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## NJMC Sea Level Measurements Gauge Wetlands Health, Climate Change

**LYNDHURST, N.J.** – The New Jersey Meadowlands Commission (NJMC) today began participating in a federal sea-level measurement program that will help the agency assess the health of its marshes and prepare for flooding that could result from global warming.

“There is substantial scientific research that suggests global warming could severely affect tidal areas such as the Meadowlands,” said Joseph Doria, Chairman of the NJMC and Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs. “By tracking sea level change now we can plan how to protect the Meadowlands District from the problems associated with climate change.”

Measurements will be taken from 21 sediment monitoring sites placed in seven marsh locations in Carlstadt, Lyndhurst and Secaucus. The Meadowlands Environmental Research Institute (MERI), the scientific arm of the NJMC, will conduct the bi-annual surveys and share the data with the US Geological Survey. The USGS is studying sea level rise at several locations along the east coast. The NJMC is the first organization in New Jersey to participate in the USGS study.

The Meadowlands District is a unique urban ecosystem comprised of more than 8,400 acres of wetlands stretching over 30.4 square miles. These wetlands serve a critical buffer function during floods and high tides. This marsh elevation study will help the NJMC determine how best to protect the marshes and local homes and businesses from changes in water level.

“The NJMC is extremely vigilant when it comes to protecting the residents and the environment of the Meadowlands,” said Robert Ceberio, Executive Director of the NJMC. “Our research and our public outreach can help those in the Meadowlands enjoy a better quality of life.”

The sea-level measurement program is one of many examples of the NJMC's proactive efforts to address global warming concerns throughout the District. The Commission is also working to curb climate change directly by promoting alternative and renewable energy programs. The NJMC's Energy Master Plan calls for significantly reducing power use and installing solar panels to provide half the energy needs for the campus.

The NJMC also encourages sustainable development with financial incentives for 'green' construction and grants to help communities purchase hybrid vehicles and link to mass transit. The Commission's own Center for Environmental and Scientific Education, opened this year, will meet Leadership in Environmental Design (LEED) standards thanks to recycled construction materials and an energy saving design.

The Commission is also addressing existing flooding concerns in Rutherford and East Rutherford through a massive \$4.5 million project designed to reduce water backup on Route 17. The work involves installing new tide gates and six-foot culverts, plus clearing existing ditches and reconstructing the drainage system.

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