



STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
news releases

AUGUST 7 2014

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CHRISTIE ADMINISTRATION BREAKS GROUND ON NEW CITY PARK CREATED FROM FORMER INDUSTRIAL SITE

*COOPERATIVE PROJECT WILL PROVIDE PUBLIC ACCESS TO DELAWARE RIVER WHILE
REDUCING FLOODING AND IMPROVING WATER QUALITY*

TRENTON – Officials from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) today joined dignitaries from the city of Camden, the Camden County Municipal Utilities Authority (CCMUA) and numerous other partners to break ground on a new city park that will transform a contaminated site into much-needed access to the Delaware River in the city's Waterfront South neighborhood.

The 5.3-acre Phoenix Park project is part of a sweeping city effort, supported by the DEP and New Jersey Environmental Infrastructure Trust, that is tackling flooding from stormwater runoff through construction and enhancement of parks, upgrading stormwater-collection infrastructure, and adding to the city's inventory of rain gardens that capture and filter stormwater runoff.

"This project, which follows the launching of improvements to Von Neida Park just two weeks ago, marks another milestone as the city continues to press forward with its Stormwater Management and Resource Training (SMART) initiative," said DEP Deputy Commissioner Michele Siekerka. "Through this initiative, the city has been developing a comprehensive network of green infrastructure programs and projects that are improving the quality of life in the city by reducing flooding and water pollution."

"Phoenix Park will provide riverfront access to the Waterfront South community, provide critical open space to the community, beautify the neighborhood, and enhance the value of Waterfront South," said Mayor Dana L. Redd.

The initiative involves the city of Camden, the DEP, the CCMUA, the Cooper's Ferry Partnership, Rutgers Cooperative Extension Water Resources Program, New Jersey Tree Foundation, other public and private partners, community organizations, and most important, Camden residents.

"The Phoenix Park project is one that we are very proud of," said CCMUA Director Andrew Kricun. "It will eliminate a contamination threat to the Delaware River, reduce combined sewage flooding in Camden and, best of all, re-connect our Waterfront South neighbors to the Delaware River. We greatly appreciate the support of the NJDEP and the funding of the New Jersey

Environmental Infrastructure Trust to make this project happen.”

The site of Phoenix Park, named for the mythical bird that rises from the ashes of its predecessor, sits on the Delaware River adjacent to the CCMUA wastewater treatment plant just off Broadway in South Camden. The buildings at the former American Minerals site were razed years ago. Contaminated soils, currently encapsulated by concrete and asphalt, will be removed. The remediated site will be planted with trees, shrubs and grasses that will allow for natural infiltration of stormwater.

The river bank will be transformed into a living shoreline with native aquatic plants and freshwater mussels. The freshwater mussel habitat creation is expected to result in the filtration and treatment of about 500,000 gallons of river water per day when fully implemented .

A walkway will provide direct access to the river while the parking lot will be made of a porous material that will likewise allow infiltration.

The project is being funded through \$2.7 million in subsidized funding from the New Jersey Environmental Infrastructure Trust and DEP, \$800,000 from Camden County, \$655,000 from a DEP supplemental environmental project fund, and \$19,000 from a state and federal Living Shoreline Grant. When completed, it is estimated that the project will manage some five million gallons of stormwater annually, giving it a chance to become cleansed before it enters the river.

The project is part of an initiative supported by \$8 million in subsidized state financing through NJEIT and DEP over a two-year period that will pay for green and traditional infrastructure improvements that are expected to annually prevent 100 million gallons of stormwater from flooding neighborhoods.

Stormwater is often contaminated with gasoline, motor oil, and other motor vehicle fluids, sewage, and other pollutants. The idea behind these projects is to reduce flooding by repairing damaged infrastructure and creating opportunities for stormwater to naturally filter back into the ground so it doesn't flow over streets and collect in flood-prone neighborhoods

These projects will also reduce the amount of stormwater that flows into the CCMUA treatment plant system. Like many urban areas, Camden has an antiquated piping system that collects both wastewater and stormwater runoff in an integrated network of pipes. In larger storms, the excessive rain can exceed the CCMUA's treatment plant capacity, resulting in discharges to the Delaware River of stormwater mixed with wastewater.

The NJEIT, an independent state financing agency, provides municipalities with attractive financing such as principal forgiveness and low interest loans, to fund projects that improve water quality in New Jersey.

“We are proud to be a partner in this worthy effort that is tackling an significant problem neighborhood by neighborhood in an environmentally and fiscally responsible way,” said David Zimmer, NJEIT Executive Director.