

# Pearson Metropark Highlights



**METROPARKS  
TOLEDO**

## Messages for Interpretation

One of our most popular parks, precious with natural riches like Great Black Swamp woodlands and restored wetlands, Pearson Metropark balances the needs of recreation and nature preservation.

- Geologic history set the stage for a natural landscape that proved a major obstacle to early settlement.
- Lake Erie wetlands, vernal pools, and manmade lakes support a wide variety of aquatic life and wildlife.
- Great Black Swamp woodlands preserve exceptional tree diversity, spring wildflower populations and wildlife nesting areas.
- From its inception, Pearson Metropark has been driven by strong citizen support and recreation needs.
- Restoration efforts at Pearson Metropark increase eco-services for people and improve habitats for nature

## What's In A Name?

Formerly called the Bank lands, George Pearson of The Toledo Blade was instrumental in acquiring Pearson Metropark. The park was officially dedicated in 1934.

## Natural and Human History

Approximately 620 acres in size, Pearson is the only Metropark that offers a remnant natural community of Ohio's former Great Black Swamp. This vast swamp extended along through several present-day counties (Ottawa/Wood/Henry/Paulding) and slightly past the Ohio/Indiana border.

The blue clay here was deposited approximately one million years ago, and was formerly the lake bottom of glacial Lake Warren. Prior to settlement, this swamp was characterized by very poorly drained soil, excessive standing water darkened by tannic acids, very large, but-tressing, old growth trees and carpets of spring wildflowers.

Due to its geologic features, the Great Black Swamp was one of the last areas settled in northwest Ohio, and considered a sort of refuge for some of the last large wildlife species that are today extirpated from the area, such as mountain lion, elk, and gray wolf.

The natural area at Pearson North is representative of Lake Erie coastal zone, featuring open wetland expanses with high numbers of waterfowl and wetland species including non-native, narrow-leaved cattail. Its wooded area also supports vernal pools-- spring woodland puddles that usually dry up by summer, do not contain fish and are hotspots for amphibian and macro-invertebrate diversity. Pearson North was acquired in 2003 and is a Lucas County wetland mitigation bank site.

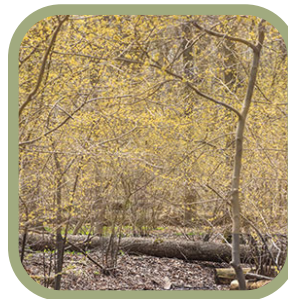
The Johlin log house, formerly located on Corduroy Road, was donated to Metroparks by Fred Johlin and moved to the Pearson North property in 2006. In 1867, the Johlins were early settlers to northwest Ohio. They



*Trout lily*



*Purple cress*



*Spicebush*



*Wild geranium*

encountered obstacles such as mosquito borne illnesses like malaria, difficulty with draining land for crops and lack of adequate roads.

As drainage technology progressed, settlement grew, and in the latter half of the 19th century most of the Great Black Swamp became ditched and tiled into very productive farmland. Some say that there is more drain tile beneath the historic Great Black Swamp than nearly anywhere else in the world.

The distinctive stonework and architecture at Pearson's shelters, gazebos and man-made ponds was originally built by the Works Progress Administration and the Civilian Conservation Corps during the mid to late 1930's.

During the mid-20th century, Pearson was a well-known recreational gathering place and offered activities as diverse as billiards, tandem cycling, roller skating and horseback riding. Today, it is still known for recreational pursuits including sledding, ice skating, tennis and pickleball.

## Plant Life

### Trees and shrubs include:

Red and Burr oak  
Silver maple  
Shagbark hickory  
Eastern cottonwood  
Basswood  
Spicebush  
Prickly ash

Paw-paw  
Sugar maple  
Musclewood  
American sycamore  
Hophornbeam  
Bladdernut  
Dogwood

Jack-in-the-pulpit	Wild ginger
Spring beauty	Trout lily
Wild geranium	Purple cress
Cut-leaved toothwort	Swamp buttercup

Metroparks monitors two plants here that are rare species in Ohio: Red baneberry and Northern fox sedge.

## Wildlife

Pearson supports excellent habitat for bats such as the big brown bat. They use open meadow areas to hunt insects and large trees with loose bark for roosting.

**Mammals include:**

Red fox	Coyote
White tailed deer	Southern flying squirrel
Eastern fox squirrel	Raccoon
Mink	Muskrat

**Birds likely at the Window on Wildlife include:**

Common grackle	Ruby-throated
Red-bellied woodpecker	hummingbird
Hairy woodpecker	Downy woodpecker
White-breasted nuthatch	Northern cardinal
Mourning dove	American goldfinch
Tufted titmouse	Black-capped chickadee
Blue jay	House sparrow
European starling	(non-native)
(non-native)	

**Wetland birds include:**

Common snipe	American woodcock
Red-winged blackbird	Killdeer

**Raptor's include:**

Great horned owl	Red-tailed hawk
Cooper's hawk	Eastern screech owl

**Game fish that can be caught include:**

Bluegill Crappie  
Smallmouth bass

**Amphibians and reptiles include:**

American toad	Northern leopard frog
Bullfrog	Eastern garter snake
Northern water snake	Midland painted turtle
Snapping turtle	

**Insects and arthropods include:**

Giant swallowtail	Monarch
Common whitetail dragonfly	Mud dauber wasps
Jumping spiders	Rusty crayfish
Orb weavers	

Within the past decade, the non-native Emerald ash borer beetle has destroyed many trees at Pearson.

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.)

