



Joe Gindoff, NY/NJTC Metro Trails Committee

To: Larry Wheelock, NY/NJTC Trails Chair
Subject: Van Cortlandt Park, John Muir Nature Trail, January 17, 2008

Cc: Margot Perron, Van Cortlandt Park Administrator
Nick Sarro, Van Cortlandt Park Supervisor

Today I walked the length of the JMNT for the purpose of completing a survey. I first walked this trail with Margot Perron last year. We discussed the possibilities of having the Trail Conference maintain the trail and to perform some contract work on the 34 step stairway next to the Weir Buildings runoff. Today I surveyed the trail to gather all the information necessary to compile a package that can be presented to the Trail Council on February 7th, 2008.

The trail is not like our typical TC trail. There are short sections that run on paved roads, paved trails, alongside highways; it runs through a holding area for road construction materials, and there are many views of golf courses and buildings. The sounds of the surrounding highways were very apparent. There is evidence of Parks Department trucks driving on sections, mounted police leaving deep hoof impressions, and plenty of bike and ATV tracks.

It sounds very dismal, sounds like we shouldn't bother with this near broken down trail. However there are the many great attributes of this nature trail that makes me want to assist this park administration in bringing it up to Trail Conference standards. It is an inner city trail that is heavily utilized, and gives many locals an "outdoors" experience.

I would like encourage my fellow Council members to vote yes to adopt the JMNT.
Larry, I'll have the proper paperwork prepared for the Council to review.
Margot, I'll need a brief note requesting our assistance in maintaining this trail.

The following are some fun tidbits from today's hike notes;

On this Dedicated Nature Path, there are no shortages of paved road and paved trails.
Found plenty of graffiti on trees, rocks and on the weir building.
Two major highways are at arms length, and they remain in ear shot.
Found plenty of erosion, corrosion and even a road construction holding lot.
You remain in view of fences, golf courses and all types of unpleasant buildings.
I saw Parks Department trucks on the trail and I saw hoof tracks from "County Mounties".
It would take a month of Sundays to cleanup all the trash and to remove the tiny paint balls.
However, on this Dedicated Nature Path there are many wonderful sights;
There were Blue Jays, hundreds Grackles, and a curiously and amusing Black Squirrel.
I walked a cobble stone sidewalk under the Major Deegan.
I met some nice Parks people, including four Park Rangers patrolling the Old Croton Aqueduct.
I stood on an exposed section of that Aqueduct, and I located a brass Newhaven R/R marker.
There was a smiling dog walker with a Collie and a Pug.
Easy to find Giant Red Oak, Red Maple, Giant Tulips, and many other great trees to hug.

You can see why I failed poetry 101, L.O.L.

JOHN MUIR

The 1.7-mile-long John Muir Nature Trail is the park's only connecting east-west path. When hiking, be safe and secure. Always hike with a friend or two and be aware of poison ivy, ticks, and uneven footing along paths.



The Trail Walk is written from east to west, or from Van Cortlandt Park East through the park to Broadway.

NORTHEAST FOREST

To the northeast, Van Cortlandt Park's forest forms a gentle slope supporting a mix of low-lying, moist woods and oak-filled uplands. The 117-acre area is bordered by playing fields and a playground to the east and south, and includes facilities for the City's water supply and Parks' Arthur



Oak and Sweetgum trees dominate the treetops in their respective dry and wet habitats, but abundant Sugar Maples grow in the Croton Woods. More common in southern New England than in New York City, the Sugar Maple is a wonderful natural feature, especially in autumn when its leaves change to vibrant mixtures of red, yellow, and orange. Chipmunks can be seen scurrying about in the groundcover. They are

Crossing over the Henry Hudson foot-bridge toward the Northwest Forest, be sure to look for the rock outcrops rising above the roadbed. These rocks are Fordham Gneiss, a rock formation that dates back 575 million years.



NORTHWEST FOREST