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Parks Commissioner Nick Fish Announces New Initiatives for Forest Park - Printable Version

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Parks Commissioner Nick Fish Announces New Initiatives for Forest Park

(Portland, OR) – Portland City Commissioner Nick Fish today announced five management initiatives that will address ecological and recreational concerns about Forest Park, the city's largest natural area, with over 5,000 acres of Douglas fir, hemlock, and cedar.

The actions focus on park management, recreation use, and stewardship. These include a recreation user survey, a desired future condition report, and the addition of a dedicated park ranger for enforcement. "Portlanders are rightly concerned about the future of Forest Park," notes Commissioner Fish. "Today we are announcing important steps that we are taking to address how the park is managed now and in the future."

Commissioner Fish and Portland Parks and Recreation (PP&R) Director Zari Santner recognize the risks to the park and acknowledge there is a tremendous amount of work still to be done in order to preserve and improve the park's natural habitat and address the funding and recreation pressures noted by the Portland City Club's Forest Park Study Committee and the Single Track Advisory Committee.

"Meeting growing recreational demands while addressing ongoing ecological threats is our greatest challenge," adds Director Santner.

Commissioner Fish has directed PP&R to complete the following five initiatives by September 2010:

- Finalize a Partnership Agreement with the Forest Park Conservancy.
- Deliver the final Forest Park Desired Future Conditions report.
- Hire and assign a full-time Park Ranger to Forest Park.
- Complete the Forest Park Recreation Survey.
- Recruit a City Club Forest Park Research Committee member to participate on the 2011/12 PP&R Budget Advisory Committee.

The Forest Park Conservancy is a tireless advocate for the park and provides thousands of hours of volunteer labor. This agreement clearly defines the legal relationship between PP&R and the Conservancy, streamlines the development of the yearly work plan and clarifies the roles of the two organizations in ongoing advocacy efforts.

Desired Future Conditions

A critical aspect of the 1995 Forest Park Natural Resources Management Plan, the DFC will provide targets for ecological conditions that will be used to build yearly work plans and long-term action plans.

Security and Safety

Portlanders are calling for more management and enforcement of park rules. Issues with camping, off-leash dogs, illegal trails, and other activities require the attention of a full-time staff member with enforcement capability. A new Park Ranger will be dedicated to Forest Park.

Recreation Survey

PP&R will work with Portland State University's Survey Research Lab to complete a Forest Park recreational survey. The survey will provide objective data about use within the park to help the bureau better manage the increasing recreational demands on the park with baseline data on the intensity of use, preferences, quality of existing park features, and demographics of typical park users.

Budget Planning and Funding Sources

The City Club, as a whole, voted to support the Forest Park Study Committee report and establish an advocacy committee. To help inform their advocacy work, the Commissioner will recruit a Study Committee member for the 2011/12 PP&R budget advisory committee, which will be formed in September.

Commissioner Fish and Director Santner repeated the need for additional funding sources for Forest Park. Fish added, "We support the call for a dedicated source of regional funding to care for Forest Park. However, while we are working on the long-term strategy I will continue to offer new initiatives that engage public and private partners to care for Forest Park today."