



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.
 - Motorized vehicles, bikes, fires, camping and hunting are all prohibited in our sanctuaries.
 - If you have an emergency, call 911 or the New Castle Police Department: (914) 238-4422.

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.