

# Brookwood Area Highlights

*Please use this as a supplement to information provided on any Metroparks maps.*

## Messages for Interpretation

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 in the Western Confederacy fighting at the Battle of Fallen Timbers used the creek's route as a means of approaching and retreating from the site. 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



5604 Swan Creek Drive



Flowering dogwood



Red oak

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 “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. Brookwood is also available for private rentals.

**Plant life**

*Notable trees and shrubs include:*

- |                   |                   |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| American sycamore | Flowering dogwood |
| Redbud            | Red and Burr oak  |
| Sugar maple,      | Tulip magnolia    |
| 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   |
| Poison ivy         |                    |

**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 |                        |

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) |

There are no trails at Brookwood. 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.



*Red-backed salamander*



*Eastern fox squirrel*



*Wild turkey*



*Yellow-throated warbler*



*White-breasted nuthatch*



*American robin*



*Virginia creeper*



*Virginia bluebell*