



Expectations

A Newsletter About Elliott State Forest Planning

May 2004

Public Meetings Set in June to Hear Comments

Public meetings to discuss and gather input on proposed strategies for the Elliott Forest management plan are scheduled in mid-June in Salem, Coos Bay and Roseburg.

The meetings are designed to provide informal opportunities to exchange information.

Specialists will be available for discussions at four walk-up stations focusing on general information, timber harvesting and habitat, fish and wildlife, and monitoring and adaptive management.

Participants will have a half-hour to move freely among the stations at their own pace. Information at the stations is designed to help participants form opinions related to questions (see page 11) they will be asked to consider during small group discussions.

See Questions on Page 11

The meetings will run 6 to 8 p.m. Dates and locations follow:

- **June 10 in Salem** at the Oregon Department of Forestry, 2600 State St.
- **June 16 in Coos Bay** at the Public Library, 525 Anderson St.
- **June 17 in Roseburg** at the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife SW Regional Office, 4192 N. Umpqua Highway.

More details about the meetings can be found on page 11.

Proposed Strategies Developed

Plan Takes Shape, Input Again Sought

The Oregon Department of Forestry has developed details for revising the forest management plan and the habitat conservation plan for the Elliott State Forest.

These details are in the form of strategies to provide direction for carrying out the three forest management concepts identified earlier as a general direction for the 93,000-acre forest near Coos Bay.

The concepts focus on 1) using structure to measure forest development, 2) having conservation areas for wildlife and 3) revising special treatment areas along streams.

Forest planners developed an integrated resource strategy approach where the effects and benefits of management practices are considered for all forest resources. The approach acknowledges, however, that not all resource objectives can be maximized at the same time.

Balancing diverse goals is seen as do-able across the landscape and over time. Individual management practices may not embody all the benefits of an integrated strategy, but taken as a whole and given time they would meet the legal mandate and provide for a broad range of resource goals.



Members of the public join the Board of Forestry on April 22 Elliott State Forest tour.

ODF invites interested persons to comment on the strategies at upcoming public meetings.

A public comment period on the draft landscape strategies runs from June 10 to July 9.

Comments from the last input period, as well as information from wildlife surveys, economic studies and forest modeling, were considered in the development of strategies.

Future opportunities for public involvement will occur as the proposed forest management plan progresses toward a final draft.

ODF began the revision process in 2000 in anticipation of the expiration of the incidental take permit in 2001 for marbled murrelet.

ODF must now survey planned timber sale areas for marbled murrelets before offering them for sale. About a quarter of the sales have resulted in detections of the seabird, requiring these sales to be abandoned or significantly altered.

**Comments Due
By July 9**

Income from Forest Goes to Common School Fund

Constitutional Mandate Requires Maximum Long-Term Revenue

The Oregon Constitution directs that timber revenue generated from Common School Lands, of which 90 percent comprises the Elliott State Forest, must go to the Common School Fund.

A portion of the interest from this fund is used to annually support public schools.

ODF has a contract with the State Land Board to manage the Common School Lands.

The Oregon Constitution (Article VIII, Section 5) authorizes the State Land Board to manage Common School Lands “with the object of obtaining the greatest benefit for the people of this state, consistent with

Common School Fund, within the context of environmentally sound management.

The goals of the State Land Board’s asset management plan are linked to the constitutional mandate and the opinion of the attorney general.

The State Land Board considered a range of management options when it adopted the current forest management plan and the habitat conservation plan in the mid-1990s, including alternatives that emphasized conservation. The current plan was considered the best balance of resource values to meet their Constitutional duty to the state.

Both the forest management plan and the habitat conservation plan being developed by ODF will need to meet the same standards of the previous plans. It is believed that the revisions will result in more flexibility and allow for higher harvest levels along with continuing environmental protections.

To provide management certainty for a longer period of time, the proposed revised habitat conservation plan aims to cover multiple species, including the northern spotted owl, marbled murrelet, coho salmon and other species of concern.

The goal of these of these changes is to develop a management plan and a habitat conservation plan that will consistently produce dependable revenue over the long term for the Common School Fund, primarily through sustainable timber harvests, while providing for wildlife habitat and other forest values.

Cost-Benefit Analysis to Compare Resource Outputs Vs. Selling Elliott

In response to a legislative budget note, a cost-benefit analysis is planned to compare resource outputs of the Elliott State Forest versus selling the forest and investing the proceeds of sale.

The Oregon Department of State Lands is in the process of selecting a contractor to do the analysis. The report will be forwarded to the legislature by December.

The Joint Ways and Means Committee’s subcommittee on natural resources issued the budget note to conduct the cost-benefit analysis. Members expressed concern about declining harvest levels due to environmental constraints.

The Elliott State Forest currently produces about 27 million board feet of timber a year, which

generates about \$15 million annually for the Common School Fund and counties. Before the listing of the northern spotted owl, the forest reached annual harvesting of about 50 million board feet, a level considered sustainable for the 93,000-acre forest.

The cost-benefit analysis is scheduled to be completed by December. A contract to conduct the study – expected to cost about \$60,000 – will be awarded within a month.

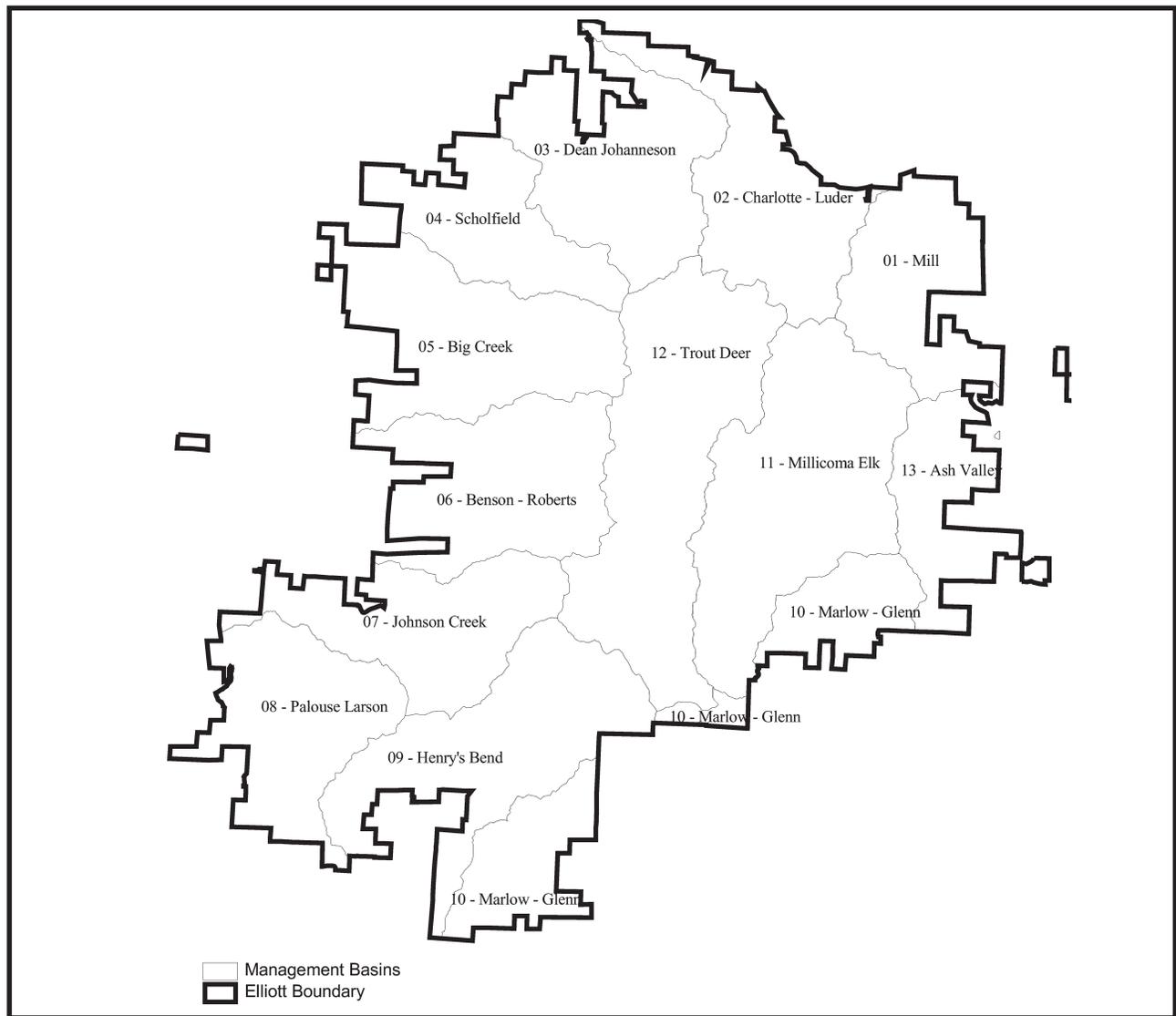
The Departments of State Lands and Forestry have developed a list of questions to be answered by the study. The questions focus not only on a potential sale and the income comparison, but also on the non-monetary values of state forestlands such as access for recreation and environmental considerations.

In light of this Constitutional mandate, the Oregon Department of Forestry manages the forest to generate the greatest amount of revenue in the long run, consistent with sound techniques of land and timber management.

The Common School Lands are owned by the State Land Board.

the conservation of this resource under sound techniques of land management.”

According to a 1992 opinion of former Oregon Attorney General Charles Crookham, the “greatest benefit for the people” standard requires the State Land Board to maximize long-term revenue to the



Proposed Management Basins Based on Watersheds *Reduced from 17 to 13, Basins Now Match Drainage Systems*

Management basins within the proposed landscape strategy for the Elliott State Forest would change from 17 to 13 basins.

The proposed basins are based on a universal standard for watersheds instead of on the size of northern spotted owl home ranges, the measurement for the current forest management plan approved in the mid-1990s.

Changing the basins to follow watersheds made sense because the drainage of water from higher elevations to a single lower point represents a “system.” Measuring

the effects of management within a watershed will fit well with future monitoring plans.

Conversely, important areas for owls and marbled murrelets are often not defined by topographic boundaries. They can span multiple watersheds.

Under the proposed plan, habitat would be managed both within and across basin boundaries. Management by watershed basins also allows for improved consideration for aquatic habitat and fish needs.

Each basin has been named – based on a geographic location,

feature or historical connection – to better identify it. The basins and their acreages follow:

- Mill** – 5,356 acres;
- Charlotte-Luder** – 6,422 acres;
- Dean Johanneson** – 7,296 acres;
- Scholfield** – 4,990 acres;
- Big Creek** – 7,823.
- Benson-Roberts** – 7,327 acres;
- Johnson Creek** – 6,322 acres;
- Palouse Larson** – 6,552 acres;
- Henry’s Bend** – 8,432.
- Marlow-Glenn** – 6,512 acres;
- Millicoma Elk** – 10,873 acres;
- Trout Deer** – 11,321 acres;
- Ash Valley** – 4,122 acres.

Conservation Areas Tied to Threatened Species

Using updated information about the location of threatened species, the proposed landscape strategy pinpoints conservation areas in each management basin and targets specific percentages for advanced structure.

The conservation areas are similar to those found in the current plan. But the proposed plan uses a fine-filter system that differs from the current management plan that used more of a broad-brush approach with either long- or intermediate-rotation basins.

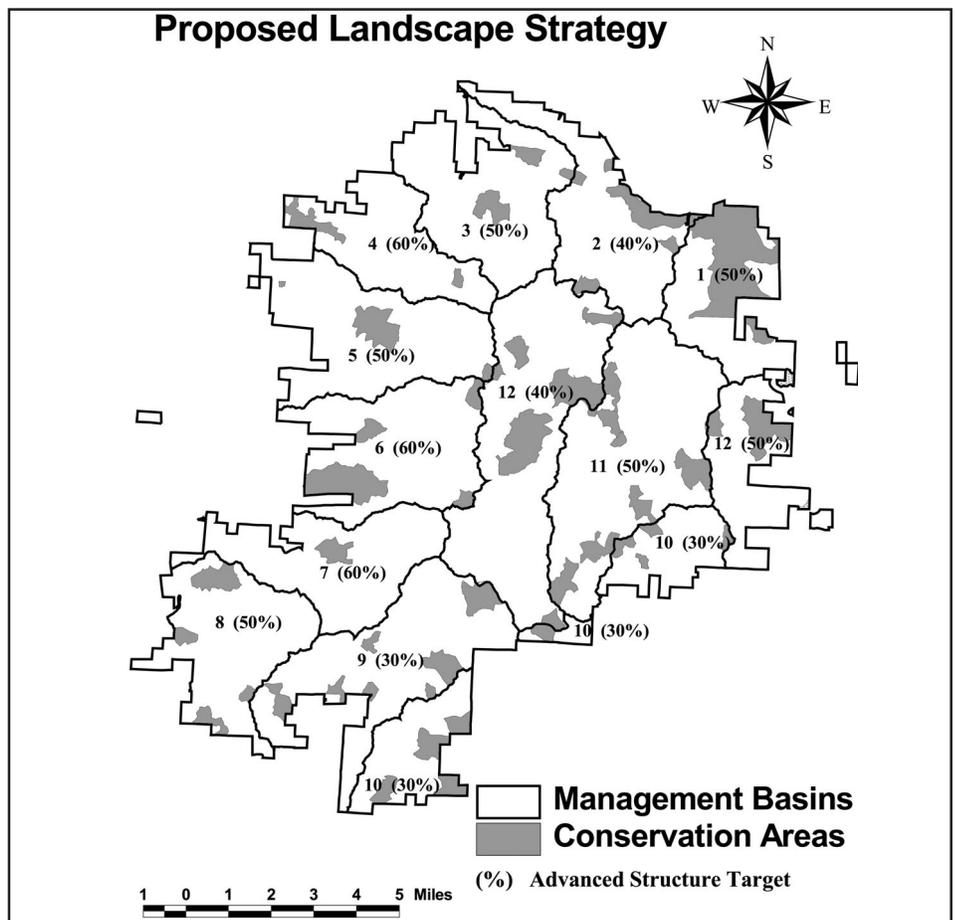
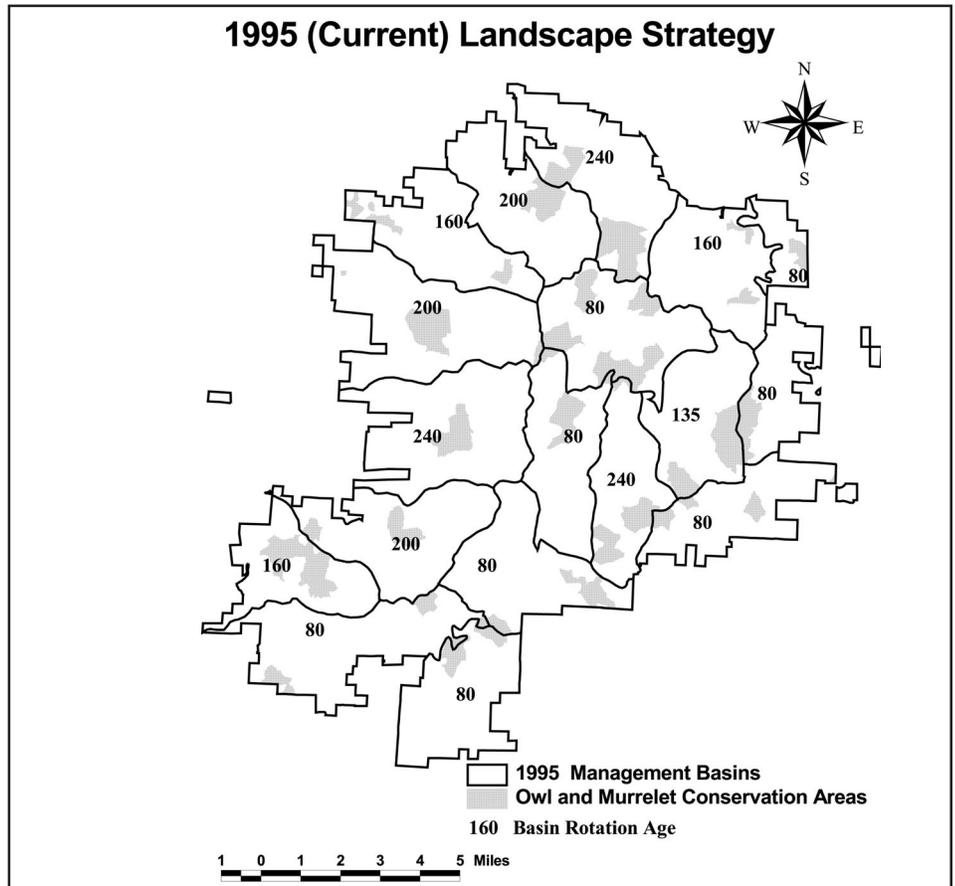
Instead of designating a rotation age for each basin, the proposed plan looks at each basin to determine conservation areas, then links these to the amount of advanced structure (older forest habitat) in each basin.

<i>Forest-wide Structure Percentages</i>	
Advanced Structure	40-60%
Intermediate Structure	35-45%
Early Structure	5-15%

The identified percentage for conservation areas and advanced structure for each basin is based on the known presence of threatened species. This provides the habitat connectivity within and among basins for the threatened species.

A similarity between the long-rotation basins of the 1995 plan and the targets for advanced structure within each basin in the proposed plan is that habitat within a basin is not confined to specific areas – the locations may change as the forest matures and habitat is harvested.

Long-term, the proposed plan would have 40-60 percent of the forest in advanced structure. For comparison, the 1995 plan would eventually have 52 percent of the landscape in 80-year or older forest (owl habitat is defined as age 80-plus in the 1995 plan).



Variety of Structure Developed for Habitat

Age of a Forest May Not Equate to Habitat

Using structure – not age – to determine habitat conditions is seen as a way to improve the quality of habitat.

In some cases, age alone may not be a good indicator of habitat quality in older stands. If these stands are densely stocked, they may lack the structural diversity needed for northern spotted owl and marbled murrelet habitat.

These threatened bird species typically use larger trees to nest and favor multiple canopies within a stand to protect their nests from predators. Unthinned stands in older age brackets tend to have smaller diameter trees because they have grown close together and have not developed the characteristics needed by owls and murrelets.



Threatened northern spotted owls prefer advanced forest structure.

Managing stands for multiple resource values, such as economic and environmental, involves periodic thinnings to promote diameter growth in fewer trees per acre. It also means managing for snags (standing dead trees) and down wood (decaying logs). Thinnings also provide growing space and light to the forest floor to initiate understory growth of younger trees (another canopy) and brush and shrubs.

The proposed landscape strategy looks at the kinds of structure in a stand to determine its suitability for

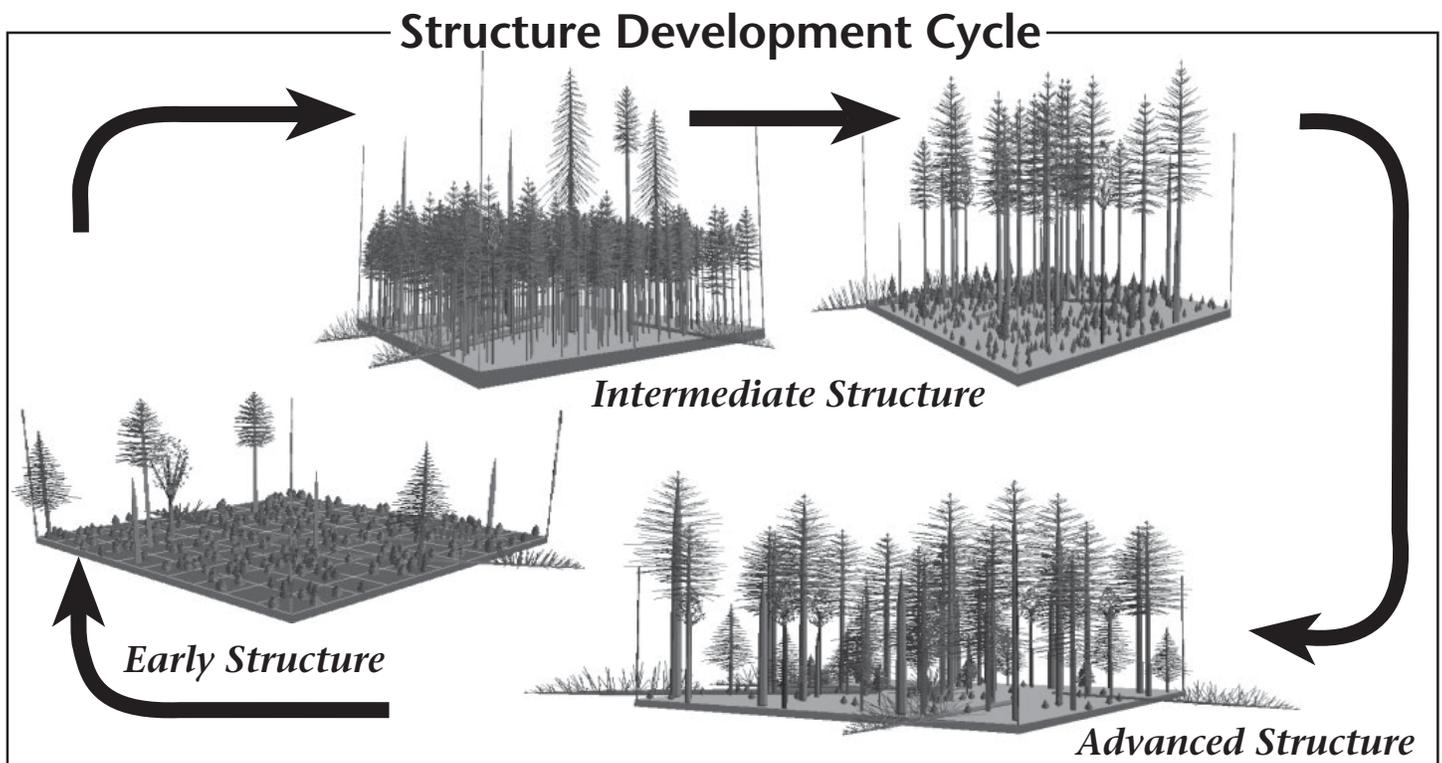
habitat. The 1995 plan uses age to define habitat.

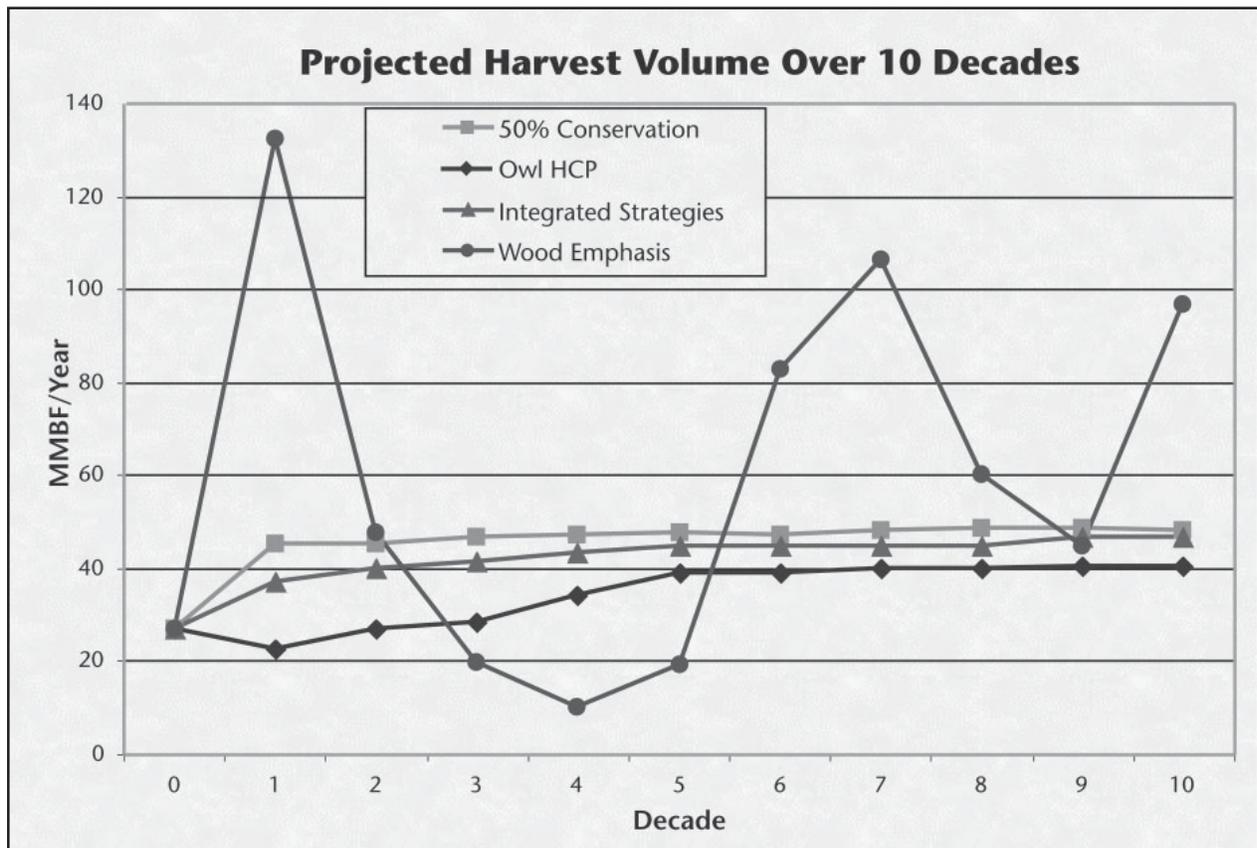
Three terms are used in the proposed plan to describe the broad structure types of the forest – early structure, intermediate structure and advanced structure.

Early structure is the primarily open areas found after a clearcut harvest. This stage of development continues for about the first 20 years.

As the canopy closes and trees fully occupy a site, the stand transitions to intermediate structure. Thinnings are used during this stage to promote tree growth and encourage the development of other structure.

Progressively a stand will develop large trees and more diverse vertical structure with shade tolerant trees and shrubs in the understory. As these characteristics develop, a stand becomes advanced structure. The definition for advanced structure includes characteristics such as multiple tree species, tree diameter, tree density, snags and down wood.





Volume projections are listed in MMBF (million board feet). ODF produced this graph and the graph on page 7 (advanced structure percentages) from computer modeling by OSU Professor John Sessions.

Computer Modeling Projects Volume, Habitat Outputs

A sophisticated computer program that uses forest inventory data to project volume and habitat outputs is being used to compare different management scenarios for the Elliott State Forest.

The chart appearing on this page shows the projected harvest volume over 10 decades for four distinctly different management approaches. The chart on page 7 shows the projected percent of advanced structure over 10 decades.

The two measures – volume and advanced structure – provide a useful comparison because forest planners are striving to attain the optimum balance between providing dependable revenues over the long term while providing resource protection for wildlife and fish species.

The volume projections will indicate whether revenue levels are

potentially going to be within an acceptable range, and whether advanced structure projections provide the necessary older forest habitat for species that depend on it.

Outputs are being analyzed, but fine-tuning and analysis of the model will continue through the summer. Inventory data being used in the model are updated, with much of the existing data collected during the last 5 years.

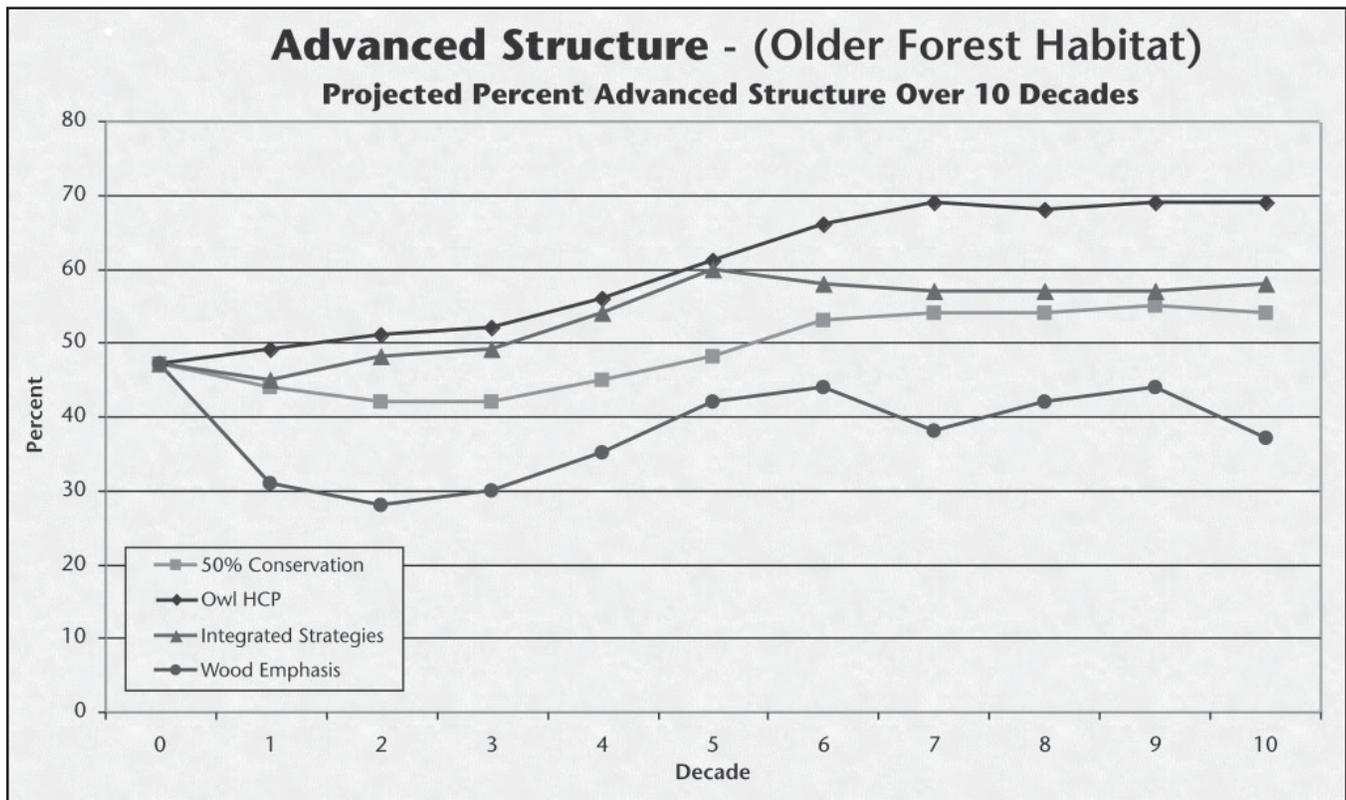
A new yield table incorporating the latest inventory data for the Elliott is being developed and will be available for use by late 2004 for modeling the proposed landscape strategy and several alternatives.

Advanced structure stands are defined as having a prominent overstory of larger trees (at least 30 18-inch diameter trees, 100 feet or more in height, per acre; 10 of

which have at least 24-inch diameters and eight or more have 32-inch diameters), an understory of 30-foot-plus trees, and a variety of shrubs and herbs on the forest floor.

Advanced structure stands of a more diverse nature have a mixture of shade-tolerant (western red cedar, western hemlock, bigleaf maple) and shade-intolerant species (Douglas-fir). The stands have at least six 12-inch diameter snags per acre, of which two have at least 24-inch diameters.

Down wood is measured by decay class – either 600 to 900 cubic feet per acres of sound logs (decay class 1-2) or 3,000 to 4,500 cubic feet of all decay classes 1-5. At least one large remnant tree (over 32-inch diameter with deeply fissured bark, large limbs or “platforms” and evidence of fungal decay or other decadence) should exist per 5 acres.



Elliott State Forest Modeling Scenarios

	50% Conservation	Owl HCP (no change)	Integrated Landscape Strategy	Wood Emphasis
General Description	HCP for owls, murrelets, fish. 50% of Elliott allocated to conservation areas	1995 HCP for owls. ODF take avoidance policies for murrelets, fish.	HCP for owls, murrelets, fish. Use structure to define habitat.	No HCP. 70 acre core for 15 owl sites, 103 marbled murrelet sites averaging 55 acres.
Timber Production	Non-declining flow. 13 mgt basins. Minimum harvest age 45 years.	Non-declining flow. 17 mgt basins. Rotation ages vary 80-240 years.	Non-declining flow. 13 mgt basins. Basin targets for % advanced structure habitat.	Maximize net present value. 13 mgt basins. No minimum harvest age.
Conservation Areas	Total conservation areas 50%	Total conservation areas 23-55%	Total conservation areas 20-30%	Surveys for owls, murrelets. One owl site vacated every 5 years. 19% of harvest setting become murrelet sites per 5 year period, up to 15,000 acres. Owl and MAMU site changes stop after 50 years. Total "off base" 19-30%
Riparian Strategy	NW FMP riparian strategies	1995 Elliott Riparian Strategies	NW FMP riparian strategies	Forest Practices Act Riparian Management Areas

Definitions:

Non-declining flow – an even rate of timber harvest over time.

Advanced Structure 40-60%, Intermediate Structure 35-45%, Early Structure 5-15%

NW FMP – Northwest Oregon State Forests Management Plan

HCP – Habitat Conservation Plan

Conservation Areas – Habitat Conservation Areas, Marbled Murrelet Management Areas, Riparian Management Areas and operationally limited areas.

Revised Strategies Maintain, Restore Aquatic Areas

Aquatic and riparian strategies are being revised to maintain or restore the key ecological function of streams, streambanks and in the upland areas that directly influence the freshwater habitat of aquatic species.

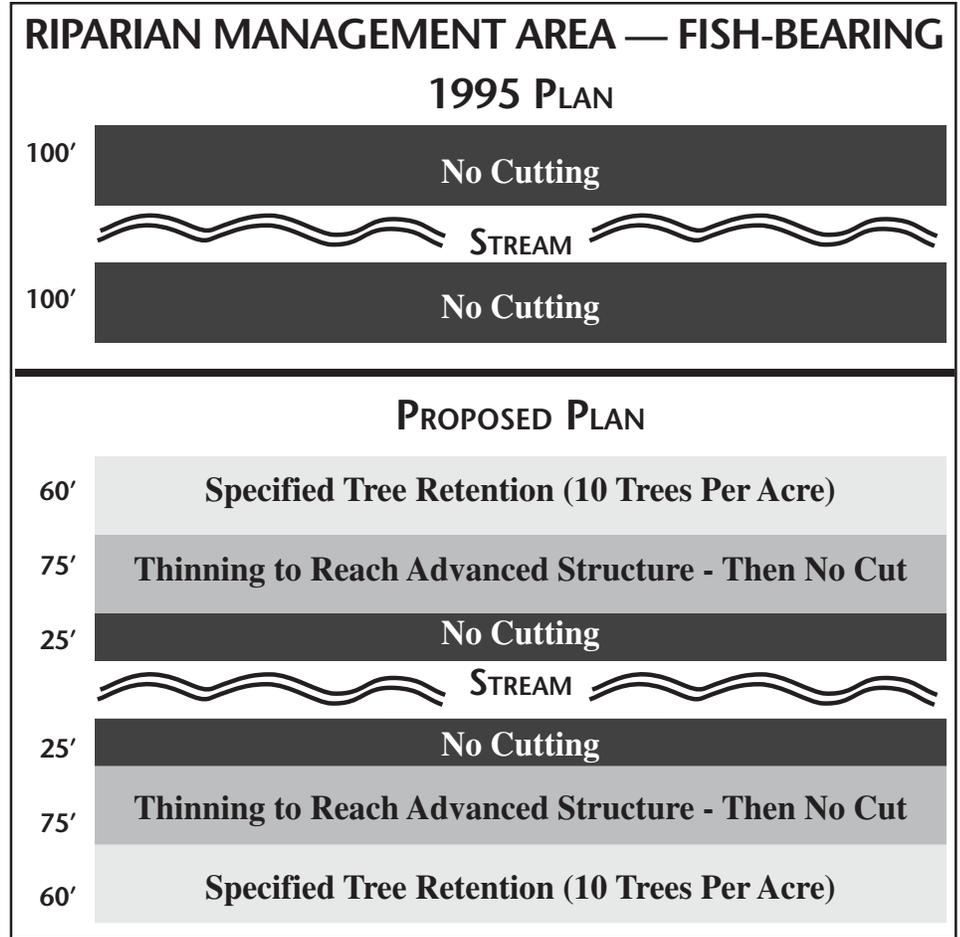
The revised strategies – based on those adopted for state forests in northwest Oregon – call for a riparian management area based on site-tree height.

The site-tree height – in the case of the Elliott State Forest about 160 feet – establishes the horizontal distance on either side of a stream for riparian management areas.

Tree retention and management standards depend on whether a stream is classed under Forest Practices standards as small, medium or large, whether a stream is perennial or intermittent, and whether or not a stream has fish in it.

The example on this page shows the current and proposed standards for fish-bearing streams. The proposed strategy allows thinning 25 feet from the stream out to 100 feet to move conditions to advanced structure, then no more harvest would occur.

The 1995 strategy does not permit harvest within 100 feet of the stream, regardless of the condition of the stand. The proposed strategy adds



60 feet of outer riparian management area where some tree retention is required.

Roads would be managed to keep as much forest land in productive condition as possible, prevent water quality problems and maintain adequate fish passage where roads cross fish-bearing streams.

Slope stability is addressed in two ways. First, the integrated landscape strategies are designed to provide an identified level of advanced structure across the forest and within each basin. Second, site-specific evaluations occur during harvest planning to get advice from geotechnical and wildlife specialists to apply detailed operating procedures.

Legacy Components Leave Structure for Next Generation

Leaving key structure components – trees, snags and down wood – after a harvest operation is done so the next generation of timber stands begins with structural complexity.

This diversity of stands provides for a variety of species and habitats. Important attributes include the size of standing live and dead trees, the

condition of those trees, and the size, amount and condition of down wood on the forest floor.

Canopies provide important habitat for a variety of wildlife. Down wood in streams also provides habitat and it is a long-term source of nutrients.

Down wood in streams also plays an important role in stream ecosystems

by forming pools and backwaters, providing nutrients, slowing stream flow and trapping sediment.

The proposed plan calls for two to four trees per acres (on average) to be retained during a regeneration (clearcut) harvest, up to three snags per acre and three to six logs per acre as down wood.

Progress Toward Goals Examined By Monitoring

Are we doing what we set out to do? Is what we set out to do still the right target to shoot for?

A monitoring plan for the Elliott State Forest will be put into place to help answer these questions. It will evaluate whether management strategies are being achieved and whether the strategies themselves are resulting in anticipated harvest levels and habitat for species of concern.

Monitoring will be tied to the forest management plan and the 10-year implementation plan, which takes the overarching principles and strategies of the forest management plan and applies them “on the ground.”

The implementation plan will project a “desired future condition” for the forest that extends several decades into the future.

The diverse stand types – ranging from early to intermediate to advanced structure – called for in the forest management plan will guide the implementation plan.

Monitoring provides information to assess the implementation and effectiveness of the forest management plan. It evaluates the fundamental assumptions that form the basis for the forest management plan.

The evaluation of these assumptions will focus on the development of specific monitoring projects to determine if the strategies are achieving their objectives.

Adaptive management will allow for fine-tuning if changes need to be made.

October 2003 Watershed Analysis Suggests Ways to Improve Quality

A recently completed independent watershed analysis found that – overall – the Elliott State Forest is being managed effectively to address key issues affecting fish, wildlife and water quality.

The October 2003 report did include recommendations to improve watershed health.

Among the conclusions, the analysis cited the forest for having a well-designed and maintained road system. It found that most human-caused barriers to fish passage have been removed.

The Oregon Department of Forestry, with assistance from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and nearby watershed councils, has an ongoing program to improve aquatic habitat. A total of 136 watershed restoration projects have been completed since 1995.

The report mentioned that where timber harvesting occurs, trees are being generously retained along perennial streams and other sensitive areas.

It was noted that sizable areas of the forest are managed for growing old trees to benefit wildlife and fish. Some of those areas, the report observed, are off limits to future timber harvests.

The watershed analysis found that ODF has addressed some past

practices that negatively affected fish, wildlife and water quality.

Some high priority recommendations from the report include:

- Increasing large wood in streams by direct placement of logs in fish-bearing streams.



Placing down wood in streams forms pools and backwaters, provides nutrients, slows stream flow and traps sediment.

- Re-establishing conifers in streamside areas that once grew this species but now support mostly hardwoods.

- Conducting an inventory of remaining discrete sources of sediment along roads within the watersheds that drain into the Tenmile Lakes.

- Monitoring herbicide concentrations for several spray operations to confirm that application methods are effective at keeping herbicides out of streams.

- Examining cost-effective means to divert ditch water along roads onto stable locations to reduce fine sediments from entering stream channels (especially on roads used during the wet season).

Scientists Review Plan and Find Much to Support

Responses from a group of scientists commissioned to review the draft forest management plan for the Elliott State Forest were generally constructive and supportive.

The eight reviewers said the Oregon Department of Forestry is taking a good approach, saying it was modern, integrative and will support sustainable ecosystem management.

They said they believed the plan includes good interpretation and use of the available science. The review was conducted in late 2003.

The group did, however, suggest having a better connection between the concepts and strategies and clearer explanations for those unfamiliar with ODF. Many of the comments called for more detail, which ODF plans to provide in the 10-year implementation plan that will accompany the long-range, strategic forest management plan.

The scientists reviewing the plan included Janet Ohmann, forest

ecologist, U.S. Forest Service Pacific NW Research Station (PNWRS); Larry Irwin, wildlife biologist, National Council for Air and Stream Improvement; Bill Emmingham, silviculture professor, Oregon State University; and Chad Oliver, forestry and environmental studies professor, Yale University.

Peter Bisson, fisheries biologist, U.S. Forest Service (PNWRS); Bob Gresswell, aquatic ecologist, U.S. Geological Survey; Eric Forsman, wildlife biologist, U.S. Forest Service (PNWRS); and Peter Teensma, fire ecologist, U.S. Department of the Interior.

General comments and the ODF response follow:

- Need better description of the current condition of the forest and the desired future condition. **ODF response:** Agree. Public review will include maps of forest condition and tables that describe modeling predictions.

- Lack detail of landscape design and the silviculture pathways and approaches to be used. **ODF response:** Agree. Detail will be described in district implementation plan, which will be reviewed at 10-year intervals. A draft implementation plan for one management basin will be available during public review.

- Need better connection between the concepts and strategies sections and clarification of guidelines, standards and strategies. **ODF Response:** Agree. Documents will be revised and reorganized to clarify relationship. A table will be available during public review to show linkages between goals, concepts and strategies.

Issues and responses related to specific questions asked of the reviewers are available for public review by contacting the district. A second, independent third-party panel review is planned late this year.

Most Recent Public Comments Offer Perspectives on Issues

More than 250 public responses – in e-mails, faxes and written letters – provided a wide variety of perspectives in the fall of 2002 on social, economic and biological issues.

Comments were sought through a newsletter that asked respondents to answer three questions focused on the broad management approaches being considered for the Elliott State Forest for revising the forest management plan and habitat conservation plan.

The questions asked 1) whether a reasonable range of management approaches were considered, 2) if the criteria represented a reasonable way of narrowing the range of

approaches, and 3) for views on using three concepts to build landscape strategies. The three concepts entail using structure to define habitat, revising aquatic strategies, and maintaining conservation areas for habitat.

Twenty-five common themes emerged from the comments. Themes ranged from general points of view that advocated little or no harvesting (to protect threatened species) to those that sought increased volume levels (citing the constitutional mandate to generate revenue for schools).

Some of those responding said the planning so far is on the right track.

Other comments focused more specifically on strategies. Recommendations for conservation areas varied from reducing them to 25 percent to increasing them to 80 percent.

The planning process under way seeks to develop a revised long-term management plan and habitat conservation plan that produce a balance of between timber revenues and other resource values that will fulfill the constitutional mandate for Common School Forest Lands.

Other opportunities for public involvement are planned as the draft plans for management and habitat conservation move toward completion.

Questions

In light of the Elliott State Forest's Constitutional mandate to produce revenue for Oregon schools and comply with the federal Endangered Species Act,

1. Do you agree with the plan's harvesting and habitat goals? Why or why not?

Please consider:

- The proposed plan calls for regeneration harvests and partial cuts to generate revenue.
- The proposed plan calls for conservation areas to protect wildlife habitat.
- The proposed plan calls for riparian areas to protect fish habitat and water quality.
- The proposed plan calls for managing for diverse stand types rather than solely using age to classify stands.

2. Do you agree with the strategies for integrating timber production and habitat development? Why or why not?

Please consider:

- The proposed plan calls for using timber harvests to generate revenue and create diverse stand types.
- The proposed plan calls for a range of stand types for diverse habitat, from open spaces to advanced structure resembling old growth.
- The proposed plan calls for using monitoring and research to see how management can be adapted to better meet timber and habitat goals.

Meetings Designed for Conversations About Planning

The public meetings in Salem, Coos Bay and Roseburg are designed to spur conversations about the direction being proposed by the Oregon Department of Forestry for the Elliott State Forest.

This direction for the forest has evolved from principles and concepts to a more detailed landscape strategy for the forest management plan. ODF is seeking opinions from the public on how well the strategy meets the constitutional requirement for the land for harvesting and habitat goals.

The meetings will start at 6 p.m. with informal walk-up stations so participants can move among the stations to gather information and ask questions of specialists.

The stations will focus on:

- General Information – the constitutional mandate for this land, what the Oregon Department of Forestry is trying to accomplish with the revision process.
- Timber Harvesting and Habitat Development – future estimates on harvested acres and volumes, explanations on stand structure types, legacy components (leave trees and down wood), and roads.
- Fish and Wildlife Habitat – conservation areas for threatened species, riparian management areas for fish habitat and water quality, diverse structure stands for native wildlife.
- Monitoring and Adaptive Management – tracking objectives and making adjustments where necessary based on observations and research.

Submit Your Comments

At Public Meetings:

June 10 in Salem
June 16 in Coos Bay
June 17 in Roseburg

By Mail:

Larry Sprouse
Oregon Dept of Forestry
63612 Fifth Road
Coos Bay, OR 97420

By E-mail:

Lsprouse @odf.state.or.us

By Fax:

541-269-2027

Comments due by July 9

