



Expectations

A Newsletter About Elliott State Forest Planning

January 2002

Study Shows Timber Income Important to Southwest Oregon

Despite a 41 percent drop in lumber and wood products industry jobs over the last decade, natural resource industries continue to be important sources of income in southwest Oregon, according to a September 2001 socio-economic study coordinated by the Oregon Department of Forestry.

The study – part of information-gathering efforts by ODF as it considers revisions to its forest management and habitat conservation plans for the Elliott State Forest – found that timber-related industries generate about 10 percent of Coos County's total personal income.

Southwest Oregon has a much larger percentage of its workforce employed in wood processing than the state as a whole. Douglas County, which processes almost half of the timber harvested from the Elliott State Forest, has 17 percent of its workers employed in the lumber and wood products industry.

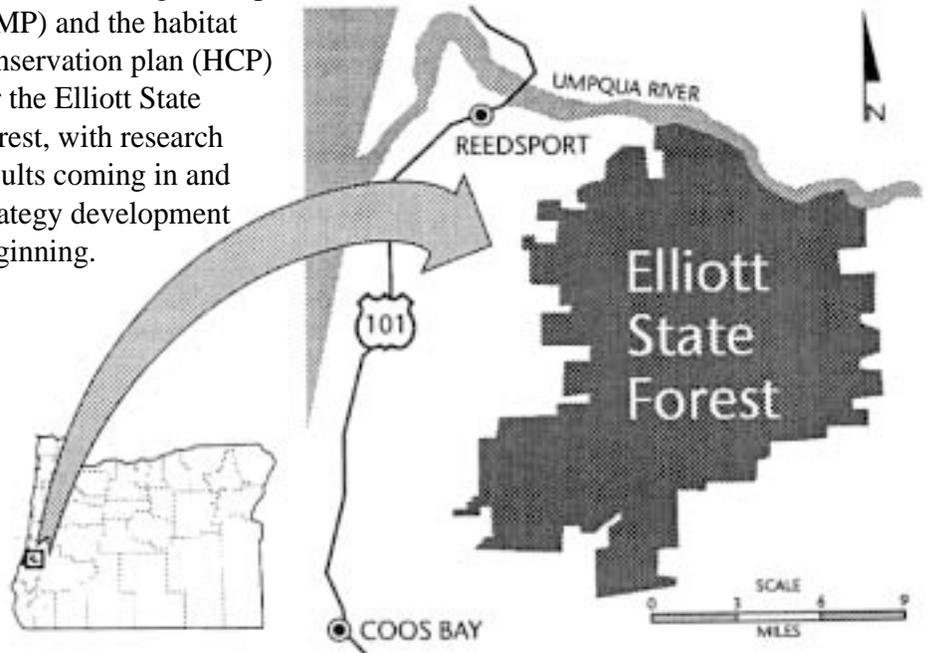
Ten percent of the timber harvested in Coos County comes from state forest lands. Over the last few years, annual harvests on the Elliott have averaged about 24 million board feet. Each 1 million board feet harvested on the Elliott generates 11 to 13 jobs, with an average wage of \$32,000.

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Forest, Habitat Planning Continues

Steady Revenue, Wildlife Protection Key Considerations

Planning continues for revising the forest management plan (FMP) and the habitat conservation plan (HCP) for the Elliott State Forest, with research results coming in and strategy development beginning.



The 93,000-acre Elliott State Forest is in the Coast Range between Coos Bay and Reedsport.

The Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) has collected a significant amount of information over the past year on aquatic habitat and the presence of sensitive animal species. This information will be used in strategy development for the revised plan and as a basis for long-term monitoring.

Other accomplishments include developing 1) guiding principles for the planning process, 2) analysis of economic and social impacts of Elliott State Forest management, 3) initial watershed assessment, and 4) state-of-the-art computer modeling to help evaluate varied management strategies.

The planning team is currently involved in overall strategy development for managing the forest and its resources. Opportunities for public review of those strategies are expected in March.

ODF manages the forest to produce a sustainable timber supply and to ensure wildlife – particularly threatened and endangered species – are protected. The planning process currently under way seeks a multi-species HCP with strategies to continue to protect the threatened northern spotted owl and marbled murrelet, and add other species of concern such as the coastal coho salmon, amphibians, songbirds and bats.

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Guiding Principles Direct Elliott Forest Planning

Guiding principles – overall rules, goals and responsibilities – direct the planning process for the Elliott State Forest.

These draft principles come from state and federal laws, administrative rules, and policies from the State Land Board and the Oregon Department of Forestry. Others providing input include scientists, interest groups and the public.

Persons wishing to comment on the following draft guiding principles, should contact Larry Sprouse (see box at top of this page).

- 1.** The plan will be a comprehensive, integrated forest management plan taking into account a wide range of forest values.
- 2.** The plan will be developed within the context of the Elliott State Forest as a managed forest.
- 3.** The plan will recognize that the forest is intended to be an important contributor to timber supply for present and future generations.
- 4.** The plan will recognize that the goal for Common School Forest Lands is the maximization of revenue to the Common School Fund in the long-term, consistent with sound techniques of land management. The goal for management of Board of Forestry Lands is to secure the greatest permanent value to the citizens of Oregon by providing healthy, productive, and sustainable forest ecosystems that over time and across the landscape provide a full range of social, economic and environmental benefits to the people of Oregon.

- 5.** Lands will be identified and managed for long-term revenue production while providing for a sustained contribution to biological capability and social values. The plan will recognize that there will be trade-offs between revenue producing activities and non-revenue producing activities.

- 6.** The plan will examine opportunities to achieve goals through cooperative efforts with other agencies, user groups, or organizations.

- 7.** The plan will be developed through a collaborative and cooperative process involving the State Land Board, the Board of Forestry, the public, local and tribal governments, and other resource management agencies including the federal services.

- 8.** The plan will be goal-driven.

- 9.** The plan will view the Elliott State Forest in both a local and regional context.

- 10.** The plan will consider the overall biological diversity of state forest lands, including the variety of life and accompanying ecological processes.

- 11.** The forest will be managed to meet state and federal Endangered Species Acts while fulfilling the State Land Board's responsibilities under the Oregon Constitution and the Board of Forestry's statutory responsibilities. Management plans for threatened or endangered species will seek to complement or supplement habitat provided by other landowners.

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- 12.** The plan will commit the Oregon Department of Forestry to using monitoring and research to generate and utilize new information as it becomes available, and employ an adaptive management approach to ensure that the best available knowledge is acquired and used efficiently and effectively in forest resource management programs.

- 13.** The plan will recognize that ecosystem restoration and watershed health are among the key goals that this plan must achieve, in a manner that is aligned with the policy direction for Common School and Board of Forestry lands.

- 14.** The plan will be designed to achieve a specific desired future condition across the landscape and provide flexible strategies for achieving that condition without a highly prescriptive approach.

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

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ODFW Stream Surveys Identify Good Habitat, Future Projects

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) and the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) are working closely to complete habitat surveys of streams flowing through the Elliott State Forest.

These surveys spot especially valuable spawning and rearing habitat for salmon and trout, said Howard Crombie, a fish habitat biologist at the Charleston ODFW Office, and they identify areas that could benefit from habitat improvement projects. The surveys' findings will be incorporated into a revised forest management plan and into individual timber sale plans.

This past year, ODFW crews – funded by ODF – completed winter and summer habitat surveys in all

major streams not previously surveyed.

Other ongoing ODFW cooperative projects on the Elliott State Forest include:

- Working with ODF foresters and the Coos Watershed Association to place large wood into streams to increase spawning gravel stability and cover for juvenile salmon.
- Counting spawning salmon in several streams each year as part of a larger coastwide survey.
- Placing spawned salmon carcasses from its Salmon and Trout Enhancement Program (STEP) hatcheries in streams to restore nutrients to the food chain for juvenile salmon and other species

(food quality carcasses are donated to charity).

ODFW fish and wildlife biologists continue to work with ODF biologists and foresters to craft a forest management plan which will provide necessary protection to fish and wildlife while also providing sustainable timber harvest.

Study Shows Timber Income Important

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Revenue generated from the Elliott is either distributed to counties, schools and local taxing districts or contributed to the Common School Fund, which in turn distributes earned income from interest to schools statewide. Most of the revenue – about \$16 million annually – goes to the Common School Fund because over 90 percent of the Elliott is Common School Forest Land. The remainder is shared with local counties.

Visitors to the Oregon Coast play an important role in the economy of Coos County, but most visitors are not participating in activities on the Elliott State Forest, the study reported.

Hiking, viewing nature, sightseeing and dispersed camping are all expected to grow in the future, the study said, and they represent the kinds of activities available on the Elliott. Although national and regional trends show hunting declining, the study said hunting is likely to continue to be an important recreation use on the Elliott.

Persons interested in receiving a copy of the study should contact Larry Sprouse at the Coos District.

Planners Sort Data to Draft Forest, Habitat Plans

A nine-member group responsible for developing revisions to the forest management plan and the habitat conservation plan continues to meet regularly to pull together a variety of research information.

Called the Core Planning Team, the group also is responsible for preparing the environmental analysis and consulting with the US Fish and Wildlife Service on the HCP. The team will be scheduling public meetings to hear public comments as key points in the planning process are reached.

Members include Jim Young, Coos District forester and project leader, and Larry Sprouse, project coordinator. Other Oregon Department of Forestry members include Marcia Humes, wildlife biologist; Logan Jones, planning coordinator; Jeff Brandt, resource

monitoring coordinator; Jane Hope, planning specialist; and Jeff Foreman, public information officer.

Team members from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife include Marnie Allbritten, wildlife biologist, and Howard Crombie, fisheries biologist.

Assisting the team from the Coos District include Greg Kreimeyer, assistant district forester, and other foresters from the district staff.

The team reports to the FMP/HCP Revision Process Steering Committee chaired by Dan Shults, ODF's Southern Oregon Area Director, and made up of managers from the ODF Salem headquarters, Division of State Lands, Department of Justice, ODFW SW Region, and the Coos County Board of Commissioners.

Harvest Models Compare Broad Management Scenarios on Elliott

The Elliott planning team has worked with Dr. John Sessions of OSU to develop forest harvest models for eight different management scenarios for the Elliott State Forest, including the current forest management plan.

Management strategies were translated into a spatial computer model that displays the impacts and outputs of those management strategies throughout thirty 5-year periods. Outputs are displayed through various quantitative tables and geographic map displays.

The initial modeling of these scenarios is completed, and the planning team is evaluating the outputs from these models as a comparative assessment tool. Through the evaluation of these scenarios, a general planning approach will be recommended to the State Land Board and Board of Forestry for approval.

The planning team will likely use elements from more than one of the conceptual management approaches to develop the draft management strategies. The models range from conservation emphasis to timber harvest emphasis.

The modeling may also be useful in preparing environmental analysis needed for a revised habitat conservation plan.

Five Species Top Songbird List of 63

Five species dominated the point-count surveys for songbirds conducted this spring on the Elliott State Forest, though researchers found a diverse group of birds because of the forest's variety of habitat types.

Some 63 species – from more than 3,900 individuals – were detected. The five most commonly detected species, in order of abundance, were the Swainson's thrush, chestnut-backed chickadee, hermit warbler, Wilson's warbler and winter wren.

Collectively, these five species comprised about 46 percent of all detections. All are common in conifer forests and occur in most age-classes. The Swainson's thrush and Wilson's warbler are most commonly associated with understory cover, which was very common throughout the Elliott in the form of saplings or shrubs.

The survey was conducted by Pacific Wildlife Research to assist the Oregon Department of Forestry in gathering baseline information on wildlife species on the Elliott. Point-count stations were established in each of the Elliott's 17 management basins.

Surveys also were conducted in likely habitats for olive-sided flycatchers and western bluebirds, two rare species often not detected during point counts. Olive-sided flycatchers were detected throughout the forest. Western bluebirds were much more limited in distribution being found in areas of younger forest habitat.

Pileated woodpeckers, another species considered "sensitive" by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, were detected in all basins during point-count surveys. The band-tailed pigeon seemed to be more common in the Elliott than elsewhere in the Coast Range. Notably absent in the survey was another sensitive species, the Vaux's swift.

Watershed Assessment Supports Revision Process

Watershed assessment – planned as a supporting component of the Elliott State Forest management plan and habitat conservation plan revision process – will provide a scientific base for management strategies to achieve the resource goals for Common School Forest Lands and the forest.

In addition to its role in the plan revision, watershed assessment will provide an on-going process – after the revised plan's implementation – to help refine the long-term management of the forest through adaptive management. Watershed assessment will help guide management decisions to achieve the broad goal found in the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds of ensuring a "high likelihood of protecting and restoring properly functioning aquatic habitat for salmon on state forest lands."

Over the last year, researchers have added to the considerable existing Elliott watershed assessment information. Included are ODFW aquatic habitat surveys, landscape scale inventory of streamside vegetation, and aquatic amphibian distribution and abundance in forest habitats.

The planning team is working closely with Salem staff to maintain consistency with the department's overall plan for watershed assessment on all state forest lands. The watershed assessment for the Elliott is scheduled for completion during 2002.

Amphibian Survey Nets Comparison Data

Surveys conducted this summer produced baseline information about amphibians living in headwater streams on the Elliott State Forest that can be used for comparisons in areas with and without harvest activity.

Pacific Wildlife Research, Inc. sampled nine pairs of streams on the Elliott – each pair consisting of one in a 50-foot no-cut buffer and another in older stands of trees (older than 80 years) – to determine if no-harvest buffers on perennial, nonfish-bearing streams are adequate to maintain headwater stream amphibian communities.

Two species of stream amphibians considered “sensitive” by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, the southern seep salamander and the tailed frog, were the primary species sampled. A total

of six different species of amphibians were detected in the paired streams.

Although both tailed frogs and seep salamanders were more common in older forest streams than in buffer strips, the study did not demonstrate these differences were statistically significant. The sample size was too small and the variance in results between sites too great to draw any conclusions, researchers said. The nine matched pairs of streams can serve as control study sites for monitoring the effects of harvest treatments in the future.

The study yielded reference data on amphibian populations and their habitats from buffer strips and late-seral forests that can be compared to other studies. It also resulted in a field trial of a new adaptive sampling survey design for stream amphibians.

Forest, Habitat Planning Continues for Elliott (continued from page 1)

HCP strategies approved in 1995 for the marbled murrelet were viewed as short-term protection measures because little was known about the seabird that nests in mature forests. Due to the limited amount of knowledge about murrelets, ODF and the US Fish and Wildlife Service (the federal agency that approves HCPs) agreed to limit the incidental take permit for murrelets to six years.

The permit expired in October 2001, so ODF now conducts murrelet surveys for timber sales proposed in potential murrelet habitat to assure individual birds are protected under the federal Endangered Species Act. This measure is not seen as the best long-term strategy for murrelets nor as

a way to assure steady timber-harvest revenue to the Common School Fund.

The planning process has been going on for about two years. ODF planners hope to complete their work on the FMP in late 2002, and submit the revised HCP to the US Fish and Wildlife Service for approval in early 2003.

Timeline for Revision Process Projects 2003 Conclusion

February 2002 - Complete Draft Strategy for Forest Management Plan (FMP) / Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP)

March 2002 - Opportunities for Public Review & Comment on Draft FMP / HCP Strategies

June 2002 - Complete Draft FMP / HCP

July 2002 - Opportunities for Public Review & Comment on Draft FMP / HCP

Planners Draft fish & Wildlife List for HCP

Planning staff for the Elliott’s Habitat Conservation Plan have developed a draft list of fish and wildlife species that could be included in the Elliott’s revised HCP.

Criteria used for including a species: 1) must be listed or at risk for future listing under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA), 2) likely or known to occur on the forest, and 3) management information about the species is available.

Including management strategies for species not currently listed under the ESA will provide longer term management certainty and avoid the need for complicated plan revisions should a species become listed. Species identified for possible inclusion in the HCP are listed below:

Wildlife - tailed frog, southern seep salamander, foothill yellow-legged frog, western toad, Del Norte salamander, red-legged frog, western pond turtle, sharptail snake, olive-sided flycatcher, northern spotted owl, marbled murrelet, bald eagle, pileated woodpecker, western bluebird, fringed myotis, long-legged myotis, Townsend’s big-eared bat.

Fish - chum salmon, coho salmon, chiook salmon, summer steelhead, winter steelhead, coastal cutthroat trout, Millicoma longnose dace, Pacific lamprey, Umpqua chub.



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"STEWARDSHIP IN FORESTRY"

Radar Surveying of Marbled Murrelets Tested on Elliott

During the summer of 2001, ODF contracted with ABR, Inc. to examine the potential uses of marine radar for studying marbled murrelets on the Elliott State Forest.

Marbled murrelets, a threatened seabird that nests on large branches in mature trees, have proven difficult to study. They fly inland to their nests at high speeds (upwards of 60 mph), during periods of low light in the early morning before sunrise, inhibiting researchers' ability to determine their abundance and track their flight paths.

Studies in the Pacific Northwest and Alaska indicate marine radar is a useful tool for counting murrelets as they fly over an area. The numbers of murrelets obtained during radar surveys can potentially

be used to examine the relationship between the amount, configuration and availability of nesting habitat and the inland abundance and distribution of murrelets during the nesting season.

Their high flight speed distinguishes them from other birds, bats and insects (or "targets") on a radar screen. More than 1,900 radar targets were determined to be murrelets during the study.

Radar assessed murrelet activity in eight drainages, typically using one radar site low in the drainage, and another further up. A total of 14 stations were visited one to six times over the summer.

Most murrelet radar targets were observed flying over ridges, rather than following valleys. Because

topography did not restrict flight paths of murrelets, it was not possible to quantify murrelet abundance by drainage in the Elliott. Also, murrelet habitat exists on federal lands east of the Elliott, so it is possible that some of the radar targets were simply passing over the Elliott.

These confounding factors also made it impossible to correlate the number of murrelet targets with habitat conditions at a local level. Radar may have potential, however, on the Elliott for checking the effectiveness of murrelet management strategies in the habitat conservation plan by monitoring changes in the local murrelet population over the long term.