

The Friends of Liberty State Park www.folsp.org

Summary of Mission, Goals and Accomplishments – 1988 to 2022

The Friends is an all-volunteer, 501(c)3 NJ non-profit organization dedicated to protecting, improving and beautifying Liberty State Park as a Central Park-type behind Lady Liberty - with passive and active recreation opportunities for this priceless waterfront park.

LSP is sacred and priceless Public Land because it is scarce urban open space and urban nature, vital for urban people's quality of life, and mental, emotional and physical public health in this densely populated area, and also sacred because LSP is next to the Statue of Liberty.

LSP is a local, state and national treasure, an inclusive and open park for All to enjoy. LSP wouldn't be the free, urban open space park it is today, if park pioneers who came before us, and then, since our 1988 founding, we hadn't co-lead grassroots battles against exclusionary privatization plans. For the 45 years of LSP history, the overwhelming majority, the broad public consensus, the clear and strong Voice of the People, 10's of 1000's of advocates have put democracy into action to defeat privatization plans - no matter what revenue was promised.

The Friends are co-leading, with the NY/NJ Barkeeper, the cause of passing the LSP Protection Act, to once and for all end privatization threats. As of 1/1/22, there are 111 groups in the Coalition and over 31,400 people have signed the petition. The public's battle for the Act's passage is against the Liberty National Golf Course's owner Paul Fireman's privatization assault with his phony front group's and other bought-off opportunists lies because he wants to destroy LSP's Caven Point Natural Area Migratory Bird Habitat for millionaire's golf holes.

The Act will create a peaceful era with the Friends finally able to focus just on improvements with park supporters, elected officials and the NJDEP, which manages LSP.

Accomplishments: Aside from advocacy against privatization, our accomplishments include: Encouraging public participation in LSP decision-making; Establishing the shuttle bus route from the Light Rail station into and around LSP (which needs re-establishing as Gov. Christie had it terminated); Championing the large size of the 1999 Green Park playground and facilitating the 2018 replacements of both LSP playgrounds; Funding over 950 trees; Funding over 16 gardens as part of LSP's Volunteer Gardening Program; Getting a \$200K Hudson County grant toward the popular Picnic Pavilions; 25 years of salt marsh cleanups; funding 1/3 of the cost of relocating the state flag poles onto Freedom Way; Funding 4 bulletin boards and binoculars. FOLSP support the DEP's 2021 plan for 61 acres of active recreation. We've always supported active recreation (at public meetings, letters, video, with Mayor Cunningham, etc. but DEP's policy didn't allow active recreation in state parks until Gov. Murphy's administration. We welcome the longtime coming funding and plan for the interior standard protective remediation.