

Liberty State Park
(Compiled by Friends of Liberty State Park)

History of grassroots battles against commercialization and privatization plans.

In the years preceding LSP's opening (6/14/76), in the 38 statewide public hearings in the late 1970's, and in many grassroots battles, tens of 1000's of citizens, and Coalitions of local, regional, and statewide organizations overwhelmingly advocated for a free and green, non-commercialized, non-privatized Liberty State Park for people and nature.

Battles after 1984, were against the internal LSP Development Corporation's plans

1. 1977 - Amusement theme park
2. 1981 - Amusement theme park and 8,000 luxury condos
3. 1980-1982 - Historic CRRNJ Terminal plan for a doll museum
4. 1986 - Commercial amphitheater with 25,000 seats.
5. 1991 - 225 acre golf course (plan introduced with no public hearing in 1986).
6. 1992-1995 - 150 acre golf course
7. 2000-2001 - Commercial waterpark
8. Spring 2001 - NJDEP says no to Dev Corp push for commercial amphitheater and 20 commercial concerts. People express opposition to amphitheater plan through Summer. DEP says Dev Corp is free to re-submit plan but there will be public hearings.
9. Fall - Winter 2001 - NJDEP says No to Dev Corp plan for commercial concert series for Summer 2002, including summer weekend concerts. People express opposition. Dev Corp tries to get Acting Gov Donald DiFrancesco to approve it over the head of DEP.

The Termination of the source of commercial plans, the LSP Development Corp.

April 22, 2002 - Dev Corp responded to DEP Com. Brad Campbell's April 3 letter (stating that the Dev Corp's direction doesn't coincide with the mission of LSP).

The Dev Corp declared its intention to push more major commercial proposals:

- Commercial amphitheater (euphemistically called Performing Arts Center) which would have weekend commercial concerts causing unpreventable traffic jams blocking public access to working families, seniors, etc. coming to use park for free uses.

- Fancy strip mall of commercial "venues" between Liberty Science Center & Terminal.

- Commercial attractions under the shed of the CRRNJ Terminal.

April 24, 2003 - The Dev Corp was terminated by Gov. McGreevey after a Coalition letter from 30 organizations, and 5000 postcards were sent. The Dev Corp delayed

park progress, and wasted the public's time fighting their destructive commercial plans.

1988-1996 - Battle against private marina with law suits. The Master Plan included a small public marina. NJDEP sided with the Dev Corp. Two restaurants included.

Spring 2001 – Cirque du Soleil, with OK from Gov (over the head of the DEP). In LSP for 75 days, causing Spring weekend traffic jams, discouraging/blocking public access.

In 2005, Friends of LSP stopped plan for a “Millionaire’s Marina” at LSP’s South End.

2010 – FOLSP opposition to Formula 1 speedway in LSP; within week, Mayor ends plan.

2011 – FOLSP opposes renting LSP land for solar panels where recreation field planned.

2014 - 2016 - The major battle against Governor Christie's and his NJDEP's destructive plans to turn LSP into a commercial venue with privatization plans which would have taken away open space and caused weekend traffic jams. The plans included a luxury hotel in the historic Terminal with its adjacent field becoming a parking lot; longterm leasing of waterfront lawns to a company like Ticketmaster for weekend events, a luxury marina at LSP's south side, amusement park, private indoor sports complex, evicting Camp Liberty, etc. This battle was different from previous major Coalition battles, as there not only was grassroots solidarity with 10,000 park supporters signing a petition, and 40 organizations signing on to a letter to the Governor, and hundreds coming to protests, but there was also a united front with elected officials, especially JC Mayor Fulop, Assemblyman Mukherji, Senator Cunningham, the rest of the Hudson delegation, the JC Council and Freeholders, and other leading NJ legislators such as Sen Weinberg and Sen Sweeney.

http://www.folsp.org/preservation/meadowlands_act.html

Nov. 2, 2017 to June 1, 2018 – Battle against Governor Christie and his NJDEP’s backroom plan, first exposed on 11/2, for Suntex Marinas, parent company of LSP’s northside marina, Liberty Landing Marina, to take over LSP’s non-commercial, urban family, peaceful southside of LSP with 300 yachts and mega-yachts, and also expand on the northside up to the river. On the southside, the marina wanted to take one of the two free parking lots (both are full on summer Sundays and many Saturdays); take parkland including the three popular and historic jetties (part of Black Tom Island saboteurs’ munitions explosion area in World War One) and the 4 acre tree grove lawn to the east of the boat launch parking lot; and destroy panoramic tranquil harbor views, which would be blocked by the 300 yachts and mega-yachts, behind locked gates. Governor Murphy’s NJDEP rejected the plan on June 1. Though the 25 year lease would have eventually required an official public process, Jersey City Mayor Fulop’s Jan. 2 lawsuit got an injunction preventing Gov Christie’s NJDEP from signing the lease with Suntex. There was a united front of strong grassroots opposition and of Hudson elected officials, as during ’14 to ’16.

Dec.2017 - May 2018 -Battle against Liberty National Golf Course, the ultra-luxury golf course adjacent to LSP, which wanted to lease and destroy LSP’s Caven Point Natural Area, a sanctuary for birds, nature education and nature exploration, for 3 relocated golf holes for multi-millionaires. Gov Murphy’s NJDEP rejected the plan on May 5, 2018 after massive opposition. There would’ve been lawsuits to kill any lease for this land bought with state and federal funds.