



**Commissioner Nick Fish**  
City of Portland

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **City Commissioner Fish Appoints Mike Abbaté as Director of Portland Parks & Recreation**

City Commissioner Nick Fish announced today the appointment of Mike Abbaté as Director of Portland Parks & Recreation.

"I am delighted to have Mike Abbaté assume leadership of Portland Parks & Recreation," said Commissioner Fish. "He brings a unique combination of experience and talent to my team."

Abbaté's appointment follows a national recruitment to fill the position. Commissioner Fish and his team worked with bureau employees, Parks Board members, representatives from "Friends" and partner organizations, community members, and City colleagues throughout the process to develop the recruitment materials, review applications, and interview candidates.

"We were looking for someone with demonstrated skills in a number of areas: leadership, strategic thinking, diversity and equity, relationships, communication, management of people, operational management and innovation, and strong political acumen," said Fish. "Mike's passion for this work and his breadth of experience consistently impressed those who participated in the selection process."

Since March this year, Abbaté has served as Asset Manager for Portland Parks and Recreation, overseeing 100 employees responsible for Parks Planning, Parks Design & Construction, and Parks Central Services.

Previously, as Urban Design & Planning Director with the City of Gresham, he developed a Design Excellence initiative, persuading the Mayor and Council to establish a new citizen-led Design Commission and enact new design standards. During his tenure, he also led Gresham's "Our Parks, Our Future" initiative to develop sustainable funding strategies for its park system.

Abbaté has twenty-five years' experience in the planning and design of outstanding public parks and recreational facilities, including Tanner Springs Park and Hood River Waterfront Park.

In addition to his public sector experience, Abbaté also co-founded and grew GreenWorks, an award-winning landscape architecture and environmental design business, recognized for its sustainable business practices and excellent design.

Abbaté served four years with the Navy, then began his civilian career as a landscape architect with private firms in Portland. While serving as a landscape architect with a local branch of the USDA Forest Service, he helped design interpretive, environmental education and recreational facilities at Multnomah Falls, Mount St Helens, Columbia River Gorge and Mount Hood. He also helped plan a new National Park in Central African Republic with a focus on rainforest protection and helping indigenous peoples develop an eco-tourism economy.

Abbaté holds a bachelor's degree in Landscape Architecture and a Certificate in Business Administration.

"It's a great honor to be chosen to be the next Director of Portland Parks & Recreation. I look forward to working with Commissioner Fish and a great team of committed employees at the bureau to meet the needs of all Portlanders," said Abbaté.

"Portland has a world-class system of parks, natural areas and recreational facilities and programs," Abbaté noted. "For over 120 years, these have been treasured by Portlanders and are key to our community's livability. I am honored and excited to build on this great public support, leading PP&R to become more inclusive and transparent, and continuing the tradition of design excellence in Portland's Parks."

Abbaté will assume his new duties on Monday, October 17, 2011.

### Portland Parks & Recreation

Portland Parks & Recreation manages almost 11,000 acres of property, comprised of natural areas, developed community and neighborhood parks, and urban plazas. Recreational, educational, athletic, cultural and social activities are available at over 200 locations throughout the city. The bureau has 445 full-time employees and over 1500 part-time and seasonal employees. The annual operating and capital budget is approximately \$80 million.

Former Parks Director Zari Santner retired from the bureau earlier this year after almost three decades of service, and eight years as Director. Prior to her departure, Portland Parks & Recreation was chosen as one of four finalists for the prestigious National Gold Medal Award of Excellence presented by the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration and the National Recreation and Park Association. The winner will be announced later this month.