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New Day Dawns for Wreck Pond with Completion of New Ocean Inlet

Monday, Nov. 21 will mark the start of something new for Spring Lake, NJ's Wreck Pond. On that day federal, state and local officials will join the American Littoral Society to recognize completion of a new inlet from the ocean to the pond that will help restore life to the coastal lake while alleviating flooding problems in nearby towns.

The event will be recognized with a press conference at 10 a.m. on the boardwalk at the corner of Brown and Ocean avenues in Spring Lake, NJ.

"This project combines restoration of an important coastal environment with reducing the vulnerability of the local communities to future hazards," said Tim Dillingham, Executive Director of the American Littoral Society. "It successfully demonstrates how restoring the coastal environment can help the shore bounce back from storms while improving daily life for people and animals in the surrounding area."

The \$7.4 million restoration project began in July 2015 as a collaborative effort to solve problems that have plagued the pond and surrounding communities for decades. The project's cornerstone is a 600-foot-long fish passage that restores tidal flows between the ocean and the 73-acre pond. The improved flow should decrease flooding around the pond, improve water quality, and bring life back to the Wreck Pond watershed.

"This project exemplifies Governor Christie's commitment to making New Jersey stronger and safer following the devastation from Superstorm Sandy," said Bob Martin, Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of

Environmental Protection. "This culvert, in concert with ongoing ecological enhancements, will work with nature to protect hundreds of properties in Spring Lake, Spring Lake Heights and Sea Girt from flooding that causes huge financial strain and disruption of lives."

The Littoral Society administered construction of the fish passage, which was funded by U.S. Department of Interior through a \$2.2 million grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Additional funding for the Wreck Pond project came from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, as part of the Flood Hazard Risk Reduction and Resiliency grant program, and the Borough of Spring Lake.

"The Wreck Pond project is a critical for fish and wildlife in Monmouth County," said Eric Schrading, Field Supervisor for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service field office in New Jersey. "The work will not only improve water quality, but will provide important migratory fish passage to the Wreck Pond watershed. This project was only possible through the tremendous collaboration of local, State, and Federal partners and the important work by the American Littoral Society. It will be really special to see a successful run of river herring in Wreck Pond as a result of this project."

Wreck Pond's natural inlet was filled in during the 1930s and replaced with a pipe that restricted the natural flow of water into and out of the pond. Run-off from roads and bird droppings became trapped in the pond, creating high bacterial levels that would often force the closure of nearby beaches. The pipe and resulting pollution also discouraged migratory fish from using the pond as a breeding ground.

The new passage - made up of a series of 5-foot-high by 8-foot-wide interconnected concrete boxes supported by pilings driven into the sand - is designed to effectively act as an inlet that can be managed through the operation of a gate during severe weather events. The gate can be closed at low tide in anticipation of heavy rainfall, creating more storage capacity for stormwater. When storm surge is predicted to be the primary weather threat, the gate can be closed to prevent the ocean from inundating the lake.

At all other times, water in the culvert will rise and fall with tide cycles, improving water quality by allowing daily flushing of pollution that causes algal blooms, degrades water quality, and harms fish and other aquatic life. This natural flow will also allow fish such as herring and eel to enter the pond and get to spawning areas.

While completion of the fish passage is a significant milestone, work won't end on Wreck Pond and the surrounding watershed. A sand berm will be constructed in the spring to provide added protection against flooding while maximizing stormwater storage capacity. The berm will be planted with native vegetation that will create wildlife habitat and stabilize it against erosion.

American Littoral Society staff, with the help of students from Monmouth University and citizen scientists, will also continue to monitor water quality and

life in the pond and its watershed. The coastal lake is fed by a stream network that branches into the Monmouth County communities of Wall Township, Spring Lake, Spring Lake Heights, and Sea Girt.

Event photos and video available upon request.

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The American Littoral Society is a member-supported, coastal conservation non-profit that promotes the study and conservation of marine life and habitat, protects the coast from harm and engages communities to do the same through work in education, advocacy, and conservation. Founded in 1961, the American Littoral Society has regional offices in New Jersey, New York and Florida. For more information, visit www.LittoralSociety.org.