Fen Fun Facts

- Fens comprise only 0.03% of all wetlands in Minnesota, making them a very rare type of wetland. Of our state's 53,775,155 total acres, fens cover only 4,000 acres (0.007%).

- Biodiversity is high in fens - almost 20% of all the plant species found throughout Olmsted County are found in our fens.

- Fens are home to rare, threatened, and endangered amphibians, reptiles, snails, and butterflies.

- Olmsted County has the third highest number of inventoried fens in the state - 10 of the state's 200 fens are found in Olmsted County. There are only 37 counties in Minnesota that have fens.

- There are four fens located in the City of Rochester.

- Only two other fens in the state have more types of mosses than one of Rochester's fens. This same fen is the 10th highest quality fen in the entire state of Minnesota.

05/15/2007

Name of Plant

As our community grows, so must its commitment to protecting and improving the quality of our water resources. Assets such as Silver Lake and the Zumbro River help make Rochester one of the nation's most livable communities. Keeping our water resources clean and usable is in everyone's interest.

Calcareous Fens

Joyce Park Fen, Rochester

Are you a fen-friendly neighbor?

What is a Calcareous Fen?

- One of the rarest natural communities in the United States.
- A wetland that is fed by mineral-rich groundwater and has little inflow of surface runoff.
- A highly diverse community of over 100 plant species, some of which are rare, threatened, or endangered.
- An ecosystem with unusual habitats that attract unique species.

Seminary Fen, Chaska • www.startribune.com

Why Are Fens Important?

Bottlebrush sedge • www.wildflowers.org

Pickerel Frog • www.audubonmagazine.org

Kalms lobelia • minnesotawildflowers.org

- Fens, like other wetlands, capture pollutants, keeping them out of our drinking water.
- Fens harbor unique, diverse plant and animal habitats.
- Fen support a large number of rare plant species. Eight state-listed rare plant species are found in calcareous fens, four of which are only found in this community.
- Fens take up to 10,000 years to form naturally - best to protect them rather than try to recreate them.
- Fens are protected under state law, which means we must safeguard them.

What Can You Do to Help?

- Plant and maintain a raingarden. These are gardens planted with plants that are used to cost-effectively retain, treat, and filter storm water collected from rain gutters and other hard surfaces. Water captured in a raingarden cannot carry pollutants to surface waters.
- Apply fertilizers according to application directions. Use fertilizes only if soil tests indicate a need. Have your soils tested - visit http://soiltest.cfans.umn.edu/ to learn how.
- Spot treat weeds and pests when necessary. Apply products according to the manufacturers instructions.
- Use native vegetation in your landscaping plans. They are low maintenance, look great, and encourage water to soak into the ground rather than run off.
- Keep your lawn's grass clippings and leaves off the streets and sidewalks where they can be transported to the wetland. Manage this organic waste by mulching, disposing at the Olmsted County compost facility, or having your waste hauler remove them.
- Collect pet waste and trash - what is on our streets will likely end up in our streams and wetlands!
- Prevent sediments from entering waterways by controlling erosion.
- Enjoy the view from a distance - fens are very fragile. Walking on the fen can reduce water retention and destroy rare plants.
- Form a volunteer group to control invasive plants while working with the MN Department of Resources (DNR) to develop an invasive species vegetation management plan.
- Install a rain barrel to capture roof run off.

The fen-friendly steps you take will:

Help protect our drinking water,

Insure the long life of the fen,

Prevent expensive restoration, and

Minimize unnecessary maintenance costs.

Keep fens clean so they can continue to be seen!