



Expectations

A Newsletter About Elliott State Forest Planning

May 2001

Coast Range State Forest Benefits Oregonians

Elliott Well Known for High-quality Timber, Recreation, Wildlife Habitat

By Jim Young
ODF Coos District Forester

The Elliott State Forest is well known for producing high-quality timber, recreational opportunities, and habitat for many of the region's fish and wildlife species.

Managed by the Oregon Dept of Forestry (ODF), the Elliott is unique in several ways:

- It was Oregon's first state forest. Created in 1930, scattered forestlands owned by the state were traded with the U. S. Forest Service for a block of land that was once a part of the Siuslaw National Forest.

- It is more than 90 percent

Common School Forest Land. When Oregon became a state in 1859, the Admissions Act stated Section 16 and 36 of every township would be given to the state for use for public schools. Called Common School Lands, these lands are managed to benefit public schools in Oregon.

- The original Elliott ownership was never privately owned. As a result, the road system was designed and developed from the beginning by ODF to meet the needs for managing the consolidated ownership of the Elliott.

- It is the first state forest in Oregon to operate under a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Elliott's HCP was approved in 1995.



Elliott State Forest has 93,000 acres.

The 93,000-acre Elliott is located northeast of Coos Bay in the Oregon Coast Range. A large fire known as the Coos Bay Fire of 1868 burned about 90 percent of the area that is now the Elliott.

Starting near Scottsburg northeast of the present-day Elliott State Forest, the fire burned about 300,000 acres as it swept southwesterly – stopping only after it reached the waters of Coos

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ODF Newsletter Provides Link

Welcome to the first issue of *Expectations*, a newsletter with information about Elliott State Forest management and habitat conservation planning now under way.

The Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) will use this newsletter to communicate with interested persons during the planning process, which is expected to take about three years.

The newsletter will be published on an as-needed basis to note progress in the planning process and to announce upcoming opportunities for public involvement.

Planning Starts Again to Take Broad Look at Elliott State Forest Resources

Ample Habitat, Sustainable Timber Harvests Sought

Another round of forest-planning – after the Elliott State Forest gained approval of its forest management plan (FMP) and a habitat conservation plan (HCP) in the mid-90s – became necessary to ensure stable timber harvests and habitat protection.

The Elliott State Forest is a

“working” forest that generates revenue for Oregon's schools through timber harvest. It also is a place for wildlife. The Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) manages the forest to produce a sustainable timber supply and to ensure that wildlife –

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State Manages Elliott Since 1930s to Benefit State

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Bay. Some trees in the fire were estimated to be 300 years old. After the fire the forest regenerated naturally as a Douglas-fir dominated forest.

1930s with intensive forest management beginning in the 1950s. Under the current management plan, two important goals for the Elliott involve managing the forest to produce revenue for the Common

revenues for the Common School Fund, consistent with sound techniques of land and timber management. Over the years, timber harvest from the Elliott has produced hundreds of millions of dollars for the Common School Fund. Current harvests on the Elliott average about 25 to 28 million board feet of timber annually, producing an average value of \$16 million per year.

Welcome to *Expectations*



I would like to welcome you to this first issue of our *Expectations* newsletter.

I invite you to take a few minutes to read through this issue of *Expectations* (as well as future issues) and become involved in the management of your Elliott State Forest.

Jim Young
Coos District Forester

School Fund and conserving important fish and wildlife habitat. Another goal is to provide opportunities for dispersed recreation, such as hunting, fishing, picnicking and camping in unimproved areas.

The primary standard of management on Common School Forest Lands is the maximization of long-term

The Elliott State Forest has many unique qualities and offers many benefits to the people of Oregon. Those benefits range from generating revenue for support of Oregon's schools, to providing habitat for threatened species, to providing recreational opportunities for people to enjoy Oregon's forests. The planning and stewardship provided by ODF's foresters and biologists will continue to provide those benefits for many years and decades to come.

The state began locating property boundaries and developing roads in the

management on Common School Forest Lands is the maximization of long-term

Forest Planning Considers Multiple Species Habitat

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particularly threatened and endangered species – are protected.

Wildlife protection strategies in the Elliott HCP spell out special protection measures for threatened species. On the Elliott, the northern spotted owl and marbled murrelet are the threatened species addressed in the plan.

Although the current HCP protects those two species, the strategies for the marbled murrelet were initially seen as short term because not much was known about marbled murrelets when the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service approved the Elliott HCP in 1995.

Due to the limited amount of knowledge about murrelets, ODF and USFWS agreed to limit the incidental take permit for marbled murrelets on the Elliott to six years. An incidental take permit can be issued after developing an approved HCP – the permit recognizes a landowner's conservation efforts as an offset to potential effects from management activities.

More was known about the northern spotted owl at the time of the HCP's approval, prompting a 60-year incidental take permit for the owl.

For the past several years, ODF has funded research on the marbled murrelet, a seabird that nests inland in older forests. ODF plans to use this and other information it has learned about the threatened bird to make sure adequate murrelet habitat is developed and maintained.

As the ODF Coos District began to consider revising the

HCP for marbled murrelets, it became clear that other species either now or in the near future would also need to be included in the HCP. Rather than go through another planning process in a few more years if a new species is listed, a decision was made to open up the process now to allow for a multi-species HCP – one that would include coho salmon and other species that could be listed in the future.

The planning process, under way for several months, is expected to take about three years to complete. The Coos District will first concentrate on revising the Elliott's forest management plan to incorporate the most current forestry research. Development of a multi-species HCP will be concurrent but finalized after completing the forest management plan revision.

These changes will help the Coos District meet its goals of producing sustainable timber harvests that generate revenue for the state's Common School Fund while protecting wildlife habitat over the long term.

The revised forest management plan must be approved by both the Board of Forestry, ODF's governing body, and the State Land Board, the three-member group of elected officials (governor, secretary of state and state treasurer) responsible for the state's ownership of Common School Forest Land.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service, both federal agencies, must approve the revised habitat conservation plan for wildlife and salmon.

Balance of Issues Raised at First Public Meetings

Citizens Express Opinions about Environment, Economy, Recreation on Elliott

A balance of environmental, economic and social issues surfaced during four public meetings held earlier this year to find out what citizens think is important when it comes to the Elliott State Forest.

The Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) conducted the meetings as part of a public involvement plan to connect with interested persons during the process of revising the forest management plan and habitat conservation plan. The meetings were the first in a series to touch base with citizens.

Held in Coos Bay, Roseburg, Salem and North Bend, the meetings used a "listening post" format where opinions were sought from participants in an informal setting. All comments were recorded and will be considered by ODF in the revision process.

ODF is guided by state law in its management of the Elliott State Forest, which is mostly made up of Common School Forest Lands.

The goal for Common School Forest Lands is to generate the greatest amount of revenue in the long run for the Common School Fund, consistent with sound techniques of land and timber management.

Following are representative of some of the comments received.

To add names to this newsletter's mailing list, write:

**Oregon Department of Forestry
Public Affairs Office
2600 State St.
Salem, OR 97310**

E-mail:
jforeman@odf.state.or.us

Or call: (503) 945-7506

Environmental Comments

Find another source of revenue for the Common School Fund; work with the Tenmile Lake Basin Partnership and the Coos Watershed Association on shared projects; protect fish (coho, coastal cutthroat, steelhead); improve stream habitat; address needs of species that depend on old growth; minimize impact on wildlife; avoid using herbicides, pesticides; reduce roads; set aside reserves for wilderness areas; assess and protect watersheds.

Economic Comments

Maintain income to Common School Fund; manage lands, don't let them lie fallow; maintain timber supply; recognize impact on local jobs, families; maintain roads for fire protection; use more regeneration harvests (clearcuts); maintain continuous, predictable and sustainable harvest levels; protect from disease and fire; maximize revenue by basing harvests on market

instead of target amounts.

Social Comments

Maintain access for hunting; manage for recreational species (open areas for deer); allow for a large amount of public access and diverse recreational activities; develop multi-use trails (for birding, hiking, mountain biking, etc.); look at tourism

Visit the Oregon Department of Forestry's Coos District Web Site at: www.odf.state.or.us/CoosBay

to learn more about the Elliott State Forest and the planning process now under way.

as replacement for timber revenue; set aside areas of the Elliott as parks; protect against vandalism, destruction of resources and illegal hunting; create opportunities for off-highway vehicle use; protect scenic values; conduct public tour of forest.

Future Opportunities Abound for Involvement, Comments

There will be lots of opportunities over the next two years for interested persons to get involved in the revision of the management plan and habitat conservation plan for the Elliott State Forest.

An Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) public tour of the forest is planned this summer. More details will be provided as they become available.

More public meetings also are planned throughout the course of the revision process. Public comments will be sought at critical points in the process.

Coos District Forester Jim Young is available to meet with groups to discuss the revision process of the plans. He has a 20-minute presentation that provides basic information about the process.

Young can be reached at the Coos District office, 267-4136.

Persons unable to attend meetings may provide their comments via e-mail (lsprouse@odf.state.or.us) or by mail to Larry Sprouse, Project Coordinator, ODF Coos District Office, 63612 Fifth Road, Coos Bay, OR 97420.



OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY
PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE
2600 STATE STREET
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"STEWARDSHIP IN FORESTRY"

Surveys Top 'What's Next' List in Collection of Data *Finding out About Birds, Amphibians, Bats, Aquatic Habitat for Strategies*

Wildlife surveys to find out more about marbled murrelets, headwater amphibians, birds, bats and aquatic habitat top the list of things to be done next in the revision process for the Elliott State Forest management plan and multi-species habitat conservation plan.

The Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) will use the biological survey information to help develop strategies for managing habitat of fish and animal species. The surveys will be conducted primarily in the 2001 field season with some continuing work in 2002.

To gain information on the abundance and distribution of marbled murrelets, a relatively new survey technique using radar is planned for the forest. The seabird that nests inland in older trees is listed as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act.

Technicians using radar equipment will identify and track the movement of marbled murrelets as they enter and fly through the Elliott.

Surveys for headwater amphibians, some songbirds and bats are also planned for the 2001 field season to establish presence and distribution of those species. Survey information on these species will help in development of management strategies and provide a

baseline for long-term monitoring.

ODF has also been working with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) to conduct aquatic habitat surveys on streams that were not previously surveyed within the Elliott State Forest.

These surveys provide information on the presence of fish species, stream flows, habitat conditions and a variety of other information related to stream health.

Different Harvesting Models Eyed

ODF is working in conjunction with Oregon State University professor Dr. John Sessions to develop custom harvest models for the Elliott State Forest. Dr. Sessions is widely noted for his development of state-of-the-art harvest modeling programs.

ODF will use data from this modeling process to compare resource outputs and habitat protection levels for a broad range of conceptual management scenarios.

The initial phase of the modeling process is expected to conclude in late June.