

NORWOOD

- COUNTY: Bergen
- MUNICIPALITY: Alpine, Norwood, Rockleigh Boroughs
- PHYSIOGRAPHIC PROVINCE: Piedmont
- QUAD: Yonkers, Nyack
- COORDINATES: Central point: 40° 59' 20" lat.;
73° 55' 45" long.
- ACREAGE: Approximately 470 acres.
- OWNERSHIP: The majority of Norwood is owned by the Greater New York Boy Scouts Council. Norwood Easthill Associates, a real estate partnership is currently contract purchaser for the portion of the Scout property lying within Norwood Borough (151 acres). Purchase of this property from the Scouts, and subsequent development, is contingent on planning board approval. Additional portions are also believed to be in private ownership.
- LAND USE: The site appears to be primarily recreational. Portions within Alpine Borough still receive light use by the Scouts, and structures from former Scout use still remain in Norwood Borough (a segment of a road, two small buildings, two water pumping stations). A trail extends within Norwood Borough south from Piermont Ave. to the Norwood-Rockleigh boundary. Additional trails are generally lacking.
- NATURAL RESOURCE ELEMENTS:
1. PLANT COMMUNITY TYPES: Community type and composition is described by Serrao (1985). The entire tract is covered by a closed canopy of mixed hardwoods of varying age and composition, with some minor stands of hemlock occurring on steep stream slopes at higher elevations. Forest types include mature mixed oak characteristic of the summit of the Palisades. Red, white, black and chestnut oak, and black birch dominate the canopy which also includes beech, pignut hickory, sugar maple and tulip-tree. Within Norwood Borough, one portion consists of a wetland forest dominated by bitternut

hickory, a forest type unique to the Palisades. An additional forest type occurring along the stream valley which drains the tract includes sycamore, black birch, beech and yellow birch. Spicebush is the most common shrub species associated with the entire tract, and a variety of characteristic mesic forest herbs predominate. Of special note is the size and presumable extreme age of trees of various species. The tract supports some of the largest trees of the Palisades area, and a few approach State records including specimens of bitternut hickory, yellow and black birch, and tulip-tree over 17 feet in circumference (possibly the largest forest tree of the NJ Palisades)(Serrao, 1985). In addition, this forest forms part of a much larger tract of younger, more disturbed woods of up to 1000 acres extending to the Palisades Interstate Park, making Norwood part of perhaps the largest remaining forested open space area in Bergen County still susceptible to development.

2. WILDLIFE: Serrao (1985) reports that the 1000 acre tract of which Norwood is a part supports the larger of two remaining herds of white tailed deer on the NJ Palisades. Additional mammals noted by Serrao (1985) include striped skunk, opossum, raccoon, red and gray fox, longtail weasel, shorttail shrew, common mole, woodchuck, eastern chipmunk, gray squirrel, white-footed mouse, pine and meadow vole, and cottontail rabbit.

The large size, unfragmented and undisturbed nature, well developed stratification, and variety of forest types allow Norwood, along with adjacent forest tracts, to support one of the highest densities of breeding forest birds in northeastern NJ (Serrao, 1985). Norwood is known to support species of warblers, vireos, flycatchers and thrushes which migrate to tropical America and are believed to be decreasing in eastern forests due in part to the fragmentation of the woodlands in which they breed (Serrao, 1985a). Some Norwood species are now extremely rare or absent from the rest of the NJ Palisades. Additional species known to breed at Norwood include the great horned owl, red-tailed hawk, ruffed grouse and pileated woodpecker.

3. RARE PLANTS: No rare plant species are currently or historically known from Norwood.
4. RARE WILDLIFE: The red-shouldered hawk (Buteo lineatus)(NJ Threatened) has been seen in Norwood during the breeding season, although confirmation of its breeding status is needed (Serrao, 1985).
5. GEOLOGICAL/TOPOGRAPHIC FEATURES: Norwood is underlain by sediments of Triassic Age (Brunswick/Stockton Formation) which are composed of sandstone, shale and

conglomerate materials. Soils within Bergen County have not been described, but are generally loamy and well drained within this region. Elevations range from approximately 60 to 460 feet and the topography is rugged, sloping down sharply to the west. Numerous streams lie within gorges in an east-west orientation, and the site lies within the Hackensack River Basin.

PROTECTABILITY:

The portion lying within Norwood Borough (151 acres), which contains the oldest and most well developed forests, is immediately threatened with residential development by Norwood Easthill Associates. Additional portions under Scout ownership appear equally vulnerable to future sale and development, based on the current land sale practices of this group. The status of remaining portions is unknown. Protection of the upper portions of the landscape should insure the future integrity of areas downstream to the west. One strategy for partial preservation could include cluster development as near to Piermont Road as possible.

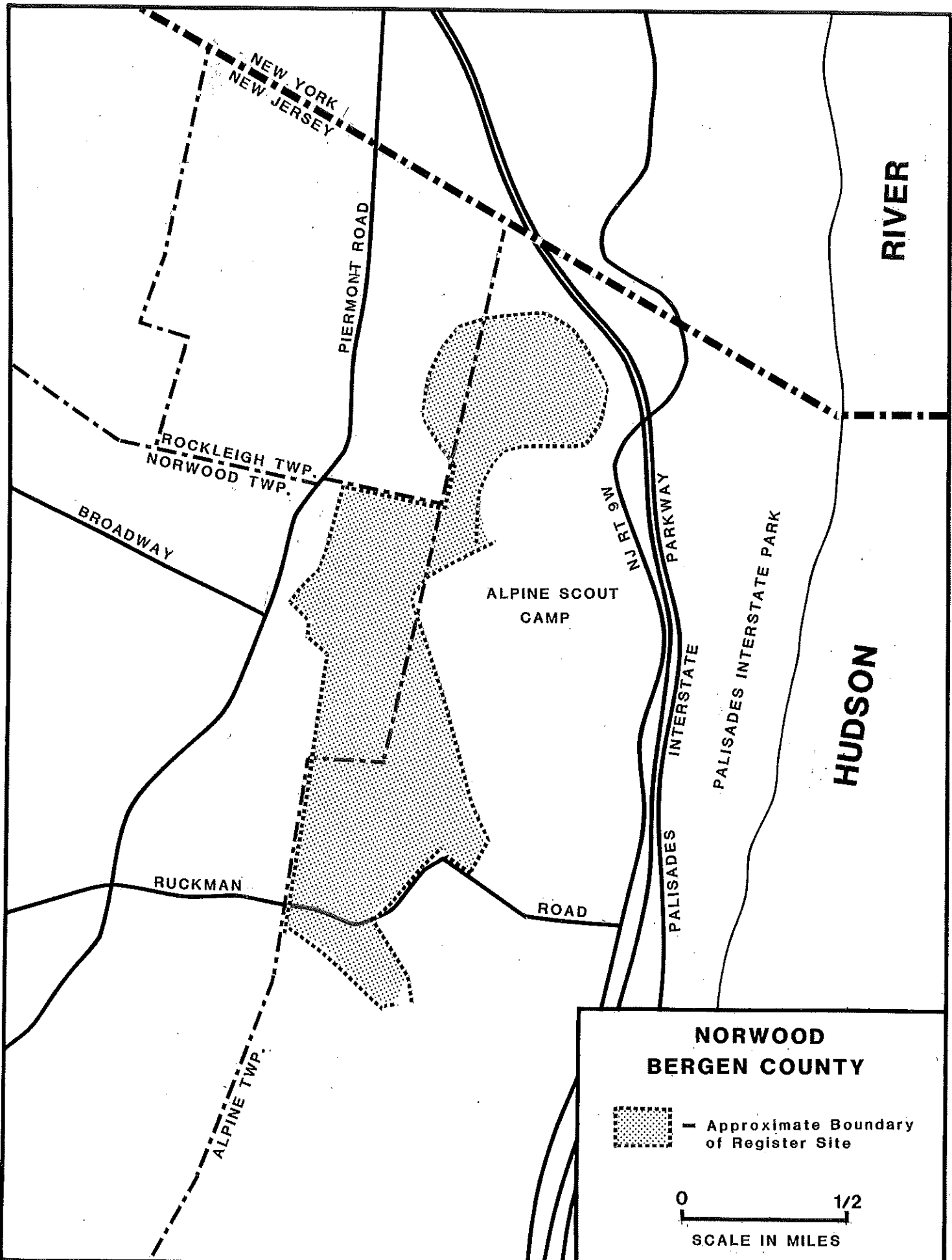
REASON FOR INCLUSION OF AREA IN NATURAL AREAS REGISTER:

Norwood satisfies at least one of four standards for inclusion of sites within the Register of Natural Areas (fulfillment of only one standard is needed for Register consideration):

1. As part of one of the few remaining large forest tracts in this part of the state, Norwood provides a significant habitat for wildlife of NJ, particularly bird species.

REFERENCES CITED:

- Serrao, J. 1985. The Norwood East Hill Tract. Unpublished report prepared for the Norwood Easthill Watch. 9pp.
- Serrao, J. 1985a. Decline of forest songbirds. Records of New Jersey Birds 11:5-9.



**NORWOOD
BERGEN COUNTY**

 - Approximate Boundary of Register Site

