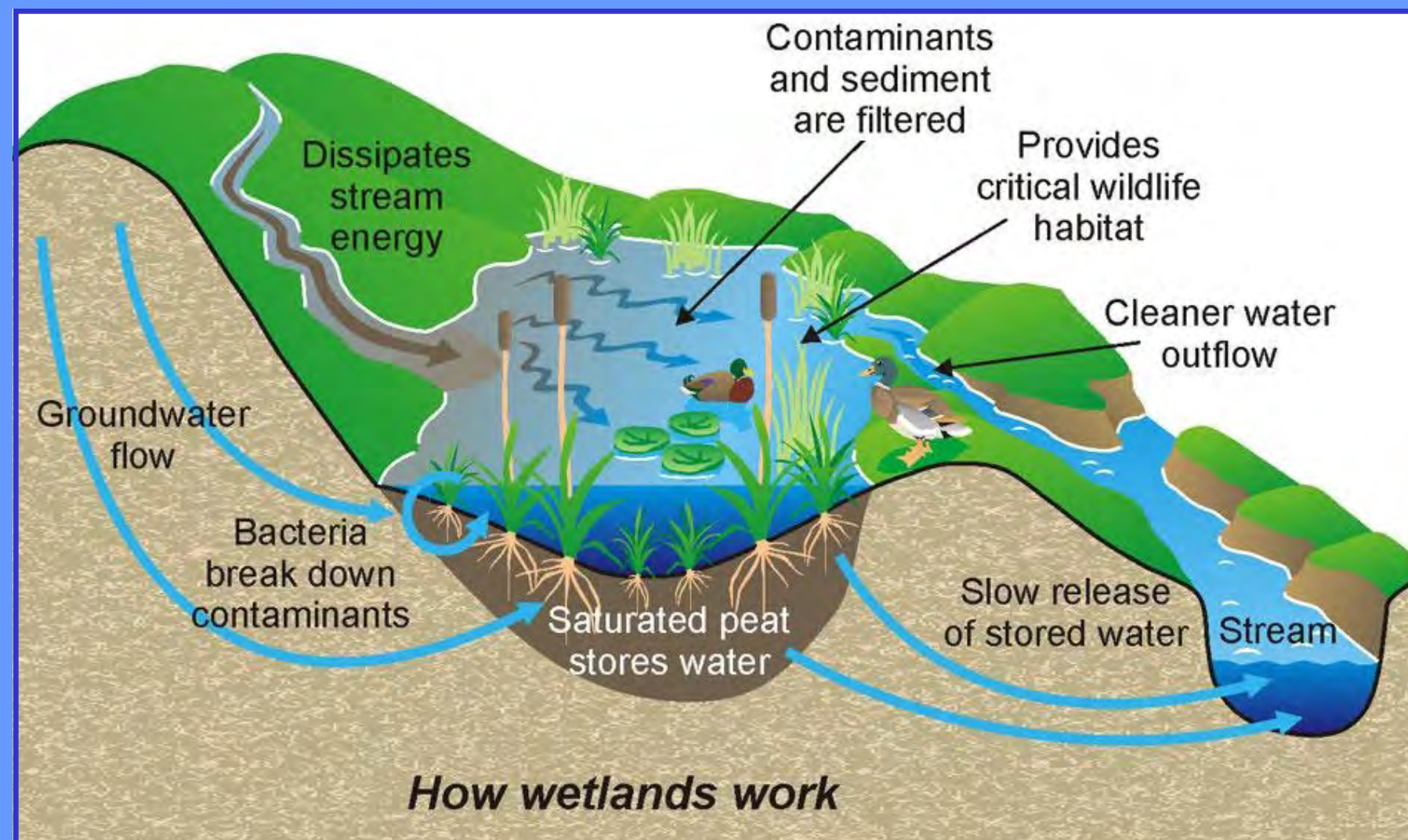
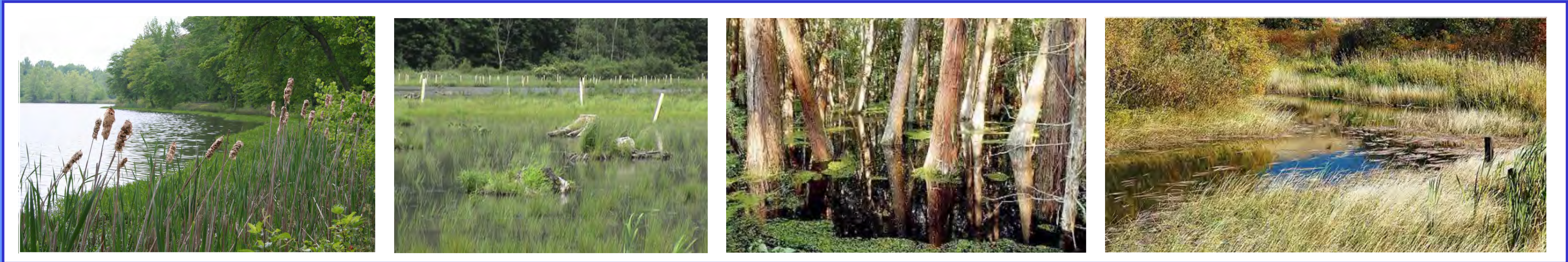


# Wetlands and their Benefits



Source: Wetlands International

**What are wetlands?** Wetlands are areas of land that are saturated for some portion of the growing season. They function like a sponge to trap and slowly release surface water. Wetlands retain excess nutrients and sediment that would otherwise pollute waterways. Wetlands are an important link between the land and water.

**Benefits of wetlands:** Pollution reduction, improved water quality, minimized erosion, reduced flood risk, increased habitat for wildlife, and recreational and aesthetic values.

**It is estimated that in the 1600s, over 220 million acres of wetlands existed in the lower 48 states. Since then extensive loss has occurred. In Pennsylvania, over 50% of wetlands have disappeared due to development, industry, agriculture, nonpoint source pollution, and erosion.**

