



Promoting and practicing sustainable forestry

2009-2011 BUDGET REQUEST



Preserving working forests

Oregon's forests are being lost to development

Population growth, rising real estate values, and contraction of the conventional timber industry, particularly east of the Cascades, have produced increasing incentives for owners of large working forests to divide and sell them. This proposal would keep key large forests in Central Oregon intact.

Forest values lost. When large blocks of forestland are fragmented into smaller ownerships, especially when low-density homes are introduced, major challenges emerge, and forest values are lost.

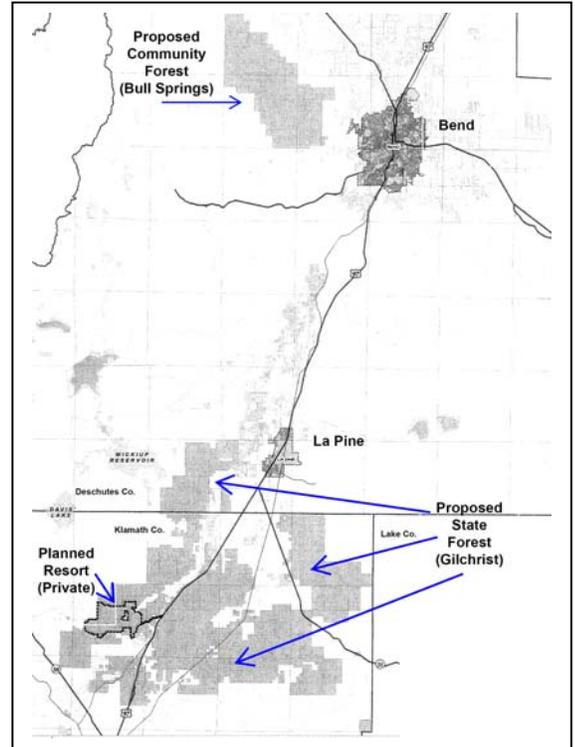
Fires and invasives. There's more potential for human-caused fires, more costly and complex fire protection needs, and increased vulnerability to invasive species.

Loss of public access, habitat. It's less likely the land will be managed for timber production. Public access is lost and wildlife habitat is fragmented.

State Forestry purchase of Central Oregon land.

This proposal authorizes a unique, one-time transaction, with a willing seller, for the department to purchase Central Oregon land that is otherwise likely to become fragmented. The transaction is based on ODF acquiring a large tract south of LaPine, near Gilchrist, at below-market value in exchange for the current owners acquiring limited development rights on a smaller tract that they would retain. **No General Fund dollars would be used.**

Community, legislative support. Many details remain to be worked out, and success would depend on community and legislative input and support, and cooperative work among community groups, local government, and state land use and natural resources agencies.



Jobs, wildlife, recreation, revenue

Maintaining working forests is important. They provide sustainable timber jobs, keep wildlife habitat intact, and secure public access to recreation opportunities. And, in time, a working state-owned forest would provide a steady stream of revenue to local counties.

Heavily harvested land at risk

The Gilchrist-area lands are at risk of being lost as working forests – because of rising real estate values, and because economic conditions have forced a succession of owners to harvest them heavily, leaving predominantly young timber with limited near-term economic value.

A likely next step would be for the land to be divided into smaller parcels and sold – in effect, turning land large enough to be a working forest into many pieces whose owners may have many differing management or development ideas.

The land needs time to recover. If the public agrees to this commitment, the state can restore the land over many years – something many private owners may not be able to afford to do.



August 20, 2008

Backgrounder Preserving working forests

Holds same potential as existing state forests	<p>Cut-over, burned lands restored as working forests. Just as the Tillamook, Clatsop and Sun Pass state forests, once cut-over and / or burned, have been restored as healthy, sustainable working forests, the Gilchrist-area land – currently at risk – has enormous potential.</p> <p>Revenue to local counties. Today, the counties with lands in current state forests have come to depend on forest revenues to provide basic public services.</p>
New state forest actively managed to achieve greatest permanent value	<p>Sustainable forest ecosystems. If the state is able to acquire these lands, the intent would be to restore and actively manage them to achieve the "greatest permanent value."</p> <p>Economic, environmental, social benefits. As defined in state law and administrative rule, this term means healthy, productive and sustainable forest ecosystems that over time and across the landscape provide a full range of social, economic and environmental benefits.</p>
Sustainable harvests each year with revenue to counties	<p>Sun Pass State Forest serves as model. The 20,000-acre Sun Pass State Forest in Klamath County could serve as a model for this similar eastside land.</p> <p>Harvests include leaving trees. The forest management approach there involves harvesting some younger trees, some middle-aged trees and some older trees – while leaving enough of each age class so the stand can grow into another harvestable unit in a few decades.</p> <p>\$1 million a year to Klamath County. This approach has worked well on the Sun Pass, providing many social, environmental and economic benefits (Klamath County receives about \$1 million in revenue each year from timber sales).</p> <p>It will take time for forest to come back. Of course, it would be some time before these new lands, if the state acquires them, could be restored to a point at which they would be able to provide a substantial range of forest benefits.</p>
What's proposed	<p>LCDC 'critical' designation. The proposal would use a provision of state land use law allowing the Land Conservation and Development Commission to designate "areas of critical state concern," and to make recommendations to the legislature about managing these areas.</p> <p>New 120,000-acre state forest. Ultimately, ODF would acquire about 120,000 acres near Gilchrist in Klamath and Deschutes counties. It would be the first new state forest created in more than half a century.</p> <p>Community forest west of Bend. The transaction also would include the transfer of 28,000 acres of land west of Bend, known as the Bull Springs tract – at no cost – to the Deschutes Land Trust. This would become a community forest, with a small portion retained by the current owner for a development that would be shaped with community input.</p> <p>Development rights. The proposal seeks legislative authority for a one-time granting of development rights for the current owner. These rights would be spelled out to address issues such as wildland fire protection, transportation, and fish and wildlife.</p>
Funding source	<p>No General Fund dollars are sought for this transaction.</p> <p>For the initial investment, multiple funding sources are being explored, including use of limited funds from a state account that collects revenue from timber sales on current state forests. Transaction costs would be repaid over time by revenue produced by the new state forest.</p>
For more information	<p>Ted Lorensen, Project Leader (503) 945-7399</p>