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June 18, 2004

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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to Continue
Study of Hackensack Meadowlands
Funds Will Help Determine Best Ways to Clean-up and Turn the 8,400 Undeveloped
Meadowlands Acres into Congressman's Vision for an Environmental Park

Washington, DC - Continuing his efforts to turn the 8,400 undeveloped acres of the Hackensack Meadowlands into an environmental park, Congressman Steve Rothman (D-Fair Lawn) tonight got the U.S. House of Representatives to approve \$180,000 for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to continue its work on a joint federal-state study of how to remediate those 8,400 acres in the Hackensack Meadowlands. Rothman used his position on the House Appropriations Committee to secure the funds, which are part of the Interior Appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2005. The bill still needs to go through some more legislative steps before the funds become official, but getting the House to approve the funds today is considered a very significant and critical step.

"Creating the Meadowlands Environmental Park will give New Jerseyans a tranquil place to escape from all the hustle and bustle of daily life," Rothman said. "At the same time we move forward in our efforts to establish the Meadowlands Environmental Park with these new funds, we are also sparing local taxpayers from the expense of having to pay for the full cost of the study and remediation."

The \$180,000 in federal funds will be used for the New Jersey Field Office of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to continue its work assisting the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission (NJMC) on its study of the 8,400 acres of the Hackensack Meadowlands that will ultimately result in the creation of an environmental park. The study, which Rothman originally got Congress to authorize in 2001, is expected to be completed by the middle of 2005.

Over the past several years, Rothman has secured \$4.2 million for land acquisition in the Meadowlands, which the NJMC

has matched for a total of \$8.4 million. Additionally, Rothman has secured \$1 million for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to conduct the study and he has secured a total of \$370,000 in previous years for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to serve as environmental consultant to the Army Corps. Rothman has also brought home \$500,000 in federal funds for remediation of the 8,400 acres.

"Having the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service serve as an environmental counselor to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission on how best to create the Meadowlands Environmental Park will ensure that all of the natural habitats for birds, fish, and other wildlife in these 8,400 acres are properly safeguarded," Rothman said. "I am very pleased that my colleagues in the House continue to support my efforts to create the Meadowlands Environmental Park and have once again approved federal funds to make this dream of ours a reality."

Rothman, a lifelong resident of Bergen County, has made the preservation of the 8,400 undeveloped acres of the Hackensack Meadowlands -- less than half a mile from the Arena/Giants Stadium property and ten times the size of New York City's Central Park -- a top priority. He has led the effort to spare the presently undeveloped wetlands, landfills, and toxic sites from development with the intention of cleaning them up, revitalizing them, and turning them into an environmental park with opportunities for canoe trips, nature walks, bird watching, other recreational activities, and an environmental education center for children.

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