

Christie Administration Announces Expanded Portion of Liberty State Park to Reopen Following Superstorm Sandy

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Tags: [Hurricane Sandy](#)

Trenton, NJ – Representing another recovery and rebuilding milestone following Superstorm Sandy, the Christie Administration announced today that major sections of Liberty State Park damaged by Sandy have been repaired and cleared and will be open again to the public this weekend. These popular sections of Liberty State Park include a segment of the Hudson River Walkway, field and green spaces for walking and relaxation, and key interconnector roads and trails that help people get to and through the park.

“We’ve been working hard to repair this treasured park, which is the most visited state park in New Jersey,” said Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Bob Martin. “We know how important this park is to our state’s residents and also to the nation, as the gateway to the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island. Reopening further sections of Liberty State Park, which suffered considerable damage from Sandy, is part of Governor Christie’s ongoing commitment to rebuilding our state and a symbol of our state’s resolve to recover from this storm.”

The DEP reopened the 9/11 Memorial, the Grove of Remembrance and certain passive recreation portions of the park on Thanksgiving weekend. Liberty Landing Marina and Liberty House and Maritime Parc restaurants were also opened at that time.

For the past two months, Liberty staff and teams of state parks employees from across New Jersey have been working to make further repairs and clear away vast amounts of debris caused by the tidal surge that hit the park during Sandy. They were supplemented by inmate labor provided by the state Department of Corrections, which had more than 100 inmates working at the park.

As a result of this effort, nearly half of Liberty Walk (the Hudson River Walkway), which offers unparalleled views of the Statue of Liberty and the New York skyline, has now been reopened. Morris Pesin Drive, one of two main entranceways to Liberty State Park is open again, as is Freedom Way, the main north-south connector road. In addition, open fields and walking areas have been reopened, with 263 of the park’s 343 public use acres now accessible to the public.

The public boat launch and fishing access jetty off of Morris Pesin Drive also have been cleared of debris and are available to the public.

In a further sign of recovery, Liberty State Park Superintendent Rob Rodriguez said spring and summer reservations will be taken starting February 4 for group picnics at the new Liberty picnic pavilion, which opened last year and suffered minimal storm damage.

However, the hours of operation have been temporarily curtailed to 6 a.m. to dusk, from the usual 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. hours, until storm-damaged lighting in the park is repaired.

“Our staff has worked tirelessly to clean up and restore the park, which drew more than 5 million visitors last year,” said Richard Boornazian, Assistant Commissioner for Natural and Historic Resources. “We know how popular it is, so we invite people to come back out to Liberty State Park, to enjoy the serenity of the park and magnificent views of the New York skyline, Statue of Liberty and New York Harbor.”

Boornazian noted there is still a great deal of work to do before the park can fully reopen. Efforts are being made to restore the Nature Interpretive Center, playground and still-closed portions of the Hudson River Walkway by the spring.

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The iconic Central Railroad of New Jersey Terminal Building, which served as the launch point into America for millions of immigrants, sustained serious water damage as a result of Sandy's nearly six-foot storm surge. An assessment is still underway to determine how to repair and restore the structure. The DEP also is getting an engineering assessment estimates to repair the bulkhead along the Hudson River at damaged ferry slip in front of the Terminal Building.

Liberty State Park consists of about 1,200 acres (including the 343 public use acres), with wildlife habitats, open water, fields, nature trails, bike paths, picnic areas and the two-mile waterfront walkway along the Hudson River - known as Liberty Walk. It is the most visited state park with 5.2 million visitors last year.

It is a centerpiece of Governor Christie's Sustainable Parks effort aimed at improving and expanding offerings and amenities, and generating more revenues at state parks across New Jersey. In November 2011, Governor Chris Christie came to Liberty State Park to announce the Sustainable Parks Plan designed to keep all 39 of New Jersey's state parks open and provide affordable recreation to state residents, especially during tough economic times.

For more information on Liberty State Park visit: <http://www.nj.gov/dep/parksandforests/parks/liberty.html>

For regular updates on the recovery status of the state's parks and historic sites visit:
http://www.nj.gov/dep/parksandforests/parks/parks_open_close.html

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