

40 Years of Progress 2009 Annual Report



**New Jersey
Meadowlands
Commission**
1969 - 2009

Agency Overview



 Forty years ago the state Legislature formed the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission to act as the zoning and planning agency for the 30.4-square-mile Meadowlands District, which includes parts of 14 municipalities in Bergen and Hudson counties.

It also charged the Commission with tackling some of North Jersey's toughest problems: creating a safe and effective system for solid waste disposal, promoting orderly development, and balancing this growth with critical environmental protections. Over the years, the Meadowlands Commission has invested tens of millions of dollars in infrastructure improvements for the area, building sanitary landfills, flood control projects and cleaning up polluted marshes.

Today, a region that once had more than 50 unregulated dumps now includes just one well-monitored sanitary landfill. Where municipalities once competed against each other for ratables, communities have come together to share the benefits of – and responsibilities for – billions of dollars in new economic growth. And an environment once scarred by pollution now has measurably cleaner air, soil and water. Wildlife is rebounding as a result, and each year tens of thousands of people now enjoy the District's parks, waterways and NJMC educational programs.

But this is just the beginning. Today the Meadowlands Commission is embracing an even greener future, focusing on alternative energy and new technology. These strategies will help reduce the harmful emissions that cause global warming and will help grow New Jersey's green economy. Perhaps most important, they will bring new investment and green jobs to the Meadowlands District.

Through the efforts of the NJMC and others, the Meadowlands District has seen much progress in the past four decades, and it is now on a path to reaching its full economic and environmental potential. ■

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Message from the Acting Chairman

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The New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, which includes the Meadowlands Commission, is dedicated to assisting local communities make the most of this great state. And since its creation in 1969, the NJMC has worked hard to help the 14 Meadowlands District Municipalities benefit from all that this incredible region has to offer.

Over the years, the Commission has invested tens of millions of dollars in infrastructure improvements for the area, and this has helped attract billions of dollars in economic development and tax revenue for District Municipalities.

The NJMC has also invested directly in the District Municipalities, helping these communities purchase police and fire equipment and upgrade local infrastructure, without burdening taxpayers. In the past six years alone, the NJMC has provided nearly \$8.5 million in direct grants to these communities.

In addition, the Commission's efforts can be seen through its programs to revitalize downtowns, to better connect communities and businesses to mass transit, and to provide parks and recreation sites nearby.

It is worth noting that the Meadowlands Commission generates all of its own funding to pay for these programs and grants - the NJMC receives no state aid, and no local tax money.

I want to thank the Meadowlands Commission board and staff for their commitment to the Meadowlands District and their hard work to make the District Municipalities even better places to live, work, own a business or visit.

Charles A. Richman
Acting Commissioner, New Jersey Department of Community Affairs
Acting Chairman, New Jersey Meadowlands Commission



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Facilities/Operations
Information Technologies
Human Resources and Ethics
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Solid Waste Administration
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Regulatory Review
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Plan Review
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UCC Code Enforcement

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Flood Control
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Director of Meadowlands Environmental Research Institute
GIS Programs
Laboratory
Library
Environmental Data Monitoring

Meadowlands Conservation Trust

NJMC Business Accelerator

Message from the Executive Director



When I moved to North Arlington as a teenager in the 1960s, the Meadowlands was getting dumped-on. Literally. Despite the region's many assets – location, transportation, the Hackensack River and its marshes – we were on the fast track to becoming the Fresh Kills of North Jersey.

Then, four decades ago, the state formed the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission to turn back the tide of trash and help the region reach its full economic potential while protecting the remaining natural resources. Once the land of landfills, the Meadowlands is now a place of possibilities.

Today, the Meadowlands District includes vibrant commercial corridors and more than 3,400 acres of preserved wetlands. There are more than 21 parks and 10 miles of walking trails. Each year, thousands of visitors enjoy the NJMC's river cruises, canoe tours and bird walks. Many more benefit from educational programs at the Meadowlands Environment Center or gaze at the stars in our William D. McDowell Observatory.

The future is equally bright. The NJMC is embracing sustainability and alternative energy, including several projects to cover former landfills with solar panels. We've started a Business Accelerator, designed to grow green-tech jobs. These projects will pay both environmental and economic benefits, in the Meadowlands District and far beyond.

The progress we have made is a reflection of the talent, determination and ingenuity of the NJMC staff, the support of our Commissioners and, most important, the agency's dedication to the people who live and work in the Meadowlands District. The partnership we have formed is a sound footing for the future, ensuring the best is still yet to come.

Robert R. Ceberio
Executive Director, New Jersey Meadowlands Commission

Celebrating Our 40th Anniversary

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The agency celebrated its 40th birthday this year with a variety of special events and new programs. The NJMC began 2009 with a governor's roundtable that featured former chief executives Jim Florio, Donald DiFrancesco and Richard Codey.

In the summer, the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra played to an outdoor audience of nearly 400 people at DeKorte Park. Other speakers during the year included Bergen County historian

Kevin Wright, shorebird expert Kevin Karlson and Rutgers biology professor Judith Weis.

The Commission also created a 40th Anniversary slide show and talk that was presented in town halls and libraries throughout the District. And the NJMC launched an Oral History Blog (meadowpast.net) that allows Meadowlands residents to share their own memories of this great place.

The NJMC also celebrated the anniversary by partnering with the Bergen County Audubon Society to offer free, guided bird walks twice a month. In addition, the Commission joined forces with the Meadowlands Museum to develop new history programming and is working with Liberty Science Center to create new educational programming to emphasize the importance and interconnectedness of all rivers, especially the Hackensack and Hudson.

40 Years



New Jersey Meadowlands Commission
1969-2009



unregulated solid-waste dumping throughout the Meadowlands. **1967** Gov. Richard Hughes instructs the N.J. Department of Community Affairs to develop a way to reclaim and develop the Meadowlands. **1968** Legislation is introduced to create the Hackensack Meadowlands Reclamation and



Development Act. **1969** Hackensack Meadowlands Development Commission is officially formed. **1970** HMDC adopts

a master plan, imposing the first environmental controls. HMDC rejects a dumping plan for 440 acres of Lyndhurst wetlands. **1971** HMDC adopts Sanitary Landfill Regulations, the first of their kind in the state. HMDC rejects a dumping plan for 864 acres in Kearny. **1972** Lawsuit won preventing

the spread of landfills into the wetlands of Kearny that will become the Saw Mill Creek Wildlife Management Area. **1973** Bergen County's plan to dump solid waste on 99 acres of wetlands in Lyndhurst is rejected. Rules banning all out-of-state solid waste are adopted. **1974** The first tax-sharing



formula in the District is created. **1975** HMDC names its proposed park in memory of Assemblyman Richard W. DeKorte, who was instrumental in the passage of the law creating the HMDC. **1976** The state Solid Waste Management Act is signed into law. **1977**

Commission enters into contract with the N.J. Department of Environmental Protection to study contamination in the Hackensack River estuary.

1978 Contracts awarded for engineering and landscape architecture design for DeKorte Park. **1979** Morris County stops sending solid waste to

the District. **1980** Trash compacting baler in North Arlington begins operation.



1981 HMDC and NJDEP enter into

an agreement to provide \$1 million from Green Acres funds to help construct the Meadowlands Environment Center. **1982** Permanent HMDC

headquarters opens in DeKorte Park in Lyndhurst. Experiments begin to determine the feasibility of extracting methane gas from the landfills.

1983 Meadowlands Environment Center opens and begins educational programming for schoolchildren, teachers and the public. **1984** Agreement

reached with Passaic County to cease solid waste disposal in the District in three years. **1985** Closure and post-closure activities begin on landfills

in North Arlington and Kearny. Contracts are awarded for the recovery of methane gas. **1986** Leachate collection system completed at 1-A landfill in

Kearny, preventing contaminants from seeping into the water.



1987 Native plants, including aspens, reintroduced to

the 1-A landfill area. The 1-C landfill in Kearny is closed. Essex and Passaic County dumping ends. **1988** Bergen County dumping ends.



HMDC enters into an agreement with the Army Corps of Engineers, EPA and the NJDEP on wetlands management.

Recycling Grant Program for the District Municipalities is established.



1991 Marsh Discovery Trail dedication in

Lyndhurst, Losen Slote Creek Park dedication in Little Ferry. **1992** Lyndhurst Nature Reserve and Transco Trail open. Commission receives the

NJ Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects' Environmental Enhancement Award. **1993** Commission enters into agreement with

Conrail to accept mitigation funding for wetlands enhancement projects. **1994** Contracting begins for wetlands enhancement; annually a billion cubic

feet of methane gas are collected. The Commission's first redevelopment study begins in Kearny. **1995** HMDC acquires wetlands in Ridgefield to

restore. North Arlington Scenic Overlook and Laurel Hill County Park Boat Launch are dedicated.



1996 Commission

establishes wetlands mitigation bank. Riverbend wetlands site in Secaucus is acquired. **1997** HMDC puts an end to the massive dumping of

residential solid waste that came into the district from New Jersey and surrounding areas. **1998** Meadowlands Environmental Research Institute

is created in a Rutgers/HMDC Partnership.



1999 Meadowlands Conservation Trust signed into law. **2000** Pontoon

boat tours expand, bringing 3,000 people a year down to the river and marshes to see the environmental recovery first-hand. **2001** HMDC officially

changes its name to New Jersey Meadowlands Commission. Meadowlands Environmental Research Institute dedication. **2002** Mill Creek Marsh

Grand Opening. Meadowlands Environment Center Grand Re-opening.



2003 World Trade Center Memorial at DeKorte

Park dedication. First Meadowlands Symposium. **2004** 1st Annual New Jersey Meadowlands Festival of Birding. Opening of the 7.5-acre Mill

Creek Point Park in Secaucus. **2005** Meadowlands Conservation Trust acquires the 587-acre Empire Tract in Carlstadt. Secaucus High School

Marsh restoration planned. **2006** NJMC launches major program for shared services and equipment among its 14



municipalities. Commission adopts incentives for green building in district. **2007** MERI study finds that the Hackensack River is getting significantly

cleaner. Secaucus High School Marsh enhancement site is completed.



2008 NJMC opens Center for Environmental

and Scientific Education and William D. McDowell Observatory in March. NJMC Business Accelerator launches in October.



2009 NJMC partners with Bergen County Audubon to hold regular bird walks. Commission awarded \$8.5 million in federal funds for its

solar landfill project.



40 Years



New Jersey Meadowlands Commission
1969-2009

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Kingsland Overlook, DeKorte Park, Lyndhurst

meadowrast.net



Mae DeVoe
North Arlington

“There used to be wildfires in the Meadowlands that would come up through the Cemetery, almost to Rutherford Place. We’d have these fires for weeks at a time in the fall. Everything was dry, so even a spark would start them. We were always afraid they would come up where the houses were.”



40 Years



New Jersey
Meadowlands
Commission
1969-2009

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1-E Landfill, North Arlington



meadowast.net



Don Smith
Little Ferry

“Far more people these days are attentive to the river and viewing it as an urban resource than they were 30 years ago. The testament to that is when you go on one of the eco-cruises on the river with people in their sixties or seventies. They say, ‘I never knew the river was so beautiful’ – and they become advocates.”



40 Years



New Jersey
Meadowlands
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Mill Creek Point Park, Secaucus

meadowpast.net



Don Torino
Moonachie

“Growing up in Moonachie and the Meadowlands area was different. When other kids were out playing baseball, we were fishing in the old clay pit in Carlstadt.

“When kids in other towns were playing football, we were out trapping Muskrats to make a few extra dollars. The winter my father passed away, Muskrat trapping helped my family manage a Christmas tree and a few gifts.

“Our summers were spent gathering blackberries, hiking along the railroad tracks and making rafts to float along Riser Creek and the old clay pit, too.”



40 Years



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Richard P. Kane

*New Jersey Audubon Society
Naturalist for whom the Kane
Natural Area in Carlstadt is
named.*

*“I was involved with the
Meadowlands for 30 years.
The problem with the
Meadowlands in the old
days was that people did
not realize how valuable it
was. It was an Oscar Wilde
situation: ‘Cynics know the
price of everything and the
value of nothing.’*

*“To get people who just
saw the Meadowlands as
a drawing-board place
to recognize there was
something valuable out
there was a challenge. New
Jersey was a heavy lift to get
people to understand about
wetlands.”*



DeKorte Park, Lyndhurst



Municipal Programs



Assisting the 14 municipalities that make up the Meadowlands District is one of the Commission's greatest commitments. The NJMC maintains an equipment pool that helps municipalities provide daily and emergency services, without additional cost to taxpayers. The NJMC also provides a range of professional planning, landscape architecture and other services, and administers the Meadowlands Area Grants for Natural Economic Transformation (MAGNET) program, a six-year, \$28 million fund for revitalization projects in the District. All these efforts are supported by the NJMC's own revenue and do not depend on state or local tax dollars.

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Highlights of the 2009 MAGNET program:

- West Riser Tide Gates, repair and engineering -- \$232,000
- Student Scholarship Program -- \$26,000
- Arbor Day trees for 14 District Municipalities -- \$9,795

The MAGNET program also provides direct grants of \$100,000 to each District Municipality through the Municipal Assistance Program (MAP).

In 2009 MAP grants were approved for:

- Police vehicles in Carlstadt, East Rutherford, Jersey City, Kearny, Little Ferry, Lyndhurst, North Arlington, North Bergen, Rutherford, Secaucus and South Hackensack.
- DPW equipment in Carlstadt, East Rutherford, Little Ferry, Lyndhurst, Ridgefield and South Hackensack.
- Emergency or fire department equipment or repairs in Little Ferry, Moonachie, North Arlington and South Hackensack.
- Upgrades to sanitary station pumps in Teterboro.
- A timing and scoring system for the pool at the new recreation center in Secaucus and computer systems to manage membership.

Municipal Solar Programs

The NJMC hired a contractor to work as a consultant with Meadowlands Municipalities and boards of education to help them plan for, finance and construct solar rooftop facilities that will help them generate power and reduce the energy costs now falling to local taxpayers. This year marked the completion of the first phase of this project, and involved an inspection and structural analysis of all potential rooftops.

Planning Services

The Commission is available to help Meadowlands Municipalities plan downtown revitalizations, affordable housing, and better connections to mass transit through its Sustainable Communities Planning Service, which provides professional staff at no cost to taxpayers. Last summer the NJMC helped North Arlington participate in community "visioning," paid for through a state grant the Commission helped the borough obtain. In February the NJMC published "Community Visioning in the New Jersey Meadowlands," a useful tool for planners, public officials and business owners seeking to follow smart-growth principles.

Plan Review

The NJMC employs a staff of construction code officials licensed by the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs to review Meadowlands District construction plans for their compliance with building, plumbing, electricity, elevator and fire protection subcodes. This regional service reduces the workload for building code officials in the 14 Meadowlands District Municipalities.

Flood-Warning System

Municipalities will also benefit from the NJMC's new, expanded flood-warning system. The program involves automatic alerts that are sent directly to local emergency personnel, notifying them of a major storm, and specific, detailed maps that allow responders to plan accordingly – down to the lot and block. The system is supported by new high-tech devices that allow engineers and emergency personnel to monitor multiple tide gates remotely and in real time.





Business Programs



The Meadowlands Commission was created 40 years ago to promote sensible development in a region that had enormous potential for economic growth – while protecting this unique environment at the same time. The NJMC has worked hard to strike this balance and today, the Commission’s support for alternative energy projects and the new green economy shows how these goals have become more closely intertwined over time.



NJMC Business Accelerator

Since its opening in October 2008, the Business Accelerator has been providing entrepreneurs with affordable rent, mentoring and an array of resources and services designed to successfully grow emerging businesses. The Accelerator currently hosts 13 companies, one of which was awarded a New Jersey Incubator Network Seed Grant. The Accelerator has also been recognized by the New Jersey Commission on Science and Technology, which awarded it a grant of \$80,000.

Business Development

As part of its ongoing commitment to ensure economic growth in the District, the NJMC created the position of Director of Business Development in 2008. The Director’s role as a liaison to the business community received greater definition this year, and this person now serves as a link to the Meadowlands Regional Chamber of Commerce and works with other NJMC staff to address concerns of this important stakeholder group. The NJMC also shares updates on its economic growth initiatives and related news through its Business and Sustainability Blog, njmcbiz.net.



Sustainability Seminars

In 2009 the NJMC held one of the largest conferences in its history. Hosting more than 300 participants, 40 vendors and 20 speakers, the Sustainable Business and Technology Seminar disseminated information about many options available for companies to go green in today’s marketplace. Another event during the fall, the U.S.-Israel CleanTech Conference, attracted more than 200 participants to our facilities.



Meadowlands Challenge

This voluntary competition for Meadowlands District businesses continued to gain ground in 2009. Designed to promote energy efficiency and increase recycling efforts among local businesses, the Challenge had a dozen participants by October, including Major League Baseball, the NY Giants, and Renaissance Meadowlands Hotel. The “best practices” of participants are shared online, and awards were presented to these green leaders at NJMC’s November Commission meeting.



Public Programs



The NJMC has run since 1983 a range of public programs to help residents and visitors better understand the importance of the Meadowlands District, and these offerings were expanded this year to celebrate the agency's 40th Anniversary. In addition to the Commission's long-popular river cruises, the NJMC now offers regular guided bird walks. There is also the new observatory, the Green Living Program and plenty of other free or low-cost ways to learn more in the Meadowlands District.



Eco-Tourism Programs

For a quarter century the NJMC has offered people a unique glimpse at the Hackensack River and its marshes from aboard the decks of its pontoon boats. The two-hour expertly guided cruises are a great way to see – and photograph – nature up close. Visitors can also join one of the Commission's guided canoe tours, or can head out in a canoe or kayak on their own with the aid of the NJMC's detailed maps, complete with GPS coordinates.

In 2009 the NJMC partnered with the Bergen County Audubon Society to offer twice-monthly, 90-minute guided bird walks at sites around the District. These walks – on the first Sunday and third Tuesday of each month – have proven hugely successful, attracting dozens at a time, and resulting in sightings of a least bittern, a black-necked stilt and a Wilson's phalarope, among other rare birds.

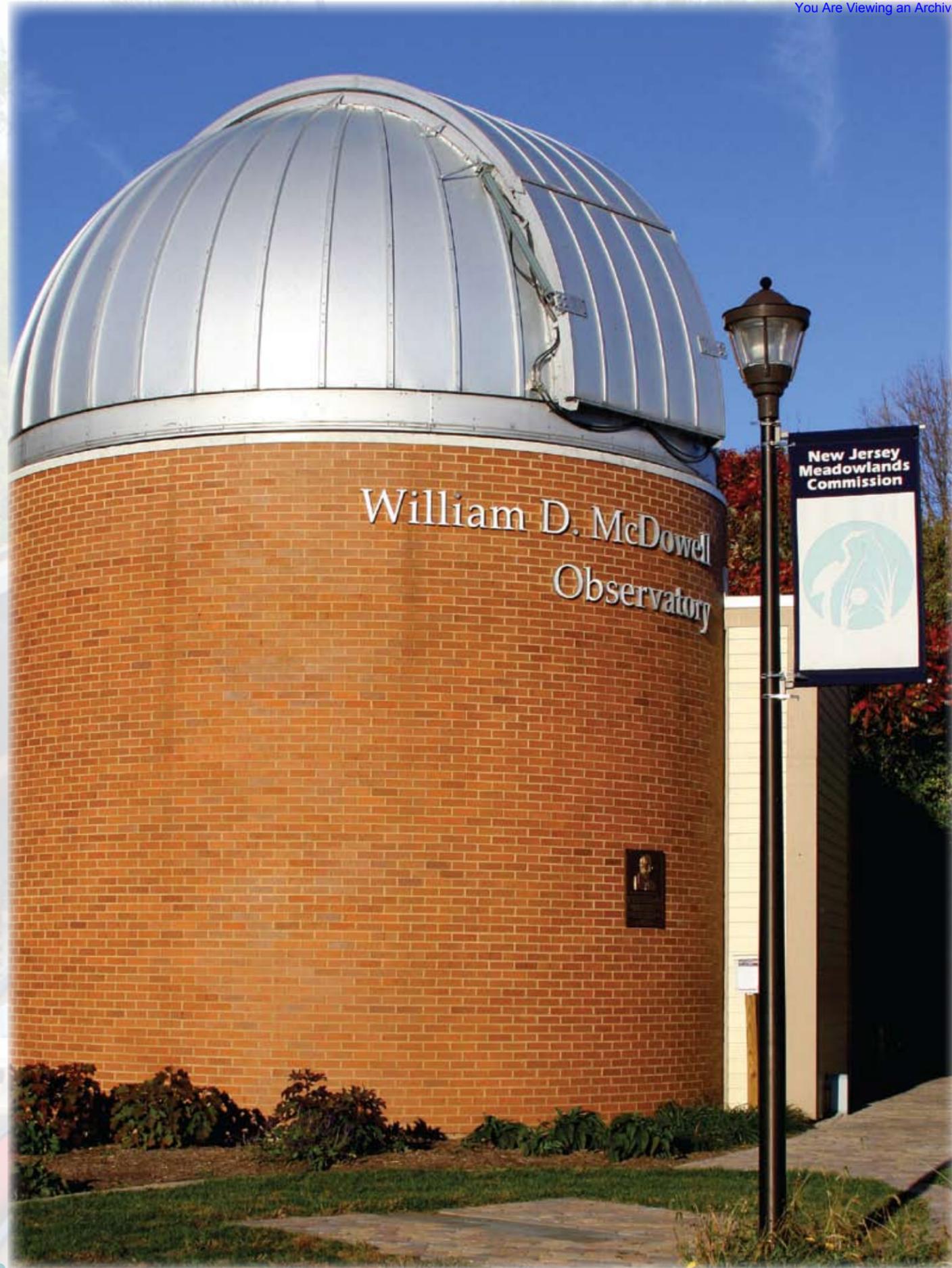


Nature enthusiasts are kept up-to-date with the NJMC's Nature Blog, at meadowblog.net. The site posts regular lists of bird sightings, updates on nature events and plenty of amazing photographs. By the fall, the blog was generating an average of 7,000 hits a month.

Meadowlands Environment Center

For decades the Meadowlands Environment Center has provided a link between the public and the Meadowlands Commission with a variety of educational programs for visitors of all ages. From the popular Halloween Party and Spooky Walk, which draws hundreds of celebrants each fall, to its Musical Salon Series, to a range of art, nature and science-related events for children and seniors, MEC public programs offer something for everyone. The MEC's DeKorte Park facility also includes the Interactive Learning Center, which highlights the Meadowlands ecology, and the Tideland Treasures gift shop.





Open Observatory

Astronomy programs at the William D. McDowell Observatory, with its 20-inch research-grade telescope, continued to gain in popularity this year. The observatory is open for free to the public on Monday and Wednesday nights, weather permitting, during which experts will help visitors view several major objects in the sky. Public astronomy lectures are held on Tuesdays with registration and a small fee required. The observatory is also open to astronomy clubs and scout groups, and is used by Ramapo College educators during their Meadowlands Environment Center programs.

Meadowlands Museum

In an effort to help showcase the unique history of the Meadowlands District, the NJMC formed a partnership with the Meadowlands Museum in 2009. This joint effort will bring new history education programs to supplement Meadowlands Environment Center events, and will help spotlight the collections of the Meadowlands Museum, located in Rutherford.



Liberty Science Center

In the fall the NJMC joined forces with Liberty Science Center to create a series of new educational programs that will emphasize the importance and interconnectedness of all rivers, especially the Hackensack and Hudson. Liberty Science Center will work with staff at the Meadowlands Environment Center to explore potential programs such as expanded summer camps, events for older adults, and developing joint activities for students and adults with disabilities.



Flyway Gallery

Arts programming continued this year at the Meadowlands Environment Center with a full roster of exhibitions at the Flyway Gallery. The NJMC created the Flyway Gallery to help foster the cultural and artistic identity of the Meadowlands District. Shows this year included individual exhibits by numerous local artists, a display of artwork by children from "Putting the Pieces Together," a Lyndhurst-based support group for children with special needs throughout Northern New Jersey, as well as the 62nd annual show by the Rutherford Art Association.



Green Living

In the fall of 2009 the NJMC launched the Green Living Programs, a series of workshops designed to help the public understand the benefits of sustainability, and how small changes in their daily lives can make a big difference. The Green Living Programs, held at public buildings or local stores, provide up-to-date information on energy saving home improvements, health and fitness, organic cooking and green products. NJMC staff is working with representatives from participating Meadowlands Municipalities to assist them with gaining Sustainable Jersey points for these events. The program is funded in part by a grant from the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation.



Education

Educating the public about the importance of the Meadowlands District and its environment is an essential part of the NJMC's work. In addition to its public programs at the Meadowlands Environment Center, the NJMC has partnered with Ramapo College to operate its school programs, which are held in the LEED Platinum-certified Center for Environmental and Scientific Education. These programs have become some of the NJMC's most visible efforts, together attracting nearly 20,000 people each year. The programs also provide an opportunity for education students at Ramapo to get unique, hands-on classroom experience.



School Programs

During the school year, Ramapo educators provide supplementary science education for thousands of students in grades K-12. Programs include ecology, chemistry, biology, physics, natural history and geology, and educators integrate the school building's green features and the observatory into lessons when possible. All programs are correlated to the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content standards. More than 13,000 students from nearly 70 school districts participated in these programs during the 2007-08 academic year. The MEC has also formed partnerships with eight districts, which allows Ramapo educators to work with district staff to fine-tune their science curriculum.

Summer Camps

Learning continues in the warmer months with the Meadowlands Environment Center's summer camps. In 2009 this program was re-tuned to accommodate children from area summer recreation programs, YMCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs, and 4-H groups. Four programs were offered this past summer, allowing 352 children to participate in camps on estuaries, ecology and astronomy, plus a survival challenge that encouraged healthy living.

Access for All

Ramapo educators have also been highly successful in adapting their science lessons for children and adults with disabilities through the MarshAccess program. The MEC and Ramapo College have received two National Science Foundation grants – for \$480,000 and \$852,300 – to implement these programs and develop a national model for teaching science to older adults. Ramapo hosted a workshop on MarshAccess for other educators this spring, and is planning a professional development conference for educators from across the East Coast for next year. They have also applied for a third NSF grant to further expand their MarshAccess efforts.

Economic Growth



The Meadowlands District, located just miles from Manhattan with a large pool of labor and a wealth of transportation options, has always been well situated for economic growth. The NJMC has supported economic expansion in the District with its efforts to encourage redevelopment and welcome new businesses, while also protecting the region's natural resources. The work is clearly paying off as former industrial sites are redeveloped, and new housing, shopping and warehouses are added to the District, while the environment continues to improve.



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Meadowlands Golf Course Redevelopment Area (EnCap) becomes Kingsland Redevelopment Area

The NJMC made significant progress this year in furthering the redevelopment of nearly 800 acres of former landfills and other property in Lyndhurst, Rutherford and North Arlington. In the spring, American Home Assurance provided \$148 million toward the landfills' closure from a performance bond it had issued to the site's former redeveloper, EnCap. With this money, work has restarted to properly close the landfills and remediate the land for future use. The NJMC held public meetings in the fall of 2009 to gather input on what should be done with the property – now known as the Kingsland Redevelopment Area.

Belleville Turnpike Redevelopment Area (Kearny)

In 2006 the NJMC adopted a redevelopment plan recommending a mix of warehouse, distribution and industrial uses for this 79-acre parcel in Kearny, and a number of warehouse facilities have been built there to date. This fall the Commission issued zoning approvals for two additional facilities in the area, allowing site work to begin for these buildings. The proposals include a 52,000-square-foot office/warehouse on Barszcewski Street and a 62,000-square-foot office/warehouse/light industrial facility on Belleville Turnpike.



Teterboro/Industrial Avenue Redevelopment Area

Demolition work and environmental remediation began this year on part of the 63-acre Teterboro/Industrial Avenue Redevelopment Area, the site of a former Honeywell industrial complex. The NJMC declared the site to be in need of redevelopment in 2008, and approved a redevelopment plan in May 2009 that recommends a mix of uses – office, retail, commercial, hotel, industrial and recreational – that can benefit from the site's location near major roadways and directly across from Teterboro Airport. The site is owned by Catellus, a Prologis company.

Secaucus

Renovations at the Mill Creek Mall have resulted in some new store openings this year, including a Sports Authority, TJ Maxx, and a Toys-R-Us/Babies-R-Us. A new 14-screen movie theater, operated by Kerasotes Theaters, opened in October, replacing a smaller six-plex theater. And, after more than a year without a major supermarket, Secaucus residents can look forward to a new grocery store with the renovation of the Wal-Mart on Park Place. Work was underway this fall on a 34,000-square-foot addition that will give the new Supercenter room to add groceries and pharmacy items to its shelves.



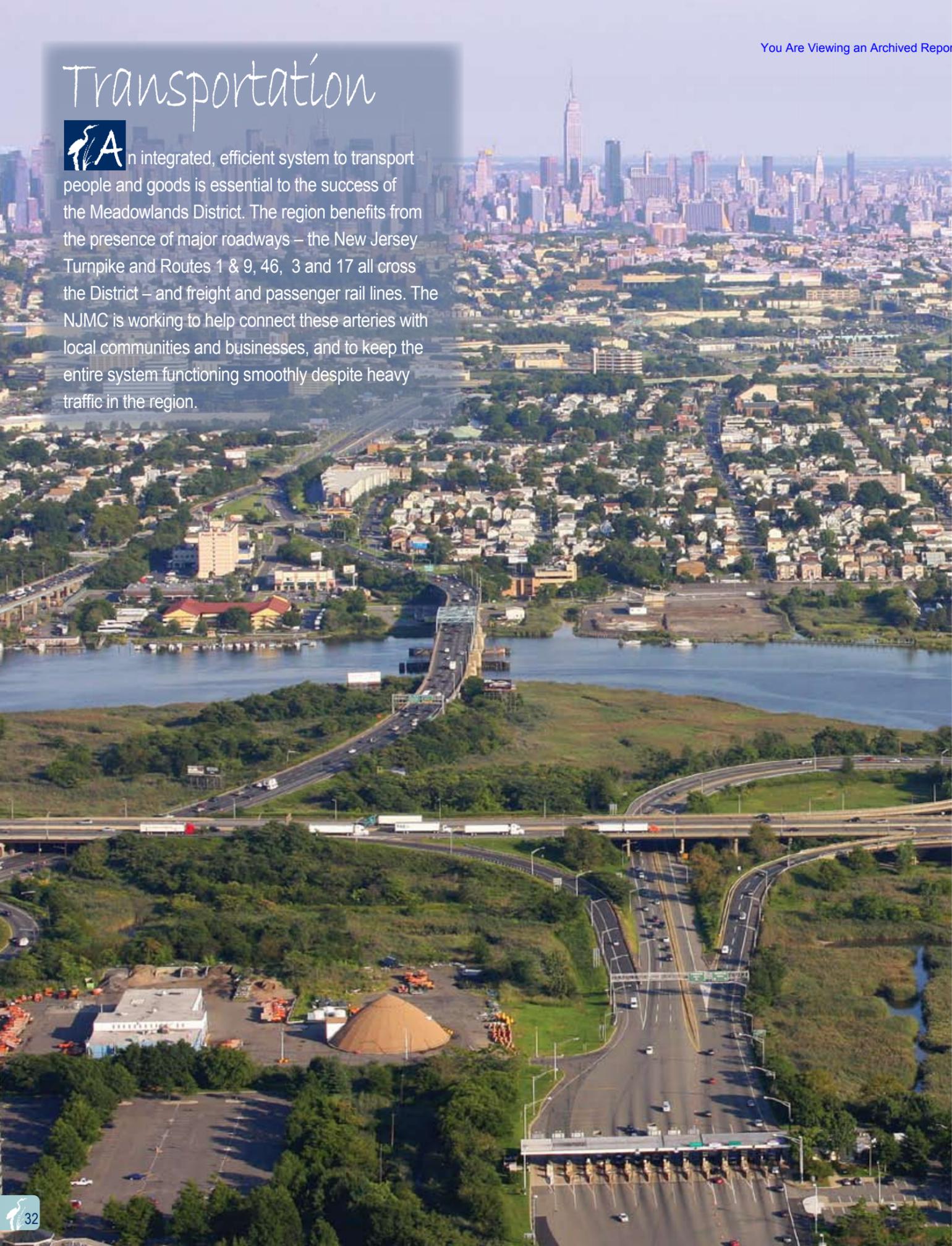
Housing

Work began this year on the second of four buildings planned for the Xchange at Secaucus Junction development, a four-story building that will include 178 residential units, nearly 28,000 square feet of retail space and a parking garage. The first building, a 304-unit four-story residential facility, was completed in fall 2008. Eventually, the complex will provide more than 1,800 homes and retail space along the Hackensack River.

The NJMC also continues to work with District Municipalities to address their state-mandated affordable housing requirements, and has updated its Interim Policies Governing Affordable Housing Development in the Meadowlands District three times in 2009 to accommodate changes in state law and to clarify procedures. The Commission has made its professional planning staff available to municipalities, and has offered up to \$70,000 to each community to help them prepare their Housing Element and Fair Share plans. The NJMC also formed the Meadowlands Affordable Housing Task Force, with representatives from the municipalities, housing advocates and other stakeholders, which has met several times this year to discuss the best way for the District to meet the state's goals for creating housing for low-income residents.

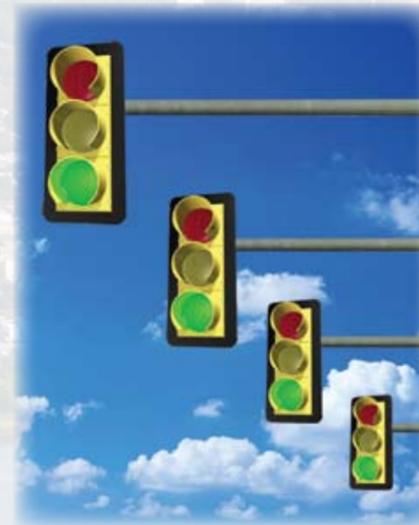
Transportation

An integrated, efficient system to transport people and goods is essential to the success of the Meadowlands District. The region benefits from the presence of major roadways – the New Jersey Turnpike and Routes 1 & 9, 46, 3 and 17 all cross the District – and freight and passenger rail lines. The NJMC is working to help connect these arteries with local communities and businesses, and to keep the entire system functioning smoothly despite heavy traffic in the region.



Shuttle Bus

The NJMC's shuttle bus program launched in 2008 with a Lyndhurst route that linked participating businesses in the Meadowlands Corporate Center to the Kingsland train station and major NJ Transit bus routes. The shuttle has become popular with riders, averaging 76 passengers a day by fall 2009, when the Rutherford train station was also included in the route. Plans call for adding a shuttle route in Moonachie and Carlstadt in the coming year.



MASSTR

Work continued this year behind the scenes on a major project that will use advanced technology to reduce traffic congestion, travel time, fuel consumption and emissions within the Meadowlands District. Plans call for construction to start in 2010 on the first phase of the MASSTR (Meadowlands Adaptive Signal System for Traffic Reduction) system, which will coordinate 14 traffic signals in Secaucus to improve traffic flow. Eventually, under the plan, the majority of signals with cameras in the District would be linked through a wireless system to benefit 400,000 vehicles that travel the region daily.

Station Parking

Travelers using the Secaucus Junction Rail Station welcomed the opening of a nearby commercial parking lot with nearly 1,100 spaces in June. The facility, operated by Edison Parking, was made possible when the NJMC approved commercial parking as an interim use in part of the Secaucus Transit Village Redevelopment Area, which also includes housing and retail near the rail station.



Flood Control

Reducing flooding in the Meadowlands District is a challenge that has plagued residents of this region for centuries. Over time, it became clear that building dikes and draining wetlands was not the answer. Flood control requires an integrated program of controlling development, managing stormwater better, and maintaining a healthy, natural marsh to absorb additional water. The NJMC has embraced this approach, and it is paying off with drier land and financial benefits for property owners.

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Route 17 Project

Work continued in 2009 on the NJMC's largest flood-control project, a \$5.5 million infrastructure upgrade to reduce flooding along Route 17 near the Rutherford/East Rutherford border. A second series of massive tide gates was installed this year on the Rutherford side of the project, and the NJMC helped the Bergen County Mosquito Commission and the New Jersey Department of Transportation clear a 1.5-mile section of drainage ditch to reduce storm water backlog.

Tide Gates

The NJMC also oversaw a \$1.4 million upgrade of the West Riser Tide Gates, on Berry's Creek in Moonachie, which protect Teterboro Airport and its surrounding area. Efforts have also begun so that a contract can be signed early next year for new tide gates on Moonachie Creek and Bashes Creek Culvert, which are expected to be installed in 2010.

This year also marked the launch of an innovative program to use cutting-edge digital technology to monitor aging tide gates. The Meadowlands Environmental Research Institute, the NJMC's scientific and technological arm, installed solar-powered instruments on antiquated tide gates. The high-tech devices use satellite communication to transmit hourly readings on the water level and mechanical functions of the gates, allowing engineers to monitor the system in real time and without leaving their desks.

Local Warning System

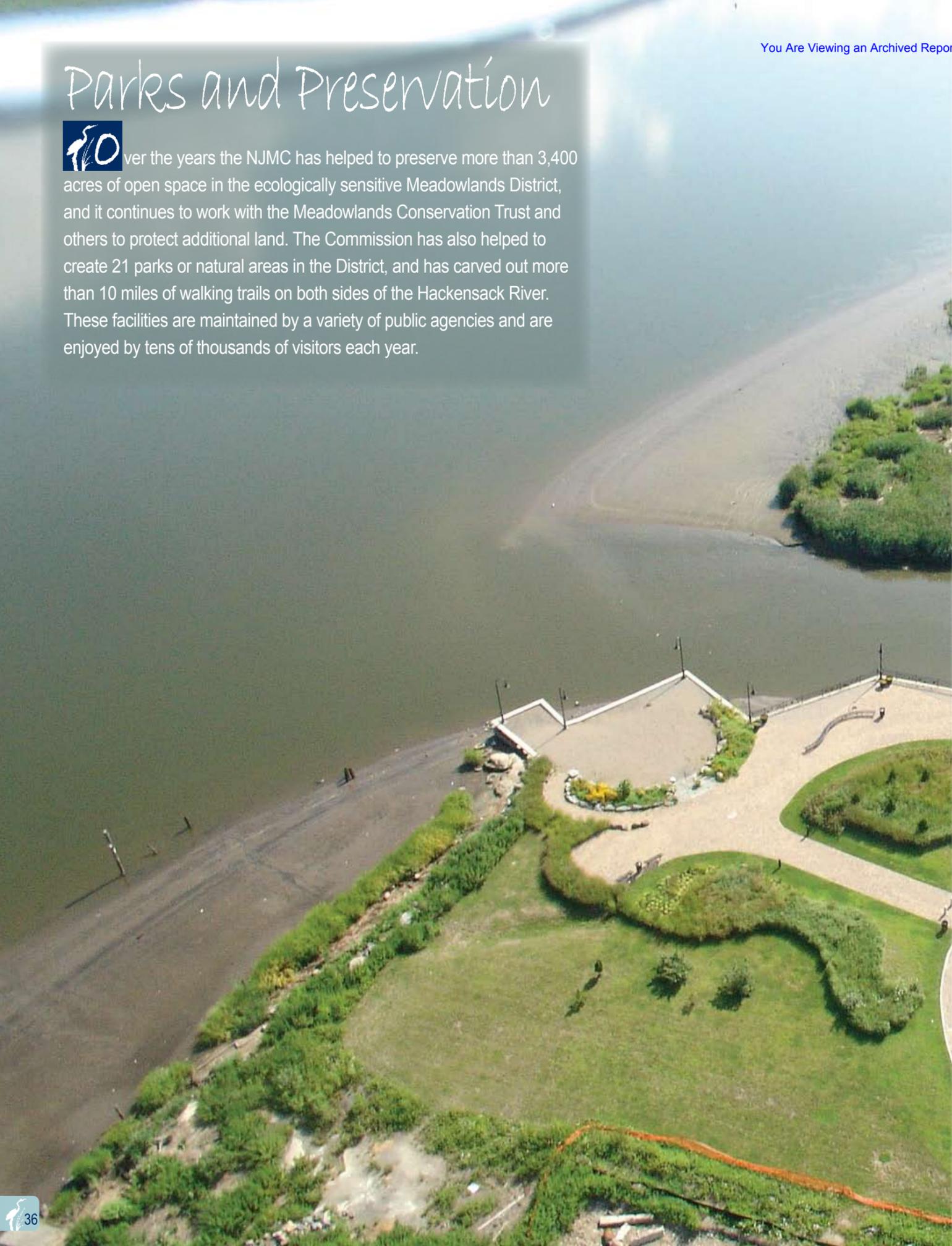
MERI scientists and their Geographic Information Systems team have also worked with NJMC engineers to design a municipal flood-warning system that will help local emergency officials plan specific responses to a variety of flood scenarios. The system involves a set of maps for each town in the Meadowlands District, showing exactly what streets and properties within the District – down to the block and lot – would be flooded by a 2-foot, 4-foot, 6-foot, or 8-foot tidal surge. The system also includes an automatic warning to all emergency responders in the District in the advent of a major, 6-foot flood.

FEMA Discounts

As a result of these and other flood-control efforts, along with the NJMC's work to preserve open space and restore healthy marshes, Meadowlands District property owners can now get a break on their flood insurance premiums. A new Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) rating in 2009 allowed 2,300 District property owners to get up to 15 percent reductions on new or renewed flood insurance policies.

Parks and Preservation

Over the years the NJMC has helped to preserve more than 3,400 acres of open space in the ecologically sensitive Meadowlands District, and it continues to work with the Meadowlands Conservation Trust and others to protect additional land. The Commission has also helped to create 21 parks or natural areas in the District, and has carved out more than 10 miles of walking trails on both sides of the Hackensack River. These facilities are maintained by a variety of public agencies and are enjoyed by tens of thousands of visitors each year.



Kane Tract

In January 2009 the Meadowlands Conservation Trust, a public land trust dedicated to protecting property near the Hackensack River, signed an agreement to designate nearly half of the 587-acre Richard P. Kane Natural Area for a wetlands mitigation bank. The agreement calls on four government agencies – the New Jersey Turnpike Authority, the state Department of Transportation, NJ Transit, and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey – to provide for environmental improvements on the Kane Tract to offset any wetlands loss caused by their local projects.

Barge Club

Work also began in late 2009 on the NJMC's River Barge Park and Marina site, in Carlstadt. The first phase includes installing a new bulkhead, a boat ramp, and 10-foot-wide docks, as well as the first dredging in the Hackensack River in more than 25 years. Work on the park, buildings and parking area will continue next year. The \$8 million overhaul of the old Barge Club site will result in the first public river access in many years from Bergen County.



DeKorte Park

This year also included several efforts to improve access and opportunities at DeKorte Park, the home base of the NJMC. The 110-acre park, the site of the MEC's public programs and the William D. McDowell Observatory, is visited by tens of thousands each year. In 2009 NJMC staff reintroduced helpful plant tags that provide the popular and scientific names for many of the species and published a new DeKorte Park map, complete with mileage totals for the trails. The park's Marsh Discovery Trail also benefitted from the addition of a special rope railing, designed to enable visually impaired people and other disabled people to better enjoy the walk. The Commission is also planning to install information kiosks that will tell the visually impaired where they are, what they're hearing and what their surroundings look like.



Alternative Energy and Resource Remediation

The NJMC was created in 1969 with a mandate to clean up an area that had become synonymous with garbage. Finding new ways to do this properly, while protecting the environment from additional damage, has bred creativity over the years. The NJMC has been green for decades, collecting methane from a network of former landfills and selling this resource for electricity since 1987, and this trend continues today with a new focus on solar power. The Commission also operates the one remaining landfill in the District -- a significant change from the more than 50 unregulated sites four decades ago.



Keegan Landfill

In January the NJMC reopened the Keegan Landfill in Kearny, accepting only construction, industrial and demolition waste. The Commission invested \$25 million to remediate this once-orphaned and leaky landfill, and to prepare it to safely accept solid waste again. This debt will be paid for partly through dumping fees, which were lowered significantly to help stimulate the local economy by offering redevelopers a less-expensive way to get rid of their costly demolition waste.

The old landfill had been leaking 400,000 gallons of polluted water called leachate a day into the Kearny Marsh — the largest freshwater marsh in the district. This year alone the NJMC will have pumped to a Newark treatment plant more than 100 million gallons of leachate that would have otherwise seeped into the marsh.

Erie Solar Project

This year the NJMC approved a lease with a firm that plans to close and cap the Erie Landfill in North Arlington and construct a solar facility using a flexible solar “carpet” on the side slopes. The project could produce enough energy – about 1.4 megawatts – to power the NJMC campus and take it off the grid permanently.



1-A Landfill Solar Energy Project

In 2009 the NJMC also launched a search for a qualified firm that will design, finance, construct, own and operate a solar renewable energy facility at the 35-acre 1-A Landfill in Kearny. This project will displace electricity normally generated by fossil fuel power plants, which will help reduce greenhouse gases and therefore benefit the environment. The NJMC was awarded an \$8.5 million federal stimulus grant to be used toward this project.

Vegetative Waste

In late 2009 the NJMC was working on a plan to extend operation of a vegetative waste transfer station atop the closed 1-E landfill, in Kearny. This important regional facility, has accepted leaves, grass clippings and other organic waste from municipalities and private landscapers for more than a decade.

Green Building



The NJMC's efforts to spur green building within the Meadowlands District reflect the Commission's original mission to protect the environment while promoting orderly, sensible development. The NJMC encourages private-sector green development through its regulations, publications and a system of incentives that include financial discounts and priority plan review. It also leads by example, using sustainable building and maintenance practices whenever possible.

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Science Building

The Commission's work to create the NJMC Center for Environmental and Scientific Education resulted in LEED Platinum Certification from the U.S. Green Building Council in 2009 – the highest ranking possible – and made the building the first public facility in New Jersey to earn this prestigious rating. The building, which is used as a teaching tool by Ramapo College educators in their Meadowlands Environment Center programs, includes rooftop solar panels, recycled building materials, Forest Stewardship Council-certified wood, and energy-efficient heating, lighting and water systems.

Green Award

In March, the NJMC also received the U.S. Green Building Council-NJ Chapter's Green Policy Award for the Commission's sustainability initiatives and programs, including its green building efforts and its success with the NJMC Center for Environmental and Scientific Education.

Green Guidelines

To help private developers in conserving energy and reducing pollution, the Commission continued to expand its Green Guidelines in 2009. In January, the NJMC approved green building guidelines, which provided direction on all aspects of the construction process, from selecting materials to disposing garbage. These were followed in February by transportation guidelines, which detailed ways to better connect to mass transit, and green home remodeling guidelines, designed to help homeowners select money-saving design features and appliances while reducing environmental impact.

Solar Applications

In addition to the energy savings involved, developers can benefit from NJMC incentives when they decide to go green. Those who embrace energy-efficient options realize savings on their application fees and get priority review. In the past year, the Commission received at least a half-dozen applications from property owners proposing to install solar panels on their commercial buildings.



Meadowlands Research

Merit research to determine the state of the Meadowlands District environment and its wildlife plays a key role as the NJMC develops policies to help the region move forward. The Meadowlands Environmental Research Institute (MERI), the scientific and technological arm of the NJMC, continually monitors the area's air, water, soils, and plant and animal life, and scientists from the NJMC conduct wildlife studies to determine species health and populations.



Resource Studies

A joint MERI-Princeton University study is looking at the chemistry of heavy metals in certain wetlands. Researchers are studying how the high marsh at the NJMC's remediated Secaucus High School Marsh removes heavy metals from the tidal water and traps them in the mud. This two-year study began in 2008 and will be completed next year.

MERI also completed in November an examination of the metachromium ore that has been dumped and buried in mud in the district. Researchers know where the metachromium is, and found most of it is stable. MERI took samples to make sure that its chemistry does not mutate into a more toxic form.

In another study, MERI researchers are measuring the capability of urban wetlands to capture and contain a harmful greenhouse gas. The eight-month monitoring of carbon sequestration could lead to marsh enhancements designed to better absorb emissions that contribute to global warming. The full survey is expected to be complete in 2010.

Wildlife Studies

With help from the New Jersey-based Wetlands Institute, NJMC naturalists began a study of diamondback terrapins in the Sawmill-Kingsland marsh during the summer of 2009. Terrapins were captured using baited commercial crab traps, then measured, weighed and tagged with electronic chips – before being returned to the marsh. The field study will continue in 2010, and the data collected will be used to get a better idea of the number of these creatures that live in this marsh.

Rare Sightings

Several rare birds brought hundreds of nature lovers to the Meadowlands this year, most notably a pair of snowy owls last winter, a black-necked stilt in June, and a northern wheatear, several golden plovers and a Wilson's phalarope in September. NJMC naturalists also located a successful new osprey nest in Kearny and a successful peregrine falcon nest on the Route 3 Bridge over the Hackensack River. In June they netted a new fish for the District, an oyster toadfish.

Financial Report

STATEMENT OF REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES: GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS December 31, 2008

Revenues	
Grants and Projects	\$ 22,651,489
Solid Waste Overhead Contribution	7,340,868
Lease Payments	2,695,712
Fees and Charges	1,577,570
Interest Income	1,194,976
Other Income	426,727
Revenues from Composting Operations	338,878
Royalties from Sale of Methane Gas	124,603
Total Revenues	\$ 36,350,823

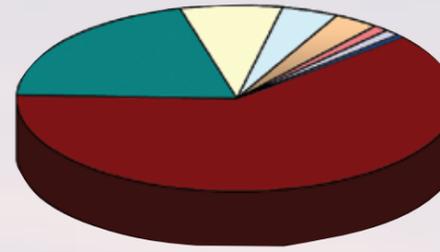
Expenditures	
Keegan Landfill Remediation	\$ 13,276,538
Commission Operations	10,340,367
Capital Expenditures	3,615,755
MAGNET Program	2,554,227
Environment Center Operations	2,476,356
Wetlands Enhancement Projects	2,166,000
Business Accelerator	482,469
Other Expenditures	420,078
Construction in Progress	292,186
Total Expenditures	\$ 35,623,976
Excess of Revenues over Expenditures	\$ 726,847

STATEMENT OF REVENUES AND EXPENSES: SOLID WASTE OPERATIONS December 31, 2008

Revenues	
Operating Revenue	\$ 23,537,804
Operating Transfers In	8,468,650
Non-Operating Revenue	1,371,096
Total Revenues	\$ 33,377,550

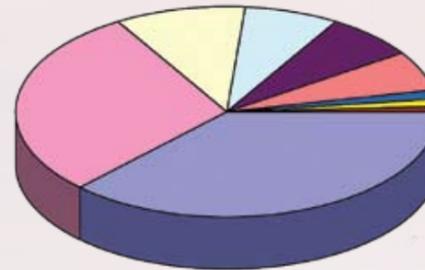
Expenses	
General Operating Costs	\$ 14,875,488
Keegan Landfill Remediation	7,504,676
Landfill Operations	4,021,953
Payments to County Utility Authority	3,686,059
MERI/Laboratory/Parks and Open Space	2,638,946
Other Expenses	255,760
Total Operating Expenses	\$ 32,982,882
Net Income	\$ 394,668

Governmental Funds: Revenues



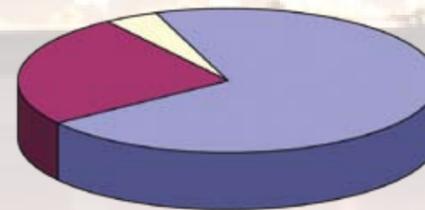
- Grants and Projects - 63%
- Solid Waste Overhead Contribution - 21%
- Lease Payments - 7%
- Fees and Charges - 3%
- Interest Income - 3%
- Other Income - 1%
- Revenues from Composting Operations - 1%
- Royalties from Sale of Methane Gas - 1%

Governmental Funds: Expenditures



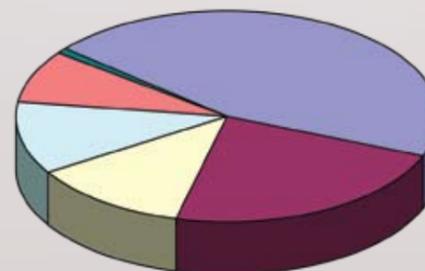
- Keegan Landfill Remediation - 38%
- Commission Operations - 29%
- Capital Expenditures - 10%
- MAGNET Program - 7%
- Environment Center Operations - 7%
- Wetlands Enhancement Projects - 6%
- Business Accelerator - 1%
- Other Expenditures - 1%
- Construction in Progress - 1%

Solid Waste Operations: Revenues



- Operating Revenue - 71%
- Operating Transfers In - 25%
- Non-Operating Revenue - 4%

Solid Waste Operations: Expenses



- General Operating Costs - 45%
- Keegan Landfill Remediation - 23%
- Landfill Operations - 12%
- Payments to County Utility Authority - 11%
- MERI/Laboratory/Parks and Open Space - 8%
- Other Expenses - 1%



40 Years



**New Jersey
Meadowlands
Commission**
1969-2009