

Story Outline

for the

Mt. Tabor Reservoir History Project Sign Panels

1-1: Reservoir 1, Interpretive Panel 1 -- (mockup available on MTNA website)

Location: On the road overlooking Reservoir 1

Panel Main Heading: The Genesis of Our Public Water System

Text

Story 1: *Access to Clean Water*

- Reference the Native American history (mention only; fuller story at Reservoir 5)
- Public health story (fuller story here; mentioned at Summit)
 - The Willamette having become a source of disease: typhoid cholera, etc.
 - Recognition of the need to find new source, and to build an engineered system

Story 2: *The Highest Reservoir*

- High location
- Reference gravity-fed engineering (mention only; fuller story at Summit)
- Dug into the hillside in the nascent park

Story 3 (or photo caption): *White Males Only*

- Who was not invited to work during the tough economic time of the mid-1890s (either Story 3, or included in a caption)

Graphics

- Photograph of the dirty, industrial, Willamette waterfront circa 1894
- Photograph of Res 1 being filled, with rural setting visible in background
- Photograph of the excavation for Reservoir 1 - likely photo to host caption about white males only

1-2: Reservoir 1, Interpretive Panel 2 -- (mockup available on MTNA website)

Location: Facing the front of Reservoir 1, down at reservoir level

Panel Main Heading: The First Reservoir

Text

Story 1: *Moving and Storing Water*

- Function of buildings – the gatehouse and weir building
- Size and volume, in compelling, comparative way

Story 2: *Cutting-Edge Construction*

- First use of reinforced concrete in the nation
- Point viewers to Ransome stamp

Story 3 (or photo caption): *The Fountain*

- In 1894, Reservoir 1 was still quite rural – an excursion from Portland

Graphics

- Drawing of the Reservoir 1 gatehouse
- Photograph of the gatehouse interior with technician at work
- Ransome stamp
- Photograph of restored fountain

5-1: Reservoir 5, Interpretive Panel 1

Location: Across the service road from Reservoir 5, looking over Reservoir 6 toward the city

Panel Main Heading: TBD

Text

Story 1: *Centuries of Plentiful Clean Water*

- Opening something like: “From this vantage, you can see the west banks of the Willamette without seeing the river itself”
- The Native American experience
 - Ten thousand years of Native history
 - Water and rivers were sacred to Northwest Indians
 - Human habitation within the region and relation to the Willamette

Story 2: *Portland’s Reservoir System*

- The growing white population, and the public and private water companies that preceded municipal water (full story here; mentioned at Reservoir 1)
- Isaac Smith and 19th-century engineering
- Description of the gravity-fed system (full story at Summit)
- Growing population, system expansion
- Overview of the entire system of six reservoirs (and maybe also Res 7, tanks, towers, wells)

Graphics

- Cross-section drawing of the system from Mount Tabor to Washington Park
- Aerial photograph of Reservoirs 1, 2, 5, 6
- Photograph of the Bull Run watershed

5-2: Reservoir 5, Interpretive Panel 2

Location: Across the service road from Reservoir 5, looking over Reservoir 6 toward the city

Panel Main Heading: TBD

Text

Story 1: *The Progressive Era*

- City Beautiful
- Beautility
- The importance of water features for the movement
- The European style and design of the various gatehouse and weir buildings

Story 2: *The Olmsteds and the Design of Mount Tabor Park*

- The city views and natural setting
- The importance of water as a feature of the park
- Both park and reservoirs on the National Historic Register
- Public amenity – strolling around the reservoirs was popular from the beginning

Graphics

- Plan drawing of Mount Tabor Park
- Photographs of the construction of Reservoir 5

5-3: Reservoir 5, Interpretive Panel 3

Location: Across the service road from Reservoir 5, looking over Reservoir 6 toward the city
Panel Main Heading: TBD

Text

Story 1: *Reservoir 5*

- The elevation of Reservoir 5 is the same as that of Reservoir 1
- The slope is thus a dam face, regulated by the federal government
- The stairway is narrow because it was originally built for the workmen

Story 2: *Reservoir 2*

- Despite our expanding population and the system's growing needs, the historic Reservoir 2 was taken off line and sold into private hands in the 1980s
- Reservoir 2 gatehouse still stands

Graphics

- Photographs of the construction of Reservoir 5
- Cross-section drawing of Reservoir 5 dam as built
- Photograph of visitors and bikes at the Reservoir 2 gatehouse

5-4: Reservoir 5, Interpretive Panel 4

Location: Facing Reservoir 5, near hypochlorite building
Panel Main Heading: TBD

Text

Story 1: *The Parts of a Reservoir*

- Function of parts: gatehouse, inlet, original cast-iron lighting)
- Construction facts about Reservoir 5
- Size and volume, in compelling, comparative way

Story 2: *The Hypochlorite Building*

- Function, etc.
- Still chlorinating for Reservoir 7 (maybe)

Graphics

- Photographs of the construction of Reservoir 5
- Original plan drawings of lights, or gatehouse
- Photograph looking across Reservoir 5 of cherry trees in bloom
- Photograph of Reservoir 5 in snow

6-1: Reservoir 6, Interpretive Panel

Location: Near SE 60th Avenue, facing Reservoir 6
Panel Main Heading: TBD

Text

Story 1: *Mount Tabor's Largest Reservoir*

- Function of parts (gatehouse, inlet, original cast iron lighting)
- Size and volume, in compelling, comparative way
- Construction facts

Story 2: *Beloved by All*

- For well over a century these reservoirs served Portlanders some of the best water in the country.
- Federal decision on LT2
 - No history of cryptosporidium in these reservoirs
- Citizen efforts
 - The value of the reservoirs as park amenities as well as historic structures
 - “Hands Around the Reservoir”
- Reservoirs disconnected from the drinking-water system
- City Council decision to preserve the reservoirs and associated structures
 - Some structures continue to have functionality, even though the reservoirs are disconnected

Graphics

- Photographs of the construction of Reservoir 6
- Photograph of Reservoir 6 with fountains
- Photograph of “Hands Around the Reservoir”

S-1: Summit Interpretive Panel

Location: East side of summit, looking toward Mount Hood and Bull Run

Panel Main Heading: Portland’s Extraordinary Water Supply

Text

Story 1: *The Search for Clean Water*

- Reference the Native American history (mention only; fuller story at Reservoir 5)
- Public health concerns with growing white settlement, which led to the need for a better water system (mention only; fuller story at Reservoir 1)

Story 2: *Our Gravity-Fed System*

- Conception and engineering (fuller story here, referenced again at Reservoir 1 and at Reservoir 5)
- The Bull Run watershed
- Conduit construction through rugged terrain

Story 3 (or photo caption): *We Don’t Drink Snow*

- We draw our water, not – as is sometimes believed – from the snowy slopes of Mount Hood, but from a separate watershed that is rain-fed and pure, not glacial runoff
- Portland’s water supply not dependent on snowfall.

Graphics

- Photograph of the Bull Run lake and Dam 1
- Cross-section drawing of the system from Bull Run to Mount Tabor
- Photograph of conduit being laid