



Commissioner Nick Fish
City of Portland

September 30, 2010

Dear Forest Park Single Track Cycling Committee Members:

A year ago, we asked each of you to work together to provide us with a set of trail options and management recommendations for single track cycling in Forest Park. We appreciate the time and commitment you have made for this work.

Forest Park is the crown jewel of our Parks system, offering over 70 miles of trails – including 28 miles of unimproved roads and fire lanes currently open to cyclists. We asked you to explore how we might provide access to single track cycling in Forest Park, while also protecting the ecological health of this unique natural area.

This process has been open, transparent, and democratic. We had community members representing a diversity of groups and interests: neighbors, cyclists, walkers, Forest Park Conservancy, Audubon, biologists, and general park users.

Meeting minutes and resources were posted on the project website throughout the process and we had very high attendance at our open house event. We received over 1,000 responses to our survey, in addition to dozens of phone calls and letters.

Thanks to each of you for providing important perspectives and contributing to the thoughtful recommendations issued in June. Over the course of the summer, we reviewed your recommendations and explored options for moving forward.

From the beginning we have been clear that recreational opportunities in the park go hand in hand with additional management actions. In response to your recommendations, and the City Club's May 2010 "Forest Park: A Call to Action" report, we took immediate actions to improve our stewardship of Forest Park by completing the Recreation User Survey, the Desired Future Conditions report, and a new Partnership Agreement with the Forest Park Conservancy. We also created a new dedicated Park Ranger position for increased enforcement and appointed a City Club Study member to serve on our Budget Advisory Committee.

With the completion of these immediate management actions, we are pleased to announce the next series of longer-term commitments that will strengthen our ability to maintain and enhance Forest Park.

Within the next year we will design and implement a new vegetation monitoring program and a new outreach and education plan to increase knowledge of trail etiquette and safety. And within the next two years, we will secure funding to complete a Wildlife Study and expand the Recreation User Study.

We will continue to work closely with the Forest Park Conservancy and other conservation partners to fulfill the management needs highlighted by your committee and outlined within the Forest Park Natural Resources Management Plan.

In response to your recommendations regarding trail options, we have concluded that Forest Park is not ready for expanded access. However, with partners like NW Trail Alliance and the International Mountain Biking Association, we will move forward with improving one to two fire lanes or utility corridors that are currently open to cyclists. Improvements may include adding switchbacks, re-greening the lanes, and enhancing existing loops.

Based on the outcome of the completed studies we will proceed with permitting applications for additional trail recommendations.

Beyond Forest Park, we are working to expand off-road cycling access throughout the Portland metropolitan area. With the support of Mayor Sam Adams, PP&R has agreed to take the lead role in managing Gateway Green and prioritizing the development of singletrack at this new park. We are also working in partnership with the NW Trail Alliance to construct two temporary skills parks.

With the support of Commissioner Leonard, PP&R and the Water Bureau will enhance recreational opportunities for pedestrians, equestrians, and bikers while increasing environmental protections at Powell Butte Natural Area. And we will continue to work closely with Metro and Intertwine partners to provide more singletrack cycling in the Portland region.

We recognize that off-road cycling is a popular recreational sport. People who enjoy singletrack riding also care about the environment and are committed to being good stewards of our natural areas. Although Forest Park is not ready to support increased access at this time, we will continue to pursue opportunities to create sustainable singletrack trails in Portland.

Thank you for serving on the Forest Park Singletrack Cycling Advisory Committee. We sincerely appreciate the time you have devoted to enhancing our Parks system.

Sincerely,



Nick Fish
Parks Commissioner



Zari Santner
Director, Portland Parks and Recreation