

# Project Spotlight



## Tibbetts Brook Park North

### Project:

Tibbetts Brook Park North  
Athletic Field Complex

Yonkers, New York

### Client:

Westchester County

Department of Parks,  
Recreation and  
Conservation

### Contact:

David DeLucia, RLA,  
Superintendent of  
Parks Facilities  
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### Design Award:

N.Y.S. Recreation  
and Parks Society  
2009 Outstanding Facility  
Award "Class III"

### Completion:

June 2007

### History

Tibbetts Brook Park was named after a 17<sup>th</sup> century pioneer settler, George Tippet, who purchased the land in 1668 from Elias Doughty, an owner of the massive, inherited estate which encompassed all the land from Hudson and Bronx Rivers to the Saw Mill River. George Tippet's descendants were driven off the property after the American Revolution for their royalist efforts, and the land was confiscated and sold off by the State. Westchester County, which is the current property owner, purchased 161 acres of this undeveloped land in 1927 and subsequently incorporated it into its Parks, Recreation and Conservation system.

### Project Background

Design and construction of the Tibbetts Brook Park Athletic Field Complex was funded through the Westchester Legacy Program, introduced by County Executive Andrew J. Spano in 2001. In this program, \$10 million per year for a period of five years was to be put into the County's capital budget to protect and enhance the county's open space system by acquiring open space; directing capital spending for recreation to the population centers in the southern portion of the county; and to develop much-needed facilities for active recreation including ball fields. Traditionally, local municipalities would turn to New York

State for grants to fund their new recreation facility construction projects. However, with the Westchester Legacy program in-place and funding for its capital projects available, the City of Yonkers was provided with a much-needed option to fund the construction of additional athletic fields.

As a result, City of Yonkers's representatives requested assistance from Westchester County to provide much-needed athletic field areas for their expanding sports programs. Two new county sports facilities located within driving distance from the Yonkers, Saxon Woods Park in White Plains and Croton Point Park in

Croton, were already being used to their full capacity. Specifically, a shortage of soccer playing venues needed to be addressed due to prevailing demographics of the City of Yonkers, and ever-increasing popularity of soccer among youth athletic programs.

The ground-breaking ceremony for the project took place on October 5, 2005, and after more than three years of planning, design, negotiations and construction, the Athletic Field Complex at Tibbetts Brook Park North was opened to all Westchester County residents on June 9, 2007.

### Design Challenges

The design team led by Ward Associates, P.C. presented a design solution incorporating three synthetic turf multi-use sports fields at the northernmost section of the park, in an area providing a buffer between the park and the Cross County Parkway being used for maintenance and storage by the Department of Parks, Recreation and Museums. Modern synthetic turf was chosen because of its ability to stand up to year round, heavy use, the difficulty and high cost of watering and maintaining natural turf fields over a long period of time, as well as the large amount of down time required for natural turf to rest. The 3 fields were laid out to circumvent an historic bridge over the Tibbetts Brook and to minimize effects on the passive recreation areas at the north end of the park. The first regulatory issue the design team encountered was the site's location in the vicinity of wetlands. In early pre-construction phases of the project it became obvious that site's natural habitat would be very sensitive to any construction activities and any disturbance would need to be mitigated. In accordance with the site's Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and through coordination with numerous environmental agencies including the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the design team introduced 2.3 acres of new wetland areas to mitigate wetlands disturbed and to treat stormwater discharges from the athletic field complex into the Tibbetts Brook. Several environmental permits were required prior to the start of construction.

The next major design challenge was presented by the fact that the Tibbetts Brook and another small stream that collect

▼ Multi-Use Field



▼ Soccer Field



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### About the Author:

Curt has been with Ward for 20 years and currently leads the firm's landscape architecture department.

Curt is a Certified Public Playground Safety Inspector and a member of various parks and recreation societies.

stormwater runoff from within the park and from a large watershed north of the park, were passing through the heart of the proposed athletic field



Tibbetts Brook Park North, Athletic Field Complex

maximum field usage in all weather conditions, year round. Other field amenities include a 1,380 square foot park accessory building with comfort stations, office and maintenance/storage areas supporting the various park

complex. Design solutions included culverting the streams under the athletic fields. As the streams clear the athletic fields and the park loop road, they daylight through decorative stone headwalls into their original stream bed, and ultimately discharge into existing and newly created wetland areas via an elaborate system of bio-retentive provisions.

activities, aluminum spectator grandstands, illuminated electric scoreboards at each field, drinking fountains, retaining/seating walls, masonry steps and ADA-compliant access ramps, trash receptacles and ornamental path lighting and signage.

Also included was porous pavement parking area for 125 vehicles with landscaped bio-retention islands for control and treatment of stormwater, ornamental parking and roadway lights back to the park entrance on Midland Avenue, bicycle racks, trash receptacles at various locations throughout the complex, vinyl-clad chain link fencing and gates for security, roadway pavement improvements, and all supporting drainage and utility systems. Landscaping of the complex to buffer the fields from adjacent passive recreation areas to the south and from the Cross County Parkway to the north was accomplished using native trees and shrubs including oaks, maples, willows, pines, cedars, hollies, and other lower growth trees and shrubs.

During site investigations and geotechnical analysis early in the design process, project engineers found that large areas of the site contained unsuitable subsoil for construction of the fields and facilities. To solve this problem, certain areas required over excavation to remove the unsuitable material and replace with suitable fill that could be compacted to the required density for construction of the fields, parking area, light structures and other improvements.

### Project Components

The 12.6-acre project consisted of three multi-purpose, modern synthetic turf athletic fields. Because of space limitations at the site, only one of the fields was designed at the maximum size of 360 feet long by 225 feet wide to accommodate adult soccer and football games. The other two fields were designed at a smaller size of 300 feet long by 195 feet wide to accommodate most varsity soccer and all youth soccer programs, as well as youth football, lacrosse, field hockey and other sports. All three fields are provided with state-of-the-art, subsurface drainage system and sports lighting for night use, which provides for

### Park Use

The athletic field complex is operated through an Inter-Municipal Agreement (IMA) between Westchester County and the City of Yonkers, where the City gets first priority for programming while taking on the responsibilities of maintenance of the fields and facilities. Any potential field space user needs to register with the City. Currently, some major users include local school youth and collegiate athletic programs, adult amateur leagues, travel leagues, and other active-recreation municipal programs. The New York Red Bulls Academy has played several pick-up games at the Tibbetts Brook Park North complex in summer of 2008.

▼ Parking Lot Bioretention Islands



▼ ADA-compliant Access Ramps



▼ Stream Culverting



▼ Park Accessory Building

