



PORTLAND PARKS & RECREATION

Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland

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Parks Commissioner Nick Fish and Portland Parks & Recreation Director Zari Santner announce Forest Park actions

Announcement includes commitment to investing in vital natural area, while expanding off-road cycling access in parks throughout city

(Portland, OR) – In response to recommendations received from the Forest Park Single Track Advisory Committee, Parks Commissioner Nick Fish and Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R) Director Zari Santner today released a series of actions relating to both Forest Park and off-road cycling in Portland.

Forest Park is the crown jewel of the City's Parks system, offering over 70 miles of trails – including 28 miles of unimproved roads and fire lanes currently open to cyclists. In August 2009, Fish and Santner charged the Single Track Cycling Committee with exploring how to expand access to single track cycling in Forest Park, while also protecting the ecological health of this unique natural area.

“We have spent considerable time reviewing the recommendations of the committee, whose work has been invaluable in examining some very important needs and issues,” noted Commissioner Fish. “The decisions we reached are based upon what we agreed is best for Portland's largest natural area.”

Forest Park Actions

Further restoration and maintenance work is needed in the park before recreational use can be expanded. The decision was reached to move forward with several committee suggestions within the next year, including:

- The design and implementation of a new vegetation monitoring program
- Development of a new outreach and education plan to increase knowledge of trail etiquette and safety

Within the next two years PP&R will:

- Expand the Recreation User Study
- Secure funding to develop, implement and complete a wildlife study
- Work with partners to improve one to two fire lanes or utility corridors that are currently open to cyclists
- Proceed with permitting applications for additional trail recommendations based on the outcome of completed studies

“We recognize that off-road cycling is a popular recreational sport.” added Commissioner Fish. “People who enjoy singletrack riding also care about the environment and are committed to being good stewards of our natural areas.”

The bureau will work with partners to improve the cycling experience on existing fire lanes, including adding switchbacks, re-greening the lanes, and enhancing existing loops.

These actions follow on Commissioner Fish’s recent announcement of the successful completion of the five management initiatives for Forest Park which he announced this past June. These specific actions, which focused on park management, recreation use, and stewardship, included a recreation user survey, a desired future condition report, and the addition of a dedicated park ranger for enforcement.

Off-road Cycling Opportunities

In addition, Commissioner Fish and Director Santner expressed a commitment to expanding off-road cycling access throughout the Portland metropolitan area:

- With the support of Mayor Sam Adams, PP&R will take the lead role in managing Gateway Green and prioritizing singletrack cycling in this new park
- PP&R will work in partnership with the NW Trail Alliance to construct two new temporary skills parks
- With the support of Commissioner Leonard, PP&R and the Water Bureau will improve the recreational experience for pedestrians, equestrians, and bikers, while also increasing natural area protections at Powell Butte Natural Area
- The City will continue to work with Metro and Intertwine partners to provide more single track cycling opportunities in the Portland region

[Further information and documentation on Forest Park, the Forest Park Single Track Advisory Committee, and expanded off-road cycling opportunities in Portland’s parks can be found online at portlandparks.org]

Forest Park Single Track Advisory Committee

The 15-member committee, formed by Commissioner Fish in August 2009, is comprised of a broad representation of stakeholders, from ecologists to cyclists, from runners to neighbors of the park. Using the Forest Park Natural Resources Management Plan, the committee members had two goals – to develop a common language for single track and trail development, and to set a goal for short-term single track cycling opportunities in the park.

In July 2010, after nine months of research and discussions, the committee presented their recommendations on trail and management options to Commissioner Fish and Director Santner.

About Forest Park

Forest Park is an unparalleled natural resource; an oasis for plants, wildlife, and the urban explorer. Unique in the nation, Forest Park is the largest natural area within a city and provides a place for quiet reflection, passive recreation, environmental research, and educational discovery. With over 5,000 acres of undeveloped natural area, Forest Park is home to over 100 species of native birds and more than 50 mammals. The park includes Special Status Habitats, such as Interior Forest and Oak Woodlands (designated in the City of Portland Terrestrial Ecology Enhancement Strategy), and has documented flora and fauna that are unique within an urban setting.

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