

The Friends of LP thank the DEP for the public process for active recreation and the whole park planning. The spectacular urban nature habitats with trails and the active recreation expands the greatness of this park which rose up from an abandoned waterfront because of my father Morris's vision and his leading the 18 year citizens' movement and co-leading major battles against privatization. The wildlife habitats and athletic additions will further enrich urban people's lives as a mental, emotional, physical and spiritual public health resource and science education resource. This DEP is the first one to change the policy against state park active recreation - except for a couple of years when the DEP was open to JC Mayor Glenn Cunningham, supported by the Friends in advocating for a ballfield to be funded by the golf course if it built 3 towers.

Creating sensible facilities before the interior is completed is welcomed.

It is essential that the state do comprehensive traffic circulation, parking needs, and mass transit studies. The interior nature wonderland will become a local and NJ eco-tourism and education destination, and the active recreation will be used by schools, leagues and choose-up groups making reservations.

The existing parking lots are already at their full capacity on any nice weekend. For the plans to not have a disastrously negative impact on people's

access to and use of the entire park due to all the additional users, these studies are the DEP's necessary common-sense responsibility.

Shuttle buses into the park from the light rail station, which the Friends worked to establish when the light rail system opened but which Gov. Christie heartlessly terminated, must be re-established as soon as possible, ideally by this July 4th weekend before a complete shuttle service is set up for 2022. One key initiative is for the DEP and NJ Transit to arrange for parking on weekends in the empty light rail station lot with shuttle buses coming into the park. A transportation plan is a critical component of these improvement plans this already jam-packed urban park on all nice weekends.

Deputy Comm Glenn has stated the DEP will obtain funds for active recreation but billionaire Paul Fireman will continue his clear strategy of promising money for a quid pro quo deal for his only goal of privatizing and destroying the Caven Point Natural Area for golf holes for his multimillionaire golfers. LP belongs to future generations as a priceless park for People of all colors, religions and backgrounds to enjoy. The essence of Liberty Park's 45 year history is that the overwhelming majority has put democracy into action to oppose privatization no matter what money privatizers s promised for this public land. The decades of the broad public consensus continues now with a Coalition of 106 local and statewide groups to

Pass the Protection Act and the with 26K petition signers. Fireman, with his political influence and donations, his lobbyists and lawyers' disinformation and the lies and smear campaign of his phony front group whose CEO has admitted getting funded by Fireman is again pushing to kill the Protection Act because it would stop his land grab of Caven Point. After the last DEP meeting, the Jersey Journal editorial, stated "What continues to cast a pall over the interior discussions is the vicious and untruthful campaign against longtime park advocates that appears designed to stop the passage of the LSP Protection Act.

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Stand up for the true purpose of Liberty Park as a non-privatized sacred NJ and American park behind Lady Liberty.

Governor Murphy's 2018 Environment & Energy Transition Advisory Committee recommended "to renew the state's commitment to open space, parks and wildlife protections - especially in urban areas- including opposing the further privatization of LSP."

Thank you Commissioner Shawn LaTourette, Deputy Commissioner Olivia Glenn, Asst Com Ray Bukowski, Supt Rob Rodriguez, John Sacco and all DEP staff.

The DEP and the Governor must be on the right side of history and say NO to an obscene giveaway of Caven Point for wealthy golfers.

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10's of 1000's who have opposed LSP privatization plans - no matter what money was promised by profiteers - for 44 years - and now by the current 103 groups in the LSP Protection Act Coalition and 25K petition signers. Arrogant moneyed-elite plutocrat golf course owner Paul Fireman with his democracy-subverting donations and disinformation - All of LSP belongs to All the People. to protect the entire park after decades of battles and to defeat billionaire Fireman's political donations, lobbyists' lies and surrogates' smear campaign to privatize & destroy the Caven Point Natural Area for 1%-er golf holes.

~~The Friends urges the DEP, Governor and legislature to come up with financial options to fund the construction of the facilities and funding for their maintenance -- without any Paul Fireman quid pro quo giveaway deal for Fireman's only goal of privatizing and destroying the park's Caven Point Natural Area~~ The overwhelming majority for the park's 44 years has opposed giving away any of this priceless urban parkland to privatizers no matter what revenue was promised.

The Friends of LSP's main message is that Governor Phil Murphy, legislators & DEP must reject Liberty National Golf Course owner billionaire Paul Fireman's clear strategy of offering money toward active recreation in quid pro quo land grab return for LSP's priceless Caven Point Natural Area to relocate golf holes for his multimillionaires.

The DEP has said it will find the funds for active recreation but Fireman & his paid surrogates will continue his money promises, falsehoods & slander campaign.

say NO to billionaire Paul Fireman's political influence, phony bought-off surrogates and disinformation in his push to privatize and destroy LSP's Caven Point Natural Area for relocated golf holes for millionaires.

Thank you Commissioner Shawn LaTourette, Deputy Commissioner Olivia Glenn, Asst Com Ray Bukowski, Supt Rob Rodriguez, John Sacco and all DEP staff.

Right and wrong

Heart and soul

2/22/21 **The Jersey Journal editorial:** "So many hopes, dreams in LSP discussions"

"What continues to cast a pall over the discussions, though, is the vicious and untruthful campaign (by Paul Fireman's surrogates) against longtime park advocates that appears

designed to stop the passage of the Liberty State Park Protection Act proposed in Trenton. Should that happen, the fight to keep the ecologically sensitive and unrivaled “outdoor classroom” at the Caven Point Peninsula area of the park free from the threat of privatization would become that much harder. We renew our call for state legislators to pass the act and for Governor Murphy to sign it into law".

- **LSP is NJ’s and America’s Central Park. Central Park has an aura of protection from inappropriate privatization leases and LSP hasn’t had such protection so this law is necessary to protect the park’s future.**
- *The park belongs to New Jerseyans, to all Americans and to future generations. This invaluable public asset has been repeatedly assaulted by privatization and commercialization plans but the overwhelming majority has always used their grassroots voices in a clear and strong way in battle after battle since the park opened, to advocate for and guide this very meaningful and iconic public land. Those wrong-headed public-b damned plans have been an attack on the purpose, use, access to and enjoyment of the park and an attack on the values represented by Lady Liberty and on urban families’ quality of life.*

The grassroots movement continues to grow, for the LP Protection Act and to defeat the privatization assault by billionaire Paul Fireman . The Coalition to Pass the Liberty State Park Protection Act has 106 local, regional and statewide groups including 42 JC groups. Also, the Petition without pandemic personal contact is over 26,000. This crossroads war for the Protection Act to once and for all end decades of privatization attacks, again shows the broad public consensus for a free park. 10's of 1000's have opposed privatization no matter what money privatizers promised. The pandemic has more clearly shown that LP as scarce urban parkland and scarce urban nature is a

crucial public health and quality of life resource. LP belongs to future generations as a priceless park for People of all colors, religions and backgrounds to enjoy.

Except for the fight against the marina lease which the Friends of LSP in 1992 sued to prevent, the public has prevailed for 44 years in defeating exclusionary privatization plans.

Fireman and his surrogates are enemies of LP. He's using his political and nonprofit donations, lobbyists, lawyers, phony front group and other surrogates to again kill the Protection Act because it protects the entire park including the Caven Point Natural Area, a habitat and urban student science resource, which he wants to privatize and destroy for bayfront eye-candy for multimillionaires' golf holes.

The Feb. 22nd Jersey Journal editorial, condemning Fireman's surrogates, stated, "What continues to cast a pall over the interior discussions is the vicious and untruthful campaign against longtime park advocates that appears designed to stop the passage of the Liberty State Park Protection Act.

The DEP will have a June 3rd update on its active recreation survey for the interior and the two areas near the park entrances. I urge you to oppose Fireman's strategy of promising money toward active recreation in return for his privatizing Caven Point.

Listen to and respect the decades of privatization opposition. The DEP has said it will find funds for active recreation but Fireman will continue his money promises and falsehoods so he can dismember this sacred public land for his profits.

No, to any give-away of the People's Park to Fireman.

The purpose of the Liberty State Park Protection Act is to protect Liberty State Park (LSP) in perpetuity as a sacred, priceless, and inclusive local, state and national public treasure from inappropriate privatization and commercial development and to preserve and improve LSP.

The Friends of LSP thank you Deputy Commissioner Olivia Glenn, Asst Com Ray Bukowski, Commissioner Shawn LaTourette, Supt Rob Rodriguez and all other DEP staff for the public input process for establishing active recreation near the park entrances and for incorporation into the interior's visionary international model of spectacular and diverse urban nature with miles of amazing trails in this concrete city. The interior nature plan had 26 years of studies, public meetings, news stories and funding efforts and it's this DEP which is not only using the Exxon pollution money to finally implement a wonder of the world nature area to enrich urban people's lives as a mental and spiritual public health resource, as a urban student science education resource and to provide scarce urban wildlife habitat but this DEP is also the first one in park history to change the DEP's state park active recreation policy - except for a couple of years when the DEP was open to Mayor Glenn Cunningham and the Friends of LSP's advocacy for a multi-use balfield which was supposed to be funded by the golf course if it built 3 tall towers.

Regarding the active recreation plans, having facilities near the park entrances closest to nearby neighborhoods and whose construction and use wouldn't need to wait until the interior 235-acre interior is completed, is sensible and welcomed.

For the interior active recreation, it is essential that the state do comprehensive traffic circulation, parking needs, and mass transit studies. The interior urban nature wonderland will surely become an eco-tourism and education destination, impacting the hearts and minds of Hudson County residents and people from NJ and everywhere else, and the active recreation facilities will be used by schools, organized leagues and any choose-up group making reservations. The existing parking lots are already at their capacity on any nice weekend. For interior amenities to be successful and not have a detrimental impact on the access to and use of the entire park due to all the additional users, these studies are a necessity for progressive planning.

Shuttle buses into the park from the light rail station, which the Friends worked hard to establish when the light rail system opened but which Gov. Christie heartlessly terminated, must be re-established as soon as possible, ideally by July 4th weekend, and if only for weekends this summer before a complete shuttle service is set up for next year. One of many interconnected solutions is for the DEP and NJ Transit to arrange for parking on weekends in the empty light rail station lot with shuttle buses bringing visitors into the park when the parking lots inevitably fill up.

We also support practical placement and choices of active recreation facilities in the interior plan based on public input and the DEP's consulting with JC recreation officials. The Friends agrees that the idea of combination multi-use fields is very sensible. It seems that locating some of the facilities along the western side of the interior makes sense as that perimeter would be walking and

bicycling distance from the Lafayette neighborhood. Because of the months of malicious falsehoods spread by Paul Fireman's paid, donated to, or propagandized surrogates, I need to make it clear again that the Friends of LSP have never opposed active recreation in the park – that we supported the late Mayor and state Senator Glenn Cunningham's efforts to establish a multi-use field around 2002 near the southern park entrance where the former cabana club parking lot is, and that the essential LSP Protection Act does not at all prohibit any active recreation.

The Friends urges the DEP, Governor and legislature to come up with financial options to fund the construction of the facilities and funding for their maintenance - without any Paul Fireman quid pro quo giveaway deal for Fireman's only goal of privatizing and destroying the park's Caven Point Natural Area The overwhelming majority for the park's 44 years has opposed giving away any of this priceless urban parkland to privatizers no matter what revenue was promised.

*For the record, I'll read a brief excerpt from a 1994 letter to the editor from the Friends of LSP's first president and co-founder, the late John Tichenor. His letter was opposing the interior 150 acre golf course plan. John's letter stated, "the development of Liberty State Park is at a crossroads. The state must reject the golf course plan and choose a Central Park type plan with family values at its heart: picnic areas, playgrounds, ballfields etc. along with gardens and natural areas. This park must serve all the residents of this county with open space in an urban area where parks are, in essence, our backyards. **Would any New Yorkers consider golf holes in Central Park?** For the record,*

Central Park is 840 acres, and LSP is 600 acres of land and 600 acres of water and not counting buildings, roads, & parking lots, the park is about 514 acres.

\ I do urge Paul Fireman's surrogates including his phony front group whose CEO admitted being funded by Paul Fireman, to start telling the truth and ending their big lies about the DEP's standard protective remediation plan and about LSP's true history. LSP has always needed independent-minded, honest, community leaders to represent the Public Good and not Paul Firemans' exclusionary golf course privatization goals.

Lastly, I thank the DEP for announcing a public meeting on the details of the creation of the interior's variety of urban nature habitats and trails, which will be an international model and which will benefit nature seekers from near and far, urban environmental Education & wildlife.