

In the 1970's, The Fontana Fen was proposed as a site for a new shopping mall. Local environmentalists intervened and ensured that the rare plant community growing in the fen was protected from development. Two area families purchased the land and donated it to the Geneva Lake Land Conservancy. The land was then donated to the Village of Fontana under the condition that it be maintained in its native or restored condition and never be developed.

*The Fontana Park Commission has accepted this task and will continue to maintain and restore the fen for future generations to observe and enjoy.*

## *Native Wildflowers in the Natural Areas*



*Lobelia spicata*  
Pale Spiked Lobelia



*Rosa blanda*  
Smooth Rose



*Ratibida pinnata*  
Yellow Coneflower



*Aster novea-angliae*  
New England Aster



*Rudbeckia subtomentosa*  
Sweet black-eyed Susan



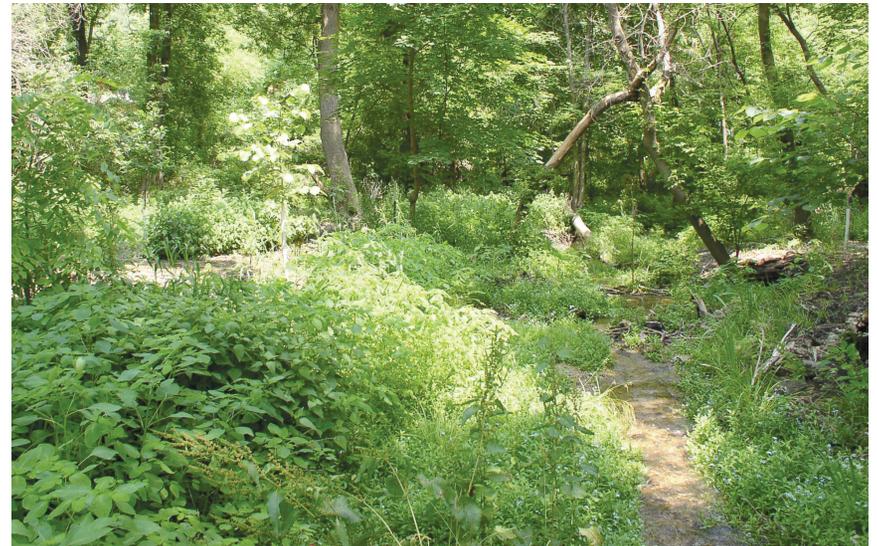
*Filipendula rubra*  
Queen of The Prairie

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Native wildflower photos courtesy of Agrecol Corporation

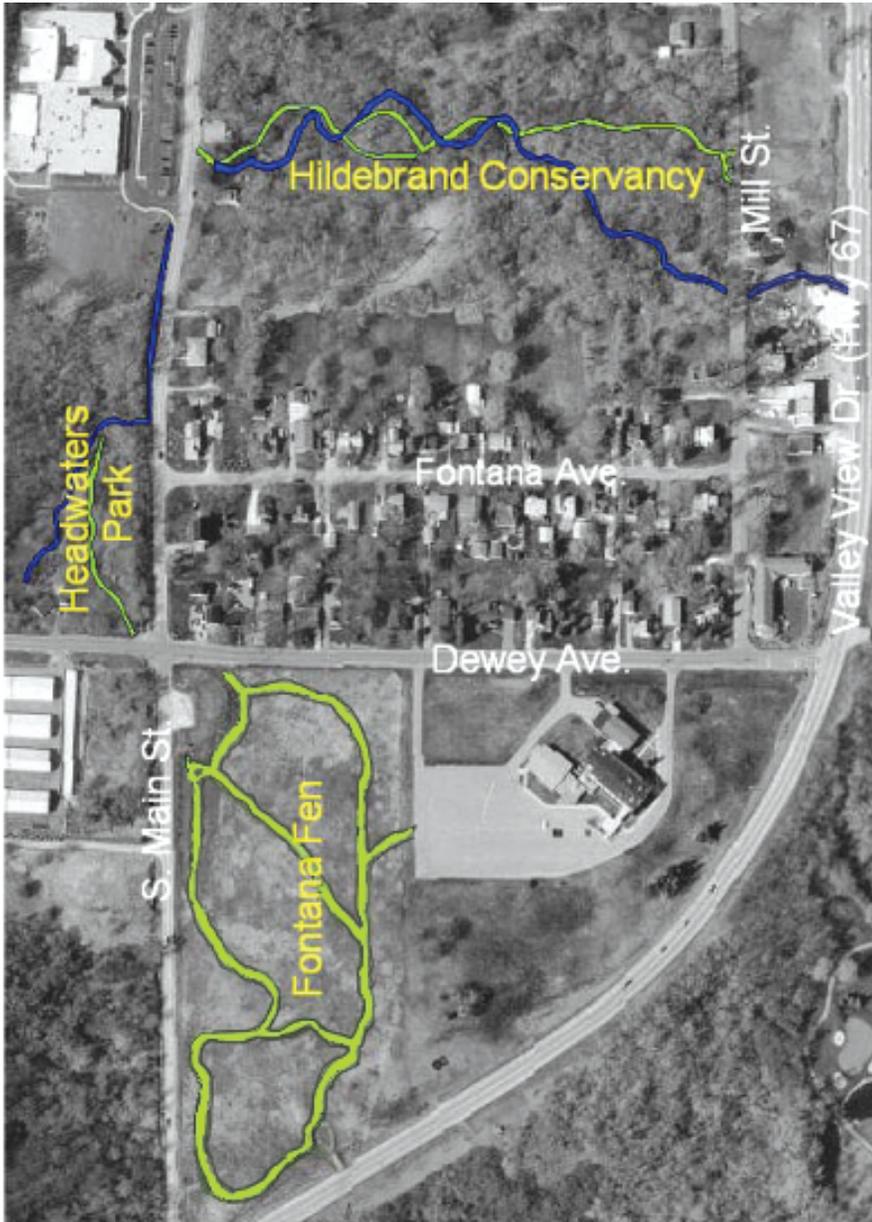


# *Trail and Natural Areas Guide*

The Fontana Fen  
Headwaters Park  
The Hildebrand Conservancy



THE FONTANA  
PARK COMMISSION



- Walking Trail
- Van Slyke Creek

## *Groundwater in the Natural Area*

The character of the natural areas surrounding The Fontana Fen, Headwaters Park and The Hildebrand Conservancy is strongly influenced by groundwater flowing just beneath the surface. Water originating from groundwater springs is cold, clean and rich in dissolved oxygen.

At Headwaters Park and The Hildebrand Conservancy, groundwater makes its way to the surface and emerges at springs which produce most of the water that flows through Van Slyke Creek feeding Geneva Lake. Many insects and several species of fish - like trout - also rely on this water quality and are found only in spring-fed streams.

The plant community in The Fontana Fen is also shaped by groundwater inputs. In a fen, the groundwater rarely emerges at the surface because plants consume the water as it flows below the surface. As the groundwater flows through the soil, it dissolves minerals and this changes the chemistry of the water. The plants growing in The Fontana Fen depend on this steady supply of mineral-rich water. Areas in which the groundwater does not come as close to the surface produce wet or mesic prairie vegetation. Many of these species in these zones are similar to those in the fen, but they do not require the same inputs of groundwater.

The entrance to the fen features several demonstration gardens. These gardens were planted to display collections of plants typical of a Tall Grass Prairie, Wetland, Short Grass Prairie and Savanna. The display gardens were planted in 2005 as part of a larger restoration project that included portions of the fen itself and the plants surrounding Van Slyke Creek.