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## **120 YEARS OF LOCAL HISTORY CAPTURED IN OC PARKS VIDEO SERIES**

**Newport Beach, CA, Friday, August 24, 2018** – One of the most interesting, appealing, and unique features of Orange County is its regional park system. The long legacy of park stewardship began for the then fledgling county more than a century ago. Friends of Harbors, Beaches and Parks (FHBP) is pleased to release a video history of the County's park system. The 14-part series covers the major milestones that marked the establishment of the county's parks, harbors, beaches, historic sites, and trail systems commencing in 1897 with the opening of Irvine Regional Park, the first of its kind in California.

The comprehensive history was produced for FHBP by Eric Jessen. Jessen served as chief of planning, acquisition, and development for OC Parks prior to his retirement in 2005. Jessen's family settled in Santa Ana in the 1870s. He has lived in Laguna Beach for 52 years.

Michael Wellborn, President of FHBP, remarks, "Much of the material comes from Eric's personal archives and recollections, and his narration of the presentations adds color and insight available only from someone who was privy to the backstory."

The details of each park facility—from Harriet Wieder Regional Park to Crescent Bay Point Park, Caspers Wilderness Park to the Old Orange County Courthouse and everything in between—have been captured on film through a collaborative, fun, and informative narrative from Jessen himself. A play list has been set up on [FHBP's YouTube Channel to view](#) the series or each film can be viewed separately. One video in the series will be featured on FHBP's Facebook page each week.

"I was brought from Caspers Park into headquarters to go to work expanding the park system. Acre by acre, we did just that from the beaches to the mountains. It was an amazing career. With the help of the park rangers, it's really gratifying to see all the wonderful places we created for public enjoyment today," Jessen adds.

By way of background, in 1997, ten Orange County environmental volunteers created FHBP after the Orange County bankruptcy raided funds dedicated for OC Parks. The volunteers realized a new consolidated approach that strengthened and coordinated the voice of parks,

water, open space, and environmental education groups was needed. Last year, the bankruptcy payments were completed and the OC Parks budget has been restored. FHBP continues to advocate for policies and projects that improve our parklands and natural lands ensuring a sustainable future for generations to come.

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*Friends of Harbors, Beaches and Parks is a nonprofit organization that has, for two decades, promoted protected and enhanced the harbors, beaches, parks, trails, open spaces, natural preserves, and historic sites in Orange County.*