

# **Restoration of the Interior of Liberty State Park**

## **Statement of NY/NJ Baykeeper on the Announcement by NJDEP on the Restoration of the Interior of Liberty State Park**

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The natural restoration of the 240-acre interior section of Liberty State Park will be one of the greatest urban natural restorations anywhere, ever.

This multi-phased restoration project that will clean historic contamination, enlarge freshwater wetlands, create habitat, including open fields and woodlands, restore salt marsh by reconnecting the interior of the park to the Hudson River, and improve local water quality. It will be led by a great team at the NJ Department of Environmental Protection, who recently spearheaded the successful restoration project at Lincoln Park West in Jersey City.

Most importantly, it will return public access to millions of people fenced out of this green oasis for over a generation along the densely populated Hudson River waterfront. In an area where every acre of green is valuable, 240 acres of remediated open space with enhanced and diverse habitat is priceless.

For over twenty years, NY/NJ Baykeeper and Friends of Liberty State Park has been advocating for this restoration. We have battled with our partners against multiple proposals to convert this property into commercial and private ventures, including a golf course, motor cross venue and waterpark. This project is due to the spark and dedication of the late Audrey Zapp, Friends of Liberty State Park, Liberty State Park Conservancy and countless park supporters.

### **Background and History:**

We thank the prior Administration, especially former NJDEP Commissioner Bradley Campbell, for initiating the natural resource damages program that has led to this announcement. Unfortunately, the Christie Administration has not brought any natural resource damages cases during its entire tenure and significantly delayed the implementation of this great urban restoration project.