



Promoting and practicing sustainable forestry

2009-2011 BACKGROUNDER



Elliott State Forest



An overview

First state forest in 1930, the 93,000-acre Elliott State Forest is located in the Coast Range between Coos Bay and Reedsport. It's named after Francis Elliott, Oregon's first State Forester, who worked many years to create the forest by trading scattered state lands around the state for one large block of land.

State Land Board owns most of the Elliott State Forest. Ninety-one percent (84,562 acres) of the land is Common School Fund (CSF) lands, owned by the State Land Board. CSF lands are properties given to Oregon by the federal government at statehood to support public education. About 70,000 acres of CSF land was used to trade for the Elliott State Forest.

Oregon Department of State Lands' Asset Management Plan strategies for CSF forest lands include 1) retaining the Elliott as a "core asset;" and 2) managing "lands to increase timber harvest levels to the extent possible while maintaining a sustainable, even-flow harvest of timber, subject to economic, environmental and regulatory considerations."

Oregon Department of Forestry manages the CSF forestlands through an agreement with the Oregon Department of State Lands, on behalf of the State Land Board. The Governor, Secretary of State and State Treasurer are the three elected officials that comprise the State Land Board. ODF also manages the other 9 percent, called Board of Forestry lands, which counties deeded to the state many decades ago.

Timber revenue for schools across state

Oregon Constitution directs that all of the timber revenue from Common School Fund lands, minus the cost of management, goes to the Common School Fund and is used to support Oregon's 197 K-12 public school districts. Management costs average about 33 percent of gross revenue.

School districts receive revenue payments twice yearly from the Common School Fund. The fund's balance has fluctuated in recent years from more than \$1 billion to its current \$765 million.

Earnings totaling \$20.2 million in the Common School Fund were distributed to schools in January by the Department of State Lands. A similar amount will be distributed in July.

Obtaining the greatest benefit for Oregonians is constitutionally required for Common School Lands. This must be done while consistently conserving the forest resource under sound techniques of land management.

Maximizing revenue to the Common School Fund is the standard for "greatest benefit," according to a 1992 State Attorney General opinion. This must be done in the context of environmentally sound management.

ODF State Forests Revenue Distribution 1998 through 2007 (in \$millions)

Year	Net to CSF
1999	\$13.3
2000	\$20.2
2001	\$12.6
2002	\$ 9.4
2003	\$ 4.1
2004	\$10.7
2005	\$14.0
2006	\$ 4.4
2007	\$ 7.2
2008	\$ 4.6
5-yr Average	\$ 8.2
10-yr Average	\$10.0

CSF - (Common School Fund)
Timber revenue from all Common School Forest Lands transferred to the CSF minus management costs.

Forestry manages Elliott State Forest to generate revenue over long run

Since 1955 \$340 million has been deposited into the CSF as net revenue (after ODF expenses) from all timber harvest activities on CSF forestlands. The Elliott usually makes up 75-85 percent of the total revenue generated from CSF forestlands. Using 80 percent as an average, the Elliott has generated about \$272 million into the CSF since 1955.



Backgrounder Elliott State Forest

Sustainable harvesting and habitat for wildlife

Generating the greatest amount of revenue in the long run – consistent with sound techniques of land and timber management – is the Forestry Department's goal for the Elliott State Forest.

Conserving the forest resource means sustainable harvesting and providing habitat for native fish and wildlife. Protecting habitat is a legal requirement for threatened and endangered species.

A forest management plan and a habitat conservation plan have been used to balance revenue and environmental obligations.

New plans for forest management and habitat conservation are developed

New plans allowing for higher harvest levels while continuing environmental protections have been developed. The habitat plan is being reviewed by federal agencies and when complete would go before the State Land Board and the Oregon Board of Forestry for approval.

Advantages of the habitat conservation plan include long-term management certainty and reduced legal risk in relation to threatened and endangered species. The multi-species habitat conservation plan includes the northern spotted owl, marbled murrelet, coho salmon and other species of concern.

Harvest levels would be consistently around 40 million board feet (mmbf) a year under the new forest and habitat plans. The average harvest level for the past 10 years is 25 mmbf. *(A board foot is a unit of wood that measures a foot square and an inch thick. An average house has about 13,000 board feet of framing lumber and 7,000 board feet of plywood or panels.)*

Timber income still important to SW Oregon

About 10 percent of Coos County's total income is generated by timber-related industries, according to a recent study. Each 1 million board feet of timber from the Elliott State Forest generates 11 to 13 jobs, with an average wage of \$32,000.

New focus: Develop forest structure instead of relying on age for habitat

Using structure – not age – to determine habitat conditions is a key strategy in the new plan.

Wildlife have certain habitat needs and foresters can influence forest development – through harvest practices – to benefit wildlife. The new plan measures a forest's habitat by its structure.

Structure is what you feel and see in forests. Trees of different types, ages and sizes; standing dead trees; decaying logs; and underbrush are examples of structure. All are important components for wildlife habitat.

A managed forest that looks like a natural forest is the goal. Stand structure types have open areas and places with snags, resembling the effects of natural disturbances – fire, insects and disease. This provides a mix of habitat for native fish and wildlife.



For more information

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