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NEWS RELEASE

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RELEASE: October 19, 1998

GOVERNOR BREAKS GROUND FOR CASTLE POINT SECTION OF HUDSON WALKWAY IN HOBOKEN

Gov. Christie Whitman today emphasized her commitment to urban waterfront development and open space preservation when she helped break ground for the Castle Point section of the Hudson River walkway in Hoboken. The 1,000-foot-long Castle Point walkway is one of three projects being funded by the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) through the Green Acres program in Hoboken.

"This model urban waterfront development is a symbol of our commitment to making urban waterfront development a high priority along with our commitment to preserving and making open space accessible for all New Jersey residents," the Governor said.

The Governor said approval by voters of Public Question No. 1, which will appear on the ballot in next month's election, will establish a stable funding level -- \$98 million annually - for open space and farmland preservation and historic preservation.

"Preservation efforts like the Green Acres program have already helped us save hundreds of thousands of acres all around the state, but we must accelerate our rate of preservation if we are to save our rapidly dwindling open space," Gov. Whitman said.

The Governor said her goal is to preserve one million acres of open space over the next ten years, including 500,000 acres of farmland, 200,000 acres for public recreation, 200,000 acres for greenways along streams and trails, and 100,000 acres for watershed protection.

Joining Gov. Whitman in the Castle Point ground breaking ceremony were Department of Environmental Protection Assistant Commissioner Bob Tudor, Hoboken Mayor Anthony Russo and Harold Raveche, President of Stevens Institute of Technology.

Construction of the Castle Point section of the walkway is a cooperative venture involving the DEP, City of Hoboken and Stevens Institute. Stevens owns the property and has leased it to Hoboken. The DEP will build the walkway then turn it over to Hoboken, which will maintain it as a city park.

The 40-foot wide walkway will run along the eastern edge of Frank Sinatra Drive, directly in front of Castle Point. It will include a fishing pier to extend 165 feet into the river with a 75-foot "T" at the end, to enhance fishing opportunities for area residents.

The project, which is being partially funded with \$750,000 in Green Acres funds, is one of three DEP - funded projects in Hoboken, which will set the tone for the remaining phases of development along the Hudson River waterfront.

Other Hoboken waterfront projects receiving Green Acres funds include \$3 million in grants and loans for the development of open space in Frank Sinatra Park (formerly North Park) for recreational and athletic activities, and \$2 million for the Hudson River Naval Museum where Hoboken City plans to permanently moor the U. S. S. Ling.

"The walkway and fishing pier will improve the quality of life for city residents as will the open space referendum on the November ballot," said DEP Commissioner Bob Shinn. "Cities, suburban, and rural areas all need environmental infrastructure whether they're greenways or walkways, fishing piers or bike paths."

Last year, Gov. Whitman announced an additional \$2 million to link segments of the Hudson River Waterfront Walkway, a portion of which is being used for this project.

This is the first time that DEP is constructing a Hudson River Walkway segment outside of Liberty State Park.

When completed, the Hudson River Waterfront Walkway will offer an 18.6-mile continuous path from the George Washington Bridge to the Bayonne Bridge that offers spectacular views of the New York City skyline and the Statue of Liberty.

Once completed, the Hudson River Waterfront Walkway will link nine historically rich communities along the Hudson River stretching along the river from the George Washington Bridge to Bayonne Bridge.