



News

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Media Contact: Ali Ryan Hansen, 503-510-6860, ali.r.hansen@state.or.us

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Elliott State Research Forest Moves Forward

State Land Board confirms intent to transfer the forest to Oregon State University, directs continued collaboration on remaining details

SALEM, Ore. – The State Land Board on Tuesday affirmed the Elliott State Forest’s future as a research forest, directing continued collaboration as details are finalized over the next two years.

The Elliott State Research Forest proposal presented by Oregon State University would support research on many topics – such as forestry’s role in mitigating climate change, protecting and restoring endangered species, and supporting economic growth and rural communities – while also creating the Oregon Coast’s largest forest reserve, protecting critical habitat, providing recreational access, and creating learning opportunities for schoolchildren. [Read the proposal.](#)

“The only way to generate the knowledge needed for a sustainable Oregon, and for Oregon to thrive, is through research,” said OSU College of Forestry Dean Tom DeLuca in presenting the proposal.

The Land Board in December 2018 asked the Oregon Department of State Lands and OSU to begin exploring the Elliott State Forest’s potential to become a publicly owned research forest. Over the next two years – with input and insight of advisory committees, Tribes, state and local governments, stakeholders, and the public – the research forest proposal took shape.

Work was guided by the Land Board’s vision for the Elliott: keeping the forest publicly owned with public access; decoupling the forest from the Common School Fund and compensating the fund for the forest; continuing habitat conservation planning to protect species and allow for harvest; and providing for multiple forest benefits, including recreation, education and working forest research.

“The Land Board did not charge us with developing a one dimensional solution; it asked us to do something far more complex—to try and reconcile and significantly advance multiple objectives that for decades have been juxtaposed in conflict. After two years of work, we believe

that the proposal before you has the potential to achieve that mandate,” said Keith Tymchuk, reading the Elliott State Research Forest Advisory Committee’s unanimous statement of support for creation of an Elliott State Research Forest. [Read the committee statement.](#)

The 16-member committee, which represents a wide variety of perspectives, formed in 2019 to provide input and insight on the research forest idea.

“What we saw yesterday should make Oregonians proud,” said State Treasurer Tobias Read. “The proposal for the Elliott, along with the tireless work of the Advisory Committee, is inspiring. I doubt anyone on the committee would say that this is exactly the proposal they would have crafted had the role fallen solely to them. Yet the group, with true Oregon spirit, emerged with a strong consensus on a path forward that has enormous potential for conservation, recreation, and research. They deserve our thanks and our continued support to help advance this project.”

The hard work and collaboration will continue, said DSL Director Vicki L. Walker, as details are finalized. Work remains on the OSU proposal, including final details of a governance structure to ensure public accountability, and to complete a habitat conservation plan, explore carbon market potential, develop a forest management plan, and establish a framework for decoupling.

The Land Board also asked DSL to continue to provide opportunities for public input, and progress reports to the Board, as work continues.

“I look forward to reporting back on our progress as the hard work continues to finalize creation of a world-renowned research forest right here in Oregon,” said Director Walker.

About the State Land Board and the Department of State Lands: The State Land Board consists of Governor Kate Brown, Secretary of State Bev Clarno and State Treasurer Tobias Read. Established by the Oregon Constitution in 1859, the Land Board oversees the state’s Common School Fund. The Department of State Lands is the Land Board’s administrative agency, managing the lands and resources that help fund Oregon’s public schools and protecting the state’s waterways and wetlands for the many benefits they provide.

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