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## Plans for Park and Boat Center on the Hackensack River Taking Shape

**LYNDHURST, NJ** - The Board of Commissioners of the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission received a status update today on the progress of the future River Barge Park in Carlstadt. A brief presentation was given to the Board by the NJMC Landscape Architecture Group, which is designing the environmentally-friendly site to enhance public awareness and access to the Hackensack River.

“This park represents a strategic investment into the recreational assets of the Meadowlands,” said NJMC Acting Chairman and Acting New Jersey Department of Community Affairs Commissioner Joseph V. Doria. “We are committed to supporting any and all efforts that respect our rivers and wetlands and secure rare upland gateways such as this.”

In 2005, the NJMC purchased the 4-acre site for \$3.1 million through funds from the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The property is the former home of the Barge Club, which operated a restaurant, boat ramp and marina on the site. Proposed plans include keeping the well-recognized “Barge” sign at the park’s entrance. The Park will also showcase sustainable design principles, such as solar panels and the use of salvaged materials. Other features include a renovated public boat ramp, a waterfront promenade and outdoor classroom, along with wildlife observation and seating areas. The park will feature twin boat houses containing the future Meadowlands Rowing Center and the NJMC Paddle Center. Nautical artifacts and interpretive signage will be incorporated throughout the park, to highlight the history of the Meadowlands.

“The goal of this project is connect residents to natural resources in order to help them appreciate the unique qualities of the place they call home,” said Robert Ceberio, Executive Director of the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission. “River Barge Park will allow people to explore the Hackensack River, a resource in recovery, whether on their own or through NJMC Eco-tours. Projects like this symbolize the rebirth of the Meadowlands, and provide for increased opportunities to use this watershed as a recreation destination.”

A 26-slip marina will operate in accordance with New Jersey's Clean Marina Program, in which marina owners and boaters adopt practices that help prevent adverse impacts to water quality, sensitive habitats and the local ecosystem. The marina will continue to serve as the departure point for NJMC eco-cruises. The design phase of the River Barge Park project is expected to be complete by the fall of 2008 at the earliest. Construction can be finished by the end of 2009 under an accelerated timetable.