

# Brookwood Metropark Highlights



**METROPARKS  
TOLEDO**

## Messages for Interpretation

The Brookwood's intimate setting accentuates harmony between nature, music and art as it offers visitor inspiration.

- Brookwood overlooks a beautiful floodplain of the Swan Creek corridor – a refuge for native wildflowers, birds and other wildlife.
- The importance of Swan Creek as a travel route has been recognized since pre-settlement.
- Brookwood promotes the arts through programming in a natural setting as it tells the story of the estate's previous owners.

## What's In A Name?

This former estate located in a quiet south Toledo neighborhood was called Brookwood by its former owners, William and Virginia Belt. Metroparks kept the name in honor of their generous legacy.

## Natural and Human History

As part of the Swan Creek Corridor, Brookwood's floodplain is a refuge for native wildflowers, birds and other wildlife. Swan Creek is a high quality waterway whose floodplain not only reduces the impact of flooding on human developments but also supports critical woodland habitat for native wildlife. Bisecting Lucas County, Swan Creek connects Oak Openings Preserve, Anderson's, Brookwood, Swan Creek Preserve and Middlegrounds Metropark. Its protection is paramount to the Metroparks mission of conserving natural areas. Migratory birds of all kinds pass through Brookwood along Swan Creek's corridor, and many of them nest in the globally rare Oak Openings plant communities upstream.

Swan Creek has also been an important travel route for people since pre-settlement. Swan Creek played an important role in history during the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794. Native Americans fighting at the Battle of Fallen Timbers used the creek's route as a means of approaching and retreating from the site, while their families remained encamped along the banks. In this way, Brookwood and the other Metroparks along Swan Creek are intricately tied to the history-changing events of Fallen Timbers Battlefield Metropark.

The generous donation of Brookwood was inspired by a love of nature and the arts for public enjoyment. Brookwood was once the family home of William and Virginia Belt, who shared it with their four children and friends for over 60 years. A University of Michigan Law School graduate, Mr. Belt worked for the U.S. Forest Service in Wyoming following college, and his experience there led to a lifetime of love for nature which is reflected at Brookwood grounds. Virginia Gordon Belt – daughter of the historic radio figure



*5604 Swan Creek Drive*



*Bridge and overlook*

“Pop” Gordon – grew up in a family of pioneers for music education where she learned the art of teaching music. A music graduate of the University of Wisconsin (1930), she taught piano to adults and children in her home throughout her life.

Together this couple merged their love of music and nature into their estate, and Brookwood's natural setting and optimal recital space entertained well known regional musicians for decades. The generous donation of Brookwood to Metroparks was initiated by Mrs. Belt in celebration of her 90th birthday in 1999 and finalized in 2003. After major renovations, the site opened for special use in 2017. Although restricted for public use, open houses and Metroparks programs provide chances for everyone to visit this lovely estate. In Spring of 2023, Metroparks completed a one-half mile trail that leads to a 90 foot bridge located on the Floodplain Trail. This bridge allows for individuals to view the floodplain as well prime woodland habitat. This bridge also pays homage to the treehouse previously on site. Brookwood is also available for private rentals.

## Plant Life

### Trees and shrubs include:

American sycamore	Flowering dogwood
Redbud	Red and Burr oak
Sugar maple	Tulip tree
Black cherry	Gray dogwood

### Garden plants and native wildflowers include:

Spring beauty	Wild geranium
Jack-in-the-pulpit	Common blue violet
Virginia bluebells	Common cleavers
Virginia knotweed	Virginia creeper

## Wildlife

### Birds include:

Great-horned owl	Cooper's hawk
Red-tailed hawk	Great blue heron
Red-bellied woodpecker	Downy woodpecker
White-breasted nuthatch	Black-capped chickadee
Tufted titmouse	Northern cardinal
Mourning dove	American robin
American goldfinch	Blue jay
Carolina wren	House wren
Song sparrow	Baltimore oriole
American redstart	Yellow warbler
Yellow-throated warbler	Bald eagle
Wild turkey	

The Swan Creek corridor is notable for spring migratory songbirds such as warblers, vireos, flycatchers and thrushes, providing critical breeding habitat all the way from downtown Toledo to Oak Openings.

It is not uncommon to see substantial numbers of Wild turkey within the island of the Brookwood parking area.

From the scenic deck that overlooks the floodplain, look for Bald eagles foraging the creek for food.

### Other wildlife include:

Red fox	Coyote
White tailed deer	Southern flying squirrel
Eastern fox squirrel	Raccoon
Ground hog	Virginia opossum
Eastern mole	Deer mouse
Red-backed salamander	American toad
Green frog	Eastern garter snake
Northern water snake	Midland painted turtle
Snapping turtle	Common white-tail (dragonfly)

In order to help protect the plant and wildlife habitat of this urban oasis and respect neighbors, please preserve the quiet intimacy of this site and only use designated areas.

Stay on trails and use protective clothing and insecticide to avoid poison ivy, chiggers, ticks and mosquitoes.

(Note: There is no poison oak in Northwest Ohio.)



*Flowering dogwood*



*Red oak*



*Red-backed salamander*



*Eastern fox squirrel*



*Wild turkey*



*Yellow-throated warbler*



*White-breasted nuthatch*



*American robin*



*Virginia creeper*



*Virginia bluebell*