



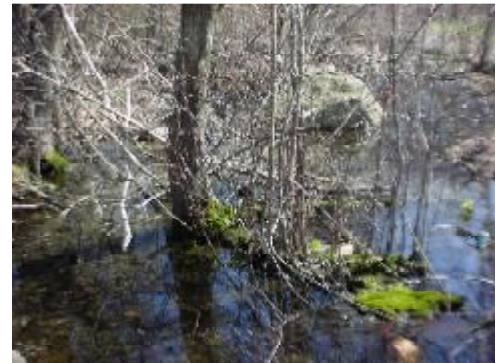
ACT
Advocates for Calm Traffic
Norwalk, Connecticut

Roundabout Norwalk with Photography

Andrews Pond & Field

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Andrews Field, a city-owned parcel of land created for the purpose of providing additional sports facilities for Norwalk High School, is no longer functioning as the school's main sports field. It was created in the tradition of the 1960's through 1980's by filling a wetland area, in this case an irregular circular area off County Street bound by Sunlit Drive, Alrowood Drive, Rome Street and Walter Avenue. As time has passed nature has begun taking back portions of the parcel. When the city took possession of the land approximately 30 years ago it was known as Peat Swamp. The area was a prime example of a New England forested wetland, bog and pond. The 'swamp' was, and still is, fed by upwelling ground water, rain and streams.



The photo on the left shows part of the Andrews wetlands (Peat Swamp) on private property, with the city-owned portion in the background.

The original plant growth consisted of various types of trees (red maple, oak and ash), wetland plants (pond weeds, bulrush, sedge, marsh marigolds, skunk cabbage, yellow flag and ferns) and other types of plants that fed and housed a diverse group of animals, fish, turtle, and birds. Migratory birds and water fowl included black ducks, wood ducks, mallards, great blue herons, great egrets and snowy egrets, red-headed woodpeckers, purple finch, hawks, swamp sparrow, and redwing blackbirds. All of these creatures, and more, currently still use and live in Andrews field and pond.

Andrews Pond & Field



The filling of the pond, caused by the sediment loading, has contributed to weed growth and increased water temperatures by allowing sunlight to penetrate to the pond bottom. The pond and portions of the field area are being invaded by invasive non-native plants, the primary one being the common reed (*phragmites australis*). These non-native invaders are considered a form of 'biological pollution' that poses a serious threat to biological diversity and subsequently render the pond as being unappealing and inhospitable.

The area, which is situated in a residential neighborhood adjacent to a heavily urbanized area, consists of a submerged ball field that has reverted to a shallow pond, a parking lot, and a sports field and track. The area receives high volumes of storm water runoff which carries with it pollutants such as sediment (from road sanding), nutrients (from atmospheric deposition, lawn fertilizers, etc.), and trash (everything from common litter to shopping carts and tires). The primary impacts on the pond are from sediment, which has allowed the area to continue to fill in and has further reduced its depth; nutrients, which feed the growth of algae and aquatic weeds; and trash, which diminishes the pond and its surrounding area's aesthetic appeal.



Present entryway to the park. Sneakers on wires are a signal from drug dealers that says 'Open for Business.'
Dirt bike riders have vandalized the park as seen here with the cut trees.

Andrews Pond & Field



The sports field is gradually sinking back into wetlands, as has the smaller ball field to the east. as time passes.

Evidence of litter and dumping is everywhere: on the field; in the streams; and in the pond.

As the photos below show, there is potential for a natural park with a recreational component, nature center and bird sanctuary.



The Andrews field parcel is a small but very valuable natural resource that can be preserved, protected and maintained as a community project to create a new city park that includes a bird sanctuary and pond. The result will not only enhance area property values but also will restore a long-impacted habitat for wildlife, wetland species and water creatures, including many endangered and threatened species.

The East Norwalk Neighborhood Association is working with the City of Norwalk toward restoring this wetland and improving the park for Norwalk's residents. [Click here for the written Proposal in Adobe Acrobat](#)

A **Friends of Andrews Park** group is being created, whose members will become the nurturers of the restoration process and the protectors of the established park. If you would like to participate please contact sea.to.the.green@sbcglobal.net

Photographs by Laurel Lindstrom

