



## HELP US TURN OUR DREAM INTO REALITY



*Vernay Lake on the Croft Property*

Teatown and the community have an opportunity to protect a 59-acre parcel of open space, including the beautiful nine-acre Vernay Lake, that lies within the heart of Teatown. This once in a lifetime opportunity will only be possible by bringing together a team of individuals, organizations, and government agencies. Teatown already has support from several key individuals, environmental groups and government officials. Now we need your help!

The **Croft Open Space Acquisition Project** is a collaborative effort to protect 59 acres of open space, which is part of the 72-acre Croft estate, located across the street from Teatown's Nature Center on Spring Valley Road

in Yorktown. The estate includes two houses ("the farmhouse" and "the manor house") situated on five acres and eight acres respectively, which will both be resold. Once purchased, the 59 acres of open space will be forever protected as part of Teatown Lake Reservation or as an extension of the adjacent Westchester County-owned Shadow Lake property (which is managed by Teatown under a 99-year agreement). Local citizens will immediately benefit from the new parkland and walking trails, and Teatown will ensure that it is managed and cared for in excellent fashion.

The value of this open space parcel, however, goes well beyond the recreational benefits. Acquisition of this land is imperative to Teatown's 834-acre nature preserve, as it is in the center of Teatown's land holdings, and will connect several pieces of protected land that have historically been physically separated by the privately-owned Croft property. Significantly, the parcel also is an important component of the remaining local open space. Protecting a sufficient number of parcels in the region through a network of conserved lands ultimately is necessary for the long-term ecological sustainability of Northern Westchester and the Hudson Hills and Highlands. The Croft open space parcel contains significant undisturbed forest, a freshwater swamp and a nine-acre freshwater lake that drains into a sub-watershed of the Croton Reservoir (part of New York City's drinking water supply) that also includes Shadow Lake and Teatown Lake.

In addition to the significant recreational and ecological value of the Croft property, participants in Teatown's environmental education programs will benefit from the surprisingly "wild" property that will remain pristine forever because it is surrounded by Teatown's protected land and the County's Shadow Lake property.

# THE CROFT OPEN SPACE ACQUISITION PROJECT

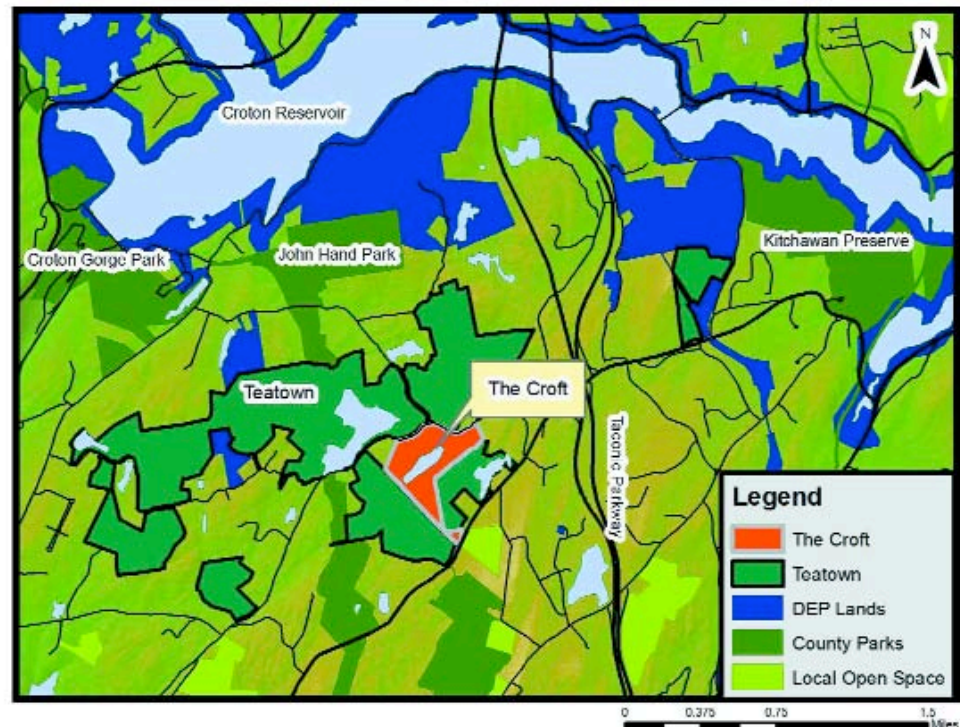


## THE PROJECT WILL INVOLVE TWO KEY STEPS:

Teatown will purchase the overall estate property, consisting of 72 acres, two houses and outbuildings for \$3.5 million. We will then subdivide the property as follows: 59 acres will be left forever as open space; five acres and a farmhouse will be sold to an heir of the estate; and eight acres including the Croft manor house will be sold.

The remaining 59 acres of open space will be managed by Teatown Lake Reservation. It can be expected to be used by thousands of people each year, including the 10,000 hikers who use our trails and the 18,000 people that attend one of our education programs (e.g. preschool and after school programs, summer and vacation camps for children ages 4-14, K-12 school classes, family weekend activities, and adult education classes).

## THE CROFT AND PROTECTED OPEN SPACE IN NORTHERN WESTCHESTER COUNTY



## REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROJECT

The Wildlife Conservation Society has identified key lands in Westchester as being regionally significant because of their high-quality habitat for plants and wildlife. The Croton-to-Highlands Biodiversity Area, in New Castle, Cortlandt, Yorktown and Putnam Valley is one such area, and it has been listed as a priority area in the newly revised New York State Open Space Conservation Plan. The Croft property forms the southern boundary of this wildlife corridor.

The parcel also is part of the larger, Hudson Hills and Highlands, which encompasses most of Westchester and Putnam Counties, and parts of Dutchess, Rockland, and Orange Counties. The bioregion is home to 785,000 people living in 37 towns and cities that on average are located within 35 miles of New York City. The region provides about 10% of the drinking water for New York City. It is significant that the Croft land is part of Croton Reservoir and New York City's drinking water supply watershed. While nature in the Hudson Hills and Highlands remains relatively healthy, it is facing increasing levels of threat from: (1) habitat loss and fragmentation from sprawling land development; (2) non-native, invasive species and emerging diseases; (3) pollution; (4) climate change; and (5) human population pressures. Protecting additional open space and proactively conserving more nature will be keys to the region's long-term ecological health. By buying this 59 acre parcel of open space, the project participants have an opportunity to enhance and protect a significant land parcel in our regional community.

# THE CROFT OPEN SPACE ACQUISITION PROJECT



## LOCAL BENEFITS OF THE PROJECT

Hikers will enjoy the woodlands and pristine lake on the Croft property. It is noteworthy that the lake is a short walk from Teatown's Nature Center and parking lot. This accessibility will allow hikers of all ages to enjoy the scenic beauty, including Teatown's many senior hikers. Additionally, our youth programming will be greatly enhanced. Teatown reaches 9,000 children annually through its school, camp, and scout programs.

The new land's Vernay Lake and other habitats will be included in Teatown's environmental education programs. By acquiring the Croft, new trails on the parcel will connect to Teatown's 15-mile trail system, offering users an extended hiking experience.

**To summarize, the acquisition of the Croft open space will result in the following benefits:**

- A regionally important piece of natural property will remain undeveloped, including a fragile watershed that is part of the New York City drinking water supply system.
- Protection of the parcel will strengthen the ecological health and long-term sustainability of adjacent open space lands found in Teatown's nature preserve and Westchester County's Shadow Lake Park. This relatively wild area is home for rare mammals such as otters and fishers, and its wetlands provide critical habitat for rare dragonflies and butterflies.
- Visitors to Teatown will have expanded recreational trails and education programs. Access for all ages to beautiful Vernay Lake especially is noteworthy.

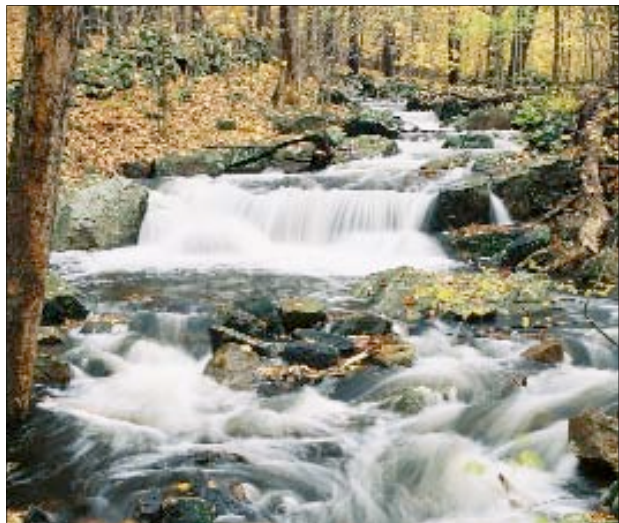
## STATUS OF SALE

Teatown has signed a contract with an option to purchase the entire estate, consisting of 72 acres of land and two houses, for \$3.5 million. We are in the process of subdividing the property: 59 acres as open space; five acres and a farmhouse will be sold to an heir of the estate; and eight acres and the Croft manor house will be sold. The cost of the open space land is \$2.3 million with additional expenses estimated at \$675,000 for a total project budget of \$2,975,000. With the generous support of the Open Space Institute (\$647,500 grant and a \$647,500 3-year loan), New York State (\$300,000 grant), donor pledges (\$1,297,400) and Teatown's Land Fund (\$100,000) we already have raised \$2,344,900 (78% of the need).

## LAND ACQUISITION LEADERSHIP

Teatown Lake Reservation will in 2013 celebrate its 50th Anniversary. In five decades, the organization's nature preserve has grown from 190 acres to 834 acres. This growth is remarkable for a local, community-based preserve and is one of our region's greatest conservation success stories. These achievements were attained by adding land -- one project at a time -- through the leadership, hard work and support of a committed board, staff and group of local citizens. It also is significant that Teatown's land acquisition projects often included building public-private partnerships between Teatown, government agencies, and other environmental organizations.

# THE CROFT OPEN SPACE ACQUISITION PROJECT



As land continues to be developed in the region, the foresight of saving land at Teatown is proving to be increasingly valuable. Imagine if we had stopped our growth with only the original 190 acres! Teatown 834 acres sits in a regional landscape of nearly 2,000 protected acres (see map, page 2), which helps make Teatown the natural jewel of Northern Westchester. Obtaining the Croft open space land in the heart of Teatown in many ways will complete the legacy of Teatown Lake Reservation's first 50 years!

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

We urgently need your financial support with a gift or donation pledge today. We hope to close on the property by November 2010. If you have any questions about the project,

please call Executive Director, Fred Koontz at 914-762-2912, x116 or call Anne Bishop, Director of Major Gifts & Planned Giving, x113.

**Together we can make a difference, forever!**

## ABOUT TEATOWN LAKE RESERVATION

Teatown Lake Reservation is a nonprofit, environmental organization with an 834-acre nature preserve and education center located in the Lower Hudson Valley in the Towns of Yorktown, Cortlandt, and New Castle, New York. Teatown's mission is to conserve open space and to educate and involve the regional community in order to sustain the diversity of wildlife, plants and habitats for future generations.

Located in the heart of the Lower Hudson Valley's Hudson Hills and Highlands, Teatown is the largest nonprofit nature preserve in Westchester County. About 28,000 people come each year to attend an education program, visit the Nature Center, hike our trails, or tour Wildflower Island, a two-acre island sanctuary located within Teatown Lake that is home to over 230 native and endangered species of wildflowers. Teatown's educators offer adult, family and children's programs to over 18,000 participants annually, including nearly 9,000 school children and 700 summer campers. Annually, over 10,000 hikers traverse Teatown's 15 miles of scenic trails that span abundant fields, mixed forests, lakes, streams, swamps and farm land. Our Nature Center is a source of wildlife knowledge and home to a variety of amphibians, birds of prey, mammals and reptiles.

In addition, Teatown is rapidly developing a reputation as the Hudson Hills and Highlands' foremost environmental organization, providing conservation leadership to this bioregion, which encompasses most of Westchester and Putnam Counties, and parts of Dutchess, Orange and Rockland Counties. We provide assistance to civic leaders in crafting practical solutions to environmental issues and help land owners and residents become more "nature friendly between the parks." To learn more, visit [www.teatown.org](http://www.teatown.org).



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