

RESOLUTION NO. 3617

A RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING
A MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR
"FOREST PARK"

FINDINGS:

1. With Ordinance No. 2046, the Newport City Council designated 95.86 acres of City owned land south of Anderson Creek and east of Big Creek Road as a "Forest Park;" and
2. In so designating the property the Council desires that a strategy be put in place to provide city staff and the public with guidance for how the property should be managed; and
3. Such a strategy was developed by city staff, with assistance from the Oregon Coast Community Forest Association, and vetted with the Newport Planning Commission and Newport Parks and Recreation Committee; and
4. The strategy, dated November 5, 2012 and enclosed as Exhibit "A," contains specific information about the condition of Forest Park and preferred management practices as they relate to recreation and educational opportunities, public infrastructure, forest stewardship; and property maintenance; and
5. Information contained in the strategy clarifies what it means for the area to be designated as a Forest Park, achieves the Council's objective of providing clear guidance for how the property should be managed, and provides policy direction that can be used to support future grant applications to obtain funding to enhance the property; and
6. The City's existing 1993 Park System Master Plan does not provide details for how this property should be managed and developed, which this strategy serves to address until such time as the Park System Master Plan is updated.

THE CITY OF NEWPORT RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. City of Newport staff, its contractors, or members of the public who are engaged in the maintenance or development of Forest Park shall adhere to the management strategies outlined in Exhibit "A."

Section 2. This resolution shall take effect 30 days after passage.



Mark McConnell, Mayor

ATTEST:


Margaret M. Hawker, City Recorder

City of Newport Management Strategy for Forest Park

November 5, 2012

1. PURPOSE

This Management Strategy provides specific information about the condition of Forest Park and desired management practices that, if accepted by the Newport City Council, serve to supplement existing City policies that set forth expectations for maintenance and future development of the property.

2. PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

Forest Park includes City owned land south of Anderson Creek and east of Big Creek road within Tax Lot 2100, Section 32DD, T10S, R11W; Tax Lot 600, Section 33, T10S, R11W; Tax Lot 400, Section 5, T11S, R11W; and Tax Lot 200, Section 5DA, T11S, R11W. The property is approximately 95.86 acres in size and is graphically depicted on the map attached as Exhibit A.

3. CHARACTERISTICS

The property is forested with mature stands of spruce, alder, and hemlock. Douglas fir, pacific yew, and cascara are also present. Understory vegetation includes salal, salmon berry, ferns, and vine maple. Two fish bearing streams cross the property, with Anderson Creek forming the northern boundary of the park and Jeffries Creek which drains to the north through the length of the property. Existing development consists of the Newport Municipal Pool in the southwest corner of the park, two municipal water reservoir tanks located roughly 1,100 feet northeast of the pool and appurtenant utility lines and access roads. A detailed description of the condition of the property, prepared by Trout Mountain Forestry, on behalf of the Oregon Coast Community Forest Association, is enclosed as Exhibit B.

4. EXISTING POLICIES

The Newport Comprehensive Plan calls for the City to pursue implementation of the Park System Master Plan, adopted in November of 1993. This strategy identifies the property as the Big Creek/Jeffries Creek Open Space area, and sets out the following policies for the management of open space lands:

- (a) Where feasible, public access into these areas should be encouraged but environmentally sensitive areas protected from public over use.
- (b) Improvements should be kept to a minimum with protection of the natural environment emphasized.

5. ZONING

The central portion of the property, identified as Tax Lot 400, is zoned P-3/"Open Space." This covers 77.43 acres of the park site. Allowed uses in the P-3 zone are limited to public parks, open space, trails and associated activities. The balance of the property is zoned P-1/"Public Buildings and Structures." This zoning designation allows a broad range of public uses (i.e. schools, courts, utility facilities, museums, fairgrounds, airports, administrative buildings, etc.). Most of these uses already exist elsewhere in the community. Public parks and trail uses are permitted in the P-1 zoning district.

6. MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

- (a) *Recreation and Educational Opportunities*
 - i. Maintain the municipal pool as a recreational venue independent from the balance of Forest Park, and seek alternative locations for a replacement facility that are situated in a more developed areas;

- ii. Explore opportunities to enhance Forest Park by developing trail elements that foster forest stewardship and educational opportunities, including trailhead kiosks, monitoring devices and learning sites supportive of school curriculums, space for interpretive/demonstration learning areas and similar features;
- iii. Consider using existing utility corridors as part of a formal trail system within the park;
- iv. Preserve Forest Park for trail and interpretive use, directing more active and intensive forms of park development to other properties; and
- v. Design and construct trail or interpretive facilities such that they avoid adverse impacts to the natural ecosystem.

(b) *Public Infrastructure*

- i. Limit the scope of utility work to that which is necessary to maintain and enhance existing infrastructure to meet the needs of residents of the City of Newport;
- ii. Consider defining utility areas by easement so that it is clear where disturbances can occur; and;
- iii. Avoid establishing an alignment for the planned extension of Harney Street that cuts through or otherwise materially impacts Forest Park.

(c) *Forest Stewardship*

- i. Conserve and maintain Forest Park as a mature forest reserve and ensure that any new uses are consistent with this objective;
- ii. Promote stewardship activities within Forest Park that enhance the natural ecosystem, including the control of invasive species, and improvements to fish habitat;
- iii. Support the efforts of volunteer groups interested in undertaking stewardship and educational activities; and
- iv. Provide city resources to supplement volunteer stewardship initiatives when such efforts are aligned with existing policy objectives and can be supported considering staff and budget constraints.

(d) *Property Maintenance*

- i. Manage Forest Park in a manner that protects and enhances its natural functions;
- ii. Avoid removing mature trees unless necessary for forest health, public safety or to maintain/enhance existing utilities and structures;
- iii. Follow best management practices when conducting earthwork to minimize erosion and avoid sediment discharge into streams; and
- iv. Evaluate measures that can be undertaken to stabilize slopes along Big Creek Road to reduce the risk of future landslides, including improvements to the drainage system.

Attachments

Exhibit A: Boundary Map of Proposed Forest Park, dated September 26, 2012

Exhibit B: Forest Park Assessment prepared by Trout Mountain Forestry, dated September 10, 2012



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EXHIBIT A: BOUNDARY MAP OF PROPOSED FOREST PARK



(This map is for informational use only and has not been prepared for, nor is it suitable for, legal, engineering, or surveying purposes. It includes data from multiple sources. The City of Newport assumes no responsibility for its compilation or use and users of this information are cautioned to verify all information with the City of Newport Community Development Department.



September 10, 2012

Penelope Kaczmarek
Oregon Coast Community Forest Association
PO Box 149
Newport, OR 97365

Re: Forest Park Assessment

Hi Pen,

I reviewed Newport's proposed Forest Park on August 21st with Chuck Willer and others from OCCFA. Following are my observation and preliminary recommendations. To build on this memo I recommend developing a more detailed long-term management plan sometime in the near future. To do so would involve a bit more fieldwork and mapping.

Forest Condition

The forest is predominantly 40-50 year-old naturally seeded stands of spruce, alder, and hemlock. Douglas-fir, Pacific yew, and cascara are minor species. Areas of older trees are found at the north end of the property, and widely scattered throughout other areas. A well-developed native understory features salal, salmon berry, ferns, and vine maple. There has been no significant tree cutting since property acquisition in the early 1970s.

Forest Health

Trees are generally healthy and growing well. I noted no significant insect or disease concerns. The property's ridge top location presents a high risk for blowdown, but I saw only limited signs of recent or past wind damage. The site's generally well drained soils and relatively open stands mitigate against wind throw risk, though risk increases with stand age, in areas of dense uniform tree stocking, or at exposed stand edges. That said, most areas are likely to be wind-firm for years to come, barring extreme storm events.

Invasive Species

The greatest forest health concern is well-established and expanding invasive weed populations, most notably English ivy. A concerted multi-year approach will be necessary to for adequate control. A combination of manual and chemical methods is typically most effective. I also observed Scotch broom, exotic blackberry, and English holly, but these are less widespread and pose a lower risk of invasion.

Water quality

Two streams cross the property, Anderson Creek to the north, and Jeffries Creek which crosses the property in the south and flows the length of the property to the west. Recent landslides along Big Creek Road and activities upstream of the property are causing sedimentation in Jeffries Creek, but Anderson Creek was running clean at the time I

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visited. The two streams join at the north end of the property, and immediately flow into Big Creek.

Fish and wildlife habitat

Both Anderson and Jeffries Creeks are considered medium fish-bearing streams by Oregon Department of Forestry rules; the small tributary of Jeffries in the far south is considered a small fish-bearing stream. The stream crossing of Jeffries by the southern trail/access road appears to be inadequately sized for fish passage, and appears to present a persistent maintenance and access issue, especially at high stream flows. Historically Jeffries Creek was known to have a significant salmon run, but recent monitoring indicates only intermittent fish runs. A closer look is warranted here.

ODF maps show no sensitive wildlife habitat areas, though larger spruce and hemlock provide potential habitat for marbled murrelets

Management direction

Given the parcel's close proximity to the city, its high recreation use, and mature forest condition the site is best suited for conservation, and has excellent potential as a mature forest reserve. Stands of this stature are becoming increasingly rare in the Coast Range, especially in such close proximity to population centers. Management to protect forest health and ecosystem values should be emphasized.

Property boundary

See the attached map for the suggested area for Forest Park. Swimming and water treatment facilities should be excluded.

Management opportunities

Priority forest stewardship activities follow. Additional project specifications should be developed. A forest management plan would provide additional rationale and details.

1. Control invasive species – a weed control plan is needed; volunteers can play a key role in control efforts
2. Improve fish passage/stream crossing – a new fish-friendly stream crossing should be designed and installed. Grant funding is available
3. Stabilize landslide areas – active slide areas should be stabilized; improving ditches and adding more cross drain culverts to Big Creek Road will reduce future slide risks (it appears this work may already be underway)
4. Fish habitat enhancements – adding large wood to stream channels and establishing more conifers in streamside zones will improve fish habitat and should help recover historic runs. Grant funding is available.
5. Forest Stewardship education – adding trailhead kiosks with information on forest stewardship activities would be an excellent education and public engagement opportunity

This is an exceptional property with great potential for enhanced public recreation and education. We have worked with several communities, and are happy to assist with planning, project design and implementation, and securing project funding.

Please contact me with any questions, or if I can be of further assistance.

Mark Miller