

Northwest Portland Real Estate Values

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"I know the true value of your home."

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Forest Park: Our Green Oasis In the City

You've just flown back to Portland from a business trip and are driving over the Fremont Bridge toward your home in Northwest. Or, you are a young couple with a child, piloting your U-Haul over the Hawthorne Bridge, enjoying for the first time the quaint charm of our riverfront city. Or, you're a bicyclist, pedaling across the Steel Bridge commuting to your downtown office job. You pick the scenario.

No matter whether you're a long-time resident or a recent transplant, when you cross a Portland bridge from east to west you are struck by the sight of a thriving cityscape against an overhanging curtain of lush, dark green trees. A big part of that forest-meets-metropolis is the marvel we call Forest Park. But that's the distant view.

Northwest Portland residents lucky enough to live nearby may walk out their front doors and find themselves in a matter of minutes in the quiet heart of a verdant forest—with its breathtaking canopy, cool soft trails, and abundance of more than 100 bird species, and some 60 different mammals. Even dyed-in-the-wool urbanites find themselves touched by the transformative power of nature.

How could a forest this large—some 5,000 acres, with more than 70 miles of meandering recreational trails—nuzzle its living

green nose so playfully against the broad, concrete back of a vibrant U.S. city without getting its head bitten off? In truth, there is always that danger—even in the environmentally friendly arena of Portland—encroaching progress is only held at bay by virtue of a lot of stewardship. For Forest Park, the emerald jewel of Northwest Portland, has had a long, uncertain history.



A Long Wait

Back in 1867, when the Forest Park area was known as Linnton Hills, Harvard-educated, Unitarian Reverend Thomas Lamb Eliot put forth the first notion that the Forest Park area should be protected by the city. He was not met with an immediate chorus of approval.

Just after the turn of the 20th century, at Rev. Eliot's behest, the famed Olmstead Brothers of Brookline, Massachusetts came to Portland to complete a park planning study for the city. The Olmstead brothers were then perhaps the greatest landscape architects in the world. Locally, they designed the Lewis & Clark Exposition and across the country an impressive little retreat in Manhattan called Central Park.

In 1912, the city of Linnton annexed the land that included Forest Park, and three years later, when Linnton was annexed by the City of Portland, the wilderness that the park now occupies became the property of Portland. Still, it wasn't until 1945 that the Club of Portland published a feasibility study on creating a city park at the area. Finally, on Sept. 23, 1948 (81 years after Rev. Eliot had made his suggestion) Forest Park was finally granted protection. The Portland "Committee of 50" civic leaders lead the effort to declare 4,200 acres dedicated as Forest Park. Some additional 800 acres have been added since that glorious day.

Among the threats to Forest Park since its original designation, a devastating fire (Aug. 1951) destroyed more than 1,200 acres. Today, fire lanes are maintained to protect the park from similar devastation. Forest Park also currently includes several public parks that have kept their original names, including Macleay, Holman, Clark and Wilson, and Linnton parks.

Protecting Forest Park Today

One of the leading organizations helping protect Forest Park today is the non-profit group, Friends of Forest Park (FoFP). They state as their mission to "maintain, preserve, protect, and improve" the forest. In so doing, the orga-

From Dan's Front Porch Every Architectural Picture Tells a Story



Recently, I took my annual vacation to study Spanish in Xalapa, the capitol city of Veracruz. The retreat gave me pause to think about how lucky we are to live in Portland, where historic preservation is highly developed. During my stay, one of the many speakers (in Spanish) who visited our class was a young man who in his spare time takes startling, museum-quality photographs of the nearby, famed port town of Veracruz. Though the photographs, which have been shown in museums from Mexico City to Barcelona, are stunningly beautiful, the pictures are sobering. They are of the dilapidated state of the classic architecture of Veracruz. This young preservationist photographer hopes to raise consciousness about saving what's left of that historic city's great old buildings. I hope he and his camera can help. In the meantime, when I got back in Portland, I appreciated even more the care with which we've preserved many of our historic buildings. Protecting our architecture preserves our cultural contributions and our history, and leaves a lasting, usable and proud landscape for future generations.

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nization supports the Portland Parks and Recreation Natural Resources Division, which has a limited budget to manage the city-owned park.

Areas of focus for FoFP include land acquisition, habitat preservation, trail and trailhead projects and preservation, and public outreach. The organization's website (listed below) notes that since 1990, it has been able to acquire some 150 acres of forest, saving it from potential logging and housing developments.

Besides its acquisitions to protect wooded land, FoFP performs regular maintenance on venerable trees, trails and signs and does ongoing education and outreach. You may also obtain from the group excellent walking maps, bike maps and brochures. They conduct expert guided hikes, too. Each year, topics covered include such things as Wildlife Tracking, Ancient Forest Ecology, and the Quest Hike Series for kids.

Walk, or Run for the Park

If you've never had the pleasure of jogging or walking through

Forest Park, now is a perfect chance. And in doing so you can contribute to the much needed financial resources that help keep the forest vibrant. The 7th Annual Walk or Run for the Wildwood in Forest Park is happening Sunday, Sept. 24, with staggered starting times from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. The start of the event is at Lower Macleay Park, right here in Northwest Portland (at the end of NW Upshur St.). The event is \$10 for the 2.5-mile course, and \$15 for the 8-mile course. There is no charge for children 8 years old and under. Proceeds go to the Forest Park Trail Program. And the day of activities includes food, music, arts and crafts, prizes and booths.

"We are trying to grow the Trails Program year-round," says Steve Hatfield, the program director of FoFP. "Right now, the bulk of trail maintenance takes place in the summer. The Walk-Run event is the primary fundraiser through which people can directly support the Trails Program. And the trails," says Hatfield, "are what people trea-

sure most, because they allow people to mountain bike, hike, walk their dogs and otherwise enjoy Forest Park up close."

Our Park Belongs to Everyone

People over the years have argued over whether Forest Park is the "largest forested natural area within U.S. city limits." But does it really matter? The important fact is not the "largest" anything. What matters is that the park is an irreplaceable treasure for the city and its inhabitants, human and otherwise.

Forest Park brings us many benefits on a daily basis. There is, of course, its sheer beauty and abil-

ity to restore our spirits, with its peaceful trails, massive evergreen canopy, and undergrowth of ferns, flowers and shrubs. And Forest Park is home and haven to many important animal species. But from a purely ecological standpoint, Forest Park's tree canopy and undergrowth maintain cleaner air and water for our area, too, and help control erosion.

For everything Forest Park provides for us, it only asks that we let it live and grow. I urge you to support the park soon, and make time to enjoy its restorative powers. Maybe I'll see you in the park for the walk-run event on Sunday, Sept. 24. I hope so.

For more information on the Walk or Run for the Wildwood (or the FoFP in general), contact Friends of Forest Park at 503-223-5449.

Or, simply visit online at: www.friendsofforestpark.org. On this website, you may also donate to and join FoFP as a member through a secure-transaction form, or print out an application which you may mail in with your check.

HOMES FOR SALE

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