THE Crockwell PRESERVE

Vision Plan

Draft: August 2025

The City of Glens Falls, in partnership with the newly formed nonprofit Crockwell Partnership, will transform a historic Glens Falls parcel into a public environmental park with trails, gardens, wetlands, and an education center—honoring the Crockwell legacy while promoting conservation, recreation, and community engagement.

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Executive Summary

This Vision Plan outlines a proposal to transform the former Glens Falls Tennis and Swim Club – once a portion of the historic Douglass Crockwell estate – into a dynamic and pivotal community asset: the Crockwell Preserve and Environmental Education Center. The now neglected site will be repurposed to provide all-season recreation, wildlife observation, hands-on ecology, and educational opportunities for students, residents, and visitors alike. The project blends cultural heritage with environmental stewardship, honoring the legacy of Douglass Crockwell—a renowned artist and civic leader—through landscape preservation, sustainable design, and a fostering of local community.

Background and Project History

The Crockwell Estate

The site, located at 264 East Sanford Street in Queensbury, New York, on the border of the City of Glens Falls, was once part of the sprawling estate of artist and illustrator Spencer Douglass Crockwell (1904–1968) and his wife, Margaret Braman Crockwell. The Crockwell family residence, which sits just south of the site, was likely constructed in 1911 on what was a 94.5-acre property consisting of idyllic meadows and lush wetlands. The house remained his family's primary residence from 1933 to 1942 and was nominated for the State and National Registers of Historic Places in 2024 (Appendix A).

Douglass Crockwell, a distinguished contemporary of Norman Rockwell, created more than 400 paintings during his prolific career. Eighteen of these were featured in The Saturday Evening Post. In addition to his illustration work, Crockwell produced murals and posters for the Works Progress Administration in the 1930s as well as advertising artwork for major brands including Coca-Cola, General Electric, General Motors, and Welch's, among many others.

Known for incorporating local models and landmarks into his compositions, Crockwell helped bring rural Warren County into the national spotlight.

Beyond his artistic achievements, Crockwell was a dedicated civic leader and a passionate supporter of his adopted hometown of Glens Falls. He served on numerous local boards and commissions, including the Glens Falls Planning Board, Glens Falls Civil Service Commission, Glens Falls Board of Education, Glens Falls Rotary, YMCA, and the Boy Scouts. He also played a significant role in shaping The Hyde Collection Art Museum, serving as board chairman from 1952 to 1968.

As generous philanthropists, the Crockwells contributed not only their resources but also their time in support of community recreation and education. Their legacy includes the donation of three parcels of land that now form the foundation for the proposed Crockwell Preserve. Margaret later gifted nearby Crockwell Pond to Warren and Washington Counties following the passing of Douglass.

A Gift of Recreation

The 6.5-acre project site was gifted to the newly formed Glens Falls Tennis and Swim Club in 1966. For decades, the site was successfully operated as a private and loved community recreation asset consisting of a pool, poolhouse, and tennis courts. In the 2010's, the facility began showing clear signs of disrepair, with an aging pool complex, overgrown grounds, and declining membership. In the summer of 2016, the pool was officially closed due to mounting financial struggles within the organization. From 2016 onward, the vacant facility suffered from a lack of maintenance, leading to progressive deterioration and the proliferation of invasive species—specifically the aggressive common reed Phragmites.

In 2018, Warren County took the property for tax delinquency, with the City of Glens Falls acquiring the property shortly thereafter.

Project Team

City of Glens Falls:

Mayor S. William Collins
Patrick W. Dowd, *Community Development Director*

Crockwell Partnership:

President
Doug Thorn, *Local Businessman*

Founding Members
Dan Hall, *Former Mayor*
Bob Landry, *City of Glens Falls Councilman*
Harrison Freer, *Town of Queensbury Councilman*
Dr. William Brender, *Conservation Landowner*
Sandra Hutchinson, *Environmental Attorney*
Gary Mikutel, *Local Businessman*

Design Team:

LaBella Associates
Kevin Hasselwander, *Project Manager and Senior Landscape Architect*
Kelsey Carr, *Senior Civil Engineer and Climate Resilience Market Leader*
Jennifer Dennis, *Senior Project Architect*
Sarah Haynes, *Project Architect*
Ryan Drotar, *Landscape Designer*
Meredith Ellis, *Permitting and Compliance Manager*

Sidekick Creative
Will Fowler, *Partner and Creative Director*
Cara Greenslade, *Partner and Business Director*

A Partnership Emerges

A committee was formed—including former Glens Falls Mayor—to explore opportunities to repurpose the site. The group's objective was to transform the City-owned 6.5-acre site into a publicly accessible wetland preserve and educational nature center complete with trails, an education center, gardens, and restored wetlands. The group, with the City's approval, began actively pursuing funding, leading feasibility studies, conducting community meetings, and garnering the support of public stakeholders. A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment and EPA All-Appropriate Inquiry was performed for the site in 2019 (Appendix B).

In January 2024, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) was formed: the Crockwell Partnership. Building on the original committee's work, the newly created nonprofit — led by Doug Thorn as president — advanced the project forward: securing additional funding, working with the City to conducting planning, and overseeing community outreach. The City contacted NYSDEC to perform an updated wetland delineation in June 2024 (Appendix C). A 1.38- acre wetland was flagged in the northeast corner of the site. A Hazardous Materials Survey was performed on the poolhouse in July of 2024 (Appendix D). Most of the testing came back negative with the exception of an asbestos-coated sink in the kitchen area.

In July 2024, the City issued a request for proposals to secure professional design services and initiate the process of shaping a realizable project. In October, a team of two local firms, LaBella Associates and Sidekick Creative, were selected by the City and the Partnership to lead the design initiative. In early 2025, the City and Partnership, in collaboration with this newly assembled creative team, began a design journey that ultimately culminated in the development of this Vision Plan before you now.

Funding for this project was made possible by a generous allocation of ARPA funds from the City of Glens Falls.

Project Vision, Goals and Measurable Objectives

Project Vision

Wetlands play a critical role in water purification, flood mitigation, carbon sequestration, and biodiversity/habitat conservation. In the context of Glens Falls, NY—nestled between the Adirondack foothills and the Hudson River—wetlands are essential ecological assets under increasing pressure from urban development and climate change.

The Crockwell Preserve and Environmental Education Center aims to create an accessible, ecologically vibrant wetland preserve and environmental education center that restores and protects natural habitat, fosters environmental literacy, and serves as a regional model for urban ecological stewardship and community engagement.

Project Goals

1 Site and Building Restoration

Restore and revitalize the site and existing facilities in a manner that honors their historical significance, promotes adaptive reuse of existing structures, enhances ecological function, and supports the development of an engaging, resilient, accessible, and environmentally sustainable site.

2 Sustainable Infrastructure and Design

Develop the center and amenities using environmentally responsible materials and practices, demonstrating green design and climate resilience.

3 Ecological Restoration and Preservation

Manage invasive species, protect and restore native wetland ecosystems, enhance biodiversity, and improve water quality through sustainable land management practices.

4 Environmental Education and Public Engagement

Provide inclusive, hands-on environmental learning opportunities for all ages, with a focus on youth education, climate awareness, and citizen science.

5 Community Recreation and Wellness

Offer safe, passive recreational amenities—such as nature trails, wetland boardwalks, birdwatching and wildlife viewing areas, and interpretive signage—that promote outdoor activity and mental well-being.

6 Cultural and Historical Integration

Celebrate the region's natural and cultural heritage by integrating art, storytelling, and historical interpretation throughout the preserve.

Measurable Objectives

1. Actively manage and reduce the spread of invasive species–specifically Phragmites–in order to support the restoration of native habitat.
2. Restore and manage native vegetation to support pollinators, birds, and aquatic life.
3. Monitor environmental impacts through regular data collection and adaptive management.
4. Create ADA-accessible nature trails, boardwalks, and viewing platforms.
5. Install interpretive signage focused on wetland ecology, climate change, and local history.
6. Thoughtfully redevelop the former poolhouse into an education center that features an exhibit area, classroom for hands-on learning, restrooms, office space, and secure storage.
7. Incorporate renewable energy and low-impact design principles in all facilities.
8. Engage community members through volunteer programs, events, and feedback sessions.
9. Develop curriculum-based partnerships with local schools and nonprofits. Jackson Heights Elementary School is within easy walking distance of the property.

Site Inventory and Project Launch

Topographic and Boundary Survey

As the first order of business, a comprehensive topographic survey was conducted in January to establish accurate baseline conditions for planning and design. The survey documented existing grades, vegetation, built structures, utility locations, and other key site features, providing a detailed and accurate representation of the physical landscape. This information was essential for identifying opportunities and constraints related to access, drainage, habitat restoration, and building reuse. The survey also informed early design decisions, including trail alignment, grading strategies, and the placement of amenities. By grounding the project in precise site data from the outset, the topographic survey laid the foundation for a responsive, resilient, and context-sensitive design process.

A boundary survey was also completed early in the project to formally establish the legal property lines, parcel dimensions, and ownership boundaries of the site. This critical step ensured clarity regarding land ownership, easements, and adjacent properties, and helped identify any encroachments or discrepancies with existing records (Appendix E).

Kick-Off Meeting

The project officially launched with a kickoff meeting with the Crockwell Partnership, City of Glens Falls and the design team. Held in early 2025, the meeting served as an opportunity to align on project goals, expectations, roles, and timelines. The session began with a review of the site's history, context, and the vision for transforming the site into the Crockwell Preserve and Environmental Education Center.

Key discussion points included site access, environmental constraints, adaptive reuse of the existing poolhouse, community engagement strategies, and the integration of ecological, educational, and recreational components into the overall design. The team also outlined the design process, deliverables, and key milestones, establishing a clear roadmap for collaboration.

Relevant site and building precedents were presented to illustrate successful design strategies and inspire discussion around potential approaches for the project. These case studies provided visual and conceptual references that helped the team explore initial ideas for programming, circulation, ecological restoration, and architectural character.

The kickoff set a strong foundation for the project, emphasizing shared values around sustainability, education, and community impact, and fostering a spirit of creativity and cooperation that was carried forward throughout the design process.

Site Analysis and Programming

Hudson Cultural Resources, a subconsultant to LaBella, conducted a Phase IA archaeological assessment of the site in accordance with State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) guidelines. This preliminary investigation included a review of historical maps, land use records, and previously documented cultural resources to evaluate the site's potential for containing archaeological significance. The findings will help inform next steps and ensure compliance with preservation standards as the project moves forward (Appendix F).

LaBella's team of landscape architects and wetland scientists conducted a comprehensive assessment of the site, examining existing ecological conditions, hydrology, vegetation, topography, and land use patterns to inform the planning and restoration approach (Appendix G).

The site, long underutilized and overgrown, displayed signs of natural rewilding, including emergent wetland conditions and encroaching native vegetation, creating a promising foundation for ecological restoration. At the same time, the property also exhibited environmental challenges, such as the presence of invasive plant species and deteriorated site infrastructure, requiring targeted management and mitigation. The existing pool house is favorably positioned, with a substantial setback from the NYSDEC wetland buffer, ensuring compliance with environmental regulations.

The site is optimally oriented with respect to solar exposure and prevailing winds and is buffered by tall vegetation along its western and southern boundaries. Just north of the existing pool house lies an upper woodland area with approximately twelve feet of grade change, offering potential for a varied trail experience and opportunities for natural play integrated into the hillside. Along its eastern and northern edges, the property is bordered by uninterrupted wetland habitat, creating an expansive, "edgeless" vista that visually merges with the surrounding landscape.

The existing vehicular access and parking areas appear to be in serviceable condition and require only minimal modification, making them suitable for integration into future plans with resurfacing. In contrast, the shed, pool, courts, hardscape elements, fencing, and various other appurtenances were found to be largely in disrepair and were recommended for removal.

Following the initial site analysis, the City of Glens Falls engaged a local contractor—utilizing remaining ARPA funds—to carefully remove many of these deteriorated features and begin restoration of significant portions of the site. Contractors followed best management practices to limit ground impacts to outside the regulated wetland buffer zone.

The site benefits from existing stormwater and potable water infrastructure, with water service provided by the Town of Queensbury. A recorded sewer easement was identified in historical deed records during the boundary survey, though no evidence of an on-site septic system was found. Additional investigation—likely including subsurface utility exploration (SUE)—will be required to determine the exact location and condition of the sewer connection.

Following the site assessment, a vibrant programming diagram was created to illustrate the proposed site elements, with each bubble scaled to reflect its relative priority based on prior input from the City, the Crockwell Partnership, and the public stakeholders (Appendix H).

Building Evaluation

LaBella's structural engineering team conducted a comprehensive assessment of the existing pool house (Appendix I). While the building exhibits signs of age and disrepair, it was found to be structurally sound and well-positioned for adaptive reuse. The evaluation included a visual inspection of the foundation, framing, roof system, and building envelope.

As part of the redevelopment planning process, LaBella's project architects also undertook a detailed analysis of the pool house to assess its adaptability and suitability for conversion into a multifunctional Environmental Education Center. Although the building shows evidence of wear—such as outdated mechanical systems, water damage, and deteriorated interior finishes—the core structural elements remain intact and capable of supporting renovation efforts.

The building's central location, durable construction, and generous footprint make it an ideal candidate for reuse. Its open floor plan offers flexibility for reconfiguration into modern program spaces, including exhibit areas, a classroom, restrooms, an office, and storage. Furthermore, the structure can accommodate the enclosure of a second-story viewing platform and the addition of an outdoor deck, enhancing the indoor-outdoor relationship and providing striking views of the adjacent wetland landscape. While the building is not fully ADA accessible in its current state, modifications can be made to bring it into compliance with the current building code and best practices.

This adaptive reuse approach not only preserves the building's embodied energy and architectural legacy but also serves as a powerful symbol of ecological renewal and community investment in sustainability. Overall, the assessment confirmed that the existing pool house presents a cost-effective and environmentally responsible opportunity to anchor the site's transformation.

3D Matterport Showcase

In March, a 3D scan of the interior of the poolhouse was conducted to support the design of the proposed retrofit. The interactive model–accessible via the link below–will remain available for one year from the publication date of this document. One particularly notable feature captured in the scan is the monumental central staircase, which leads to the elevated viewing platform offering sweeping views of the site.

my.matterport.com/show/?m=j5tp6fSsHiq

Design Process

The design process was rooted in collaboration, creativity, and a deep understanding of the site's ecological and cultural context. Beginning with the thorough analysis of existing conditions, the design team engaged in an iterative process that combined precedent studies, stakeholder input, and project objectives to shape a vision for the site's transformation. Guided by principles of sustainability, accessibility, and community engagement, the design evolved to balance ecological restoration with educational programming and passive recreation. The result is a thoughtful, adaptable framework that celebrates the site's natural assets while creating meaningful spaces for learning, exploration, and stewardship.

Research and Precedent Exploration

Research and case studies played an important role in shaping the design (see Appendix J). The team looked at similar projects—like nature preserves, education centers, and wetland restorations—to learn what works well in low-impact, environmentally friendly design. These examples helped guide decisions about layout, materials, and features that encourage both learning and caring for nature. The team adapted these lessons to fit the unique landscape and community needs of Glens Falls.

One strong local example is the Five Rivers Environmental Education Center in Delmar. Like the Crockwell Preserve, it combines wetland protection with well-designed trails and interactive features that connect people to nature. Five Rivers spans over 450 acres, with more than ten miles of accessible trails, a LEED-certified building, and restored habitats. It shows how a nature preserve can be both a place to learn and enjoy the outdoors. Crockwell Preserve aims to do the same—using its central location, natural features, and the repurposed pool house to create spaces for play, learning, and wildlife observation. Both places focus on low-impact recreation and hands-on learning, especially for children and families, while promoting environmental care through inclusive programs.

Another example is the Landis Arboretum in Schoharie County—a successful nonprofit-run public garden with wetlands, meadows, a pond, and extensive trails.

Preliminary Design Concepts

As part of the early design process, LaBella's team developed three unique concepts for the Crockwell Preserve, each offering different ideas for how the site and buildings could be organized and used. These concepts explored a range of possibilities (see Appendix K).

The three options were reviewed during a collaborative session with the City and the Partnership, where feedback was gathered and priorities were discussed. Based on this input, a final concept was selected that best reflected the project's goals and community vision.

Shaping the Site Vision

LaBella's design team collaborated closely with the Partnership and the City to shape the vision for the Crockwell Preserve, transforming the former tennis and swim club into a vibrant destination for learning, exploration, and wellness.

Central to the plan is a focus on universal accessibility and sustainable infrastructure. A small accessible parking area welcomes visitors and is paired with a bioretention swale that runs alongside it, capturing stormwater and featuring native wetland plantings as part of a living infrastructure system. A designated school bus drop-off zone ensures safe access for student groups, with a clearly marked accessible path linking the parking area to the main building and site features.

Visitors will be welcomed by an entry kiosk in front of the Education Center, offering interpretive signage, maps, and educational materials that introduce the site's ecological and cultural stories. Nearby, a demonstration rain garden will manage rooftop runoff while serving as an educational tool to teach visitors about green infrastructure and the water cycle.

The restored poolhouse will become the Environmental Education Center, opening to a variety of engaging outdoor spaces. These include active pollinator gardens that support biodiversity and provide teaching opportunities, a formal bluestone patio that extends the building's use into the landscape, and a spacious event lawn for seasonal events, performances, or community gatherings. Tucked into the south corner near the lawn, a small outdoor amphitheater offers a shaded spot for group learning, storytelling, or quiet reflection.

From the event lawn, a mulch trail winds through the upper woodlands, offering an immersive walk through nature. A stepped path leads to a hillside natural play area made from organic materials that encourage imaginative, nature-based play. Further along, the trail system enters the wetlands, where boardwalks made of precast concrete or wood allow visitors to explore without disturbing sensitive habitats. The trail leads to a newly created pond with a floating observation deck at its center, inviting wildlife viewing for students, researchers, and casual visitors. Nearby lawn trails weave through restored meadows, offering self-guided exploration, habitat education, and seasonal color displays.

Every part of the site is designed to spark curiosity, support ecological health, and strengthen community connections to nature.

Creating an Architectural Identity

The new primary structure at the Crockwell Preserve has been thoughtfully reimagined through the adaptive reuse of the former Glens Falls Pool and Tennis Club. In a collaborative effort with committee members, the design team at LaBella Associates worked diligently to provide a concept that transforms the existing building into a vibrant, multifunctional space capable of hosting small events, accommodating student field trips, and welcoming daily visitors.

Guided by the committee's broader vision for the Preserve, the team embraced the challenge of renovating the original pool house—a seasonal, open-air facility—into a sustainable, year-round building. Prioritizing both environmental stewardship and budget-conscious solutions, the decision was made to retain and upgrade the existing structure rather than pursue new construction.

From the outset, the design team and structural engineers conducted comprehensive site assessments to confirm the building's viability for reuse. Their shared vision preserved key architectural elements that contribute to the building's unique charm: the panoramic 360-degree views from the

second-floor lookout, the twin interior staircases, and the central skylight at the roof's peak. This renovation is not merely a structural update, it represents a strategic investment in green construction practices, offering cost savings and reduced environmental impact through the reuse of existing infrastructure. It stands as a testament to the power of adaptive reuse and collaborative design in bringing a community's vision to life.

The proposed renovations encompass structural reinforcements, upgraded floor systems to fully enclose the building envelope, thoughtfully designed additions, durable low-maintenance exterior materials, and high-efficiency windows and doors to enhance energy performance. The integration of bi-fold windows allows the building to recapture its original open-air character during warmer months, subtly honoring its past while adapting it for year-round use.

The new facility will feature a variety of indoor and outdoor spaces designed to support education, recreation, and community engagement. Inside, visitors will find exhibit areas, light-filled solariums, and a flexible multipurpose room suitable for classes, lectures, or private rentals. As part of the new construction efforts, a rooftop deck has been introduced, offering sweeping views of the surrounding preserve.

Altogether, the building aspires to be a welcoming, multi-use destination that not only honors its natural surroundings but also serves as a valuable community resource for events, education, and quiet connection with nature.

Design Elements at a Glance

Site/Wetland Preserve

- Vehicular entrances and parking area resurfaced with asphalt or gravel
- 22 formalized parking spaces with well-provisioned ADA-accessible parking
- Overflow parking/drop-off with capacity for 6 school busses
- 150 LF bioretention swale/bed
- Locally-sourced timber entrance kiosk
- Rain garden and/or cistern to collect roofwater
- 500 SF bluestone patio
- 10,000 SF event lawn
- 3 tier outdoor amphitheater outdoor classroom
- 2,500 SF planted pollinator gardens
- 15,500 SF seeded native meadow
- 28,500 SF seeded wet meadow
- 26,500+ SF restored wetlands
- 3,000 LF of lawn/mulch/stone dust trails including upper woodland trail with timber stairs
- Natural play area with elements built into the upper woodland
- 750 linear feet of precast concrete (PermaTrak) or pressure treated wood boardwalk on helical piles with ample room for expansion into adjacent parcels
- 3 PermaTrak or pressure treated bridges traversing the pond tributary
- ¾ acre pond with a 15'x30' observation deck
- 500 linear feet of pond tributary/ overflow stream bed
- Native trees, shrubs and groundcovers including a large feature tree central to the site circled be a custom curved seating area. Plant ID tags throughout.
- Thoughtfully placed site furnishings throughout the site
- Interpretive/Wayfinding signs
- Opportunities for public art

Environmental Education Center

Programming:

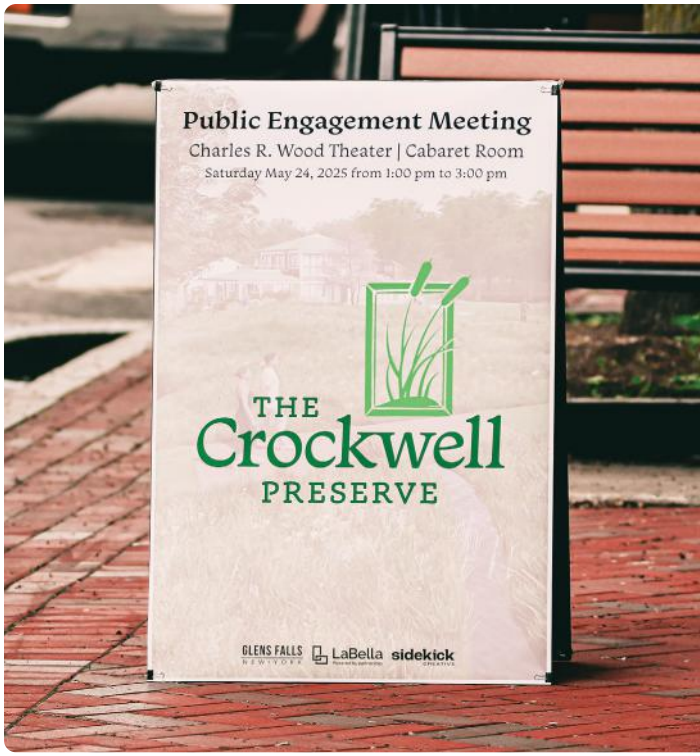
- Central exhibit display
- Central stairway
- Light-filled solariums
- Flexible multi-purpose classroom
- Enclosed second story look-out
- Addition of a rooftop deck
- (1) office
- (2) restrooms
- (2) mechanical/storage spaces

Elements:

- Structural reinforcements as needed
- Utility enhancements as needed
- Upgraded energy efficient mechanicals (i.e. heat pumps), electrical and plumbing
- +/- 500 SF of additions
- Upgraded floor systems
- Durable, low-maintenance exterior siding and roofing in a color palette that complements the site's character and surrounding context
- High efficiency windows and doors
- Integration of bi-fold windows to recapture the building's original open-air character during warmer months.
- Reclad stairwell with local wood
- New entry vestibules
- ADA access to the second floor (lift or elevator)

Community Engagement

On May 24th, a public engagement meeting was held at the Charles R. Wood Theater in downtown Glens Falls. The event was promoted through the City's website, the Glens Falls Chronicle, and social media. It began with an open house, where visual boards and a rendered video of the proposed site and building were displayed. A brief presentation followed, covering the project's history, design concepts, branding efforts, and proposed next steps. A question-and-answer session provided an opportunity for community input, with attendees offering enthusiastic and constructive feedback. Around 30 community members attended, including the mayor of Glens Falls. Detailed meeting minutes were recorded to document the discussion (Appendix L).

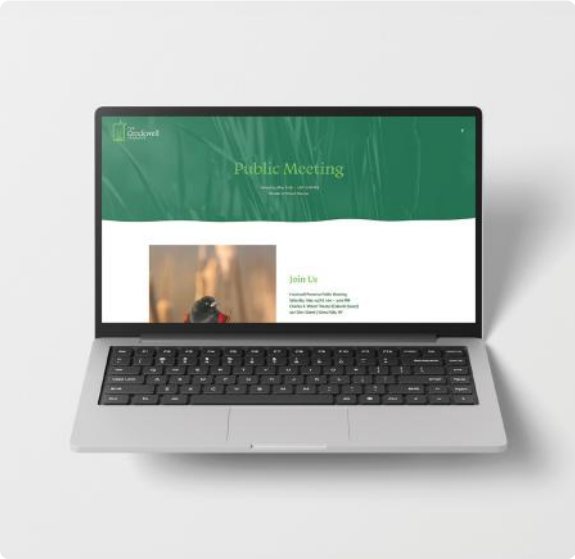


Final Design

The design team incorporated community feedback into the final concept and developed additional planning resources to support the vision (Appendix M). These include:

A context plan that highlights the Crockwell Preserve's location relative to Glens Falls' schools, parks, and green spaces, underscoring its role within the broader community network. By adding much-needed green space and educational access to the city's underserved northeast corner, the preserve will help fill a critical gap in the local trail and park system. Its walkable proximity to nearby schools and neighborhoods makes it especially well-suited for everyday recreation and outdoor learning.

A preliminary expansion plan to extend the Crockwell Preserve's boardwalk system into adjacent wetlands located on parcels owned by conservation landowner Dr. William Brender, who has announced his agreement to donate the land. This proposed extension would create a seamless network of boardwalk trails through a diverse mosaic of wetland habitats—including marshes, open water, and forested wetlands—offering visitors a nearly one-mile-long immersive nature experience. The preserve is poised to become one of the most extensive and ecologically rich boardwalk experiences outside of coastal areas—an unmatched resource in upstate New York.



Vision Plan

This Vision Plan was crafted to highlight the design process and provide a resource for the project moving forward.

Branding and Website

As part of the project's public identity and outreach strategy, Sidekick Creative led the development of a comprehensive branding package for the Crockwell Preserve for the City and its supporting entity, the Crockwell Partnership. This included the creation of a unique logo that reflects the mission and character of the preserve, as well as the initial design and development of a dedicated website, which will continue to evolve as the project progresses. The website will serve as a central platform for sharing project updates, educational resources, promotional videos, and additional imagery to engage the public and inform stakeholders. In addition to branding and digital media, Sidekick Creative collaborated closely with the LaBella design team to provide graphic design, layout, and visual storytelling for the final Vision Plan, ensuring the document is not only informative and accessible, but also visually compelling.

Budget, Funding and Phasing

Two preliminary cost estimates were developed based on approximate quantity take-offs and design assumptions gathered throughout the design process (Appendix N). The projected cost was estimated between $5 and $6 million, including design and permitting. The estimates also include several alternates, demonstrating flexibility in the design to align with available funding.

Permits and Compliance

Prior to implementation, the project will be subject to a range of local, state, and federal permitting requirements to ensure regulatory compliance and responsible development. This includes securing necessary approvals related to wetlands and stormwater management from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), as well as local site plan review and building permits through the City of Glens Falls and the Town of Queensbury. Additional permits may be required for land disturbance, utility work, or ADA accessibility upgrades. All design and construction activities will adhere to relevant environmental regulations, zoning ordinances, and building codes. Early coordination with permitting agencies and regulatory bodies will help streamline the approval process, minimize delays, and ensure that the project aligns with best practices in ecological preservation, public safety, and sustainable development.

Phasing of Implementation

Given the overall scope and budget, the project will likely need to be completed in phases. Below is a potential phasing strategy designed to allow community access to improvements as each phase is completed.

Phase 1 (2025)

- Site cleanup
- Vision Plan and Community Engagement
- Funding Application for Design
- Commencement of Fundraising Efforts

Phase 2 (2026–2027)

- Design Development, Construction Documents and Permitting
- Funding Application for implementation of the Education Center and Wetland Establishment
- Ongoing Fundraising Efforts to match and supplement

Phase 3 (2027–2028)

- Construction of Site Access Improvements and the Education Center (including adjacent site improvements and temporary stabilization/ protection of the remaining site)
- Invasive Species Management and Preliminary Wetland Establishment
- Ongoing Community Input Sessions and Building Programming (i.e. exhibits, workshops)
- Funding Application for implementation of the Site Improvements
- Ongoing Fundraising Efforts to match and supplement

Phase 4 (2028–2029)

- Completion and Grand Opening of the Education Center
- Site Restoration and Construction of Site Improvements (i.e. pond, boardwalks, trails, etc.)
- Ongoing Community Input Sessions and Site Programming (i.e. Community Events)
- Ongoing Fundraising Efforts for ongoing maintenance and future improvements

Phase 5 (2030)

- Completion of the Site Restoration and Improvements
- GRAND OPENING to the public
- Cultural and Seasonal Events are initiated
- Long-term maintenance and ecological monitoring plan in place.

A Call for Conservation

Nearby development pressures, specifically commercial development along the adjacent Quaker Road corridor, highlights the fragility of Glens Falls' remaining natural habitats. Unchecked growth is a challenge to the community's strong commitment to green space. The Crockwell Preserve serves as a vital refuge. As natural areas disappear, the preserve stands as a lasting pledge to balance, resilience, and equitable access to nature for future generations.

Monitoring and Maintenance

Following implementation, ongoing maintenance will be essential to ensure the long-term health, accessibility, and functionality of the Crockwell Preserve and Environmental Education Center. This includes ecological stewardship activities such as invasive species management, habitat restoration, and trail upkeep, as well as routine facility maintenance, landscape care, and infrastructure inspections.

A detailed maintenance plan will be developed in coordination with municipal staff and community partners to outline roles, seasonal tasks, and performance standards. Funding for maintenance will be supported through a combination of municipal resources, grant opportunities, and potential partnerships with local nonprofits, schools, and volunteer organizations. This collaborative approach will help sustain the site's integrity while fostering continued community investment and engagement.

Conclusion

The Crockwell Preserve and Environmental Education Center is envisioned as a regional model of ecologically responsible and community-centered design. Rooted in careful planning and inclusive engagement, the project seeks to restore connections between people and the natural world, foster long-term environmental stewardship, and inspire future generations of conservation leaders. In addition to its educational mission, the preserve will offer accessible opportunities for passive recreation, nature-based play, and exploration. By creating safe, engaging spaces for children and families to experience the outdoors, the project encourages active lifestyles and nurtures a lifelong appreciation for the environment. The initiative also prioritizes wetland and wildlife habitat restoration and protection, ensuring the long-term health of local ecosystems while providing opportunities for wildlife viewing and nature observation. Conveniently located within a walkable and bikeable distance from downtown Glens Falls, the preserve strengthens the connection between city residents and its surrounding natural landscape.

Together, these efforts establish the preserve as a living classroom, a community haven, and a powerful symbol of how ecological restoration and public engagement can shape a more resilient and inspired future.

Appendix

Scan the QR code above to access the full set of appendix items or visit

heyzine.com/flip-book/c0125def0a.html

Board Members

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Bob Landry, *Secretary*
William Brender
Brian Flint
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