

Section 1.0 Introduction

In the spring of 2003, the Westchester County Department of Planning received a grant from the New York State Department of Conservation Hudson River Estuary Program (Hudson River Estuary Program) to work with the communities in the Croton Bay Watershed, which consists of the Croton Gorge and Indian Brook subwatersheds, to prepare a Watershed Conservation Action Plan. The Croton Bay Watershed Steering Committee, an inter-municipal committee consisting of representatives from the Towns of Cortlandt, Ossining, and New Castle, the Villages of Ossining and Croton-on-Hudson and Westchester County was created. The Westchester County Department of Planning provided technical and administrative assistance to the Croton Bay Steering Committee in carrying out its goals related to the creation of the plan.

The Indian Brook-Croton Gorge Watershed Conservation Action Plan (the plan) is the first comprehensive watershed program developed along the Hudson River in Westchester County. Prior to the Indian Brook-Croton Gorge Watershed Conservation Action Plan, environmental initiatives along the Hudson River were limited or fragmented and were based on individual community/project needs and resources.

In order to develop a comprehensive watershed program for the Croton Bay Watershed, (the watershed), each municipality, municipal representative and Westchester County had to agree to the same goals and objectives for the watershed. At the beginning of the planning process, six major goals for the plan were established relating to:

- Protecting and restoring the natural resources, most significantly the Croton River, Indian Brook Reservoir, Existing Wetlands and Groundwater Drinking Sources
- Developing and implementing stormwater management practices that will improve water quality
- Promoting sustainable development through land use and environmental regulations;
- Preserving and protecting existing wildlife and

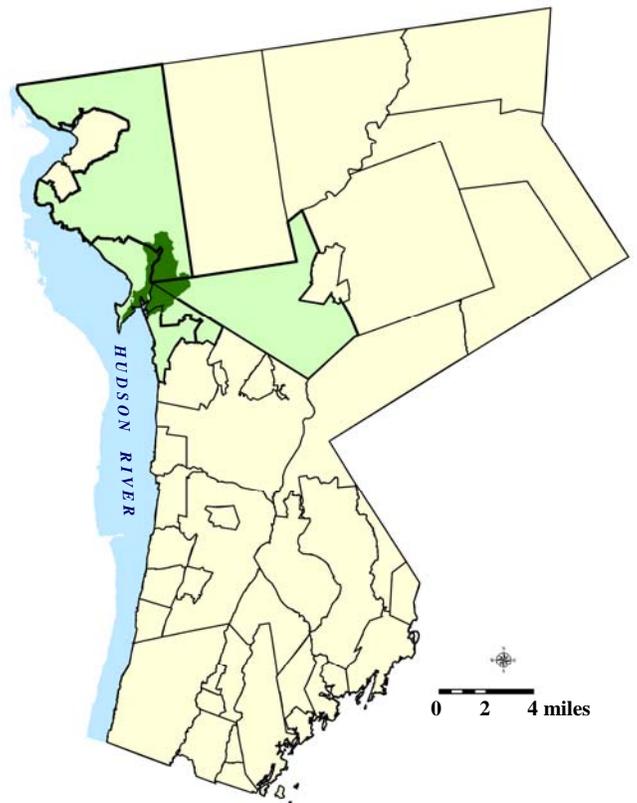


Figure 1-1. Location of Croton Bay Watershed in Westchester County



Figure 1-2. Municipalities of the Croton Bay Watershed

significant wildlife habitats

- Public outreach and education
- Implementation of the Indian Brook-Croton Gorge Watershed Plan goals and recommendations through inter-municipal cooperation

The plan details the existing conditions, or the state of the watershed, which includes information on the physical and natural resources, wildlife and significant wildlife habitats and land uses of the Croton Bay Watershed. Through analysis of the state of the watershed, recommendations were developed based on the above goals to improve the current water quality conditions found throughout the watershed. Implementation of the recommendations will require inter-municipal cooperation and coordination among the municipalities.

Figure 1-3. The Croton River, Croton-on-Hudson

The Croton River begins where the East and West Branches of the Croton River meet downstream from the Croton Falls Reservoir. Shortly downstream, the Croton River, along with its tributary, the Muscoot River, flow into the Muscoot Reservoir, and after flowing through that, it empties into the New Croton Reservoir. The water leaves the spillway at the Croton Dam, and finally empties into the Hudson River at Croton-on-Hudson, New York.

