

Hundreds join in clean up of storm-damaged Liberty State Park

By Rafal Rogoza / The Jersey Journal

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During a typical Saturday morning Liberty State Park in Jersey City is teeming with joggers and bicyclists enjoying the view of the Manhattan

skyline. But this past Saturday was different, as hundreds of volunteers dedicated their time to

cleaning up the mess left behind by Hurricane Sandy. The 600 upland-acre park, closed since the super-storm struck on Oct. 29, sustained tremendous damage from flood waters and strong winds that wrecked the park's landmarks, boardwalk, and fields.



“I didn’t know whether to cry or scream,” said Park Superintendent Rob Rodriguez, recalling when he saw the park’s historic Central Railroad of New Jersey Terminal flooded with five feet of water.

Park officials say the damage to the park could take up to nine months to repair and could cost up to \$10 million dollars.

To help restore the park Saturday, more than 400 volunteers filled garbage bags with debris and trash that had littered the northern and eastern sections of the park, including around the Grove Remembrance 9/11 memorial.

The cleanup project was organized by The Friends of Liberty State Park with the support from the NY/NJ Baykeeper, AT&T Pioneers, the Boys Scouts, Jersey Cares, and Hudson County Community College.

Before Saturday, the burden of cleaning up the devastated park had rested entirely on the state’s park department, said Rodriguez, adding he believes the park will be fully reopened in nine months.

“I’m so thankful that when people heard about this that they themselves further spread the word,” said Sam Pesin, president of Friends of Liberty State Park, the nonprofit dedicated to caring for and protecting the park.

Debby DeVenezia, 51, a special project manager with AT&T Pioneers, a network of volunteers within the telecommunications industry, brought 43 volunteers to the party.

“To hear that the park needed help it was like hearing a family member crying,” said DeVenezia, a resident of the Jersey City Heights.