

NJMC NEWS RELEASE

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**New Jersey
Meadowland
Commission**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Local History Discussions, Pontoon Boat Cruises, Animal Visits, Old-Fashioned Barn Dance Highlight New Jersey Meadowlands Commission (NJMC) Summer Senior Program

LYNDHURST, N.J. – Local history talks, pontoon boat rides on the Hackensack River, visits from raptors and marsh animals, and an old fashioned Barn Dance are among the many highlights of the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission’s (NJMC) 2013 Summer Senior Program.

“The New Jersey Meadowlands Commission is pleased to provide area seniors with a diverse array of first-rate programming that educates and entertains,” said Marcia Karrow, Executive Director of the NJMC. “The NJMC Summer Senior Program is a great service to residents of the Meadowlands District and beyond, and we invite all seniors to participate in our free and low-cost programs.”

All events listed below are free and take place at the Meadowlands Environment Center (MEC) in DeKorte Park, Lyndhurst, unless otherwise noted. For more information, to request a copy of the 2013 Summer Senior Program, or to register for a program, call 201-777-2431, or stop by the Meadowlands Environment Center, located at 2 DeKorte Park Plaza, Lyndhurst.

Butterflies, Birds of Prey and Marsh Creatures

Both delicate and fearsome winged marvels will make their way to the MEC this summer. On **Saturday, June 8, at 1 p.m.**, join Butterfly farmer Rick Mikula and a variety of beautiful butterflies for his “**Hole in Hand Butterfly Farm**” presentation. Mikula will discuss these beautiful and ecologically important insects, including their life cycle and how you can create your own backyard butterfly habitat. Head back to DeKorte Park at **10 a.m. on Sunday, June 9**, for a **Plant Walk** with botanist Edith Wallace, who will identify flora that best attracts birds and butterflies.

Come “**Meet the Marsh Animals**” on **Tuesday, June 25, at 2 p.m.** Participants will be able to get up-close and personal with a turtle, watch a shrimp’s heart beat through a microscope and learn all about blue crabs. A formidable falcon takes center stage on **Thursday, July 11, at 2 p.m.** for “**Flight of the Raptor.**” Master Falconer Jennifer Pena’s demonstration is designed to educate, enlighten and amaze while helping audiences understand the vital importance of these magnificent creatures to our natural world.

On **Tuesday, July 23, at 2 p.m.**, MEC educators will take visitors on a **Beachcombing Bonanza** in the NJMC Science Center in DeKorte Park. Participants will learn facts about sea creatures and the difference between shells and bones. Live ocean animals and a collection of New Jersey seashells will be on display.

Butterflies again take center stage on **Sunday, July 28**, for the NJMC’s **Fourth Annual Butterfly Day**. The highly-popular, family-friendly festival, scheduled for **10 a.m. to 3 p.m.**, attracted nearly 700 visitors last year. In addition to ongoing butterfly walks for the whole family, there will be brief introductory slide shows on the Butterflies of DeKorte Park, and tables with information on butterfly identification, binoculars and gardening to attract butterflies – plus contests and great door prizes (rain date Sunday, Aug. 4).

Shining Stars

The NJMC welcomes the season with a “**Summer Solstice Celebration**” on **Thursday, June 20, at 7 p.m.** Dr. John Sloan, Director of the NJMC **William D. McDowell Observatory**, will explain why the solstice is the longest day of sunlight in the year and how cultures around the world celebrate the beginning of summer. The program is in the NJMC Science Center, located next to the observatory.

Following the program, participants are invited to view the night sky at the observatory. Visitors can view heavenly bodies from a research-grade telescope with a 20-inch lens housed within a six-inch, retractable dome. The observatory is also open to the public for free stargazing on **Monday and Wednesday evenings from 9 to 10:30 p.m. in June and July, and 8:30 to 10:30 p.m. in August, weather permitting and excluding holidays.** You must be able to climb 25 stairs to reach the telescope.

“**Let’s Talk Astronomy**” learning sessions are held in the Science Center and feature topical discussions followed by stargazing. Each session costs \$5. Classes are held from **7 to 9 p.m. on the following Tuesdays:**

- **June 18 (Comets, Asteroids and Wildlife)**
- **July 9 (Astronomy in Colonial America)**
- **July 23 (Planets Orbiting Other Stars)**
- **Aug. 6 (Celestial Navigation: How the Skies Steered the Ships)**
- **Aug. 20 (Constellations & Stars of Late Summer – Their Lore and Meaning)**

Local History Comes to Life

Engaging discussions on iconic current and bygone local landmarks and organizations are a yearly Summer Senior Program favorite. Visitors are invited on **Thursday, June 27, at 2p.m.** to a talk on “**The Boys of Bergen - Remembering the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in**

Bergen County.” The CCC was created by President Franklin D. Roosevelt during the Great Depression to provide jobs for young men while helping to conserve the area’s natural resources. Between 1933 and 1941, the CCC boys toiled along the cliffs of the Palisades and in the marshes of the Hackensack Valley. Presenter Kathleen Duxbury is an author, photographer and New Deal researcher.

On **Thursday, July 18, at 7 p.m.**, the focus turns to **Bill Miller’s Riviera: America’s Showplace in Fort Lee**. The famed nightclub featured breathtaking views of the George Washington Bridge from its perch on the Palisades, and its stunning showgirls and secret gambling casino drew the famous and the infamous to its tables.

Frank Sinatra, Mickey Mantle, Sugar Ray Robinson, Ava Gardner and hundreds of other A-listers –along with mobsters like Frank Costello and Meyer Lansky –wined and dined at the Riviera. The showplace closed in the 1950s to make way for the Palisades Interstate Parkway. Join author Tim Austin and relive the days and nights of this amazing place.

Glass bottles, in all their shapes and colors, are as practical as they are beautiful. On **Thursday, July 25, at 7 p.m.**, Chet Nesley, master scuba instructor and avid underwater artifact collector, will present a **History of Glass Bottles**. Nesley will discuss the bottle making industry and how to look for clues to date bottles. Various bottles salvaged from the New Jersey shore will be on display.

On **Tuesday, July 30, at 2 p.m.**, join us for an exploration of **Ellis Island –The Golden Door**. Tom Bernardin, former National Park Service Ellis Island tour guide and author of “The Ellis Island Immigrant Cookbook,” will present a slide-lecture program that tells the story of the millions of immigrants who passed through Ellis Island, including authentic photos of the immigration process and the recently restored facility.

Patriotic Songs and Barn Dancing

Visitors can gear up for July 4 holiday with an Independence Day Concert on **Tuesday, July 2, at 7 p.m.** The North Jersey Concert Band will entertain with a selection of music connected with America’s History. Grab a partner and head down to the NJMC’s River Barge Park in Carlstadt on **Thursday, Aug. 1, at 7 p.m.** for an old-fashioned **Barn Dance**. Caller Ron Kapnick will teach the steps as you socialize like folks did a century ago.

Boat Trips and Bird Walks

Special **pontoon boat cruises** on the Hackensack River are scheduled for **Tuesday, July 9, at 5:30 and 6:30 p.m.** The cruises are a great way to experience the amazing natural beauty and wildlife of the Meadowlands District from a unique, close-up vantage point. MEC guides will discuss the natural and cultural history of the region and point out fauna and flora. Be sure to bring your cameras to take advantage of excellent photo opportunities. On land, Dr. Angela Cristini, Director of the MEC, will discuss the ecology of the Hackensack River. The rain date is Tuesday, July 16.

The pontoon boat cruises leave from River Barge Park in Carlstadt. The cost is \$7 per person and reservations and advance payment are required. The boats cannot accommodate wheelchairs. Regular pontoon boat cruises as well as canoe tours are scheduled from early June to mid-

September and cost \$15 per person. For a full schedule, call 201-460-4640 or visit <http://www.njmeadowlands.gov/environment/tours.html>.

The NJMC and the Bergen County Audubon Society will continue their **two-hour guided bird walks throughout the summer on the first Sunday and third Tuesday of every month at 10 a.m.** at various Meadowlands District locations. The walks are geared toward beginners and experts alike. Bring binoculars, bug spray, sunscreen and a sense of wonder. For more information, visit www.njmeadowlands.gov and click on the “Events” button or call 201-460-2002.

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