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An OPB Original Production

Forest Park: Portland's Backyard Gem OREGON FIELD GUIDE on October 14

Oregon Field Guide devotes a half-hour special to explore the health, history and future of Portland's Forest Park. Five thousand acres of forest sit five minutes from urban downtown, protected from development but facing increasing pressure from more people who want to use it.

Every generation seems to fight over how best to use and protect the Park. Lately, cyclists have pushed hard for new trails in the park dedicated to mountain biking. It was in the midst of shooting video for this production when OPB encountered mountain bikers working on an illegal trail. Watch as the bikers claim their work on the rogue trail actually helps the environment. Then join other cyclists who go in to repair both the damage done to the park and to the cycling community's reputation.

The rogue trail made as much news this year as did a rogue ditch did in 1906 when a conniving former congressman stole water from Balch Creek. The history of Forest Park follows a long trail of cunning, failed dreams and ultimately, great vision. In an odd twist, the park might not exist if it were not for landslides and un-paid taxes. Early documents reveal the important role played by a previously uncredited early Portlander – a man who might just be responsible for dropping the idea of the park into the ear of the most influential person possible.

After avoiding mass developments of thousands of homes, large scale timber cutting and even attempts to drill for oil, Forest Park was officially set aside nearly half a century after the first push to preserve the land.

Today the park faces great challenges. Its health is in jeopardy from large invasions of non-native plants, a lack of funds from the city and a rash of young trees dying prematurely.

Tune in to the stations of Oregon Public Broadcasting on Thursday, October 14 at 8:30pm (and Sunday, October 21 at 1:30am and 6:30pm) and explore the gem in Portland's backyard.

Videos of the stories featured on FIELD GUIDE are available at opb.org/programs/ofg/ or watch entire programs at watch.opb.org.

About OREGON FIELD GUIDE

In its 22nd season, OREGON FIELD GUIDE remains a valuable source of information about outdoor recreation, ecological issues, natural resources and travel destinations. OREGON FIELD GUIDE airs Thursday evenings at 8:30pm on the television stations of Oregon Public Broadcasting and repeats on Sundays at 1:30am and 6:30pm. In the Mountain Time zone of Eastern Oregon, the program airs at 9:30pm Thursdays, and at 7:30pm Sundays.

About OPB

OPB is the largest cultural and education institution in the region, delivering excellence in public broadcasting to 1.5 million people each week through television, radio and the Internet. Widely recognized as a national leader in the public broadcasting arena, OPB is a major contributor to the program schedule that serves the entire country. OPB is one of the most-used and most-supported public broadcasting services in the country and is generously supported by 120,000 contributors.