



Fall 2015

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Director Mary Abrams announces her departure

Land Board names Stephanie Hallock Cummins interim director

After three years as director of the Oregon Department of State Lands, Mary Abrams will move to an exciting new adventure in Hawaii. She leaves the agency effective Oct. 19 to lead the Pacific Island Fish and Wildlife office for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

"I am excited about this new opportunity and look forward to taking on a new set of challenges," Abrams said. "Though my time here at State Lands has been a whirlwind of tough decisions, I've really enjoyed working with our dedicated employees and all the helpful partners this agency interacts with on a daily basis."

"Mary's steady hand at the Department of State Lands has been invaluable," said Governor Kate Brown, chair of the State Land Board. "I thank her for her wise leadership. Mary built a strong team that will serve us well in the future."



Highlights of her tenure at the department include:

- Reorganizing the agency to more efficiently group its diverse program areas.
- Launching the effort to find alternative ownership of the Elliott State Forest, a land asset of the Common School Fund that has lost money for the fund because of species habitat protections.
- Building stronger relationships with agency partners through personal outreach, collaborative work groups, and enhanced customer involvement.

Abrams came to DSL after spending six years in Africa where she led Peace Corps operations in three countries. She also was a division administrator and water quality specialist at the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, and held natural resource positions with the City of Portland after being on the faculty at the Oregon Graduate Institute.

Land Board members commended Abrams for her work at the agency:

"It has been a pleasure working with, and learning from, Mary Abrams," said Secretary of State Jeanne P. Atkins, who chaired the Board's Oct. 13 meeting in Gov. Brown's absence. "Her thoroughness, broad perspective and knowledge of the history of Oregon State Lands have been invaluable for me as a Land Board member. Her skills and experience will be missed. Still, I wish her well in her new adventure."

State Treasurer Ted Wheeler said, "Oregonians can be proud of the work Mary Abrams has done at the Department of State Lands. Her ability to bring complex subjects into clear focus and to communicate with credibility on a wide range of issues will be sorely missed. I wish her luck on her next adventure."



At the meeting, the Land Board appointed Stephanie Hallock Cummins as interim director. Hallock worked most recently at the Department of Environmental

Quality, where she was director for seven years, and in other positions for 13.

Hallock also served as a member of Gov. Kitzhaber's staff and was a project manager for

Oregon Solutions. In 2013, the Governor appointed Stephanie to the State Board of Agriculture.

Starting in May 2014, Hallock worked as the outreach coordinator for the Elliott State Forest project.

The land Board is working with the Department of Administrative Services to conduct a nationwide recruitment for the [director position](#).

Land Board seeks creative solution for Elliott State Forest

Elliott Ownership Transfer Opportunity



On Aug. 13, the State Land Board approved a resolution that directs the Department of State Lands (DSL) to begin implementing a protocol to transfer ownership of the Elliott State Forest out of the Common School Fund.

"The decision to pursue alternative ownership comes after years of hard work and thorough consideration of input from a wide spectrum of interested citizens," said DSL director Mary Abrams. "We believe the protocol will allow the Land Board to meet their trustee responsibilities to the schoolchildren of Oregon through a transfer that allows interested parties to balance economic and conservation values," she said.

Until recent years, the Elliott State Forest near Coos Bay has been a revenue-producing asset of the fund. Oregon's "school trust lands" are overseen by the Land Board, composed of the Governor, Secretary of State and State Treasurer. The board serves as trustee of the fund.

Recent litigation related to protections for threatened species has made it difficult for the state to make enough revenue through timber harvesting to meet the Land Board's trust obligations to fund schools.



To resolve this dilemma, the Land Board is trying something different. They're seeking plans from interested parties that will continue to preserve conservation and other public benefits of the forest, and also provide revenue for schools as mandated by the Oregon Constitution.

At their August meeting, the Land Board directed DSL staff to start implementing the protocol to transfer ownership of the 84,000 acres of school trust lands within the Elliott State Forest to another entity.

About 60 people attended an informational "kick-off" meeting on Sept. 17. **A second meeting will be held on Oct. 20 in Salem.** Interested parties may attend in person or participate by conference call. See the *Elliott State Forest Ownership Transfer Opportunity* [fact sheet](#) for an overview and key dates.

2015-17 agency rulemaking

Changes mostly related to 2015 legislation

The Department of State Lands has an ambitious rulemaking schedule over the next two years, with at least a dozen administrative rules needing updating this biennium.

All rulemaking efforts are posted on the [DSL website](#). Check this page frequently to get the latest on schedules and proposed changes.

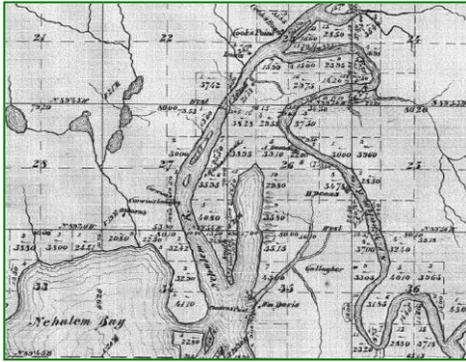
Highlights include:

Waterway Leasing Rules (Division 82): this will cover three main topics:

- Leasing categories and associated rates. This is in response to a rulemaking petition submitted by a lessee and the introduction of Senate Bill 11 during the 2015 legislative session.
- Reevaluating the definition of transient use as it pertains to non-commercial vessels occupying state-owned waterways. This is in response to the ongoing issue of "live-aboards" in Multnomah County and on other waterways.
- Setting the parameters of the Submerged Lands Enhancement Fund (House Bill 2463), and developing a notification process prior to removing abandoned or derelict structures.

Territorial Sea Ocean Renewable Energy Rules (Division 140): implementing a streamlined process for siting ocean energy projects (Senate Bill 319). This requires both proprietary and regulatory rulemaking.

Historically Filled Lands Rules (Division 68): accommodating a streamlined process to resolve filled lands claims, and also establish new lands. This rulemaking is necessary to address the



recommendations of the Filled Lands Advisory Committee and the requirements of Senate Bill 912 which passed during the 2015 legislative session.

Artificial Beaver Dam Rules (Divisions 89 and 93): seeking to create expedited permitting option(s) (Div. 89 General Authorization and/or Div. 93 General Permit) for stream restoration actions that specifically mimic or re-enforce the function of beaver dams, such as water quality and hydrology improvements, habitat expansion and complexity, and wildlife use.

Utility Easement Rules (Division 122): implementing House Bill 2460 to allow charging an administrative fee for utility lines outside city limits. This is not a priority because the fee amounts approved in statute are consistent with the current fees in rule.

Removal-Fill General Permit Rules (Division 93): creating a new General Permit for routine maintenance dredging of existing marinas, boat basins, terminals, access channels, etc. for navigational access. The Department will also initiate rulemaking to re-adopt the existing General Permit for Impacts to Vernal Pool Wetlands that will expire in April 2016.

State completes greater sage-grouse agreement

Sept. 18 signing supports federal decision to not list species

The Obama administration on Sept. 22 announced that the greater sage-grouse, a species that lives in rangelands in eastern Oregon, will not be listed as an endangered species under federal law.

Interior Department Secretary Sally Jewell said restoration of the bird's habitat will be accomplished through collaboration among federal agencies, states, ranchers and environmental organizations.



The Oregon Department of State Lands (DSL) has been working for several years to prepare a Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA) for managing sage grouse habitat in collaboration with private and public entities to make Oregon's protection strategy as seamless as possible.

"Our CCAA applies across all DSL-managed land within the sage-grouse's range," said eastern region manager Lanny Quackenbush. He says about 50 percent of state-owned rangelands are currently occupied sage-grouse habitat.

The CCAA that was finalized in September requires the state to complete habitat assessments, to be submitted to the U.S. Fish and

Wildlife Service for approval. Quackenbush said a precondition of the CCAA was completing assessments on 25 percent of state-owned rangelands. The other assessments will be completed within the next three years or earlier.

The assessments evaluate the current state of habitat and include a projection for improving or worsening conditions. Specific conservation measures are put in place as needed to address the conditions.



The phased approach reflects both DSL's and the USFWS's capacity to

conduct and review assessments. "The goal is to have 100 percent coverage for our lands in case the sage-grouse is later listed," said Quackenbush. "We believe all our hard work will pay off for the environment and also for economic activities on Oregon rangelands."

The term of the CCAA is 30 years, unless modified, extended or terminated sooner.

Trust Property updates

Estates Unit

The estates team has had a busy year, with 120 reported estates in the first quarter of FY 2016 alone. This will likely result in an overall increase in number of estates handled for the fiscal year. The Department of State Lands administers estates that have no will and no apparent heir.

The team of three also received and conducted heir searches on over 375 reported estates during FY 2015.

Staff continues to identify and notify rightful heirs so that they may exert their legal rights to claim estates.



In July 2015, DSL closed on the sale of a property in Roseburg. Extensive research has not identified any heirs to this property to date. DSL is working with the Department of Justice to fully probate this estate along with several others.

More information about the estates administration program is available [online](#).

Unclaimed Property Unit

Staff is gearing up for the annual reporting of unclaimed property. If you are a business or organization that is holding funds for a payee that cannot be located, you'll need to make sure you are complying with Oregon's unclaimed property law. Check the Unclaimed Property Unit's [website](#) for more information.

Also check the unclaimed property [name search](#) to see if you have unclaimed funds. It's easy and quick, and you might be surprised to find you have money waiting to be claimed. With more than *half a billion dollars* available for claim, chances are good that you, your business, a relative or friend have unclaimed funds.

Oregon drought persists

The 2014-2015 statewide snowpack set new record lows, replacing the previous low-snow years of 1977, 1981, 1992 and 2005.

While the new water year began Oct. 1, all of Oregon is still classified by the US Drought Monitor as being in a severe drought, with two-thirds of the state in extreme drought. Cooler temperatures, shorter days and the end of irrigation season have helped some stream conditions recover, but many reservoirs are still extremely low.

The National Weather Service says the outlook through Dec. 31, 2015 is for the drought in Oregon to persist and intensify. If 2016 starts out warm and dry, the State of Oregon may reconvene its Water Availability Committee, which reviews technical data including precipitation, temperature, snowpack, streamflow measurements, and reservoir storage.

Local, state, federal and tribal governments can use this information to coordinate a response to drought.

Gov. Brown directed all state agencies that own or manage land and facilities to reduce non-essential water use, with a goal of reducing use by 15 percent or more by Dec. 31, 2020. These agencies, which include DSL, must also report to the Governor by Nov. 1, 2015, and annually thereafter, on progress in implementing these actions, barriers encountered, and future steps to reduce non-essential use of water.

Check the Oregon Water Resources Department [Drought Watch](#) web page, and also www.drought.oregon.gov for more information and updates.

South Slough brochures highlight activities, trails

Two new publications touting visitor activities, educational programs and research at the South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve are now available.

Learn about the importance of estuaries and how to explore the Reserve by land and water in the [Explore an Estuary](#)



brochure. The smaller [rack card](#), available in state and local visitor centers, provides directions and colorful photos to entice visitors to make the trip to Charleston.

Visit the South Slough [website](#) for more information on this special place on Oregon's southern coast.

Check out other DSL brochures online:

<http://www.oregon.gov/dsl/Pages/brochures.aspx>

Please bear with us!

The Department of State Lands recently remodeled the work space in our 25-year-old building. Because the state is converting to a new phone system, we are temporarily using cell phones for agency business. Unfortunately, calls to and from our cell phones are not as stable as we would like which results in calls being frequently dropped. We sincerely apologize for the inconvenience, and hope to have land lines installed by the beginning of 2016.

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