

Agenda Item No.:	5
Work Plan:	State Forests Work Plan
Topic:	Department of State Lands Elliott State Forest Land Transfer
Presentation Title:	Update on the Elliott State Forest Land Transfer
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CONTEXT

The Department of State Lands is seeking proposal for acquisition plans from entities or partnerships that are interested in owning the Elliott State Forest. In July of this year, State Forester Decker indicated in a letter to Department of State Lands Director Mary Abrams, that the Oregon Department of Forestry is interested in owning the Elliott with several considerations including financial constraints, statutory mandates, and development of a business model that best achieves our desired outcomes.

Given our history with the Elliott State Forest, our skilled and knowledgeable staff on the Coos district, and our proven record for managing the forest for public benefits, ODF is uniquely positioned to own and manage the Elliott State Forest. However, given the complexity of the issue and a lack resources, the Department is not situated to lead the development of partnerships or a transfer proposal.

BACKGROUND

The State Land Board has embarked on a Land Transfer process for the Elliott State Forest which includes a protocol and associated timeline to submit a proposal. The work at hand is complex and needs to be completed in short order. The Department is examining its potential role in the transfer process, partnerships, and proposal development. Our current management strategies for Board of Forestry lands are anchored in stewardship principles that provide habitat for native fish and wildlife in the context of a working forests. Working forests and public access support important social benefits to timber dependent communities.

While ODF is uniquely situated to manage the Elliott, we are not in a position to lead the development of an acquisition proposal. Limited department resources impede our ability to develop partnerships and propose a plan that characterize mandates and management goals, solicits adequate review and public involvement, and secures appropriate legislative support. Furthermore, the proposal would need to assure that we could manage the land without significant financial or legal risk. We are, however, committed to staying close to the process and remain open to prospects for partnership and ownership that are within the best interests of the state. Department staff welcomes any Board discussion or deliberation on this topic.

NEXT STEPS

The Department will periodically update the Board of Forestry as the Land Transfer process continues.

RECOMMENDATION

Information only.