

# THE FRIENDS OF LIBERTY STATE PARK

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## Governor Christie announcing millions for LSP's Interior 240 acre urban nature restoration

It is exciting news that this spectacular urban nature restoration with nature trails in the fenced off Interior will finally start 23 years after Gov Whitman rejected the Interior golf course plan.. The former freight yard site will become a nature wonderland for nature experiences and education in this densely populated region, and also bring in indirect eco-tourism dollars to benefit the economy.

Gov Christie had \$11 and a half million dedicated to the Interior 8 years ago and he could have started the first stage then but didn't do anything until now.

Commissioner Martin states (in beginning of press release) that the" project advances the Christie administration goal of continuing to enhance the public's enjoyment of this flagship of NJ's state park system", but Governor Christie's main goal has been that state parks pay for themselves and he spent over 4 years trying to privatize LSP in destructive ways and arrogantly ignored 4 decades of opposition to the privatization of this treasured open space park behind Lady Liberty.

**The grassroots movements which defeated the golf course and commercial waterpark plans for the Interior have protected the Interior and set the stage for this natural area to become a reality for all to enjoy for generations to come.** On 4/26/95, Governor Christie Whitman rejected the golf course plan, due to "overwhelming public sentiment" (her answer to a reporter). Her official statement. at

[http://www.folsp.org/history/governor\\_official\\_rejection\\_golf\\_course.pdf](http://www.folsp.org/history/governor_official_rejection_golf_course.pdf) asserts that a living and evolving ecosystem will be a natural oasis in this densely populated region.

**The Friends expresses tremendous gratitude to the driving forces of the restoration plans, Greg Remaud, deputy director of the NY/NJ Baykeeper, Dr. Frank Gallagher of Rutgers who was a LSP official for over 30 years, and John Sacco, of the NJDEP Office of Natural Resource Restoration. Deep gratitude goes to Audrey Zapp, the "godmother" of LSP, who was in the forefront of the battle against the golf course and waterpark (and co-led many**

**battles with Morris Pesin between 1977 and 1992), and worked tirelessly between 1995 and 2001 for the natural area Interior plan.**

This ecologically diverse restoration will open up 240 acres to safe public enjoyment, and will clean up the mostly minor contamination. There are approximately 250 bird species which migrate through or live in the Interior. Having a spectacular natural area will uplift visitors, and will help the economy with "ecotourism" dollars.

Senator Bob Menendez and Congressman Albio Sires obtained millions for crucial Army Corps of Engineers studies. After many years of studies, public meetings and delays, this announcement of millions for this world class restoration will make LSP an even greater NJ and American treasure. This urban natural area with trails will be breathtaking and popular and will be an international model of re-using brownfields for the benefit of people and nature.

The Restoration will include trails, a promenade into the Interior's center, and views of Lady Liberty, Ellis Island and the Manhattan skyline. The conceptual plans also feature freshwater wetlands, a tidal salt marsh channel connecting the Interior to the Hudson River, forested area, tall grass habitat, and a recreational hill for picnics, sleigh riding, etc.