

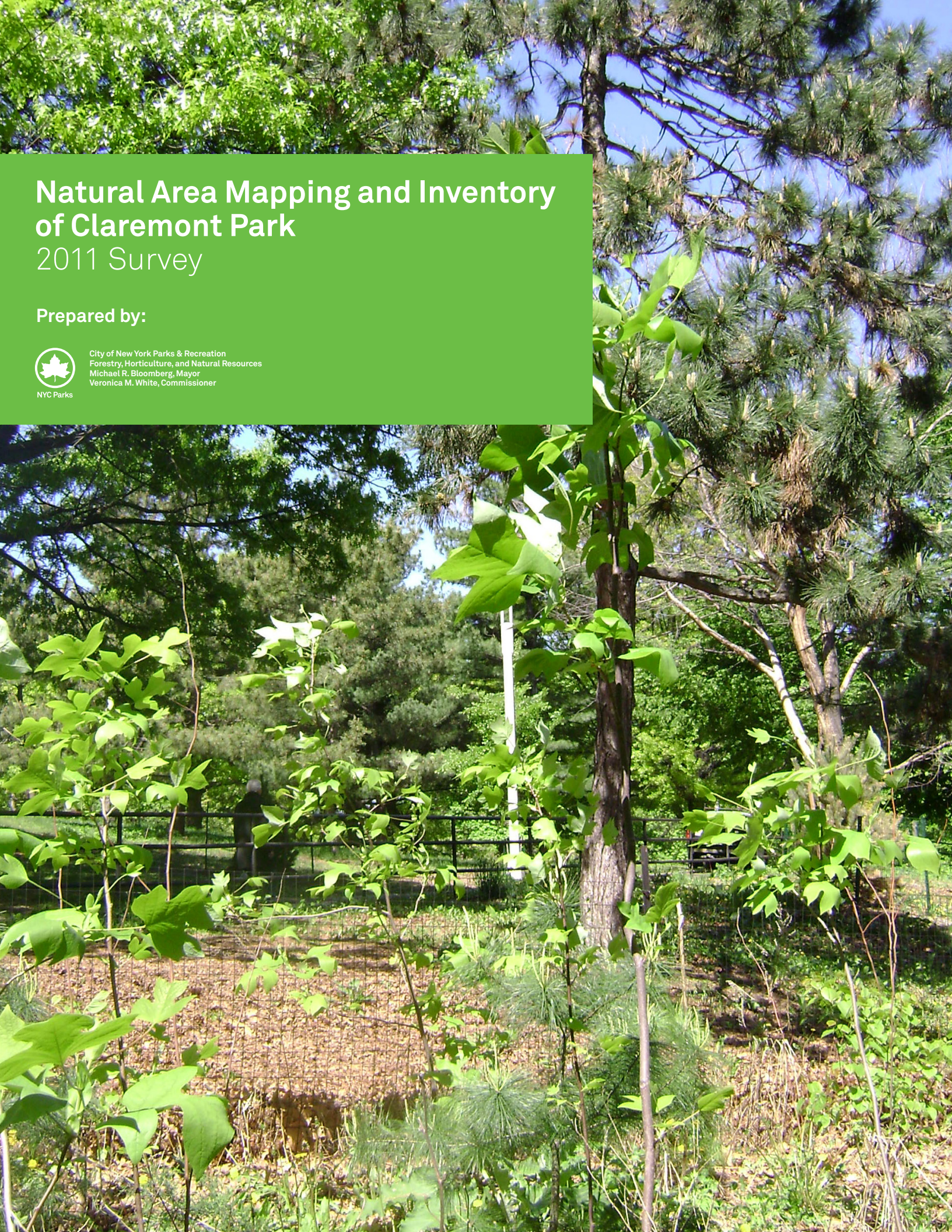
# Natural Area Mapping and Inventory of Claremont Park 2011 Survey

Prepared by:



NYC Parks

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## **Claremont Natural Area Mapping & Inventory Surveyed 2011**

**38.5 acres**

### **Introduction**

The City of New York Parks & Recreation (DPR) manages one of the most extensive and varied park systems of any city in the world. These 29,000 acres of city park property occupy about 15 percent of New York City's total area. In addition to flagship parks such as Central Park and Prospect Park, the city's parklands include over 11,000 acres of natural areas.

Until the 1980's, the DPR was primarily concerned with developed landscapes and recreation facilities rather than natural areas. In the absence of a comprehensive management policy, these areas succumbed to invasive species, pollution and erosion. In 1984, Parks established the Natural Resources Group (NRG) with a mandate to acquire, restore, and manage natural areas in New York City. The wetlands, forests, meadows, and shorelines under Parks jurisdiction provide valuable habitat for hundreds of species, from rare wildflowers to endangered birds of prey. To facilitate the protection, management and restoration of natural areas, NRG began an inventory of parkland using entitation, a process of identifying and describing ecologically distinct plant communities.

### **Entitation**

Originally designed for European landscapes, the system was revised by NRG in 1985 for use in urban parkland. This method of inventory was chosen because it is well suited to the patchy environments often found in urban areas. The focus of this type of survey is to break down a landscape into discrete, manageable units based primarily on dominant vegetation; each unit is described as an "entitation unit". Entitation units are defined using a weighted list of criteria.

The following distinctions qualify entitation units:

- Vegetation cover type (e.g. closed forest, vineland, scrub)
- Dominant canopy vegetation (e.g. Norway maple, hickory, oak)
- Understory vegetation type (e.g. herbs, vines, shrubs)

Additional factors, such as topography, current use, environmental disturbance and soil condition (e.g. wet, moist, and dry) are also taken into account. Using aerial photographs and field reconnaissance, a landscape can be delineated and mapped into distinct ecological entities. These maps and descriptions will serve as baseline ecological data to conduct natural areas management.

### **Data Collection**

To prepare for fieldwork, mapping technicians examine aerial photographs and delineate areas of similar cover and create a strategy for on the ground surveys. In the field, boundaries are identified as described based on ground cover and vegetation types. For each unit, staff records the data listed above, current uses, environmental disturbances, historical indicators, community stability, and a narrative description of the area including management concerns and notable other species present.

Once collected, all of this data is then entered into a central entitation database. The field maps are then digitized in ArcGIS with the boundaries of each unit recreated and linked to the entitation database. Once the digital map and database are linked maps can be created and information can be queried quickly. The final step is to convert the unit map and descriptions into a final report format, which you are now reading.

## **Claremont Park Overview**

### **Land Use History**

The area that is now Claremont Park was historically was an old estate containing farmland, meadows and a swamp. The Claremont mansion was built in 1859 and the grounds were developed with an apple orchard and terraced lawns and that descended to the Mill Brook (now Webster Avenue). Claremont was acquired between 1888-90 during a time of large city land acquisition in an effort to increase parkland in the Bronx.

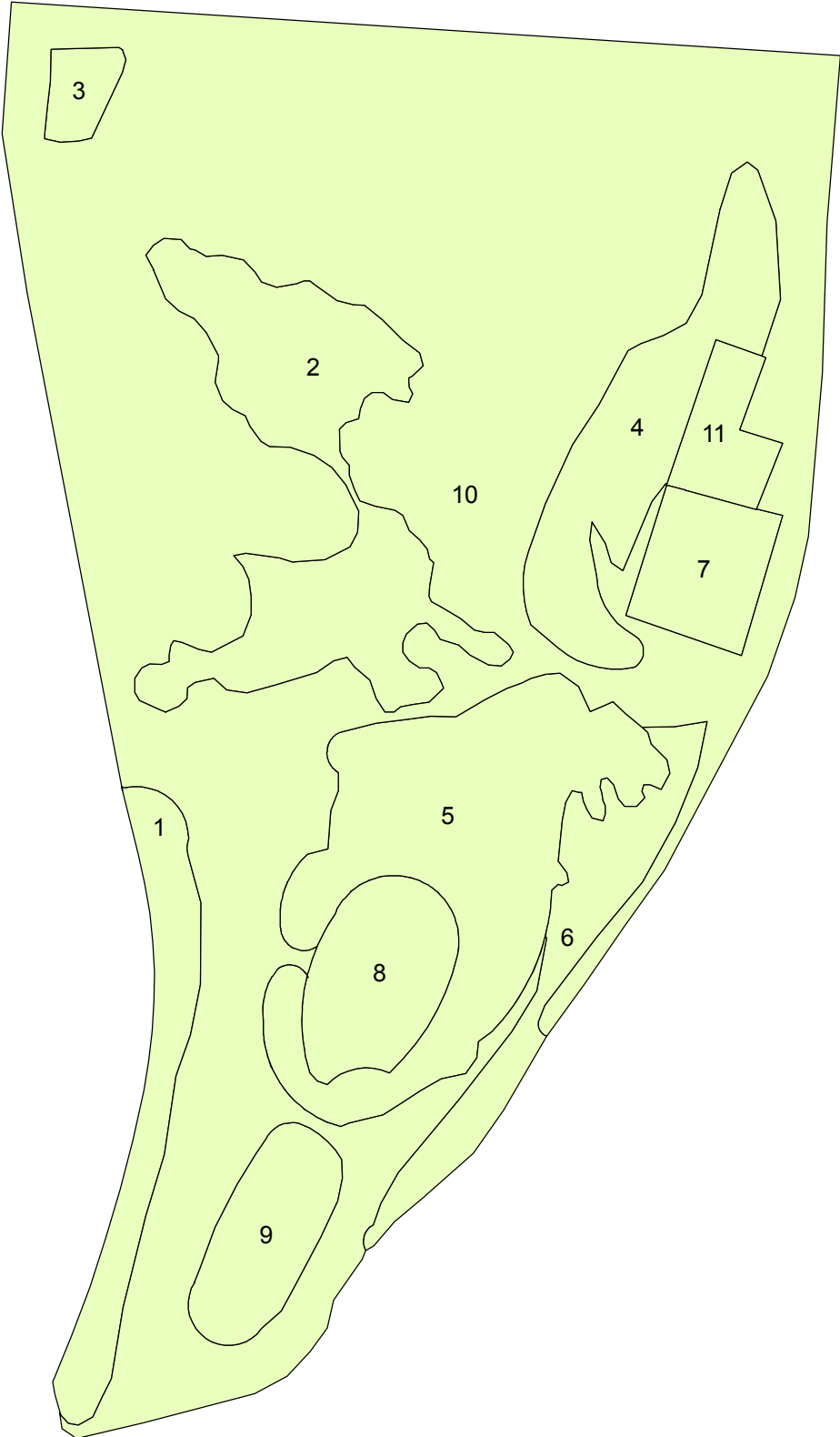
Over time the mansion and orchards were removed, new park paths and local streets were laid, and facilities for baseball and tennis were created. The infamous Black Swamp-which swallowed up livestock in colonial times-was filled in by the early 20th century. In 1914 new playground at Claremont Park opened with swings, shoot-the-chutes (slides), see-saws, swings for different age groups, sand boxes, and basketball courts. The average attendance in the first year was 700 children a day. Substantial changes in the 1930s and 1940s transformed Claremont with new lighting, benches, and playgrounds making the park more inviting to senior citizens, parents, and children. Four new playgrounds opened in the park in 1940. A new outdoor pool and changing rooms opened in the park in 1971. New play equipment and safety surfacing were installed in 1996, and additional play equipment, safety surfacing, swings, pavement, and fencing were installed in 1998. One of the Bronx's oldest parks, Claremont Park has remained on the forefront of conservation and recreation for more than a century.

### **Current Use**

This oasis in a busy Bronx neighborhood currently contains a swimming pool, playground, basketball court, several forested areas, gazebo and large open lawn. Even though most of the park dominated by recreation facilities, landscaped woodland and lawn and a few forested patches dominated by beech, oak and maple trees exist. Recent mandates to improve the forested areas has resulted in invasive species removal and native forest restoration efforts in the park. In 2009 two sites within the park were planted with a mix of native trees and shrubs. This ecological assessment of Claremont Park was conducted in 2011 and should be utilized as a management tool to locate areas with native vegetation, areas that require immediate attention and also serve as a baseline for measuring change over time.

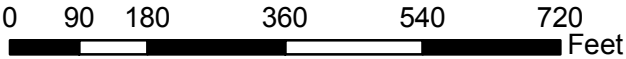
**Technicians:** Clara Pregitzer and Chris Crews.

# Claremont Park 2011 Entitation Bronx, NY



## Legend

 Entitation Unit



# Claremont Park Entitation Unit Descriptions, Surveyed 2011

**Unit:** 1                      **Date of Visit:** 7/12/2011                      **Species Changing:** No  
**Acreage:** 1.27              **Management Concern:** Yes                      **Community Structure Changing:** No  
**Classification:** IB2a1

<u>Site:</u>	<u>Species</u>	<u>Height</u>	<u>Exotic</u>	<u>Historical</u>	<u>Uses</u>	<u>Disturbances</u>
Closed Forest	Oak, pin	<5' & 5-30'	No	Restoration		Trash
Deciduous	Norway maple	<5' & 5-30'	Yes	Planting		
Phanerophytes	Mulberry, white	>30' & 5-30'	Yes			
Slope						
Dry/Moist						

## **Comments:**

This is a forested strip along the western edge of the park. It is bordered by Teller Avenue to the west and a landscaped unit to the east. This is a very diverse unit with mixed native and invasive species. The understory is a mix of tree saplings planted in a reforestation effort and mugwort. The overstory is dominated by pin oak, Norway maple, and white mulberry. Other species include tulip-tree, red maple, American elm, Virginia knotweed, black cherry, white mulberry, porcelainberry, goldenrod, red oak, Oriental bittersweet, Norway maple, garlic mustard, silver maple, great ragweed, slippery elm, serviceberry, Ailanthus, poison ivy, swamp white oak, violet, burdock, wood nettle, white pine, redbud, rubus spp., common plantain, dandelion, lesser calendine, spotted knapweed and London planetree.

**Unit:** 2                      **Date of Visit:** 7/12/2011                      **Species Changing:** No  
**Acreage:** 3.04              **Management Concern:** No                      **Community Structure Changing:** No  
**Classification:** IVA2f

<u>Site:</u>	<u>Species</u>	<u>Height</u>	<u>Exotic</u>	<u>Historical</u>	<u>Uses</u>	<u>Disturbances</u>
Herbaceous	Cool season grass	<5'	No	Planting	Picnic	Soil compaction
Deciduous	Clover, white	<5'	No		Sports	Trash
Thallophytes	Plantain, common	<5'	No		Foot traffic	
Level						
Dry/Moist						

## **Comments:**

This unit is an open lawn used for sports, picnicking and recreation. It is bordered by the landscaped area with large and newly planted pin oak B + B trees. A paved sidewalk goes through the middle of the unit and there are several honey locust trees in the middle.

# Claremont Park Entitation Unit Descriptions, Surveyed 2011

**Unit:** 3                      **Date of Visit:** 7/12/2011                      **Species Changing:** No  
**Acreage:** 0.28                      **Management Concern:** No                      **Community Structure Changing:** No  
**Classification:** VD

<u>Site:</u>	<u>Species</u>	<u>Height</u>	<u>Exotic</u>	<u>Historical</u>	<u>Uses</u>	<u>Disturbances</u>
Scarcely Vegetated Deciduous Thallophytes Level Dry	Oak, pin	<5' & >30'	No	Paved path	Sports	

## **Comments:**

This is a constructed playground at the northwestern edge of the park. This area is scarcely vegetated. Pin oaks have been planted here. Some mugwort and common plantain exist in cracks.

**Unit:** 4                      **Date of Visit:** 7/12/2011                      **Species Changing:** No  
**Acreage:** 1.99                      **Management Concern:** Yes                      **Community Structure Changing:** No  
**Classification:** IB2a3

<u>Site:</u>	<u>Species</u>	<u>Height</u>	<u>Exotic</u>	<u>Historical</u>	<u>Uses</u>	<u>Disturbances</u>
Closed Forest Deciduous Hemicryptophytes Slope Dry	Norway maple Mulberry, white Elm, slippery Knotweed, Virginia	all all >30' & 5-30' <5'	Yes Yes No No	Fence Planting Paved path	Foot traffic	Erosion Soil compaction Dumping

## **Comments:**

This is a forested strip along the eastern edge of the park. The eastern side of the unit is bordered by ball fields, and the western by a paved pathway. This unit is dominated by Norway maple, white mulberry, slippery elm and Virginia knotweed. There is an old stone and concrete wall running the length of the unit halfway down slope, with a series of dirt paths interspersed. The area is poorly kept with large amounts of trash and dumping requiring immediate attention. There was a dead animal wrapped in a bag and covered with maggots along the top of the stairs on the eastern entrance. Other species include violet, burdock, wood sorrel, lambs quarters, eastern cottonwood, mugwort, black cherry, pokeweed, ragweed, red oak, hawthorn, garlic mustard, hackberry, choke cherry, bush honeysuckle, red mulberry, Siberian elm, American beech, blue beech, Virginia creeper, poison ivy, Ailanthus, pin oak, basswood and multiflora rose.

# Claremont Park Entitation Unit Descriptions, Surveyed 2011

**Unit:** 5                      **Date of Visit:** 7/12/2011                      **Species Changing:** No  
**Acreeage:** 3.76                      **Management Concern:** No                      **Community Structure Changing:** No  
**Classification:** IIB1e

<u>Site:</u>	<u>Species</u>	<u>Height</u>	<u>Exotic</u>	<u>Historical</u>	<u>Uses</u>	<u>Disturbances</u>
Woodland	Pine, Austrian	all	Yes	Full-crown tree	Picnic	Soil compaction
Mixed	Pine, white	>30'	No		Foot traffic	Trash
Thallophytes	Oak, pin	>30' & 5-30'	No			
Slope	Norway maple	>30'	Yes			
Dry/Moist	Mulberry, white	5'-30'	Yes			
	Cool season grass	<5'	No			

## **Comments:**

This unit is a woodland with a mix of evergreen and deciduous trees landscaped trees surrounding Claremont Pool. Austrian Pine dominates with many over 30 feet and some newly planted saplings. White pine, pin oak, and Norway maple are also dominant throughout the unit with a mowed lawn understory. The other species include: hawthorn, white mulberry, mugwort, clover, plantain, sawtooth oak, red oak, American elm, black cherry, and dandelion.

**Unit:** 6                      **Date of Visit:** 7/12/2011                      **Species Changing:** No  
**Acreeage:** 1.29                      **Management Concern:** Yes                      **Community Structure Changing:** No  
**Classification:** IVA2f

<u>Site:</u>	<u>Species</u>	<u>Height</u>	<u>Exotic</u>	<u>Historical</u>	<u>Uses</u>	<u>Disturbances</u>
Herbaceous	Norway maple	all	Yes		Foot traffic	Dumping
Deciduous	Oak, pin	>30'	No			Trash
Thallophytes	Elm, American	>30' & 5-30'	No			Soil compaction
Level	Mulberry, white	>30' & 5-30'	Yes			
Dry						

## **Comments:**

This is a forested strip along the southeastern section of the park. It is a closed forest with a sparse mixed understory dominated by Virginia knotweed, wood aster and wood nettle. Norway maple dominates the overstory with a few large pin oak and American elm trees. A few blue beech trees also exist within the unit. There is a large amount of trash scattered and dumped within the unit. A reforestation area within the unit contains prolific tulip trees, white pine, and eastern red cedar. Other species include: pokeweed, bush honeysuckle, Ailanthus, mugwort, black cherry, multiflora rose, hawthorn, white oak, slippery elm, poison ivy, garlic mustard, black locust, clover, smartweed, pin oak, blue beech, devils walking stick, violet, wood sorrel, red oak, redbud, dogwood, and Eastern cottonwood.

Claremont Park Entitation Unit Descriptions, Surveyed 2011

**Unit:** 7      **Date of Visit:** 7/12/2011      **Species Changing:** No  
**Acreage:** 0.81      **Management Concern:** No      **Community Structure Changing:** No  
**Classification:** IVA2f

<u>Site:</u>	<u>Species</u>	<u>Height</u>	<u>Exotic</u>	<u>Historical</u>	<u>Uses</u>	<u>Disturbances</u>
Herbaceous	Cool season grass	<5'	No	Fence	Picnic	Soil compaction
Deciduous	Elm, American	>30'	No		Sports	Trash
Thallophytes					Foot traffic	
Level						
Dry						

**Comments:**

This unit is a baseball diamond dominated by cool season grass. American Elm trees border the baseball diamond to the south and east. The southeast end of the unit is adjacent to Clay Ave and Claremont Parkway intersection. Fences with a few white mulberry saplings surround the diamond.

**Unit:** 8      **Date of Visit:** 7/12/2011      **Species Changing:** No  
**Acreage:** 1.13      **Management Concern:** No      **Community Structure Changing:** No  
**Classification:** VD

<u>Site:</u>	<u>Species</u>	<u>Height</u>	<u>Exotic</u>	<u>Historical</u>	<u>Uses</u>	<u>Disturbances</u>
Scarcely Vegetated				Other	Sports	Soil compaction
Deciduous					Foot traffic	Dumping
Therophytes						Trash
Level						
Dry						

**Comments:**

This is a pool and parks facility area.



# Claremont Park Entitation Unit Descriptions, Surveyed 2011

**Unit:** 9                      **Date of Visit:** 7/12/2011                      **Species Changing:** No  
**Acreage:** 0.96              **Management Concern:** No                      **Community Structure Changing:** No  
**Classification:** VD

<u>Site:</u>	<u>Species</u>	<u>Height</u>	<u>Exotic</u>	<u>Historical</u>	<u>Uses</u>	<u>Disturbances</u>
Scarcely Vegetated	Oak, pin	>30'	No		Sports	
Evergreen	Locust, honey		No		Other	
Phanerophytes	Cool season grass	<5'	No			
Level						
Dry/Moist						

## **Comments:**

This unit is a recreation area with basketball and squash courts. During the summer, it is also used as a summer camp recreation area for children. There are a few planted Pin Oaks scattered within the unit for shade. Other species include honey locust, Kentucky bluegrass, and crabgrass.

**Unit:** 10                      **Date of Visit:** 7/12/2011                      **Species Changing:** No  
**Acreage:** 23.29              **Management Concern:** No                      **Community Structure Changing:** No  
**Classification:** IIB2a5

<u>Site:</u>	<u>Species</u>	<u>Height</u>	<u>Exotic</u>	<u>Historical</u>	<u>Uses</u>	<u>Disturbances</u>
Woodland	Beech, blue	>30'	No	Full-crown tree	Sports	Soil compaction
Deciduous	Oak, pin	>30'	No	Lamppost		Trash
Thallophytes				Paved path		
Level						
Dry/Moist						

## **Comments:**

This is a landscaped unit with large ornamental trees in similar proportion throughout and mowed lawn that dominates a majority of this park. Other species include: red oak, Norway maple, American elm, Ailanthus, hawthorn spp., white oak, London planetree, red and white mulberry, sawtooth oak, tuliptree, red maple, silver maple, ragweed, rubus spp., goldenrod, slippery elm, choke cherry, black cherry, honey locust, porcelainberry, Virginia knotweed, poison ivy, wood sorrel, burdock, and Canadian thistle.

Claremont Park Entitation Unit Descriptions, Surveyed 2011

**Unit:** 11                      **Date of Visit:** 7/12/2011                      **Species Changing:** No  
**Acreage:** 0.52                      **Management Concern:** No                      **Community Structure Changing:** No  
**Classification:** VD

<u>Site:</u>	<u>Species</u>	<u>Height</u>	<u>Exotic</u>	<u>Historical</u>	<u>Uses</u>	<u>Disturbances</u>
Scarcely Vegetated	Cool season grass	<5'	No		Sports	
Deciduous	Mugwort	<5'	Yes			
Thallophytes	Plantain, common	<5'	No			
Level						
Dry						

**Comments:**

This unit is a basketball and squash court. There is scarce vegetation mostly along the border of the fences. Large ornamental trees surround the unit but are not included.