

# **ELLIOTT STATE FOREST**

## ***An Asset of the Common School Fund***

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### **Background Information**

- First state forest, established in 1930. Named for Francis Elliott, Oregon's first state forester, who consolidated scattered school trust lands into one large block of land. Located in the Coast Range between Coos Bay and Reedsport.
- The forest is part of the constitutional trust lands overseen by the State Land Board (Governor, Secretary of State and State Treasurer) to generate money for Oregon public schools. Revenue from the forest is deposited into the Common School Fund. Since 1955, the Elliott has netted more than \$300 million for the school fund.
- Of the Elliott's 93,000 acres, about 90 percent (86,367 acres) is Common School land managed by the Oregon Department of Forestry through an agreement with the Department of State Lands.
- ODF manages an additional 2,270 acres of Common School land within the Coos District included in the Elliott State Forest Management Plan. ODF manages a total of 120,000 acres of forestlands for the Land Board and DSL.



### **Sustainable Forest Management**

- The Elliott has been managed over the past few decades to a relatively high conservation standard. One-third of the forest cannot be harvested due to conservation plans, protection of threatened or endangered species habitat, and other environmental policies.
- In 1995, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service approved an Elliott State Forest Habitat Conservation Plan that included a 60-year Incidental Take Permit for the northern spotted owl, and a six-year ITP for the marbled murrelet which expired in 2001. Murrelets have been protected since that time through a take-avoidance strategy.
- Beginning in 2000, a multi-agency group of foresters and scientists worked on designing a revised Elliott Habitat Conservation Plan, but was unable to reach agreement with the National Marine Fisheries Service.

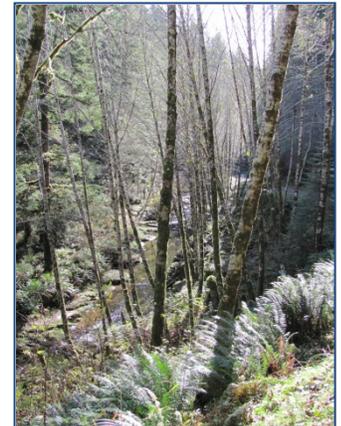
### **Future of the Elliott State Forest**

- The Land Board in October 2011 approved a new Forest Management Plan (FMP) designed to increase harvest levels while conserving fish and wildlife habitat.
- Two other plans (the *10-Year Implementation Plan* and *Forest Land Management Classification* maps) were put in place to complement the FMP.

#### ***The new plan's management strategy:***

- Included a take-avoidance policy (which is used on all other state forests), that involves surveying for threatened and endangered species before harvesting.
- Would have increased timber harvest from an average 25 million board feet to about 40 mmbf annually.

- Would have produced an additional \$3 million to \$5 million annually for the Common School Fund, with an estimated \$9 million to \$13 million in total annual revenues.
- Would have generated an estimated \$2 to \$3 million in additional revenue annually for logging businesses from increased timber harvest; as well as increased contracting opportunities for wildlife surveys, thinning, reforestation and road improvements within the forest.
- Would have supported an estimated 190 jobs associated with increased harvest levels (16 million additional board feet). Each 1 million board feet of timber from the Elliott State Forest generates 11 to 13 jobs, with an average wage of \$36,000.
- Set aside 28,000 acres as “conservation areas.”
- Supported continued carbon sequestration capacity through increasing the total standing wood fiber in the forest from the current 3.12 billion board feet to 3.19 bbf over the next 35 years.
- Increased resources available for research and monitoring efforts within the forest, as well as road improvements.



***Litigation affects management plan:***

- In January 2012, Cascadia Wildlands, the Audubon Society of Portland, and the Center for Biological Diversity filed suit regarding habitat in state forests, including the Elliott, for the marbled murrelet, a seabird protected by the Endangered Species Act. The lawsuit halted or deferred some timber sales until it was settled in February 2014. The terms of the settlement of the case permanently scaled back timber harvest levels and associated revenues.
- Due to reduced timber revenues, managing the Elliott State Forest cost the Common School Fund about \$3 million in 2013. Continued substantial losses are projected in coming years.
- In December 2013, the State Land Board approved selling 2,700 acres within the Elliott to: 1) help recoup the \$3 million deficit; and 2) gauge the market value of land within the forest.
- In spring 2014, three parcels totaling 1,453 acres were sold by sealed-bid auction. Two other parcels will be sold later in the year. All funds from sales are deposited in the Common School Fund for K-12 public schools in Oregon.
- The Land Board has not made any decisions about the disposition of the remaining school lands within the Elliott State Forest. The Department and Board will work with stakeholders concerned about the future of the Elliott to allow the Board to evaluate a number of potential management options for the forest.



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