



State of New Jersey
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
FISH AND WILDLIFE
OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER

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PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor

SHEILA Y. OLIVER
Lt. Governor

SHAWN M. LATOURETTE
Commissioner

Kerry Kirk Pflugh,
President
Friends of NJSOC
PO Box 358
Brick, NJ 08723

March 4, 2022

Dear Kerry:

I am writing to express full support of the Friends of NJSOC's bid to assume the management and care of the New Jersey School of Conservation.

New Jersey Fish & Wildlife has a great need for places and open spaces like NJSOC statewide. The site so easily meets all our requirements when offering environmental and fishing education programs, such as a healthy lake, sprawling trails, access to both terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, complete with indoor and outdoor educational space with the potential for overnight lodging. No where can you find a place like this in New Jersey that also has a long history of environmental education excellence.

New Jersey Fish & Wildlife has been partnering with the Friends of NJSOC for over a year. By partnering with them, the site has fast become a home for our annual Youth Fishing Challenge (YFC), a one day event that invites youth with their families out for a day of fishing and healthy competition. We also decided that -via the the Friend's group- our *Sistas Afield* inaugural voyage should be at SOC because SOC is now a safe and structured place to nurture women with their children in fishing and shooting sports. Broadly, where Montclair State University dropped the ball on maintaining infrastructure and programming as stewards of the site for eons, the Friend's group has done their best in a short period of time to revamp and remake the location into a desirable destination. More mending of some of the buildings notwithstanding, I have complete faith that the direction the Friends group is going to revitalize SOC is exactly what it needs, and I affirm that I will be there with boots-on-the-ground to help them.

In summary, partnering with the Friends of NJSOC over the last year by offering a variety of one-day hands-on events, we have proof that the Friends Group is THE BEST FIT for continuing the goal of being a destination for quality environmental education programming. And we wait patiently with enthusiasm the time when they can offer overnight opportunities as well.

Should you have questions for me, I can be reached at 609-947-4302.

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PS: As a 1998 graduate of the New Jersey School of Conservation, I lived the SOC Experience under Dr. Kirk and look forward to its rebirth!!!

Respectfully yours;

Liz Jackson, Senior Biologist Education

Liz Jackson

