Dear Commissioner Fish:

On Wednesday 09/21/11, during our daily walk on Leif Ericson Drive, [my wife] and I had the pleasure of meeting and chatting with three Forest Park volunteers. I'm writing to let you know how delighted we are by what we learned from them.

We understand that they are pioneers in Ranger Bob McCoy's program in which trained volunteers will be a frequent personal presence in Forest Park. They explained to us that their work will include educating Park users about practices that contribute to Park health and safety; that prevent harm to people, animals, trails, and off-trail areas; and that enhance the value and visibility of Forest Park as a Portland treasure. Their initial focus will be on helping people understand the importance of complying with the city code requirement that dogs be leashed at all times, and the reasons for that requirement: unleashed dogs can damage the park environment; disrupt nesting, breeding, and feeding areas and patterns of native animals; disseminate seeds of invasive plants; spread infection caused by bacteria and parasites in dog waste that is not collected properly; create fear and anxiety in Park users; cause physical harm to the Park and its human visitors; and interact with other dogs in ways that result in injury to themselves and other dogs.

As I've let you know in the past, I appreciate your ongoing commitment to "Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland." I'm especially grateful, as are others with whom I've discussed this matter, for your decision to hire and assign a full-time Park Ranger to Forest Park, one of the five "New Initiatives for Forest Park" announced in your June 17, 2010 news release. Welcome, too, of course, is the "Forest Park Watch" program about which you wrote to me on March 18, 2011, and about which I am writing to thank you today.

This volunteer program is of great value to all of us. Let's keep working together to make our world a better, safer, and healthier place, one interaction at a time.

Warmly,

Herman

Herman M. Frankel, M.D.