

The Green Oasis

The Official Newsletter of
Liberty State Park

FALL 2023

The Green Oasis is published by Liberty State Park.

We encourage and welcome your comments and suggestions. If you have any ideas for articles for upcoming issues, please contact us at LSPNatureCenter@dep.nj.gov.

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New Jersey Department of
Environmental Protection
State Park Service
Philip D. Murphy,
Governor
Tahesha L. Way,
Lt. Governor
Shawn LaTourette,
Commissioner

In Memoriam: Lori Garth



(Left) Lori hard at work in the newly renovated Nature Center

(Right) Lori makes a new friend

Photos: Mandy Edgecombe

Liberty State Park is deeply saddened by the loss of longtime Resource Interpretive Specialist Lori Garth. Lori passed away on March 15th, 2023, following a lengthy illness.

Lori joined the LSP staff in 1998 as a volunteer and worked her way up to becoming a full-time naturalist. She brought a vast wealth of dedication, knowledge, leadership, and passion about nature to Liberty State Park. Her park colleagues, friends, and visitors to LSP will all miss her deeply and strive to continue her work to preserve and protect this beautiful earth she was so fond of.

To honor Lori, Liberty State Park staff, friends, and volunteers joined Lori's family this past spring to plant a native garden and install a bench dedicated to Lori just outside the Nature Center. A quiet place where one can enjoy the sights and sounds of nature is a fitting dedication for Lori, continuing to offer others the chance to gain their own hands-on experience in the natural world.



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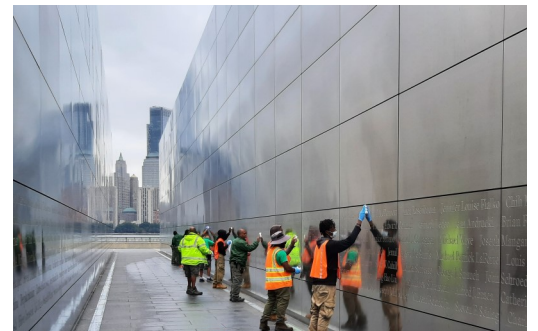


(Top left and right) Family, friends, and co-workers prepping Lori's garden
(Bottom) The finished garden
Photos: Tereza Marshyti

Thank You to Hourly Staff at Liberty State Park

As we wrap up another busy summer season here at Liberty State Park, a sincere thanks is extended to all of the seasonal staff who helped carry out numerous aspects of park operations during this very active time of year.

Whether it was assisting with office duties, helping teach interpretive programs, aiding park patrons with directions, or keeping the park looking neat and tidy, the seasonal staff stepped up and kept things running smoothly. All of their hard work is greatly appreciated, and the success of Liberty State Park would not be possible without them!



Staff coming together to clean the 9/11 Memorial
Photo: Brian Shankle

As The Crow Flies!

by Patricia Hilliard



Fish crow perched on a branch
Photo: Peter Pearsall

“Look at me!” the blackbird called. It was an American crow sitting in an aviary. The other birds were colorful, but this blackbird could speak.

There are two types of crows in North America: the fish crow, which makes a very high-pitched, nasally call, and the American crow, which makes the familiar, “caw-caw” noise. At times it is difficult to tell the two apart. Keep in mind, the fish crow walks or skip-hops on the ground and prefers to live along shorelines.

The American crow can be found throughout most of North America. It has a short, squared tail. When flying, its wings move as if it were rowing a boat. Both types of crows are omnivores, which means they eat just about anything. Crow populations are mostly stable. They nest high in tree tops. Their nests are 6 to 19 inches across, made of sticks with an inner cup lined with pine needles and leaves. They lay 3 to 9 eggs per nest, once a year.

Crows will eat the eggs and chicks of other birds. Don’t confuse crows with ravens which are big birds that have big thick bills and tails that are tapered at the end. Ravens like to eat crow’s eggs. Crows are skillful fliers and are attracted to bright, shiny objects that they may take in their bills and fly away with. If you want to attract crows, put out peanuts, their favorite treat.



American crow in the grass
Photo: Peter Pearsall

Sources:

All About Birds – The Cornell Lab: https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/American_Crow/id

A Field Guide to the Birds of Eastern and North Central North America, by Roger Tory Peterson, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1980. ISBN 0-395-26621-1

<https://www.nj.gov/dep/fgw/chkbirds.htm> American Crow status in NJ –not endangered.

Liberty State Park Joins Instagram



Liberty State Park now has an Instagram account!

Our Instagram features posts about upcoming events and interpretive programs at Liberty State Park, and highlights interesting wildlife sightings or species spotlights during different seasons of the year.

Follow us at <http://www.instagram.com/libertystatepark> or scan the QR code here to start scrolling. Be sure to like your favorite posts, or contact us if you have any suggestions for content you would like to see featured!

ArtLSP: Supporting the Art in Public Places

by Ray Baylon

Liberty State Park is dedicated to promoting the arts in order to educate park visitors about the communities' cultural heritage and vibrant creative expressions. Throughout 2023, we have collaborated with the local arts community and hosted hundreds of artists from Hudson County and throughout the state of New Jersey. This unique setting allows for both interesting and inventive exhibitions to be enjoyed by both park visitors and art enthusiasts. These free public exhibitions display the cultural significance of the arts community in Jersey City.

Kicking off the new year, LSP hosted the Hudson County Alliance of Teen Artists. The Teen Artists Awards highlighted hundreds of student artists from across the county. The showcase of winners was displayed for over a month and allowed visitors an opportunity to appreciate our youths artistic talent! Family, friends, teachers and art enthusiasts gathered in the historic CRRNJ Terminal concourse to present the students with awards of excellence!

In the spring, Liberty State Park enthusiastically welcomed local artist MustArt back to the park. Through the collaborative partnership with Jersey City Mural Art Program, MustArt skillfully touched up our beloved LSP water tower mural! This was such a huge success that in November, MustArt will host his very own Arts Festival featuring local muralists, live painting sessions, local vendors and so much more! This event will be held at the historic CRRNJ Terminal at LSP.

Another exciting partnership project we worked on in October was Art Fair 14C. This annual week-long art show based in Jersey City featured hundreds of artists from around the world and across the state. This year, the Jersey City Art and Studio Tour week joined with Art Fair 14C to bring artwork to the Historic CRRNJ Terminal for Jersey City Arts Week. Through this collaboration, Art Fair 14C sponsored free and discounted tickets to local residents, allowing us to host one of the most equitable art weeks in Hudson County.



MustArt Water Tower in LSP
Photo: Kathleen Caparo-Fernandez



Some of the featured artwork on display
Photo: Kathleen Caparo-Fernandez

Thanks to a collaborative project with local gallery Mana Contemporary, Liberty State Park welcomed Montana-based conservation artist Ben Miller to make an addition to his River Series, featuring our very own Hudson River. Ben Miller is well-known for his impactful Endangered Rivers Series where he brings awareness to river habitat conservation through the power of his fishing pole! Spectators of all ages watched on as Miller used nothing but his fly fishing gear to create an astonishing interpretation of the Hudson River.

Smokey Bear paid a visit to Liberty State Park this summer along with one of his vintage Forest Fire trucks. Original paintings by Rudy Wendelin, on loan from the USDA, made for a one-of-a-kind gallery at the CRRNJ Terminal, which tourists from all over the

world enjoyed. Smokey himself even stopped by giving visitors an opportunity to learn about the effects of forest fires on vital ecosystems and how we can help!

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Another exciting project LSP collaborated on with the Jersey City Board of Education was Weaving the Community. Students from all over the city worked together to create an astonishing display of artistic talent using only fiber mediums to embody the essence of their community.

Each class then came to view and appreciate their artwork while it was on display in the CRRNJ Terminal Waiting Room for all park visitors to enjoy.

The success of art programming in Liberty State Park relies upon the continued collaboration between the park and our local art community. We will continue to invest in art programming while serving as a hub for cultural heritage and historic preservation to enrich our local community and the overall quality of life for all park visitors.



Artwork and weavings featured in the Terminal
Photo: Kathleen Caparo-Fernandez

Restoration To Begin at Boxwood Hall

by Katherine Craig

Boxwood Hall State Historic Site in Elizabeth, a satellite site of Liberty State Park, will soon be warmer in winter and cooler in summer. Thanks to a grant from the New Jersey Historic Trust, the windows and frames at Boxwood Hall are slated for repairs in the near future. This will improve their appearance and reduce the carbon footprint of the building, while maintaining its 18th century façade.

The windows at Boxwood Hall had their last major overhaul in the 1940's. At that time, the house had been saved from demolition by the citizens of Elizabeth and was undergoing restoration. The building had been modified from an 18 room, 2.5-story mansion with side wings to a four-story structure. It had evolved from a family home to the Elizabeth Home for Aged Women.



Boxwood Hall exterior

When the Boxwood Hall Memorial Association and the State of New Jersey began the restoration, which would include the removal of the 19th century top 1.5 stories, the original windows had been replaced with frames containing two glass panes on the top and bottom sashes. To reestablish the 18th century exterior appearance, new windows were installed with 12 panes of glass on top and bottom. The frames, interior and exterior, were repaired or replaced as needed.

Time and weather have taken their tolls on the windows at Boxwood Hall, but now this historic house is on the road to the revitalization of its exterior glory.

Happy Birthday Boxwood Hall!

By Katherine Craig

On April 10th of this year, Boxwood Hall in Elizabeth marked the 80th Anniversary of its dedication as a State Historic Site. Built in the mid 1700's, Boxwood Hall was a private home until the 1840's, when it was used as a young ladies' academy. In the 1870's, it was a boarding house, and in 1883 became the Elizabeth Home for Aged Women.

The home relocated in 1938 and it looked as if time had run out for this venerable building. It was scheduled for demolition to make room for a parking lot, and the citizens of Elizabeth were furious. Boxwood Hall had been visited by Alexander Hamilton, the Marquis de Lafayette and George Washington. The third owner, Jonathan Dayton, was a signer of the US Constitution. The owners' wives and their staffs, paid and enslaved, had maintained a beautiful home. How dare the authorities blithely agree to its loss?

This took place during the Great Depression, and neither the City of Elizabeth, nor the State of New Jersey or the US Government had the funds to purchase the house. Undeterred and determined, the people of Elizabeth formed the Boxwood Hall Memorial Association and set to work. Two years later, the Association reached its goal & Boxwood Hall was theirs. (An interesting fact: 15% of the purchase price was raised by the schoolchildren & teachers of Elizabeth & Union County.)

The State of NJ accepted the donation of the building in 1940 and began restoration. On April 10th, 1943, Boxwood Hall State Historic Site was open to the public as a museum. Except for a hiatus during World War II (when the Red Cross was allowed to hold classes there) and the recent COVID lockdown, Boxwood Hall has continued the mission set forth by the Memorial Association.

It is with great pride that the State of New Jersey can say, "Thank you, citizens of Elizabeth!"

Boxwood Hall State Historic Site, 1073 East Jersey St., Elizabeth, NJ, is a satellite of Liberty State Park. It is usually open Mon-Fri., 9AM-5PM, last tour 4PM. Because of small staff size, visitors are urged to call 908-282-7617 to confirm. Organized groups by appointment. Boxwood Hall is partially ADA accessible.



(Left) Hon. J. Christian Bollwage, Mayor, City of Elizabeth, Bette Jane Kowalski, Member, Union Co. Board of County Commissioners, Katherine Craig, Caretaker, Boxwood Hall, Mark Texel, Administrator, NJ State Historic Sites, Scott Donner, Boxwood Hall Volunteer

(Right) Katherine Craig, Caretaker, Boxwood Hall, holds sign produced & donated by Timothy Dunn, Art Teacher at Cicarell Academy of Elizabeth High School.

Photos: Scott Donner

Greetings from the Garden

by Anita Grist

The gardening crew at Liberty State Park is responsible for making the flower beds in the park look neat and tidy for visitors to enjoy and keeping them full of important plants and flowers to attract pollinators like birds, bees and butterflies across the park. The gardens range from natural to semiformal.

Volunteering is a great way to make a difference in your community, give back to the environment and helps all of us offset our carbon footprint.

The park is a public space where you can show off your work to others. Last year we had a birthday group attend a volunteer event. They planted bulbs and this year they will return to see their daffodils and lilies bloom!

Volunteering tasks include weeding, pruning, mulching, removing invasive species and planting new plants and annual bulbs. It's a great way to spend time outdoors and enjoy the numerous views Liberty State Park has to offer.

Volunteers can be any age (children 16 and under must be accompanied by an adult) and there is no experience necessary. We provide all equipment needed. Weekend volunteering takes place on Saturday mornings from 9:00AM to 12:00 PM. During the week, corporate and volunteer groups are also welcome.

For more information or to sign up for volunteer work, please contact Maria, LSP's head gardener, at 201-915-3418 or e-mail Rosemarie.Cuillerier@dep.nj.gov. Thank you for your interest in making a difference.

New History Programs at the CRRNJ Terminal

by Peter Clark



CNJ tugboat out on the harbor

The historical interpreters at Liberty State Park are pleased to announce the addition of two new interpretive programs. These topics will be presented at the historic CRRNJ Terminal located in the north end of the park and focus on the themes of transportation and industry.

The first program, "Tugboats: Workhorses of the New York Harbor", explains the integral role that the tugs of the Central Railroad played in moving freight throughout the region and beyond. We also have a handmade model of a harbor tugboat donated by Jersey City native Ron Wos.

The second program, "Coal and the Central Railroad of New Jersey", offers a chronology of the booming coal business that made "The Big Little Railroad" a prime driver of the anthracite coal market. Our Power Point presentation will follow the coal trains from the mines of Pennsylvania to the dockyards of Jersey City in our power point presentation. Both programs will be followed by an optional walk along the historic waterfront.

For more information about when these two programs will be offered or to pre-register for a current program, please contact the Liberty State Park Nature Center at LSPNatureCenter@dep.nj.gov or 201-915-3400 x503.



CNJ railroad train with coal tender

The Mystery of Marsescence

by Sarajane Bruno

Have you ever been outside in the wintertime and taken notice of a deciduous (broad, flat-leaved) tree still holding onto many of its leaves, even though other similar trees have long since lost theirs? The leaves are not the colorful, bright foliage synonymous with autumn, but appear brown, dull, and papery.

This unusual, though not so uncommon phenomenon is called marsescence, when a tree will not lose all its leaves during the autumn months. The term is derived from Latin and means, “to wither”, accurately describing the withered, dull look of the leaves left behind. Leaves do not form an abscission, or detachment, layer on the leaf stem, allowing them to cling to the tree branches.



Oak trees exhibiting marsescence
Photo: Tereza Marshyti

Marsescence is commonly seen in trees such as oaks and beeches but may be observed in other tree species. There are many questions as to why a tree would retain its leaves during the fall and winter months and several theories have arisen to try and answer them.

Dried deciduous leaves may take on a role similar to those of evergreen trees, which never lose their leaves in the fall and winter and provide warm shelter for birds and other animals in cold weather. Also, the less appetizing dry and papery leaves may deter animals such as deer from foraging on the more appealing new buds and greens.

Whatever may be the reason, rest assured these trees will eventually drop those leaves which prefer to “hang around”, and new growth will begin the following spring. The next time you happen to be in Liberty State Park, see if you can find any trees exhibiting marsescence.

Help Support Liberty State Park with Dedicated License Plate



With the purchase of Liberty State Park license plates, you will be supporting the continued improvement of New Jersey’s premier urban state park. Your dollars help to maintain and restore historic structures like the CRRNJ Terminal, provide for upgrades to the Nature Center, create wildlife habitat, increase recreational opportunities, and so much more.

License plate funds were used to install 50 new flag poles along Freedom Way which now display the 50 state flags. Funds were also used in 2020 to inoculate many of the park’s mature ash trees against the Emerald Ash Borer and purchase replacement state flags, historic display flags and pennants.

Please consider becoming part of our community of supporters. For more information or to order your plates today, please visit your nearest NJ Motor Vehicle Agency or visit on line at <http://www.state.nj.us/mvc/Vehicle/Liberty.htm>, or by phone at (888) 486-3339. Thank you for your support.