



STATE OF NEW JERSEY
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HAWK RISE SANCTUARY OPENS AFTER 5-YEAR RESTORATION

TRENTON - Hawk Rise Sanctuary, a 95-acre ecological preserve and wetland complex in Linden, which was carved out of a former landfill through the combined efforts of the Department of Environmental Protection, the city of Linden, and the New Jersey Audubon Society, opened this morning following a special ribbon-cutting ceremony.

“This project is an excellent example of the Christie Administration’s commitment to lessen the cumulative environmental impacts that stress many of the state’s urban communities, in this case by providing a much-needed and unique greenway,” said DEP Commissioner Bob Martin. “The opening of this sanctuary also shows the good that can be achieved when state and local governments and environmental groups work together for a well-intended goal.”

“I’m very excited about the opening of the Hawk Rise Sanctuary” added Linden Mayor Richard Gerbounka. “This is the product of many, many years of hard work and cooperation between Linden, New Jersey Audubon, and the DEP. Hawk Rise will provide unique open-space recreational activities to not only the citizens of Linden, but to all of Union County.”

A 2007 Administrative Consent Order issued by the DEP called for the proper clean-up and closure of the Linden Landfill, a dump site that was located along the Rahway River and Arthur Kill. The consent order also included an agreement with the city to enhance 50 acres of surrounding forest areas and wetlands that would become the core of a Linden greenway.

Linden committed \$1 million for the greenway access project and the establishment of education and interpretive programs, while the DEP’s Office of Natural Resource Restoration and Green Acres Program combined to provide a \$1 million match from dollars generated by a separate settlement with Merck & Co. for natural resource damages associated with contamination of ground water in the Linden area.

Several businesses, including ConocoPhillips/Phillips 66, Infineum, Cogen Technologies and Northfield Bank, also made contributions to construction of the sanctuary.

“The Opening of the Hawk Rise Sanctuary marks an important milestone toward the creation of a Rahway River greenway for generations of New Jersey residents to enjoy,” said DEP Assistant Commissioner for Compliance and Enforcement Wolf Skacel, who attended the ceremony held at the Range Road entrance to the new preserve.

The sanctuary includes a walkway/trail system, overlook platforms, and pedestrian bridges. In addition to panoramic views of the Rahway River, trails are equipped with interpretive signage to provide visitors with habitat descriptions and information regarding 123 species of birds and other wildlife that have been seen in the area.

The city also has worked with the Linden Public Schools system to integrate the sanctuary with the science curriculum and bring student groups to Hawk Rise for ecological studies. Audubon also is offering a full suite of natural history programs for families and adults.

“We are excited to partner with the DEP and City of Linden at the Hawk Rise Sanctuary for a project that offers a tremendous opportunity to connect residents with the Rahway River,” said Dale Rosselet, Vice President for Education with New Jersey Audubon. “We look forward to conducting a wide variety of programs for schools, families and nature enthusiasts and sharing this urban jewel with the residents of Linden and surrounding communities.”