

## 10. PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

The quality, quantity and variety of parks and open spaces are important attributes that help define the character of a community. Much of North Castle's community character lies in its attractive residential neighborhoods and the parks and recreational facilities that serve them. The benefits of parks and open space are varied, in that they provide opportunities for social interaction and healthy activity; help preserve natural features and environmentally sensitive areas; serve important drainage and stormwater management functions; and enhance neighborhood aesthetics.

North Castle's Recreation and Parks Department is responsible for providing recreation programs and services to all residents of the Town. These include adult, senior and youth programs and two summer day camps. In addition to stewarding the Town's parks, the Recreation and Parks Department maintains and organizes rentals of the Town's facilities. Facilities are available to non-commercial organizations for events including the Pool and Tennis Club, Hergenhan Recreation Center, North Castle Community Center, the gazebo, picnic pavilions and the Town's athletic fields.

### 10.1 TOWN PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

North Castle has over 2,872 acres of open space, including public parks, private recreation, nature preserves and water supply land. Table 10.1 categorizes all of North Castle's open space by type and provides the acreage for each.

#### 10.1.1 Public Parks and Open Space

The Town has 15 municipal parks located throughout its hamlets and residential areas.

In North White Plains, **Clove Road Park** includes the North Castle Community Center and its playground, multi-purpose field and Little League baseball field. Adjacent to Clove Road Park is the **Bronx River Parkway**, which includes a multi-use pathway. **Fountain Park** is a wooded area south of Clove Road Park, also accessible from Hillandale Avenue. **Miller Park** is located at the southern end of the hamlet, at the corner of Reservoir Road and North Broadway. This small park, which features a monument and seating area, is under one acre in size, but serves as a gateway to the Town.

In the Quarry Heights neighborhood, **Quarry Park** is a small neighborhood park on William Street off Old Orchard Street with a playground and a grass field. **Strauss Park** is also located off Old Orchard Street, and is mostly wooded with a grass ballfield, adjacent to the County's Cranberry Lake Preserve.

Armonk's main park is the 55-acre **Wampus Brook Park**, located west of Main Street between Bedford Road and School Street. The Wampus River runs through the park, and the Wampus School, HC Crittenden Middle School and the Hergenhan Recreation Center are located on either side. The Town recently considered a proposal to redesign the southern portion of Wampus Brook Park (south of Bedford Road and next to Maple Avenue) to improve drainage and provide seating, a walkway and parking. **North Castle Community Park**, located off Business Park Drive between the office park and the IBM campus, features baseball, softball, soccer fields, tennis courts, a running track and a picnic pavilion. The park also operates a private indoor sports and tennis facility. Town Hall's **Legion Field** is located off of Bedford Road behind the Town Hall office and court buildings and features a non-regulation sized softball diamond at the center of the site.

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Table 10.1: Major Open Spaces and Recreation Areas

Name	Acres
<b>Local Parks and Open Space</b>	
Betsey Sluder Preserve	93
Cat Rocks Park	113
Cedar Hill/Huntwood Park	19
Clove Road Park	15
Fountains Park	15
Johnson Tract	10
John A. Lombardi Park	20
Miller Park	1
North Castle Community Park	47
Quarry Park	1
Strauss Park	9
Town Hall and Legion Field	8
Wampus Brook Park	55
Winkler Park	4
<b>County Parks and Parkway Lands</b>	
Bronx River Parkway Reservation*	27
Cranberry Lake Preserve*	156
Kensico Dam Plaza*	65
Miller Hill	3
Silver Lake Park*	57
Wampus Pond Park*	82
Washington's Headquarters (Miller House)	1
<b>Nature Preserves</b>	
Byram Lake Preserve	29
Eugene and Agnes Meyer Preserve*	259
Mianus River Gorge Preserve*	564
Nature Conservancy (Middle Patent Rd., Mianus River Rd.)	46
Nichols Preserve*	81
Westmoreland Sanctuary*	622

<b>Private Recreation</b>		<b>Acres</b>
North Castle Town Pool Complex**		11
Breezemont Day Camp		13
Brynwood Golf & Country Club		155
Fishing Club of White Plains		15
Lindeman Farm		51
Whippoorwill Country Club*		175
White Birch Farm		25
Windmill Club		25
<b>Institutional and Public Assembly</b>		
Byram Hills High School		64
Byram Hills School District Property, Round Hill Road		14
Coman Hill Elementary School		13
Crittenden Middle School		19
Jennie Clarkson Campus		37
Louis Calder Center, Fordham University		109
St. Patrick's Church		13
Wampus Elementary School		25
<b>Water Supply Lands</b>		
Byram Lake/Mount Kisco Water Supply Lands*		293
Greenwich/Port Chester Waterworks Lands*		195
New York City Water Supply Lands*		4,851
Windmill Water District		73
<b>Cemetery</b>		
Middle Patent Cemetery		14
<b>Nurseries</b>		
Roth Nursery		25
Troy's Garden Nursery		28

\* Indicates portion of property located in the Town of North Castle

\*\* The Town plans to acquire this privately owned land by the end of 2017.

Source: Westchester County

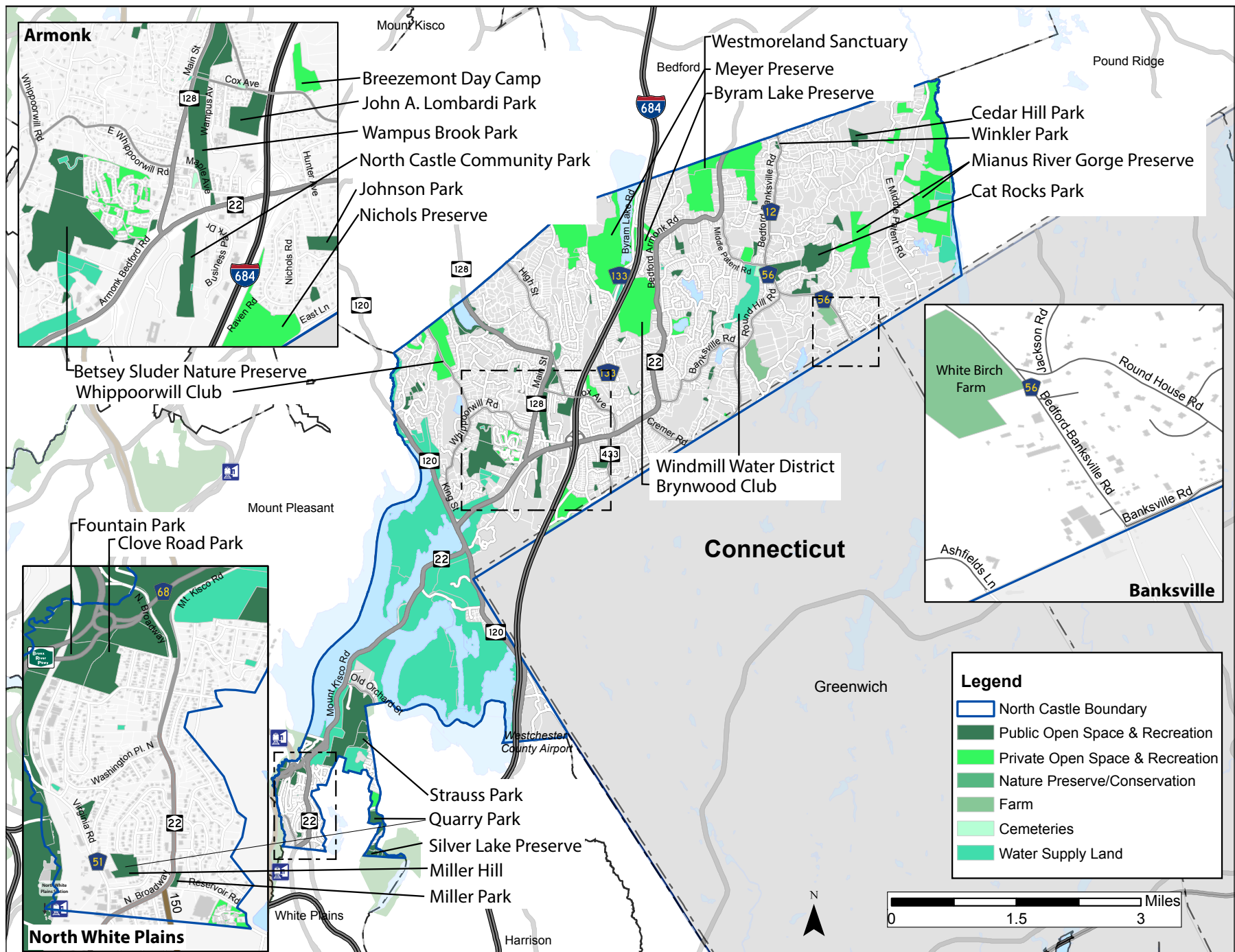


Figure 10.1 Parks and Open Space

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The Eastern District of North Castle, including areas surrounding the Banksville hamlet, features a number of wooded areas and recreational resources. **Cat Rocks Park** is a 113-acre nature preserve located on Bedford-Banksville Road. It includes hiking trails and areas for wildlife observation, though these are only accessible from nearby private property **Cedar Hill/Huntwood Park** and **Winkler Park** are smaller open spaces in the Eastern District featuring both active and passive recreational options.

### 10.1.2 Private Open Space

Several privately owned areas in North Castle provide recreational or open space benefits either to members or the surrounding neighborhoods. The largest of these are country clubs: the 175-acre **Whippoorwill Club** along Whippoorwill Road and the 155-acre **Brynwood Golf and Country Club** between Route 22 and I-684. The Golf Course Community Floating Overlay District (GCCFOD) was established at the site of the Brynwood club as part of an approved project to develop a portion of the property as a residential community of active adults. The floating zone provides for preservation of most of the site as designated green space.

Other private open spaces in North Castle include farms, private clubs, a day camp and the **North Castle Pool and Tennis Club** (privately owned but managed by The Town). Membership to the swimming facilities are available to Town residents and the Byram Hills School District. Two private equestrian facilities are in the Eastern District, **Lindeman Farm** on Mead Road and White Birch Farm on Bedford-Banksville Road. Other private clubs include the **Armonk Tennis Club** on Route 22; the **Daniel Grey Fishing Club**; located across Middle Patent Road from the Windmill Water District Lands; the **Grand Slam Health and**

**Tennis Club** in Banksville; **Breezemont Day Camp** on Cox Avenue in Armonk; and the Windmill Club, part of the Windmill Farm residential development east of Armonk. These properties provide substantial green space and recreational opportunities for the Town. The western portion of the **Mianus River Gorge Preserve** is located in North Castle and features over seven miles of publicly accessible trails along the Mianus River (see Figure 10.1). A number of the Town's nature preserves are also privately owned open space, including Betsey Sluder Preserve, Westmoreland Sanctuary and Nichols Preserve.

In addition, there are several institutional open spaces, including the 109-acre **Louis Calder Center** in Armonk on Whippoorwill Road, which serves as Fordham University's Biological Field Station, and the 37-acre **Jennie Clarkson Home for Youth**, home to the REACH Academy in Quarry Heights, next to New York City Water Supply Lands and the BOCES campus.

### 10.1.3 Water Supply Land

Four municipal water supplies own property in North Castle. The largest is the New York City water supply lands, occupying 4,851 acres of land in the western portion of the Town between Armonk and North White Plains. In addition, the Windmill Water District owns 73 acres of land in Armonk; the Greenwich/Port Chester Waterworks owns 195 acres in the Eastern District; and the Town of Mount Kisco owns 293 acres in North Castle for the Byram Lake/Mount Kisco water supply lands. Access and recreation activities are limited in these lands. Permits are required through the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (NYCDEP) for fishing on the New York City Reservoirs, while the Town/Village of Mount Kisco also requires a fishing permit for its Byram Lake reservoir.

## 10. PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

### 10.2 ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

North Castle has a long history of stewardship of its natural resources and open spaces. Those efforts should continue, and the Town should take advantage of new opportunities to enhance recreational opportunities for its residents.

#### 10.2.1 Enhance Existing Town Open Spaces

North Castle's publicly accessible open spaces are valuable recreational and aesthetic assets, and should continue to be maintained and enhanced. While there may be opportunities to create new open spaces in a targeted, fiscally responsible way, the major emphasis for North Castle should be on maintaining and upgrading its existing open spaces.

**Wampus Brook Park South:** This is an underutilized open space across Bedford Road from Wampus Brook Park in Armonk. The Town has recently considered plans to enhance this space with walking paths, additional parking, landscaping and benches.

**Maintenance and Upgrades:** Several parks, particularly those in Quarry Heights and North White Plains, are in need of improved maintenance and equipment upgrades. Other identified issues include the need for restrooms at the Community Park, improvements at the Town pool complex and replacement of the Parks garage (currently located at Lombardi Park).

#### 10.2.2 Explore New Recreational Opportunities as Needed

Residents near Fountain Park have voiced a desire to improve this park for passive recreation use. The park currently has limited public access and requires clean up and waste removal.

The Town should also explore possibilities to permit additional passive recreational access to water resources, such as the area south of the Business Park where the Wampus and Byram Rivers converge. This area could provide trails that would serve as amenities for both the Business Park and users of Community Park.

Additional issues and recommendations related to hamlet area parks are discussed in Chapter 12.

### 10.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **Parks**

The Town should build bathroom facilities at Community Park. Existing plans for pre-fabricated facilities offer a low-cost and easily implemented option that would provide the necessary facilities during times of heavy use. Longer-term, the Town should consider the construction of a new recreation facility at Community Park. The specific activities and facilities accommodated in such a center would need to be based on identified community recreational needs to ensure that it is not duplicative or redundant with existing municipal facilities and the private tennis facility located at the park.

At Wampus Brook Park South, the Town continues to explore options to enhance the park in a cost-effective way. Bids to implement recent plans were determined to be too high to proceed at this time. The Town should evaluate scaled-back plans that focus on adding parking to serve the northern part of the park as well as nearby downtown shops. Other amenities at Wampus Brook South could be provided later. If a proposed parking garage project at the Westchester County Airport proceeds, environmental mitigation related to that project may include funding for Wampus Brook improvements.

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In the event that pedestrian improvements outlined in Chapter 7 are implemented, there is an opportunity to connect North Castle Community Park and Wampus Brook Park across Route 22. A trail that joins to new sidewalks along Maple Avenue and a pedestrian crossing between Maple Avenue and Business Park Drive could enable the Town to expand accessibility of its two major parks in Armonk. New sidewalks throughout the business park could further this connectivity.

### ***Playgrounds***

Improvements should be made to existing playground facilities at public parks, including Clove Road Park and Quarry Park among others, where equipment is out of date. Plans for Wampus Brook Park South should also consider including a playground facility.

### ***Department Facilities***

The Parks Department garage should be replaced. The optimal location for a new garage would be at a combined new facility shared with the Highway Department at the current highway garage site behind Town Hall. Relocation of the Parks Department garage to the Town Hall site could also free up space at Lombardi Park for additional recreational uses.

### ***Town of North Castle Pool***

The Town has plans to purchase the Town of North Castle Pool by the end of 2017 and should make improvements to its facilities, including resurfacing the pool deck and refinishing the pool's interior. In addition, the Town should pursue plans to construct a small building that could be rented for events and provide storage space at the pool site.