**News Release**

**New Jersey Meadowlands Commission**

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# Findings from Sediment Study Show Hackensack River Is Getting Cleaner

LYNDHURST, N.J. – The New Jersey Meadowlands Commission today received the results of the first study in 16 years of metals in sediments at the floor of the Hackensack River.

"This study is part of the ongoing efforts of the Corzine Administration to provide sound environmental quality and protection in the Meadowlands," said NJMC Chairwoman Susan Bass Levin, also the Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs. "Building upon our recent avian survey that reveals 260 types of birds in the Meadowlands, a fish inventory showing an increase in diversity of species, and an air quality study that helps guide our renewable energy and green building initiatives, today's study marks an era of continued environmental progress for the Meadowlands."

The study was conducted by NJMC staff and MERI (Meadowlands Environmental Research Institute) scientists at locations throughout the Upper, Lower and Middle portions of the Hackensack River and its tributaries. Samples of surface mud were gathered at 24 locations, following the methodology of a previous study commissioned by the NJMC in 1987.

The samples were analyzed by the MERI lab for Cadmium, Chromium, Copper, Lead, Nickel and Zinc. Additional to the original study, MERI also tested for concentrations of Mercury, Arsenic, and Iron in the sediments.

The raw data was sent to the New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT) for analysis and comparison to previous findings. Surface mud throughout the river system revealed an average 75 percent decrease in Cadmium, Chromium, Copper and Lead. The sharpest decrease was in Copper, which has been determined to be harmful to the gills, liver, kidneys, and the nervous system of fish.

Criteria established to measure the adverse biological effects of the metals on an ecosystem revealed Chromium, Copper and Nickel had shifted from hazardous to acceptable levels since 1987. Mercury was the only metal remaining at a high

concentration level, however, no significant difference in Mercury concentration was reported at different points along the river.

“This study will help back the NJMC’s environmental preservation efforts with strong scientific data,” said NJMC Executive Director Robert Ceberio. “The data augments the NJMC’s Continuous Water Quality Monitoring initiative and the strategies outlined in the Comprehensive Action Plan to research and improve the Meadowlands ecosystem, while sharing the results of these efforts.”

The findings will be published in a formal report, to be made available to the NJMC Board of Commissioners and the general public by the summer.

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