

2006/2007 Annual Report



A Sustainable Meadowlands



New Jersey Meadowlands Commission

Carlstadt East Rutherford Little Ferry Lyndhurst Moonachie North Arlington
Ridgefield Rutherford South Hackensack Teterboro Jersey City Kearny North
Bergen Secaucus A Sustainable Meadowlands Carlstadt East Rutherford Little Ferry
Lyndhurst Moonachie North Arlington Ridgefield Rutherford South Hackensack
Teterboro Jersey City Kearny North Bergen Secaucus A Sustainable Meadowlands

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Message from the Governor

Through its forward-thinking policies and ideas, the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission is implementing a regional planning agenda that encourages economic growth and environmental preservation in the Meadowlands District. This vision supports economic vitality through infrastructure improvements and redevelopment projects in member municipalities.

On the environmental front, the Commission is setting a fine example with its ambitious plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the promotion of green building. These are crucial steps toward meeting the targets of the Global Warming Response Act that I signed.

The Commission's dedication and hard work is making the Meadowlands region, and by extension the state, a better place for all of us to live, work and enjoy.

A stylized, handwritten signature in brown ink, representing Jon S. Corzine.

Jon S. Corzine
Governor, State of New Jersey





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Photo Courtesy of A. Reytor



Board of Commissioners



Joseph V. Doria, Jr.

*Acting Commissioner, New Jersey Department of Community Affairs
Chair, New Jersey Meadowlands Commission*



**James A.
Anzevino**

*Commissioner
Treasurer*



**Mia M.
Macri**

Commissioner



**Michael J.
Gonnelli**

Commissioner



**Eleanore S.
Nissley**

*Commissioner
Vice Chair*



**Leonard R.
Kaiser**

Commissioner



**Arleen F.
Walther**

Commissioner

Executive Team



Robert R. Ceberio

Executive Director

Irfan Bora

*Director of Finance
& Management
Chief Fiscal Officer*

Christine Sanz

*Director of Legal Affairs
and Chief Counsel*

Ileana Kafrouni

*Director of Land Use
Management
Chief of Regulatory Affairs*

Thomas Marturano

*Director of Solid Waste and
Natural Resources*

Christopher Gale

*Director of Communications
and Municipal Outreach*

Francisco Artigas

*Director of the Meadowlands
Environmental Research
Institute*



Message from the Acting Chair

The New Jersey Meadowlands Commission continues to make progress in balancing economic growth with environmental protection in the Meadowlands District. The agency's hard work has paid off in the truly valuable services it provides to the region.

The NJMC's proactive movement for a flourishing economy and vital environmental stewardship in the past year is commendable. Through promotion of green building, renewables and energy efficiency on its campus and throughout the District, it is leading the way for innovative governance. The agency's adoption of a Comprehensive Action Plan that challenges its own staff to work to maximum efficiency also deserves acknowledgement.

The CAP is a first-of-its-kind plan in New Jersey state government; it tasks our agency with linking goals, employee performance and budgetary planning to results. This dollars-to-deeds approach stresses accountability and allows us to map our progress and share results with stakeholders and the public through a transparent and easily understandable process.

The NJMC helps the citizens of the Meadowlands and beyond in many ways, from the funding it provides to municipalities to help reduce flooding to the educational programs and eco-tours that promote awareness of the delicate beauty of the Meadowlands.

I take great pride in the NJMC's accomplishments and I am confident that the Commission will have many more achievements to celebrate in the future.

A handwritten signature in brown ink that reads "Joseph V. Doria, Jr." The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small "Jr." at the end.

Joseph V. Doria, Jr.

*Acting Commissioner, New Jersey Department of Community Affairs
Chair, New Jersey Meadowlands Commission*



Message from the Executive Director

The Meadowlands District is a unique region where amazing natural beauty, wildlife, vibrant business and residential communities coexist and overlap. It is the job of the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission to protect, preserve and perpetuate this extraordinary landscape.

We are hard at work improving the financial climate for the business owners and residents of our 14 District towns. For instance, the funding and technical assistance we have provided over the past year to flood control projects, transportation improvements, support for small businesses, a strong Convention and Visitors Bureau and other economic infrastructure improvements are helping businesses' bottom lines while lifting some of the financial burden off taxpayers' backs by growing commerce.

Our efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through the use of renewable energy and green building puts us ahead of the curve in heeding Governor Corzine's call to combat climate change under the state Global Warming Response Act. By retrofitting our facilities to meet the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards and offering financial incentives to builders whose projects in the District attain LEED certification, we have set an example in the field while demonstrating that we are very serious about fostering a sustainable environment in the Meadowlands.

The past year has also seen construction begin on our new Center for Environmental and Scientific Education. The new facility, which is being built to LEED standards, will serve as a focal point for our educational programs. Its centerpiece, the William D. McDowell Observatory, will offer a viewpath to the stars through a state-of-the-art telescope. It will be one of the few observatories open to the public in Northern New Jersey.

Through these and other projects, the NJMC is taking an aggressive and progressive approach to improving the quality of life in the Meadowlands today and promising a "Sustainable Meadowlands" tomorrow.

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads "Robert R. Ceberio". The signature is fluid and cursive, written on a light-colored rectangular background.

Robert R. Ceberio
Executive Director

Overview

For the past 38 years, the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission has guided the transformation of a once unsightly dumping ground into a breathtaking natural oasis while fostering responsible commercial, industrial and residential development in the 30.4 square-mile Meadowlands District that encompasses parts of 14 towns in Bergen and Hudson counties.

Moving forward, the NJMC is focused on several initiatives that will ensure a “Sustainable Meadowlands,” a region that is well-prepared to meet the environmental and economic challenges of an ever-changing world.

As detailed in this report, the NJMC has been proactive in pursuing the use of renewable energy and environmentally-responsible construction while continuing its ongoing efforts to improve the District’s physical and economic infrastructure through a variety of ambitious initiatives.

The NJMC’s efforts are monitored through its new Comprehensive Action Plan (CAP), a first-of-its-kind program that charts the agency’s progress through a series of goals and objectives, and links to performance and budget planning.





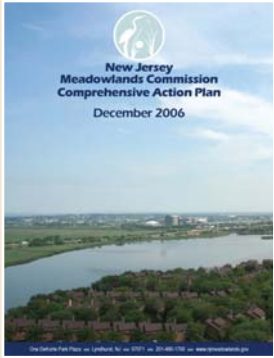
Finance and Management

The NJMC's Finance and Management Division maintains the agency's budget, carries out accounting and purchasing functions and ensures the efficiency of day-to-day operations. This division administers the Meadowlands District's tax sharing formula and oversees the Meadowlands Area Grants for Natural and Economic Transformation (MAGNET) program, a \$33 million financial plan that funds District-wide revitalization. The division includes the departments of purchasing, security, maintenance, information technology, general services and vehicle fleet maintenance.



Management

Highlights of 2006-07



Comprehensive Action Plan

In January 2007, the NJMC Board of Commissioners approved a pioneering budget and management initiative that will serve as a financial roadmap for the agency in the years to come.

The Comprehensive Action Plan (CAP) is the first of its kind in New Jersey state government to tie together an agency's mission and goals, performance measures, human resources system, financial planning and strategic budgeting.

The multi-year plan, which was prepared by the National Center for Public Performance at Rutgers University, links budgeting to results and calls for a comprehensive human resources management system.

The plan will improve operational efficiency by linking administrative activities to the performance outcomes that matter most for the agency and its stakeholders. The CAP focuses on the agency's five core missions and sets goals and objectives for each. The core areas are: environmental protection, economic development, solid waste management, provision of regional services and organizational efficiency.

Economic Summit

In October 2006, the NJMC co-sponsored the Second Annual Meadowlands Economic Summit. It brought together economists, policy makers, business and community leaders, and environmental advocates with the common goal of growing economic opportunities in the Meadowlands District. Stakeholders explored ways to utilize the District's strategic advantages, including its proximity to New York City and access to mass transportation, while protecting and promoting its environmental treasures.

Several recommendations critical for economic growth emerged from the meeting:

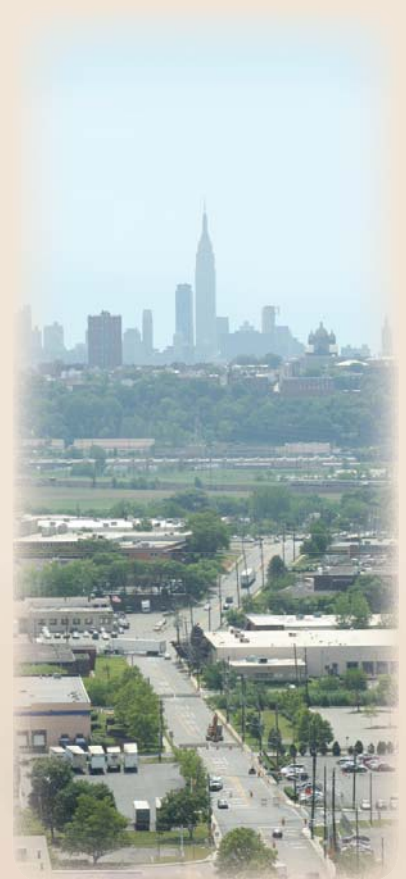
🔥 Improve internal circulation and transportation within the District, with special attention paid to mass transit in order to meet the increasing number of jobs expected in the region over the next 30 years.

🔥 Expedite a Rutgers University study of the applicability of stormwater utility concepts in the District in order to craft a comprehensive system that addresses declining flood prevention structures.

🔥 Begin an analysis of establishing a small business incubator in the District to foster innovation.

🔥 Establish a hotline for businesses seeking information on state and NJMC land use regulations.

🔥 Strengthen policies regarding waste disposal and renewable energy.



Employment Opportunity Center

To further foster economic growth in the District, the NJMC appropriated \$100,000 to the Meadowlands Regional Chamber of Commerce. This money will help fund the continued operation of the Meadowlands Employment Opportunity Center. The center maintains an online job bank to connect Meadowlands region businesses to the workforce, sponsors local job fairs and provides training resources to workers.

Shared Services

Through the NJMC Municipal Equipment Pool, District municipalities have access to a camera truck and sewer jet-vac truck that serve as useful resources in addressing sewer and storm line problems and related issues. In continuing its efforts to further Governor Corzine's goal of providing shared services to help municipalities run more efficiently and save taxpayer dollars, the NJMC allocated \$1 million in October 2006 to develop and implement a new

shared services and equipment program among its 14 member municipalities. Funding was provided from the NJMC's Meadowlands Area Grants for Natural and Economic Transformation (MAGNET) program. Guidelines for fund distribution will be presented to the NJMC's Board of Commissioners upon the completion of studies by the Institute for Meadowlands Studies Rutgers University.



MAGNET

The MAGNET program is a five-year, \$33 million financial plan that provides funding for programs across the Meadowlands District. This helps to stabilize municipal property taxes through the funding of various projects including equipment purchases, roadway and sidewalk repairs, ballfield upgrades and flood control initiatives.



MAP

The NJMC's Finance and Management Division reviews applications and disburses grants allotted by the Board of Commissioners to the 14 Meadowlands municipalities. The Municipal Assistance Program (MAP) was established to assist the municipalities in providing a better quality of life for their residents while helping stabilize property taxes.

In October 2006, the NJMC appropriated \$1.4 million in MAP grants to its 14 member towns. Some of the items supported by the 2006-07 MAP grants include:

🔥 New fire, police and public works vehicles in Carlstadt.

🔥 A Sept. 11 memorial park in East Rutherford.



🔥 New police cars and equipment in Kearny.

🔥 New police vehicles and equipment; improvements to DPW, flood control and fire equipment, and new ballfields in Little Ferry.

🔥 Sidewalk, crosswalk and street light improvements in Lyndhurst.

🔥 New police cars and security equipment for the municipal building and police station in Moonachie.

🔥 New police and fire department vehicles and firefighter turnout gear in North Arlington.

🔥 Replacement of damaged sewer pipes, manhole and inlet repairs, street resurfacing, and curb and sidewalk replacements in Ridgefield.

🔥 Installation of handicapped-accessible restrooms, new benches, landscaping and streetscape improvements, and resetting of World War I plaques in Rutherford.

🔥 New police vehicles and an upgrade to the police dispatch desk in Secaucus.

🔥 New firefighter equipment, law enforcement vehicle and implementation of the township Web site in South Hackensack.

Financial Report

STATEMENT OF REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS

December 31, 2006

Revenues

Solid Waste Overhead Contribution	5,663,558
Sale of Property	12,469,801
Fees & Charges	2,048,757
Interest Income	2,914,898
Contribution for Observatory/Science Center	1,500,000
Grants	967,554
Royalties from Sale of Methane Gas	247,436
Revenues from Composting Operations	339,766
Other Income	213,788
Total Funding Sources	26,365,558

Expenditures

Commission Operations	9,785,193
Environment Center Operations	1,801,600
Contribution to Restricted Fund	7,992,056
Open Space Acquisition	1,067,377
MAGNET Fund	2,276,849
Amounts expended against prior year revenue allocation	1,850,590
Construction in Progress - Science Center	584,566
Capital Expenditures	260,322
Contribution to Other Operations	564,060
Other Expenditures	182,945
Total Expenditures	26,365,558

SOLID WASTE OPERATIONS STATEMENT OF REVENUES AND EXPENSES

December 31, 2006

Revenues

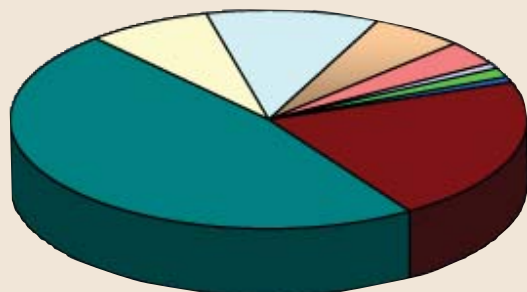
Operating Revenue	19,612,317
Non-Operating Revenues	1,110,106
Total Revenues	20,722,423

Expenses

General Operating Costs	11,320,197
Landfill Operations	3,402,005
Payments to County Utility Authorities	2,058,256
Closure Expenses	1,304,873
MERI/Laboratory Expenses	2,441,140
Other Expenses	188,087
Total Operating Expenses	20,714,558

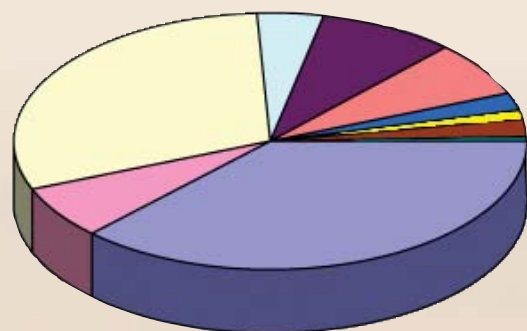
Net Income **7,865**

Governmental Funds Revenues



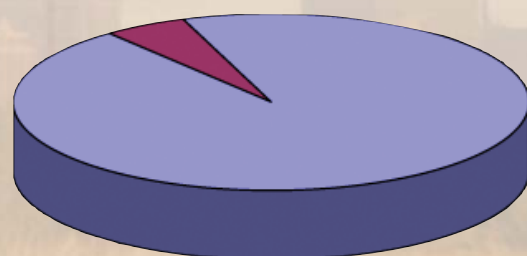
- Solid Waste Overhead Contribution - 21%
- Fees and Charges - 8%
- Contribution for Observatory/Science Center - 6%
- Royalties from Sale of Methane Gas - 1%
- Other Income - 1%
- Sale of Property - 47%
- Interest Income - 11%
- Grants - 4%
- Revenues from Composting Operations - 1%

Governmental Funds Expenditures



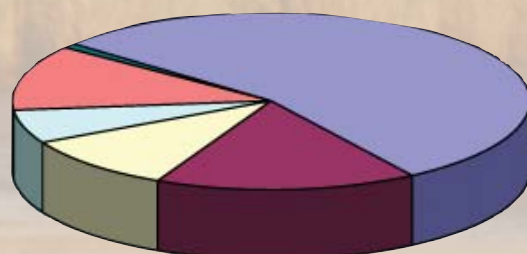
- Commission Operations - 37%
- Contribution to Restricted Fund - 30%
- MAGNET - 9%
- Construction in Progress/Science Center - 2%
- Contribution to Other Operations - 2%
- Environment Center Operations - 7%
- Open Space Acquisition - 4%
- Amounts expended against prior year revenue allocation - 7%
- Capital Expenditures - 1%
- Other Expenditures - 1%

Solid Waste Operations Revenues



- Operating Revenue - 95%
- Non-Operating Revenues - 5%

Solid Waste Operations Expenses



- General Operation - 55%
- Payments to County Utility Authorities - 10%
- MERI/Laboratory Expenses - 12%
- Landfill Operations - 16%
- Closure Expenses - 6%
- Other Expenses - 1%

Land Use Management

The Land Use Management Division's employees are organized into three groups. The Site Plan Review and Inspections Group is responsible for establishing and enforcing the zoning and subdivision regulations of the Meadowlands District. All plans and property improvements, including redevelopment projects, are reviewed alongside the Meadowlands Master Plan and its supporting regulations to ensure orderly development. The Plan Review Group is responsible for enforcing New Jersey's Uniform Construction Code. The Special Projects Section is responsible for planning and engineering efforts and initiatives of the Commission, including flood control and transportation management. Together, staff presides over the primary land use regulations that govern the 30.4 square-mile Meadowlands District.



Management



Highlights of 2006-07

Redevelopment Areas

The redevelopment of the Meadowlands District is an ongoing process. Over the past four decades, the area has been transformed from blighted wastelands into a region of breathtaking beauty, vibrant business districts and peaceful residential communities.

Highlights of redevelopment projects in 2006-07 include the following:

🏗️ The completion of a new retail center on Harrison Avenue in the Kearny Redevelopment Area.

🏗️ Start of construction on the second building in the Saw Mill Park industrial complex located in the Belleville Turnpike Redevelopment Area in Kearny.

🏗️ The opening of a 328-unit apartment complex, located in the Wall Street West Redevelopment Area in Lyndhurst.

🏗️ Commencement of construction on the first residential building in the Riverfront Landing Zone of the Secaucus Transit Village Redevelopment Area. The 304-unit, four-story structure includes 64 units reserved for affordable and workforce housing.

Green Building

As a leader in advancing environmentally-responsible construction and building management, the NJMC adopted a series of voluntary incentives in October 2006 designed to encourage green building in the District. The incentive program rewards builders who incorporate the guidelines of the U.S. Green Building Council's (USGBC) Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating system into their projects. Incentives for projects that meet LEED standards include a partial refund of required zoning fees, priority review and bonuses where residential uses are permitted.

Leading by example, the NJMC has moved to bring its administrative offices, the Meadowlands Environment Center (MEC), the new Center for Environmental and Scientific Education and William D. McDowell Observatory in line with green standards. Existing NJMC facilities underwent an energy audit in the Summer of 2007. Future plans include using photovoltaic cells to generate power and increasing light, water and recycling efficiency.

The agency also entered into a contract with the Rutgers University Center for Green Building to conduct new research on environmentally-friendly construction and management practices.





Flood Management

The NJMC Board of Commissioners appropriated funds toward several projects that aim to alleviate flooding in District towns, improving the quality of life of residents, merchants and commuters. In the summer of 2007, the NJMC completed the restoration of several drainage systems in Carlstadt and Moonachie between Washington Avenue and the Gotham Parkway. The design of the improvements, including a new tide gate on Palmer Terrace and 4,500 linear feet of ditch cleanout, was completed by NJMC stormwater engineers.

A construction time table was established for the Rutherford Tide Gates, East Rutherford Tide Gates and the cleanout of associated mile-long drainage ditches. This restored drainage system will reduce flooding on Route 17 as well as for numerous roadways and industrial buildings in both towns. A total of 10 tide gates and 16 culverts will be added in one of the area's largest flood control projects. Work is slated to begin in the fall of 2007.

The NJMC continued to conduct catch-basin and storm sewer cleanouts throughout the District and participated in several other flood control initiatives. These projects included:

- 🔥 Coordination with the Hudson County Engineering Department on the design and

construction of a large capacity pump system on Penhorn Creek in Jersey City to increase protection for Secaucus and Jersey City from flooding.

- 🔥 Collaboration with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to design short-term and long-term flood control improvements to the Belleville Turnpike.

- 🔥 Assistance to the Meadowlands Conservation Trust on the design and inspection of Federal Emergency Management Agency funded embankment repairs in Carlstadt and South Hackensack.

- 🔥 Funding and technical support to Secaucus on residential drainage improvements.

- 🔥 Inspections of District tide gates prior to major storm events.

- 🔥 Restoration of the Williams Avenue/Route 17 North drainage system in Hasbrouck Heights.

Bergen County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan

The NJMC is currently working with the Bergen County Office of Emergency Management to prepare the Bergen County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan. The Plan will include all 72 municipalities within Bergen County. Once completed the Plan will open jurisdictions up to receiving Hazard Mitigation Grant funding in the event of a natural disaster. The Plan is scheduled to be completed in late 2007.

Meadowlands District Transportation Plan

A draft of the Meadowlands District Transportation Plan was released for public comment in the Summer of 2007. The Plan fulfills the requirements of the Hackensack Meadowlands Transportation Planning Act and plays an important role in the NJMC's mission to improve mobility for passengers and freight throughout the District. The Plan considers future growth within the District and identifies transportation improvements that will be needed to support such development until the year 2030.

The Plan prioritizes improvements, estimates costs, and derives funding sources from both the private and public sectors. A full range of transportation improvements is recommended to address existing and future needs within the District. This will ensure that growth within the District is supported and that resources will be available to mitigate future mobility

concerns. The Meadowlands District Transportation Plan is designed to be a fluid document and will be revised and updated over time as the Transportation Planning District's needs change.

Affordable Housing

The NJMC continues to offer District municipalities financial and technical assistance to support the planning for and production of affordable housing. NJMC staff is available to provide municipalities with clarification regarding Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) rules, an assessment of the suitability of sites for affordable housing, and data regarding historic and planned development in the Meadowlands District so that the municipalities can address their affordable housing needs. Through an affordable housing partnership with the Borough of Carlstadt, the NJMC has assisted with revising the Borough's Housing Element and Fair Share Plan and laying the groundwork for the Borough to address its affordable housing obligation.

The NJMC Board of Commissioners has authorized staff to initiate a rulemaking process regarding the NJMC's affordable housing regulations as soon as COAH adopts revisions to its own rules. The rulemaking will provide consistency with COAH's revised rules and further the NJMC's capacity to plan and zone for affordable housing needs.



Brownfields Redevelopment

The federal Environmental Protection Agency has awarded the NJMC a \$200,000 Brownfields Assessment Grant. This assistance is available to enhance the environmental characterization of priority brownfield clusters in the District and make a significant contribution to find properties with redevelopment and revitalization potential. The NJMC is reviewing data sources to identify two to three priority brownfield clusters for characterization.

Uniform Construction Code Plan Review Highlights

The Plan Review Group continued to exceed its mandated deadlines for construction code plan review, while reviewing a record number of applications and plans in 2006 and 2007. In addition to its duties throughout the Meadowlands District, the group has been instrumental in managing the design and

construction phases of the new Center for Environmental and Scientific Education, a 10,000 square foot expansion of the Meadowlands Environment Center.

The group maintains a mutual aid "go" team of licensed UCC inspectors and Professional Engineers who respond to natural disasters throughout Bergen County to perform initial damage assessment. Safety training of all NJMC personnel who perform inspections or enter job sites throughout the District falls under the purview of this department. The Plan Review Group also maintains a Certified First Responder Corps that responds to medical emergencies within the NJMC campus and a trained Certified Emergency Response Team that assists Bergen County emergency responders with outside emergencies.

Natural Resources and Solid Waste

The Natural Resources and Solid Waste unit of the NJMC includes the Parks and Open Space Group, Wetlands Group and Solid Waste Group. Employees in these diverse groups oversee the handling of construction debris and other waste in the District, preserve and protect the District's wetlands, and create and maintain parks.

Highlights of 2006-07

River Barge Park and Marina

In October 2006 the NJMC announced preliminary plans for the first-ever public marina on the Hackensack River. The environmentally-conscious River Barge Park and Marina will be constructed in Carlstadt on the site of the old River Barge Cafe ("Barge Club") restaurant and play a key role in the NJMC's efforts to restore the Hackensack River to a recreational boating destination. The NJMC acquired the 4-acre property in 2005 and envisions the marina as a place to celebrate the river's history, current renaissance and continued resurgence as a destination. In a nod to the site's past, the well-recognized "Barge" sign will remain at the park's entrance. In keeping with the NJMC's commitment to sustainable building, the construction of River Barge Park will follow the guidelines of the New Jersey Clean Marina Program, in which marina owners and boaters voluntarily adopt practices that help prevent adverse impacts to water quality, sensitive habitats and the local ecosystem.



Plan Highlights Include:

🌿 Incorporating sustainable design principals such as the use of salvaged and recycled materials in construction, including salvaged Atlantic Heart Pine from the retrofitted lighter barges that made up the restaurant.

🌿 Green spaces including outdoor classrooms, a maritime history trail, picnic areas and wetland planting for shore edge stabilization.

🌿 A boat marina that will separate motorized and non-motorized vessels.

🌿 A regional rowing center for high schools, colleges and paddle clubs in the District.

🌿 Native plants, interpretive signage, birding and wildlife trails, and boardwalks.

🌿 A State Marine Police and New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection substation.



Skeetkill Marsh Transfer

The NJMC continued its program of consolidating open space within the District by transferring ownership of the Skeetkill Creek Wetlands Enhancement Site in Ridgefield to the Meadowlands Conservation Trust (MCT). The transfer guarantees that the 16-acre marsh will be preserved in perpetuity along with other MCT properties. During the decade that the NJMC oversaw this critical ecological area, the agency restored the site's biological diversity, reestablished tidal flows, created new open water areas, and encouraged community involvement through a cleanup day and annual Tree Swallow Nest Box Conservation Project.

Bird Study

A comprehensive, two-year study of avian species in the Meadowlands District found a full complement of common, threatened and endangered birds making their year-round or seasonal homes here. Researchers in the study, which was conducted by the New Jersey Audubon Society, recorded more than 200 avian species and more than 150,000 individual birds. The Northern Harrier was the most commonly-seen endangered species, while the Osprey, Savannah Sparrow and Black-crowned Night Heron were the most viewed threatened species. The NJMC will use the results of the study as a basis for future decisions on habitat restoration and other initiatives.



Duck Food Availability Study

Behavioral surveys conducted in the winter and spring of 2006 found that dabbling ducks spent more time feeding in tidally-influenced sites compared to tidally-restricted sites. The amount of available food suggested that the District is capable of supporting additional wintering and migrating waterfowl. The study, conducted in conjunction with Ducks Unlimited, suggests that where possible, restoration activities in the Meadowlands should focus on restoring tidal hydrology and vegetation to tidally-restricted sites.



Secaucus High School Wetlands Enhancement Project

A 43-acre site located between Secaucus High School and Mill Creek Point Park in Secaucus is receiving a comprehensive upgrade thanks to the NJMC. The improvement project, which began in March 2007, includes clearing invasive phragmites and increasing tidal flow to allow for greater biodiversity of fish, mammal and bird species, notably the Yellow-crowned Night Heron that nests in the nearby Schmidt's Woods. The project entails the construction of a 1,500-foot elevated boardwalk that will allow visitors and Secaucus High School students to stroll along the marsh and view the growth of this restored urban wetland. The boardwalk will feature several observation benches and award-winning wildlife signage. The project's anticipated completion date is late 2007.

Park Improvement

In June 2007 the NJMC awarded a grant to the Borough of Little Ferry for the construction of new baseball and soccer fields at Losen Slote Creek Park. Children in neighboring South Hackensack will use the fields as well, making the project an example of shared recreational facilities.



Interpretive Sign Award

The NJMC is committed to informing the public about their environment. The agency's efforts in this regard were recognized in December 2006 by the New Jersey Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects, which presented the NJMC with a Merit Award in Communications for the educational and interpretive signage at Richard W. DeKorte Park, the home of the NJMC in Lyndhurst. The signposts serve as a guide and discovery tool, helping visitors understand the natural environment throughout the 128-acre park while explaining the

history, hidden stories and lessons in the landscape. A series of "Project Signs," for example, walks visitors through the park's transformation from its former use as a landfill to its rebirth as an oasis for environmental education and passive recreation. "Meadowlands Stories Signs" focus on the thriving marsh estuary with words and watercolor renderings of raccoons, meadow voles and other night creatures. "Waterfowl Identification Signs" offer photos, facts and trivia on some of the 260 avian species found in the park throughout the year.



MERI

Meadowlands Environmental Research Institute

The Meadowlands Environmental Research Institute (MERI) runs the NJMC's Geographic Information System (GIS), the environmental chemistry laboratory, the scientific library and a network of field environmental monitoring stations. GIS maps and data about the District are stored digitally and geographic information is assembled on demand to address planning and environmental issues. The system also provides emergency workers within District municipalities with instant access to critical data for emergency response. The laboratory monitors environmental contaminants in sediment, water, air and animal tissue. MERI scientists oversee environmental studies that guide the NJMC's policies and plans for the future. MERI continuously monitors air and water quality to gain a full understanding of the ecological vitality of the Meadowlands region and how to maintain and better protect the Meadowlands ecosystem.

Highlights of 2006-07

Meadowlands Science Symposium

MERI held a three-day conference with Rutgers University in May 2007 to discuss scientific research findings in the Meadowlands and greater New York Metropolitan Area related to climate change, renewable energy and urban wetlands monitoring. The NJMC presented studies on the Meadowlands bird population and health, biodiversity in the Meadowlands region and the testing of AquaBlock™, a material being used to isolate contaminated sediments from the water column and food-web of the Kearny Marsh. MERI will continue to monitor air quality and greenhouse gas emissions to assess the impact of global warming on the District and explore new ways to combat climate change.

Study Finds Hackensack River Is Improving

The NJMC received good news in April 2007 when it learned that the Hackensack River is getting cleaner. The results of a study conducted by NJMC staff and MERI showed an average 75 percent decrease in potentially harmful heavy metals in river sediments. Reductions were found in cadmium, chromium, copper and lead. The greatest decline was in copper, which has been found to be especially harmful to fish.





Portable GIS Systems for Emergency Management

MERI is working to provide all 14 Meadowlands District towns with portable GIS databases for emergency management. These programs come loaded on a tablet-style computer, provide access to potentially life-saving information and can be accessed from patrol cars and emergency vehicles operating in the field. The information is updated continuously and compiled from original paper maps, satellite images, census data and other geographical documents available at the local, state and county levels.

Improved Air Quality

The NJMC is currently pursuing several air quality studies in cooperation with the Environmental and Occupational Health Services Institute at the Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and Rutgers University-Newark. The studies measure air pollution from fixed and mobile sources around the District. A personal air quality component of the study measures the actual exposure to air toxins of individuals moving about in the District. As part of the NJMC's ongoing efforts to improve air quality, the agency has begun to convert its entire vehicle fleet into fuel-efficient hybrids. Half of the electricity needed to run NJMC facilities will be derived from a 700 kiloWatt solar array. The agency anticipates breaking ground on this array in the fall of 2007.



Sea Level Rise

In collaboration with the US Geological Survey, the NJMC is establishing instruments in District wetlands to measure sea level rise. These instruments measure the elevation of wetland surfaces in relation to sea level. Information from these instruments and similar ones established along the Eastern Seaboard provide valuable information for the long-term management of coastal wetlands.

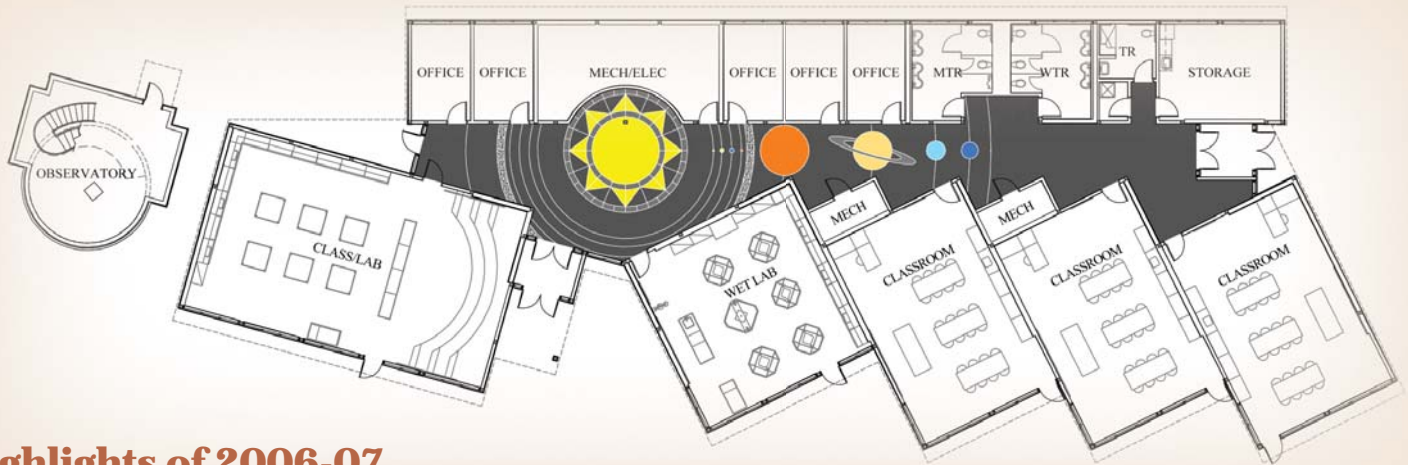
Meadowlands Environment Center

The Meadowlands Environment Center (MEC) is an NJMC facility operated by Ramapo College of New Jersey and is probably the most visible aspect of the Commission's work. Thousands of school groups take advantage of the MEC's range of educational programs year-round, in addition to the visitors and tourists who are attracted by a regular schedule of public events. More than 600 teachers attend workshops at the MEC each year where they learn to incorporate wetlands studies and environmental education into their classrooms.

The MEC houses classrooms, the Discovery Station interactive learning center, a multi-use computer lab, a marsh diorama, a 250-seat auditorium, the Flyway Gallery for local and environmental art exhibits, the Tideland Treasures gift store, an interactive Meadowlands Liberty Convention and Visitors Bureau travel and tourism kiosk and the Marsh Pavilion, which offers picturesque views of the Hackensack River and New York City skyline.

The Center's location in Richard W. DeKorte Park provides access to a variety of trails and outdoor classrooms where summer camps and special events are held. The employees of the MEC are Ramapo College professors, students and staff.





Highlights of 2006-07

Science Center and Observatory

The NJMC heralded a new era for its educational mission in November 2006 by breaking ground on the NJMC Center for Environmental and Scientific Education and its centerpiece, the William D. McDowell Observatory. The 10,000 square-foot facility will include three classrooms, a wet laboratory, a classroom/laboratory, administrative offices, storage space and a lobby. The observatory will feature a state-of-the-art telescope with a six-meter retractable dome. The Observatory is named after William D. McDowell, the first executive director of the NJMC who established the framework through which the agency has worked since its inception in 1969. A lifelong public servant who was also Mayor of North Arlington and the first Bergen County Executive, Mr. McDowell passed away April 13, 2007 at age 80.

MarshAccess Grant

The MEC will expand its programming for individuals with disabilities thanks to a \$852,000 National Science Foundation grant awarded to Ramapo College in April 2007. The college will use the funding to further develop, test and implement the MarshAccess program, a national model for accessibility and assistive technology that adapts science programs at the MEC for people with disabilities.



Pilot Field School

As part of a Pilot Field School sponsored by the NJMC, the freshman class at Lyndhurst High School studied earth sciences at the MEC during the 2006-07 school year. The program will continue with the 2007-08 freshman class.

Scholarships

The NJMC Board of Commissioners recognizes the importance of the continuing education of the District's young people. To that end, the Board allocated \$32,000 in scholarships in 2007 to 16 college-bound high school seniors in District municipalities. To be eligible for a scholarship, students must maintain a B average, participate in community service and write a 500-word essay on the importance of science and technology in education.

Executive

The Executive Division supports the Executive Director of the NJMC, provides legal counsel, maintains intergovernmental relations and gives administrative support. The division also facilitates and maintains an open dialogue with the press, municipal governments, legislators, state agencies, and residents. In addition to these tasks, the division takes on special projects. Broad initiatives are pursued that span several NJMC divisions, such as plans to improve transportation infrastructure in the District to foster a permanent renewable energy source to reduce the need for traditional fossil fuels in the years ahead.

Legal Department

The Legal Department is responsible for the oversight and execution of all legal actions and the resolution of all legal issues which face the NJMC. Additionally, the department serves as a liaison to the attorneys who represent the NJMC, including those from the Attorney General's Office and all outside counsel.

One example of the department's defense of

the agency's policies is the action it has taken to pursue illegal rail-side waste operations that sidestep local health, safety and environmental regulations. These transfer stations have faced stiff legal opposition from the State, which is committed to protecting the health and safety of all residents and workers.

In addition, the department provides legal and policy advice on in-house issues to the NJMC staff and the Executive Division, including employment, ethics,

safety and security. Furthermore, the day-to-day activities of the legal department include the review of agenda items, resolutions, the oversight of all large scale procurement and purchasing operations. Notably, the department now leads the NJMC's Office of Sustainability, which houses its Renewable Energy Program, a critical component of the agency's move toward a Sustainable Meadowlands.

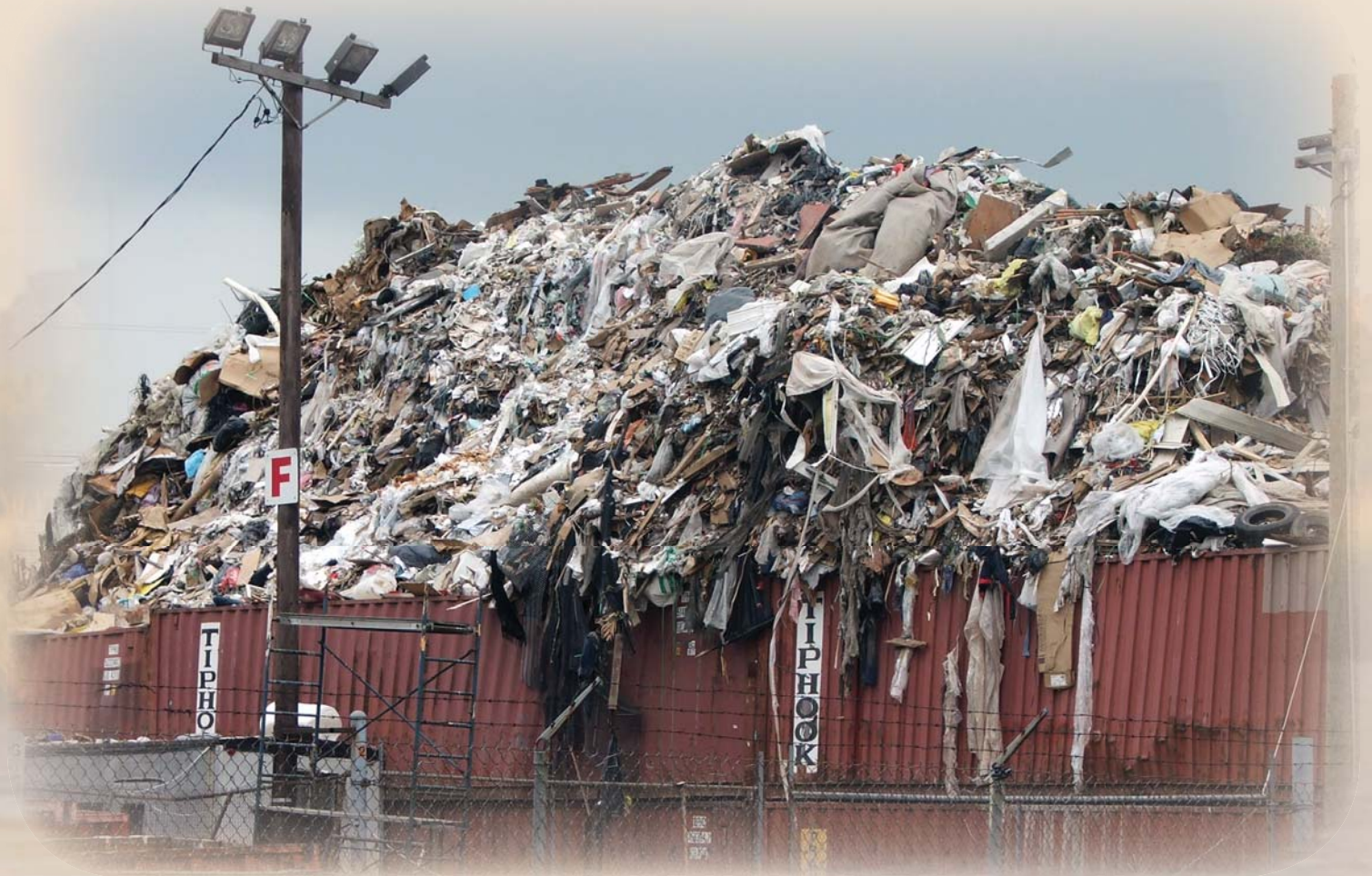
Photo Courtesy of A. Reytor



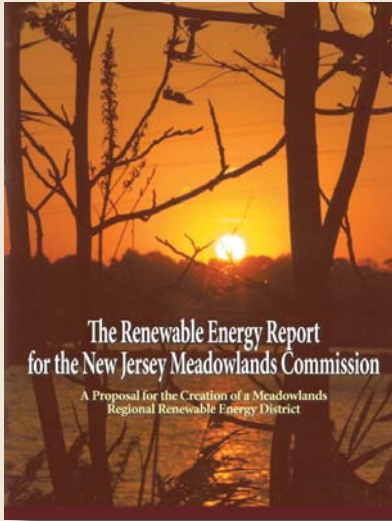
Highlights of 2006-07

Litigation against Unregulated Rail-side Waste Operations

The NJMC is involved in litigation against rail-side waste transfer operators in the Meadowlands District who attempt to avoid obligations to abide by local and state health, safety and environmental regulations. Many of these operators claim that because of their proximity to railroads, they fall under federal railroad regulations and are exempt from local laws. Local entities have traditionally held oversight over solid waste operations.



Renewable Energy



The NJMC is aggressively pursuing Governor Corzine's goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions under the terms of the state's Global Warming Response Act. This calls for reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, a 20 percent reduction; and to 80 percent below 2006 levels by 2050. The agency is expediting the installation of an eventual 5 Megawatt solar array with a startup 700 KiloWatt solar energy grid on NJMC properties.

In June 2007 the Board of Commissioners of the NJMC selected a contractor to install solar panels on property adjacent to the NJMC administrative building. The Commission also announced it would negotiate a power purchase agreement with Epuron LLC to maximize the financial benefits of the system. In addition, the NJMC Board of Commissioners has authorized assistance to municipalities,



school districts and others participating in the Meadowlands Regional Renewable Energy District to help prepare those entities for the installation of solar facilities. The NJMC will also work to attract renewable energy research, development and installation companies to the District.



NJMC Awarded USEPA Awards for Environmental Quality and Clean Air Excellence

In April 2007, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) honored the NJMC with an Environmental Quality Award, recognizing the agency's efforts and accomplishments in protecting and restoring thousands of acres of valuable urban wetlands in the District. The agency was also recognized for its eco-tourism efforts, including its seasonal guided pontoon boat cruises and canoe tours and year-round educational programs at the Meadowlands Environment Center. Nearly 2,000 people experienced the Hackensack River and its vibrant ecosystem from a totally new perspective on an NJMC boat tour in 2006.

The USEPA again lauded the NJMC in May 2007 for its comprehensive policies and regulations aimed at improving air quality in the 14 District towns. The agency's commitment to air quality reflects its dedication to meeting the goals of the state's Global Warming Response Act that was signed into law by Governor Corzine in July 2007.



The Arts

The NJMC is proud of the many artists who hail from the District, whether they express themselves through plays, paintings, photographs, dance, film or other outlets. These creative individuals and others from beyond District borders are among the champions of fostering a sense of place in the Meadowlands region. The past year included many interesting and thought-provoking exhibits by talented artists, including the following:

🌿 Elaine Lorenz's "Earth Spiral" was unveiled in October 2006. The circular sculpture combines human craftsmanship with natural flora.

🌿 Also in October 2006, The Flyway Gallery in the Meadowlands Environment Center hosted a nature-themed exhibit by the Art Association of Rutherford. The show celebrated the group's 59th anniversary.

🌿 "Species on the Edge," an exhibit featuring award-winning artwork and essays by fifth-graders from across New Jersey, kicked off the Flyway Gallery's 2007 exhibit schedule. Students wrote essays and created artwork focusing on threatened and endangered species.

🌿 Students from the South Bergen Jointure Commission provided artwork for the March 2007 exhibit, "Welcome to Our World: Artwork from Special Needs Children."

🌿 "Skyline: Natural Wonders and the Urban Landscape," featured works by students from Hudson Community College in June 2007. The multi-genre "Marsh Meditations," featured works by members of the Princeton Artist Alliance and remained on display throughout July and August.





New Jersey Meadowlands Commission

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