

# NJMC NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## NJMC RIVER BARGE PARK DAY SET FOR SATURDAY, MAY 19

*Riverfront Park Opening Day Celebration in Carlstadt Features Free Pontoon Boat Rides, Mini Kayak Lessons, and More Family-Friendly Activities*

**LYNDHURST, N.J.** – The New Jersey Meadowlands Commission (NJMC) will celebrate the opening of River Barge Park in Carlstadt on Saturday, May 19, with a day of free, family-friendly activities focused on raising awareness of the importance of environmental protection, conservation and keeping our waterways clean. River Barge Park Day is scheduled from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. with a rain date of Sunday, May 20.

Activities at the scenic, 5.5-acre park on the Hackensack River include NJMC 30-minute pontoon boat rides, mini kayak lessons provided by REI, environmental education activities for children conducted by Meadowlands Environment Center educators, park tours, bird watching, a live barn owl exhibit, environmental exhibitors, food vendors and more.

“The NJMC is very proud of River Barge Park and we cannot wait to share this beautiful new jewel with the public,” said Marcia Karrow, Executive Director of the NJMC. “River Barge Park Day is a wonderful opportunity for the entire family to participate in fun and educational programs that foster environmental preservation while enjoying this spectacular new park.

The park provides much-needed boating and paddling access to the Hackensack River in southern Bergen County while magnificent riverfront views provide a tranquil setting for relaxation, bird watching and experiencing the Meadowlands District’s stunning natural beauty and unique urban ecosystem up-close. The park includes a boat ramp, docks, paddling and rowing launch points, a 17-slip marina, a scenic promenade with picnic tables, paths lined by native plants and an education pavilion.\*

River Barge Park Day events include a reading and book signing session for kids at 11 a.m., 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. by Tom Yezerski, whose beautifully-illustrated children’s book, “Meadowlands: A Wetlands Survival Story,” was named to the New York Times list of 10 Notable Children’s Picture Books for 2011.

Kids can also participate in water chemistry activities using science kits to test water temperature, salinity, dissolved oxygen and ph, and observe organisms found in the Hackensack River under the microscope. The Meadowlands Environmental Research Institute will have a computer showing real-time water quality data from several monitoring stations throughout the Meadowlands District. They also have a “Soak the Polluter” activity planned for children.

Other exhibitors include wildlife educator Joe D’Angeli, who will present a live Barn Owl exhibit throughout the day, the Bergen County Audubon Society, which will help visitors find birds and other wildlife through spotting scopes, the Hackensack Canoe Club, and the Wanda Canoe Club. The Meadowlands Museum will showcase the region’s rich history, while the Meadowlands YMCA has activities planned for all ages.

Environmental groups including the New York-New Jersey Harbor Estuary Program, and the New York-New Jersey Harbor Coalition will inform visitors about protecting, restoring and improving safe access to waterways. The Rutherford Green Team will talk about how to move toward and maintain sustainable communities.

River Barge Park Day is hosted by the NJMC and the Bergen County Audubon Society and was made possible by funding from the New York-New Jersey Harbor Estuary Program and the NEIWPC. The NJMC purchased the park property, which was once slated for residential development, with major funding provided by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

The construction of River Barge Park advances the NJMC's commitment to sustainability and green building. The education pavilion features a thatched roof consisting of Phragmites from New Jersey marshes, while the pavilion, tables and bench furnishings were constructed with 300-year-old first-growth long leaf yellow pine salvaged from the Barge Club restaurant, which formerly stood on the site. The park also includes energy-efficient lighting and sustainable storm water management, collection and filtering systems.

**All parking for River Barge Park Day is at the Izod Center, Lot 28, just minutes from the park. Free shuttle bus service will be provided for all visitors to and from Lot 28 throughout the day.**

**\*Due to space limitations, visitors may not bring their own kayaks, canoes or boats to River Barge Park Day.**

For more information, please call 201-460-4619.

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