



Friends of Little Bennett Park

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Geography & Trails

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Trails

Browning Run Trail

[PDF for printing](#)

Use	Multi-use (Hk, Bk, Eq)
West Trailhead	Western Piedmont Trail near Wims Meadow
East Trailhead	Purdum Trail
Distance	1.96 miles
Nearest Parking	A limited amount of parking is available at the site where Browning Run trail crosses Clarksburg Road.
Summary	One of the longest trails in the Park, it crosses Clarksburg Road and has both western and eastern segments. Western segment begins opposite Wims Meadow on Western Piedmont Trail and is largely wooded though it passes through two meadows and a low-land swamp. Eastern segment begins at Clarksburg Road in a meadow and then climbs rather steeply for several hundred yards, eventually intersecting with Purdum Trail.

Narrative Direction: North and East from the Western Piedmont Trailhead

Browning Run trail is the second longest trail in the Park. While the name of this trail (Browning Run) seems to suggest that it might be named after a nearby creek, oddly the trail parallels for much of its length a creek that is identified as 'Ballfield Tributary' on most maps.

The southern trailhead to Browning Run trail is located just east of the bridge over Ballfield Tributary near Wims Ballfield. From this trailhead, the trail proceeds south for a hundred yards then turns east as it climbs a small hill overlooking Wims Ballfield and then turns again and heads north where it will soon intersect and cross the Western Piedmont trail again. The Parks Department built this southern extension to the Browning Run trail in 2008 as a bypass for equestrians so their horses would not have to climb a short but steep paved section of Western Piedmont trail.

Soon the trail will cross the Western Piedmont Trail (see photo below). Browning Run trail then gradually rises through an unmown, late stage meadow. You can observe several Eastern red cedar pines beginning to mature in the meadow.

Timber Ridge (HBE)
Tobacco Barn (HBE)
Western Piedmont (HBE)
Whitetail (H)
Woodcock Hollow (H)



After about 200 yards, you reach a modest ridge line and enter the full canopy of a predominantly hardwood forest. At this point you can see that recent spraying has killed several multi-flora rose and other non-native invasive vines here at the forest edge. There is a rest bench on your right.

Then as you proceed gradually down the other side of the ridgeline, you find yourself totally enclosed in forest canopy. Note the evidence of a narrow gravel bed, cut-and-fill forest road underfoot as the trail descends 200 yards or so.

Eventually the trail flattens out and you can begin to hear Ballfield Tributary streaming by in the wetland to your left. This part of the trail is totally enclosed by healthy forest. There are few NNIs and many old, rotting, moss-covered logs lie gradually decomposing into soil along both sides of the trail.

As you begin to leave this forested part of the trail, note the large hollowed out area in the hillside to your right. While we are not sure of its origin, it may be a vestige of a small quarry or possibly a cellar of some kind.

You will now come across another wooden bench that sits at the edge of a large, healthy meadow (see photo below) the trail passes through over the next couple hundred yards. Immediately behind the wooden bench you can see and hear Ballfield Tributary passing by.



As the trail completes its passage along the meadow, it intersects Tobacco Barn trail. To the left, as that trail heads north, you can see its wet trail crossing of Ballfield Tributary.

Over the next several hundred yards the trail passes over mostly flat, thickly forested land, illustrated in the photo below. To your left lies swampland that encloses Ballfield Tributary. There is much skunk cabbage and many ferns along the way. Eventually you will come to a pedestrian-only bridge over a small feeder stream into Ballfield. Horses pass to the left here, please.



After this, the trail switchbacks up the side of a small hill to avoid the wetland on your left. Along this trail stretch, you will come to another wooden rest bench.

Soon the trail flattens out again as you enter another meadow that the trail passes through on its last few hundred yards before reaching Clarksburg Road. There are many wild blackberry bushes along the edge of the trail here but you can also see several young non-native invasive *Ailanthus* (Tree of Heaven) trees beginning to rise above the tall meadow grass.

As you approach the road, the meadow opens up to a nice vista on the hillside to your right. Browning Run soon crosses Clarksburg Road (see photos below) and you can see signs for the trail on both sides of the road.





There is a small parking lot on the east side of Clarksburg Road.

The eastern segment of Browning Run trail passes the edge of another large meadow. After a hundred yards or so another trail breaks off to the left. As yet unsigned, this is the trailhead for Lewisdale trail, the Park's newest trail. Lewisdale trail is about 3/4 mile in length and passes two wet stream crossings before terminating at the horsetrailer parking lot on Lewisdale Road.

In another hundred yards or so, the trail intersects with Pine Knob trail which passes to the south. It is at this juncture that Browning Run re-enters the woods through which it will pass until its eventual termination at Purdum Trail.

Soon after entering the forest, the trail crosses another small feeder stream into Ballfield Tributary via a pedestrian-only footbridge. After this, you encounter one of the most physically challenging trail segments in the Park as it climbs several hundred yards through the forest.

After a rather vigorous 10 minute up-hill hike, a clearing begins to become visible. You will soon encounter a well-placed wooden rest bench but do not be tempted to stop here. Instead, hike about another 100 yards to a point where Browning Run makes a sharp right-angle turn to the east.

When you reach this sharp turn in the trail, this is a good point to take a short standing break. From the edge of the meadow to your left, take a minute to catch your breath and look out over the expansive, pastoral vista to the north. This is one of the best spots along Little

Bennett Park trails to observe and appreciate the surrounding region's rich agricultural heritage and continued use today.

From this point, Browning Run trail follows a wide flat clearing through the forest for about 200 yards (see photo below the next paragraph) over an underground gas pipeline until it terminates at Purdum Trail.

NOTE: When you approach Browning Run's termination point at Purdum Trail, it appears that Browning Run crosses Purdum and follows the gas line which continues straight down the hill from this point. Some people use this path to reach Little Bennett Creek which is a few hundred steep downhill yards ahead — though the path is not an official part of the Park's trail system.



