

Gompers park, featuring one of the city's premier natural restorations, was developed in the mid to late 1920s based on a design by landscape architect Henry J. Stockman. Increasing its significance and that of the two adjacent sites (Gompers Park Expansion, p. 56; LaBagh Woods, p. 77) is their location as part of the extensive corridor of protected land along the North Branch of the Chicago River.

A one-acre lagoon **1** is located just east of the parking lot off Keeler Avenue. Water bubbles up from a limestone fountain and waterfall on the east end, and flows slowly through the lagoon. Clumps of native aquatic and wetland vegetation grow along the perimeter of the lagoon **2**, and limestone pavers provide access to the water's edge. This is a good fishing spot. Other aquatic life such as crayfish, dragonfly nymphs, frogs and turtles live in and around the lagoon.

Once the water travels under the red footbridge at the west end of the lagoon, it tumbles down a small waterfall and into a stream that leads into the wetland **3** that runs alongside the North Branch of the Chicago River. The wetland takes in

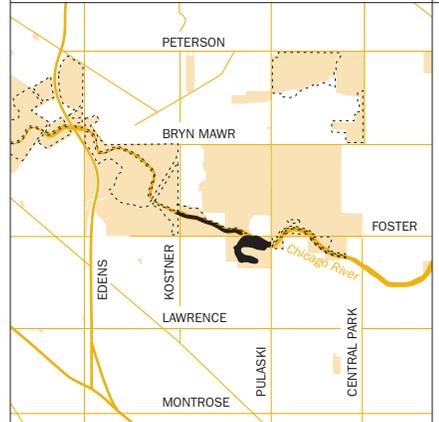
floodwater from the river on occasion. The natural community here is well-suited to these conditions. Arrowhead, bulrush, pickerelweed, swamp milkweed, and various sedges are among the plants that thrive here.

The plants and the soils hold, utilize, and slowly release water which otherwise might flood residential neighborhoods, giving the wetland an additional function beyond providing habitat. Muskrats utilize this habitat. The drier portions of the natural area support cup plant, culver's root and other plants more typical of prairie or savanna **4**.

On the rise separating the lagoon and the wetland is a grove of old oak trees. Some are estimated to be more than 200 years old. Though the understory of native grasses and flowers are missing—this part of the park is mowed because of the intensive use it receives by visitors—the remaining oaks help this area retain the general appearance of the savanna that was once there.

GOMPERS PARK—
LAGOON AND WETLAND

Site No. 29



5200 NORTH / 4300 WEST



**Gompers Park—
Lagoon and Wetland**

No. 29



ADDRESS 4300 W Foster Ave
OWNER Chicago Park District
ACREAGE 7.81

- HABITATS
- 1** Aquatic
 - 2** Naturalistic Planting
 - 3** Wetland
 - 4** Prairie/Grassland
 - 5 6 7** Riparian/Water Edge

DIRECTIONS Use Gompers Park parking lot on the west side of Pulaski just south of Foster, and walk north toward the wetland area.

Gompers Park—Lagoon and Wetland

Chicago Habitat Directory 2005

100 Feet