Message from the Superintendent

The summer of 2014 started off with a literal “Bang”, as we welcomed back the July 4th fireworks celebration to Liberty State Park. Thousands of visitors came out to enjoy the daylong festival that included a free concert by country music star Craig Morgan, children’s carnival rides, an appearance by the Budweiser Clydesdales, gourmet food trucks, and of course fireworks by Grucci. Co-sponsored by Suntex Marinas, Budweiser, and the City of Jersey City, the celebration was the first to take place at Liberty State Park since 2008 and gave thousands of visitors a spectacular show.

Thanks to all of our park staff, volunteers, and other partners who helped to keep our park safe, clean and enjoyable throughout the long weekend.

Efforts continue to restore park facilities damaged by Superstorm Sandy. Exterior repairs to the historic Central Railroad of New Jersey Terminal have been completed and the concourse was temporarily opened to the public September 11 for park visitors. “Restoration of the Terminal Building’s exterior allows us to turn a new chapter in the recovery of Liberty State Park,” said Department of Environmental Commissioner Bob Martin. “We are now one step closer to fully repairing the park so that patrons can benefit from all that it has to offer.”

The Terminal suffered $4.9 million in damages due to Sandy. Completed repairs include the building’s exterior doors, windows, roof and skylights, as well as the concourse exterior door and skylights. Plans are underway to re-open the concourse for scheduled intervals as each phase of the overall restoration permits.

The main ferry slip, which sits adjacent to the building, has also been restored to its pre-Sandy condition and repairs for several other ferry slips, which have been long out of service, are scheduled for 2016.
Liberty Partners with SCA

Liberty State Park partnered with the Student Conservation Association (SCA) to bring a community crew of ten local high school students led by two group leaders to assist with several projects in need of attention. The six-week long program, funded in part by the Federal Highway Administration’s Recreational Trails Program, provided an opportunity for the students to come to the park and work in a team environment, gaining experience and building necessary life skills. The crew worked on a number of projects, including clearing overgrown vegetation along 1,000 feet of boardwalk, installing erosion control water bars, and planting native vegetation. The students, many of which are regular visitors to Liberty State Park, were grateful to have the unique opportunity to go behind the scenes and see what it takes to maintain our beautiful Liberty State Park.
News from Boxwood Hall

As part of the observance of the 350th Anniversary of the founding of New Jersey, Boxwood Hall State Historic Site has been reconfiguring the museum rooms in order to better tell Boxwood’s--and New Jersey’s--history. Over the past two years, furnishings have been moved, accessories added, and two major pieces, a large gilded mirror and a canvas floorcloth, purchased. This project was recently enhanced by a generous donation. Thibaut Wallpaper, Fabrics and Furniture, based in Newark, NJ, donated nine rolls of wallpaper in the “Pompadour” pattern, reproduced from an early 19th century design. The donation also included 6 yards of reproduction fabric, taken from the same era. The wallpaper will be installed in one of the parlors at Boxwood Hall. The parlor, called the Dayton Room, boasts an Adam mantelpiece, installed about 1800 by the house’s third owner, Jonathan Dayton, youngest signer of the US Constitution. With the addition of Thibaut’s gift, the room will better reflect the décor of the early 1800’s. The fabric will be used to recover a chair, which currently sports upholstery more reminiscent of the 1960’s.

There are five other rooms at Boxwood Hall that are furnished with period pieces dating from the late eighteenth to mid-nineteenth centuries. As the reconfiguration progresses, each room will be designed to tell part of the story of Boxwood Hall and its inhabitants. Thanks to Thibaut’s generosity, the project has taken another major step forward.

Boxwood Hall is a satellite site of Liberty State Park located in Elizabeth, NJ. The site is open Monday-Friday, 9 AM-12; 1-5 PM; weekends, by appointment. Groups of all ages are welcome, also by appointment. Admission is free. For more information, please call Boxwood Hall at 908-282-7617.
Book Release of *Images of Modern America: Liberty State Park*

Liberty State Park is pleased to announce the release of a new collection of images capturing the renowned past, present, and future of LSP. Titled *Liberty State Park*, this book is the latest in a series of releases from Arcadia Publishing called *Images of Modern America*.

The author, Gail Zavian, is a lifelong resident of Jersey City and “The Unofficial Photographer of Liberty State Park”. Park patrons may catch a glimpse of Gail, her sister Karen, and her camera venturing through the park to photograph life at LSP. The book contains 160 images from a wide variety of sources, including Gail’s personal collection of photographs, park supporters, and LSP’s historical archive.

*Images of Modern America: Liberty State Park* is 96 pages of beautiful imagery and stories sure to delight both the seasoned visitor to Liberty State Park and those experiencing the park and all it has to offer for the very first time. The book is available for purchase at the Park Office for the retail price of $22.99 (plus tax). Stop in today to peruse this stunning collection and maybe take a copy home with you!

Free Wi-Fi at Liberty State Park

Liberty State Park is pleased to offer free wireless Internet service at the Morris Pesin Drive and Freedom Way picnic areas.

The service, provided free of charge through a one-year partnership with American Park Network and Toyota Prius Hybrid, allows visitors to stay connected. Simply select the “Oh, Ranger! Wi-Fi” network on your smartphone, tablet, or wireless device and agree to the terms and conditions.
Species Spotlight: Little Blue Herons

The summer of 2014 was a good year for little blue herons at Liberty State Park. There were numerous sightings of both adults and juveniles foraging along the mud flats and tidal creeks. Identification of the little blue, especially in its juvenile white phase, can present more of a challenge than some of the more conspicuous herons and egrets such as the great blue heron, black-crowned and yellow-crowned night heron, great egret, snowy egret and cattle egret. Birding requires close attention to shape, color, sizes and sound. The little blue heron forces us to hone our observation skills as birders.

An unusual characteristic of the little blue heron is that it is white for the first 9 months and can often be confused with a snowy egret. Although similar in size, the juvenile little blue can be distinguished from the snowy by its bluish gray bill and its pale green legs and feet. The snowy’s bill and legs are black (although the legs are sometimes yellow in juveniles) and feet are bright yellow, hence the nickname “golden slippers”. As the little blue enters its adult phase, it first becomes mottled and then solid blue with a maroon tinge to the neck. It stands about 24 inches high, substantially smaller than the great blue heron which can reach up to 52 inches. The little blue also differs from the tricolored heron in that it has a dark rather than white belly and distinguishes from the reddish egret in that it has blue versus red at the base of the bill.

Little blue herons eat fish, insects and crabs. They do most of their hunting along the edges of ponds or marshes. Their call is a harsh coughing or scrapping sound. They build nests in shrubs near other herons and egrets. They have nested as far north as Canada and into the Midwestern U.S. According to the Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey, “Nesting locations within New Jersey have only been documented along the shorelines of Barnegat Bay and south.” NJ Fish and Wildlife has listed the little blue as a Species of Special Concern, which indicates its populations are vulnerable.

Little blue herons fly south for the winter to Florida, Louisiana or as far as Central America. Timing is another important factor in identifying birds. If you see a large blue heron in winter, it is most likely the great blue heron. Watch for little blue herons to return to Liberty State Park in April. The edges of the salt-marsh at Richard J. Sullivan Natural Area and Caven Point are likely hot spots. Maybe someday we will be lucky enough to have little blue herons nesting here.

Friends of Liberty State Park

On Saturday, October 11th, the FOLSP hosted their annual fall meeting at the Liberty State Park Picnic Pavilion, followed by a book signing with, Gail Zavian, FOLSP board member and author of the great new color photography book, “Liberty State Park – Images of Modern America”. The book will be available for sale or may also be purchased through the FOLSP website at www.folsp.org or in person at the Liberty State Park Office.

We thank all who have supported a free and beautiful park. We welcome new members to help support our mission to preserve, protect, conserve and promote Liberty State Park. For more information, please visit www.folsp.org.

Upcoming FOLSP Events Spring 2015

Saturday, April 11 - Annual Salt Marsh cleanup-Richard J Sullivan State Natural Area
Sunday, April 19 - Friends’ 10th Annual Awards Luncheon
Saturday, April 25 - Friends’ Annual “WALK for LSP”

Gardening for the Spring

Greetings from the garden crew at Liberty State Park. With cooler weather coming, we are looking forward to planting our seasonal mums and bulbs in our formal garden beds. Come out and join us as we plant our fall bulbs so that they can flower the next spring.

In case you haven't planted bulbs before, they require a period of frost and lots of rain. The first flowers to bloom in the spring are tulips and narcissus (daffodils). Each fall, we rely on the help of hundreds of volunteers to plant approximately 30,000 bulbs. Bulbs are easy to plant. Bring the kids or grab a friend and come enjoy a day of gardening in the great outdoors.

Our volunteer gardeners meet every Saturday morning from 9 am-12pm.

For more information, please contact Maria at lspgardening@verizon.net or (201) 915-3418.
Public Nature Interpretive Programs

The Nature Interpretive Center is still closed to the public due to storm damage and while the building may not be accessible, the staff is offering public interpretive programs. This fall and winter we will be out and about in the park and we invite you to join us. We will be offering our guided bird walks and low tide beach walks as well as some new programs to help you get better acquainted with all that Liberty State Park has to offer. A full list of our programs for the fall and winter is below. If you would like to register for any of our programs call (201) 915-3402, ext. 109 or email us at lspic@verizon.net and we will be more than happy to help you. We look forward to seeing you soon.

Fall Bird Walk  Nov. 1 or 22, 2014  10am - Noon  FREE
Come on out to Liberty State Park and join us for a leisurely stroll as we look for and identify the birds that visit for the fall. *Bring binoculars if you have them, we have a limited number that can be borrowed. Suitable for children ages 5 and older with a caregiver and adults of all ages.  ADA Accessible

Low Tide Beach Walk  Oct. 18, 2014  10am - 11:30am  FREE
Join us for a stroll along the beach to see what the tide has brought ashore. *Wear old shoes that can get wet and muddy. Suitable for children ages 4 and older with caregiver and adults of all ages.

Winter Waterfowl Walk  Dec 6 or 20, 2014 or Jan. 10 or 24 or Feb. 7, 2015  10am - Noon  FREE
When the weather gets cold, numerous species of waterfowl head to the park. Join us for a walk along the river to see which birds have arrived for the winter.  *Bring binoculars if you have them, we have a limited number that can be borrowed. Suitable for children ages 5 and older with a caregiver and adults of all ages.  ADA Accessible

Earthcache Discovery Trail  March 21, 2015  10am - Noon  FREE
Using handheld GPS (global positioning system) units we will go on a virtual treasure hunt to discover the richness of the harbor estuary. Through the use of this technology you will discover the estuary’s immense resources, how it was shaped, how we manage the resource and how it directly affects our quality of life. *Suitable for children ages 6 and older with caregiver and adults of all ages.  Partially ADA Accessible