



December 10, 2019

Good morning Governor Brown, Treasurer Read, and Secretary Clarno:

My name is Josh Laughlin. I'm the Executive Director of Eugene-based Cascadia Wildlands, representing our 10,000 members and supporters today. We appreciate the Land Board's efforts to keep the Elliott State Forest public for all the values it offers and to begin decoupling the Elliott from the Common School Fund through the \$100 million bond approved by the legislature.

Over the past year we have been closely following the OSU College of Forestry's efforts to create the Elliott State Research Forest. While no specific plan has been put forth, we are alarmed by many aspects of the modeling and conversation to date. It appears this is going to be yet another attempt to aggressively log the old forests found on the Elliott, and instead of clearcutting to fund school kids, is may be clearcutting to fund the expenses associated with the College of Forestry's so-called "research forest."

Clearcutting 120 acres at a time isn't research. Aerially spraying three rounds of toxic herbicides each logging cycle isn't research. Killing native mountain beavers that compete with sapling growth isn't research. Aggressively logging native temperate rainforests up to 160 years old isn't research.

Let's call it what it appears to be: the same old failed approach just wrapped up with a new bow.

We are also alarmed about the possibility of the College of Forestry creating a private non-profit corporation to become the future owner of the Elliott State Forest in order to maximize carbon dollars on the forest. The Land Board made it clear that the Elliott must be retained in public ownership, and that was much of the justification behind the legislature's \$100 million bond. Moving fee title to a private non-profit corporation significantly reduces public oversight and management transparency of this outstanding forest.

That said, we support the concept of an Elliott State Research Forest, particularly when addressing pressing issues like species extinction, restoration of degraded landscapes, water quality, and carbon accounting. We also want to see durable conservation sideboards in any research forest, like:

- 1) Protection of mature forest stands to safeguard imperiled terrestrial species. Any silvicultural research must be focused in the human-created plantations, which are generally under 80 years old, and must be restoration-driven.
- 2) Protection of streamside buffers well beyond what the Oregon Forest Practices Act provides to safeguard water quality and to help recover imperiled salmonids.
- 3) Retention of fee title with a public entity in perpetuity, whether that is the Department of State Lands, Oregon Parks, Siuslaw National Forest, OSU or someone more appropriate.
- 4) The \$100 million in taxpayer revenue must be used to permanently protect *specific* acreage on the forest through a conservation easement or similar mechanism.

Lastly, I'd like to remind you that the legislature created the Trustland Transfer Program in 2017 so perhaps there is an opportunity get one step closer to full decoupling of the Elliott from the School Fund in an upcoming session.

Thank you,

Josh Laughlin

Josh Laughlin
Executive Director