Come and explore the New Jersey Meadowlands!

The New Jersey Meadowlands Commission is the zoning and regulatory agency for the 30.4-square-mile Meadowlands District, composed of parts of 14 municipalities in Bergen and Hudson counties. Created in 1969, the NJMC has fought to end illegal dumping, encourage appropriate development, and protect the remaining open space and wetlands. The NJMC has helped preserve thousands of acres and had created eight miles of trails and 21 parks in the District, and also conducts bird walks, canoe tours and popular pontoon boat cruises on the Hackensack River.

About the NJMC's nature programming: In collaboration with the Bergen County Audubon Society, the NJMC offers free twice monthly bird walks as well as other nature walks and additional special events. For the schedule click the "Events" button at njmeadowlands.gov.

The Meadowlands Experience

Tide Specifics and Keep

About the NJMC's Nature Blog: The Meadowlands Nature Blog – meadowblog.net – helps the public keep up with events and nature news in the region, featuring daily updates and great photography.

The Meadowlands Environment Center

Meadowlands Environment Center
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Experience it all...

in the

Meadowlands

The New Jersey Meadowlands Commission Offers:

- Pontoon boat cruises and guided canoe tours
- Children's programs, including our annual Halloween Party and Spooky Walk
- School science programs that meet NJ core curriculum standards
- Guided birding walks, talks and bird-bandning demonstrations
- The Flyway Gallery, featuring local environmental artists
- Meadowlands Environment Center's interactive educational displays
- Thousands of acres preserved, eight miles of trails, 21 area parks
- Millions invested in major floodplain management projects
- Environmental remediation and enhancement projects
- Films, book talks, concerts and other public events
- Grants, professional help and other direct municipal assistance to help offset property taxes
- Scientific research through MERI, the Meadowlands Environmental Research Institute
- MERI Science Library, open to the public
- Free trail guides, birding books and other pamphlets
- Green building guides, assistance and existing examples
- Public viewing nights and astronomy classes at the William D. McDowell Observatory

Black Skimmer

Black-crowned Night Heron

Great Egret

Great Blue Heron

Ruddy Turnstone

Green Heron

South of the park is the Secaucus Wetlands Enhancement Site, where an elevated boardwalk provides students from nearby Secaucus High School and other visitors a unique view of a restored urban wetland. At the opposite end of the marsh is the Mill Creek Marsh Trail, where you can see

the remains of Atlantic White Cedar trees that once forested the Meadowlands.

More than 270 bird species have been reported in the Meadowlands, making this a major stop along the Atlantic Flyway. Within the Mill Creek Marsh, Green-winged Teal frequently congregate in open water and use phragmites as a barrier from cold winter winds. The return of spring is heralded by Tree Swallows seeking homes in nest boxes built by the NJMC and volunteer groups. In the summer, Double-crested Cormorants perch atop the remains of docks and old tide gates. Herons, egrets and terns feed along shorelines, and Black-crowned Night Herons, a threatened species in New Jersey, nest in the taller trees. You can also find Fiddler Crabs digging in the mud along the riverbank and Diamond-back Terrapins soaking up sun in the shallows. Above the waterline, Muskrats tunnel through the reeds and build huts on the banks. In the background, you can hear the muted rush of traffic on the eastern spur of the New Jersey Turnpike. That sound and the view of the New York City skyline in the background provide a striking contrast between the area's human development and its preserved open space.

Be advised, the tide will impact what you see -- and where you can go -- in the Mill Creek Marsh. At low tide broad mudflats are exposed, providing great looks at wildlife, at high tide you can explore more of the marsh's waterways. See information at right for tide specifics and keep an eye on the time when you are paddling to avoid becoming stranded on a mudflat.

NOTE: High and low tides occur roughly six hours apart. For daily tide information visit www.saltwatertides.com and click on “tides” and then “New Jersey.” Scroll down to Hackensack River and check “North Secaucus, Garretts Reach;” then jump to the bottom and enter the date and time you plan to travel.
Mill Creek Point Canoe Trail

Mill Creek Point Park Once the site of a sawmill and more recently a restaurant called Tony's Old Mill, the land is now a public park with a launch for canoes and kayaks, and areas for viewing wildlife and for catch-and-release fishing. 74°23′25″W  40°48′10″N

Hackensack River

Mill Creek

Canoe Launch

New York City

A spur of the New Jersey Turnpike, between Exits 16W and 18W, rises over the eastern side of the marsh. Five miles in the distance, the Empire State Building and Midtown Manhattan skyline can be seen. 74°28′18″W  40°46′58″N

Mill Creek Point Canoe Trail

Harmon Meadow Plaza A number of commercial buildings can be seen to the south of the marsh, including hotels, restaurants, retail stores, and the Meadowlands Convention Center, demonstrating the close proximity in which man and nature coexist in the Meadowlands. 74°23′6″W  40°47′54″N

Spartina Alterniflora

On the eastern section of the marsh, note the proliferation of the saltwater-loving grass called spartina alterniflora. This grass is a superb example of adaptation, since it survives by excreting salts from special glands in its leaves. 74°23′04″W  40°46′56″N

Phragmites

The western shore of the marsh is dominated by phragmites australis, also called the "common reed" or "phrag." This species derives its name from the Greek word for "fence," and spreads as much as 30 feet each year by ground-level roots called rhizomes. Phrag can grow up to 15 feet tall. 74°23′46″W  40°47′35″N

Phragmites Marsh

NJMC Native Replanting

As part of wetlands enhancement activities beginning in 1998, the NJMC helped to increase the number of bird and wildlife species visiting and breeding in the Mill Creek Marsh by creating upland areas and open water channels. The NJMC also replanted native vegetation like spartina alterniflora, sumac, groundsel tree, hibiscus, marsh elder, and cedar trees. Thousands of Green-winged Teal – the area’s smallest waterfowl – can now be seen in the marsh each winter. 74°46′35″W  40°47′53″N

Spartina Marsh

Mill Creek Marsh Trail The marsh ends near a walking trail, accessible by a muddy journey out of the water, or by dry trail from behind the Mill Creek Mill. Several wooden footbridges on the trail allow a view of the remains of colonial-era Atlantic White Cedar forests. In the mid-1700s, many of these 90-foot tall trees were burned to eliminate hiding places for pirates and bandits, according to legend. Early settlers also used the decay-resistant wood to construct canoes, barrels, furniture, homes and roads, like Paterson Plank Road, a 15-mile wooden road that once stretched from Paterson to Hoboken. The forests were completely lost when the Oradell Dam was constructed, blocking the Hackensack River’s flow and allowing for an influx of salt water from the Newark Bay. Today, only the stumps of the cedar trees remain. 74°3′78″W  40°47′56″N

Residential Homes

A number of Secaucus residents live along the Mill Creek Marsh and the Hackensack River. Many construct porches and docks to enjoy the recreational opportunities the creek provides. 74°23′36″W  40°47′52″N

Secaucus Municipal Utilities Authority

The Authority is responsible for the treatment of much of the wastewater generated within the Town of Secaucus. 74°23′10″W  40°47′54″N

Tide Gate In the early 1900s, the Hudson County Mosquito Extermination Committee was formed out of fears that mosquitoes would spread malaria to populated areas. Dikes, ditches and tide gates were built throughout the Meadowlands in an attempt to dry out the marshes and eradicate the insects. Approximately 18,000 acres of marsh was drained in the region during this time. 74°27′46″W  40°48′58″N

Osprey Nesting Platform

NJ Turnpike Eastern Spur

Reed平板

North Impoundment

Habitat Island

Mill Creek Marsh Trail

NJMC Web sites:

Our home page: njmeadowlands.gov
Our research arm: mcp.njmeadowlands.gov
Our nature blog: meadowblog.net
Our history blog: meadowpast.net

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