

Pearson Metropark Highlights

Please use this as a supplement to information provided on the Pearson Metropark map.

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, buttressing, 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



Trout lily



Purple cress



Spicebush



Wild geranium

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 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 paddle-boating, sledding, ice skating, and tennis and pickle ball.

Plant Life (* = state-listed rare)

Trees and shrubs include:

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|--------------------|-------------------|
| Red and Burr oak | Paw-paw |
| Silver maple | Sugar maple |
| Shagbark hickory | Musclewood |
| Eastern cottonwood | American sycamore |
| Basswood | Hophornbeam |
| Spicebush | Bladdernut |
| Prickly ash | Dogwood |

Native spring wildflowers include:

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|----------------------|-----------------|
| 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:

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

Birds likely at the Window on Wildlife include:

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

Wetland birds include:

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| Common snipe | American woodcock |
| Red-winged blackbird | Killdeer |

Raptor's include:

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

Game fish that can be caught include:

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| Bluegill | Crappie |
| Smallmouth bass | |

Amphibians and reptiles include:

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

Insects and arthropods include:

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|----------------------------|------------------|
| 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, ticks, Yellow jackets and mosquitoes.

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



Red-winged blackbird



Giant swallowtail butterfly



Red fox



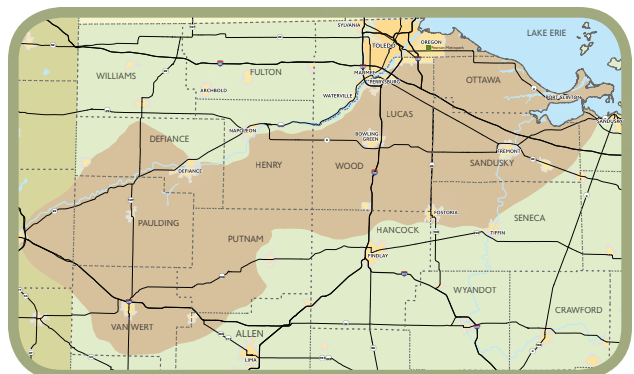
Northern leopard frog



Marbled orb weaver



Big brown bat



■ GREAT BLACK SWAMP