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State of New Jersey
Department of Environmental Protection, Natural & Historic Resources
Office of Leases & Concessions, Mail Code 501-04C
PO Box 420
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0420

To Whom it May Concern:

I'm writing to express my support for the "Friends" to take on management for the New Jersey School of Conservation (NJSOC). I was a Montclair State University Faculty member at the NJSOC for 14 years . In addition, I have continued to volunteer for them since Montclair State University's divestment from the NJSOC.

In the 14 years that I worked at the NJSOC, I took on multiple roles and saw the impact the environmental education programs had on the students who came there. The environmental educator position was the most rewarding in being able to see the children have first-hand experiences in exploring our natural world. From holding a salamander for the first time to pushing themselves to climb a 20 foot climbing tower, seeing the growth in a child from the start of their trip to the end was immeasurable.

Additionally, we were host to graduate students and AmeriCorps staff who we would sometimes learn from as much as we taught them to be better educators. The research projects conducted there by our graduate students served as a foundation to show our visiting school groups that not only can it be fun to explore our environment but that research can lead to environmental management practices to help protect it. This followed the overall mission to "instill an environmental ethic through research and education." The NJSOC should be open to everyone who wishes to come and respectfully explore this pristine place, not just one university or institution.

The Friends' desire to take on the management of the NJSOC cannot be underestimated. They want a facility for **everyone** and have the drive and determination to make that happen . They have an amazing following of supporters and volunteers accomplishing more, during a pandemic, than most places have in a lifetime. The collaborations with other organizations and institutions that they have made over the last couple of years show they have a sustainable model for the future of NJSOC, one that the previous manager was unable to provide.

I strongly request that you grant management rights to The Friends of the New Jersey School of Conservation. Not to, would be a disservice to this historical facility that has already provided so much to the New Jersey community.. The Friends have the ability to create a facility that is managed with passion and dedication that will endure the tests of time.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Correa-Kruegel

Formerly, Educator/Researcher at NJ School of Conservation

Currently, Community Service Aide for Warren County Department of Land Preservation