

FOX RIVER WETLANDS

Protecting 3,436 Acres in the Heart of the Fox River Watershed



Fox River Wetlands is MNA's largest land protection project in its 70-year history, protecting 3,436 acres (5.4 square miles) of habitat for moose, bear, and the federally endangered gray wolf. It includes a stretch of the East Branch of the Fox River, an iconic brook trout stream and one of only sixteen state-designated Natural Rivers under the Michigan Natural Rivers Act. The project will also protect thousands of acres of wetlands adjoining the river including more than 600 acres of patterned fen, one of only 20 known occurrences of this rare peatland type left in Michigan.



Preserving an Iconic Trout Stream Made Famous by Ernest Hemingway

Protecting thousands of acres of wetlands along the Fox River will play a crucial role in maintaining the water quality needed for river's native brook trout fishery. It was the trout fishing that led Hemingway to the Fox River in the summer of 1919 while recuperating from the aftereffects of World War I. "The Big Two-Hearted River", one of his most famous short stories, was based on his time fishing the Fox but the true location is disguised in the title. The Fox River remains one of the most iconic trout streams in Michigan and has been specially designated by the state under the Michigan Natural Rivers Program.

Protecting More than 600 Acres of Patterned Fen, a Rare Wetland Type

Patterned fen is a rare wetland type with striking "wave-like" peat ridges (called "strings") and hollows (called "flarks") running parallel to the slope of the land but perpendicular to the groundwater flow. There are only ten high-quality patterned fens left in Michigan. MNA's Fox River Wetlands project protects more than 600 acres (roughly 454 football fields) of patterned fen, including thousands of dragon's mouth orchids, ragged-leaved orchids, club-spur orchids, pitcher plants, sundew, cotton grasses, arrow grasses and many other rare plants and animals.



Providing a Home for Moose, Black Bear, and the Endangered Gray Wolf

The Fox River Wetlands project site is located north of Seney National Wildlife Refuge and connects to tens of thousands of acres of State Forest land. Scale is everything for larger, wide-ranging mammals such as moose (a species of special concern in Michigan), black bear and the federally endangered gray wolf. Evidence for all three has been found on the Fox River Wetlands project site. The large size of the Fox River Wetlands project not only helps support these majestic mammals, it also provides excellent habitat for waterfowl and breeding birds that require large blocks of undisturbed habitat.

Conserving Peatlands — a Carbon Superhero and a Global Protection Priority

Despite making up only 3% of the land cover on Earth, peatlands store more carbon than all other vegetative types combined (including forests). For that reason they have been rightly called a carbon storage "superhero". Conserving peatlands is a global priority because destroyed or degraded peatlands release huge amounts of carbon, methane, and other greenhouse gases and account for 5% of CO2 emissions caused by humans. The Fox River Wetlands project will protect more than 2,000 acres of diverse peatland types and will make a valuable contribution toward carbon sequestration.



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tour of this spectacular project by the award-winning
videography team of Fauna Creative.

