

**The Friends of Liberty State Park www.folsp.org
Summary of Mission, Goals and Accomplishments – 1988 to 2024**

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 free and green park behind Lady Liberty – for free recreation and nature enjoyment in this waterfront open space 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 treasured urban park it is today, if park pioneers who came before us, and since our 1988 founding, we hadn't co-lead grassroots battles against exclusionary privatization and commercialization plans. For LSP's 48 years, the overwhelming majority, the broad public consensus, the clear Voice of the People, many 10's of 1000's of advocates have put democracy into action to defeat major commercial assaults and to protect and improve this urban parkland.

The Friends co-lead the cause of passing the LSP Protection Act, to once and for all end privatization threats. The Act had 111 local, regional, and statewide groups in a Coalition and over 33K petition signers and the support of key elected officials including JC Mayor Steve Fulop and Assemblyman (now Senator) Raj Mukherji. However, the influence and money, and the lies and smear attacks of those funded by Paul Fireman, billionaire owner of the Liberty National Golf Course who wants to privatize LSP's popular Caven Point Natural Area where students acquire STEM experiences, for relocating golf holes, got the Protection Act replaced with a non-protection law that set-up a LSP task force stacked with his front groups and others he funded. Thankfully DEP Commissioner Shawn LaTourette listened to the public's overwhelming months and decades of support for a Central Park type park including 165 acres of flood resiliency amazing habitats, during his ongoing "Revitalization Program" and rejected the billionaire's funded surrogates' exclusionary Sports and Entertainment Complex plans.

Friends of LSP Accomplishments

Encouraging public participation in LSP's land use decisions for a Central Park type park; establishing the shuttle bus route from the Light Rail station into LSP (which needs re-establishing as a former governor ended it); championing the 1998 large Freedom Way playground and facilitating the 2018 replacements of both LSP playgrounds; funding over 1020 trees (planning to fund 50 more in the Fall of 2024); funding over 16 gardens as part of LSP's Volunteer Gardening Program; getting a \$200K grant toward the creation of the popular reservable Picnic Pavilions; 28 years of salt marsh cleanups; funding 6 bulletin board: and funding kayaks and kayak accessories, binoculars and other supplies for LSP's Nature Center.