



September 8, 2015

Tom Imeson, Chair
Oregon Board of Forestry
2600 State Street
Salem, Oregon 97310

Re: Recommendation for the Elliott State Forest Common School Lands

Dear Chair Imeson and fellow Board of Forestry Members:

The Oregon Conservation Network (OCN) is a coalition of over 40 Oregon organizations representing tens-of-thousands of members from all across the state. As a coalition, and as individual organizations, we have been following the Elliott State Forest issue closely over the years, including attending and submitting testimony at previous Board of Forestry and State Land Board meetings.

We recognize that the Elliott has incredible natural resource, economic, recreational, and cultural values. Our members encourage that these values be prioritized in the coming months and years for all Oregonians. With the state's legal obligation to protect, and recover, threatened and endangered salmon and wildlife that call the Elliott home, the Common School Fund (CSF) is no longer able to benefit from logging on the Elliott as it once did. A solution must be found to make the CSF whole without sacrificing the old-growth forest, salmon, and wildlife that are a priceless part of Oregon's natural heritage.

We believe strongly that the Elliott State Forest lands must remain in public ownership. Beyond the commitment to the Common School Fund, this resource belongs to all Oregonians and the Elliott's existing old forests remain a rare and diminishing treasure. Up to 90% of Oregon's original old-growth forest has been lost, and the Elliott is unique among state forestlands in that it still contains significant stands of forest over a century old. The people of Oregon are best served if the Elliott remains in public hands for the purposes of conservation, wild salmon and wildlife, streams and habitat, hunting and fishing, carbon storage to mitigate climate change, clean drinking water, education, recreational opportunities, and supporting sustainable timber jobs by restoratively thinning second-growth timber where appropriate.

An ideal outcome for the people of Oregon will incorporate a strong transition plan and a robust management strategy that decouples clear-cutting forests from funding our schools. We stand united to work with the Board and Department of Forestry and other state agencies as necessary resources are found to keep the Elliott a public and productive state asset based on the guidelines set by State Land Board. If legislation is needed to move this process forward by providing a funding

mechanism, we are ready to support that course of action. We understand that legislation is also needed to assure the Department has broader management guidelines specific to this iconic forest. It is our view that the people of Oregon, if given the choice between seeing the Elliott subject to some form of privatization or using public monies to purchase and retire the Common School Fund's interest in the land so that it can be managed sustainably and stay in public ownership, would overwhelmingly choose to keep the Elliott in public hands.

We appreciate your careful consideration and ask that the Board of Forestry direct the Department of Forestry to submit an Expression of Interest to the State Land Board prior to December 15th, 2015. As you continue to balance so many important issues relating to Oregon's forests, please consider us a resource.

Thank you,

The Oregon Conservation Network

cc: Sybil Ackerman-Munson, Board of Forestry Member; Cindy Deacon Williams, Board of Forestry Member; Nils Christoffersen, Board of Forestry Member; Tom Insko, Board of Forestry Member; Gary Springer . Board of Forestry Member; Mike Rose, Board of Forestry Member; Richard Whitman, Governor's Natural Resources Policy Advisor; Doug Decker, State Forester; Mary Abrams, Director, Department of State Lands.

OCN is coordinated by the Oregon League of Conservation Voters and powered by the tens of thousands of Oregonians who belong to our member organizations:

1000 Friends of Oregon | American Rivers | Associated Oregon Recyclers | Audubon Society of Portland | Beyond Toxics | Bicycle Transportation Alliance | Cascadia Wildlands / Center for Biological Diversity | Central Oregon Landwatch | Citizens Utility Board of Oregon | Climate Solutions | Defenders of Wildlife | Environment Oregon | Fair and Clean Energy Coalition | Friends of Mount Hood | Friends of the Columbia Gorge | Hells Canyon Preservation Society | Kalmiopsis Audubon Society | League of Women Voters of Oregon | National Wildlife Federation | Neighbors for Clean Air | Oceana | Oregon Citizens for Safe Drinking Water | Oregon Environmental Council | Oregon Coast Alliance | Oregon League of Conservation Voters | Oregon Natural Desert Association | Oregon Shores Conservation Coalition | Oregon Surfrider | Oregon Wild | Pew Charitable Trust | Recycling Advocates | Renewable Northwest Project | Rogue Valley Audubon Society | Rogue Riverkeeper | Sierra Club Oregon Chapter | Trout Unlimited | Tualatin Riverkeepers | Umpqua Valley Audubon Society | Upstream Public Health | WaterWatch of Oregon | Wild Salmon Center | Willamette Riverkeeper