

SAW MILL RIVER AUDUBON

OUR MISSION

To maintain environmental quality for all living things by protecting natural ecosystems through education, advocacy, and habitat conservation.

OUR SANCTUARIES

Saw Mill River Audubon owns eight separate sanctuaries protecting more than 300 acres of wildlife habitat in Westchester County. All are open to visitors free of charge, seven days a week, from dawn to dusk.

Group Visits: With advance notice, we may be able to provide your group with a guided tour. Visit our web site for more information about guided sanctuary tours and our calendar of free public field trips. Even if your group wishes to visit without a guide, please contact us. To enhance your experience, we want to ensure that your visit does not coincide with that of another group.

Staff & Volunteers: Our sanctuaries are maintained by a part-time caretaker and our Sanctuary Committee assisted by volunteers and our executive director. We also rely on our sanctuary neighbors to monitor these special habitats. Volunteer Trail Walkers monitor individual sanctuaries and report on trail conditions and visitor and wildlife observations.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

We also invite you to submit a Trail Walker report at our website if you see needed trail work or want to report observations about wildlife or visitors.

Help us protect and conserve open space for the enjoyment of all! Join SMRA by filling out the form on the inside of this brochure and mailing it with your tax-deductible contribution to our office. Or donate online today at: www.sawmillriveraudubon.org



CHOATE
SANCTUARY

275 Millwood Road • Chappaqua, New York 10514

Phone: (914) 666-6503

Email: office@sawmillriveraudubon.org

Website: www.sawmillriveraudubon.org

Welcome to Choate Sanctuary

We hope you enjoy your walk. A few reminders as you begin your visit:

- A sanctuary is a place where all life is respected. Please do not remove or injure any plant or animal and please leave only your footprints behind when you leave.
- Dogs are welcome on leashes. Please pick up after your dog.
- If you have an emergency, call 911 or the Croton Police Department: 914- 271-5177

ABOUT THE TRAILS

The **White Oak Trail**, marked with **white**, begins at the sanctuary entrance and borders a small marsh at the corner of Crow Hill Road and Route 133 (Millwood Road). The trail crosses a footbridge over a stream edged with jewelweed in summer. The trail continues to a "T" intersection with the Hickory Trail (see below). The White Oak Trail continues to the right, while the Hickory Trail branches off to the left. The White Oak Trail makes a loop through the rolling hills and stone walls of this overgrown pasture. Along the way, the trail passes massive rock cliffs of Fordham Gneiss, one of the principal underlying rocks of Westchester County.

The stone walls that cross the hills of Choate Sanctuary were originally built as fences for sheep or pig pastures before the turn of the century. The rockiness and thin soil made the land unsuitable for crops. Stone walls offer their own microhabitats for small mammals, snakes, and invertebrates. With winter snow, look for weasel tracks atop and across the stone walls.

The **Hickory Trail**, marked with **yellow**, passes through a forest of black birch, various oaks, and hickories across a steep hillside that overlooks Route 133. Along this trail, you can see four different Lycopodia (small evergreen ground plants): ground cedar, ground pine, running pine, and shining club moss. This trail also passes more of the dramatic rock formations that characterize this sanctuary.

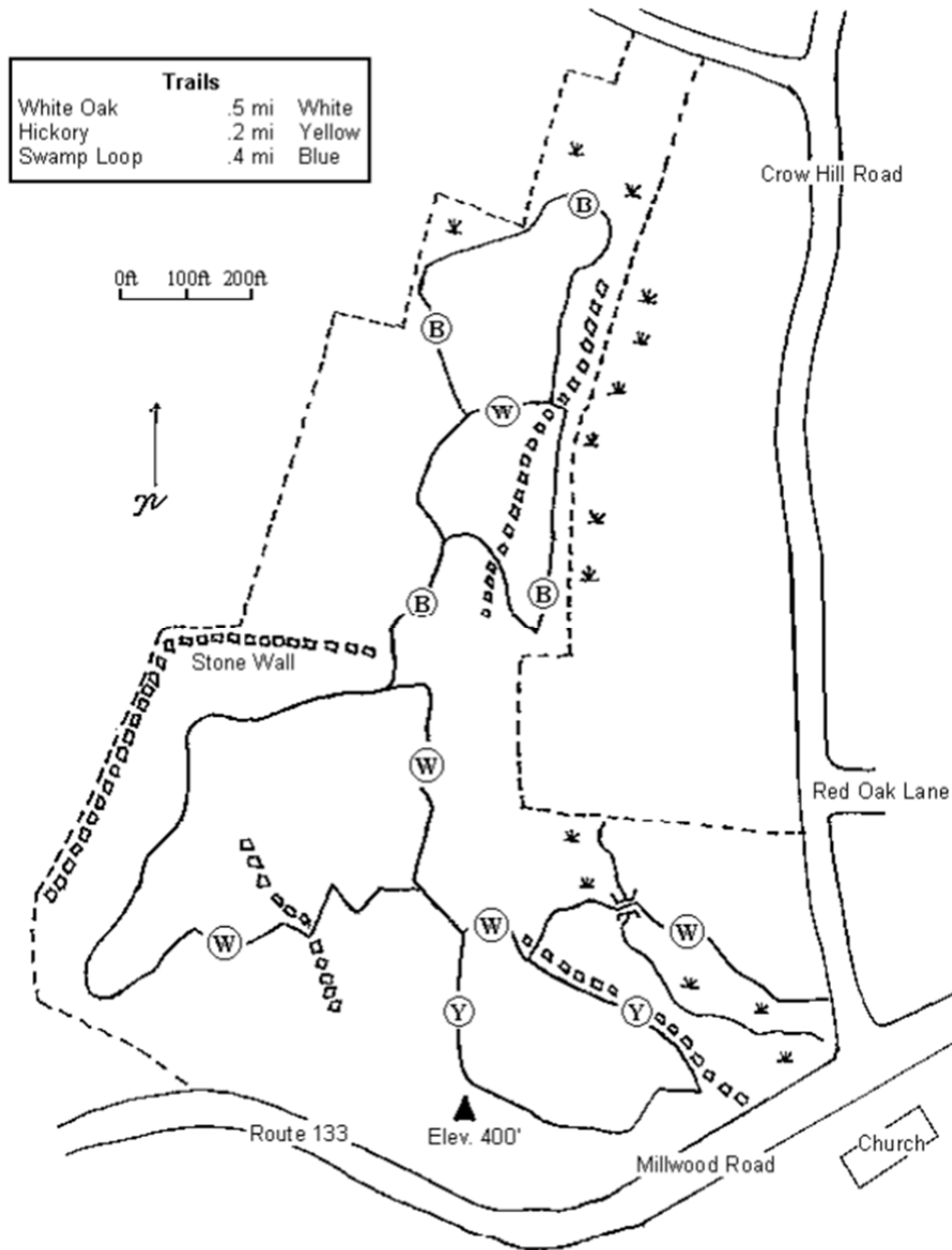
The **Swamp Loop**, marked with **blue**, explores the Town of New Castle parcel leased to Saw Mill River Audubon in 1997. This trail passes through upland rocky forest that is gradually succeeding from black birch and mixed maple species to American beech and oak species. Red-tailed hawks are often observed in this area and are recorded nesters in the sanctuary. The eastern section of this trail travels along the edge of a red maple swamp and small stream. Spring peeper frogs may be heard here in spring. In spring and fall, this is a good location to observe migrating warblers and thrushes.

HISTORY OF CHOATE

The heirs of Joseph H. Choate, Jr. gave 23 acres to the New Castle Land Conservancy in 1972 in memory of their father. Three additional acres were added to the sanctuary in 1974 by Geoffrey Platt, in memory of his wife Helen Choate Platt. Since 1975, when the New Castle Land Conservancy merged with Saw Mill River Audubon, SMRA has managed Choate Sanctuary as a wildlife refuge with passive recreation use through hiking trails. In 1997, approximately four acres were added to the northern part of the sanctuary under a 99-year lease from the Town of New Castle.

Choate Sanctuary

32 Acres · 1.1 miles of hiking trails



In an emergency, call 911 or the New Castle Police Department: (914) 238-4422

TRAVEL DIRECTIONS AND TRAILS ENTRANCE

Choate Sanctuary is at the corner of Crow Hill Road and Route 133, one mile west of Mount Kisco.

From the Saw Mill River Parkway:

1. Take the Mount Kisco-Route 133 exit.
2. Continue west (away from Mount Kisco) on Route 133 for approximately 1/2 mile to the Mount Kisco Presbyterian Church on the left. Crow Hill Road is immediately across from the church on the right.
3. Turn right on Crow Hill Road. The sanctuary entrance is on the left, approximately 100 feet from the intersection and marked with a sign post.

From the Taconic Parkway:

1. Take the Millwood-Ossining exit (Route 133-Route 100).
2. Continue east on Route 133 for four miles through Millwood, past the Route 120 turn to Chappaqua and past the traffic light at Seven Bridges Road.
3. The Mount Kisco Presbyterian Church will be on the right and Crow Hill Road on the left. Turn onto Crow Hill Road and follow the directions above.

Parking is illegal on Route 133 and Crow Hill Road. You may park on Red Oak Lane, the first right-hand road beyond the sanctuary entrance. Parking is sometimes available in the church lot. **Traffic can be very heavy on Route 133; use extreme caution in crossing this road on foot.**

To learn more about our other sanctuaries, our free public field trips and programs, and our other activities, visit www.sawmillriveraudubon.org

CELEBRATE NATURE WITH
SAW MILL RIVER AUDUBON

I want to support your
local conservation work.

- \$500 \$250 \$100 \$50
 \$30 Other _____

Please make checks payable to Saw Mill River Audubon and send with this form to the address below. If you prefer to donate online using a credit card, visit www.sawmillriveraudubon.org

We welcome your comments and observations about our sanctuaries.

CHOATE SANCTUARY COMMENTS

Name _____
Street _____
City, State, Zip _____
Phone _____
E-mail _____

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