

Oak-Hickory Savanna 1 3 4 6 13

The dominant species are the trees - mostly bur oaks and shagbark hickories. There are also smaller Hill's oaks and assorted shrubs that make up the understory. The ground layer is the main blooming layer. The spring ephemeral wildflowers bloom before the trees leaf out while the maximum amount of sunlight can reach the ground.

Wetland 2 11 15 16

There are several wetland types on site - marsh, floodplain, sedge meadow, and the fens for which the site is named. The dominant species here are the sedges. These look very similar to grasses which have round stems, but most sedges have "edges". At the bottom of the stem, you can feel a triangle. In between the sedges are the forbs. Orange-colored hoary puccoon starts blooming in May, and blue-hued fringed gentian finishes the season in September.

Prairie 5 7 8 9 10 12 14

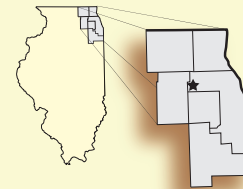
There are also several types of prairie on site - dry hill, bare gravel, mesic, and wet. All have one thing in common. The dominant species are grasses. Forbs (flowering plants) grow in between the clump grasses. There is always something in bloom from shooting star in May through asters in September.

What is a fen? A fen is a wetland fed by groundwater. Underground, the water carries a lot of dissolved minerals, mainly limestone (calcium carbonate). Springs and seeps carry the water to the surface where the minerals precipitate out. The water is strongly alkaline from the limestone and selects for plants that are hardy enough to handle it. This is perfect for small white lady's slipper orchids.

What is a kame? Kames are gravel hills that were formed back when the glaciers receded from the area. As the glaciers thawed, the meltwater washed off all the gravel and dirt that had been scraped up into the glaciers. The resulting piles are the gravel kames that support the prairies and savannas that evolved as global temperatures rose after the last ice age.



Bluff Spring Fen



Bluff Spring Fen is a designated Illinois Nature Preserve. As such, we are governed by the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission. Please follow these rules when visiting the preserve:

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| STAY ON TRAIL | NO BIKES | NO ALCOHOL |
| DO NOT PICK FLOWERS | NO FISHING OR HUNTING | NO CAMPING |
| NO DOGS | NO GEOCACHING | NO VEHICLES |