

Elliott State Forest Research Advisory Committee

September 28, 2020

Advisory Committee Website: <https://www.oregon.gov/dsl/land/pages/elliott.aspx>

Advisory Committee Members present (via Zoom): Steve Andringa, Bob Sallinger, Michael Langley, Mary Paulson, Paul Beck, Eric Farm, Melissa Cribbins, Asha Aiello, Chris Boice, Mike Kennedy, Ken McCall, Mark Stern, Keith Tymchuk, Vicki Walker (convenor), Thomas DeLuca, and Bob Van Dyk.

Department of State Lands and Oregon State University Staff present (via Zoom): Meliah Masiba, Geoff Huntington, Robert Underwood, Ali Hansen, Bill Ryan, Tom DeLuca, Katy Kavanagh, Randy Rosenberger, and Caitlyn Reilley.

Oregon Consensus Facilitation Team present (via Zoom): Peter Harkema, Jennah Stillman, Brett Brownscombe, and Amy Delahanty.

Action Items

Action Item	Who	Date
Circulate draft September 28 meeting summary to AC members for review and comment.	OC	Completed.
Continue effort to revise and reach agreement on research platform, governance, and other components of a research forest proposal	OSU/DSL with Advisory Committee members	Ongoing

Welcome, Agenda Review and Process Overview

Facilitator Peter Harkema welcomed the group and invited members to do a round of introductions. He then reviewed the agenda topics with the group, which included members to hear general regarding efforts and components related to the Elliott State Research Forest process; OSU to review the proposal draft outline and research platform outcomes with members; and a discussion of wrap up and next steps.

General Updates

Department of State Lands

Department of State Lands Director, Vicki Walker, welcomed the group and thanked them for their continued commitment. Vicki shared over the past two years the Committee has worked diligently

on difficult topics related to a potential ESRF, and acknowledged it has been challenging at times. She reviewed the project timeline with the group, which was that the Committee's work will be completed in November ahead of the December 8 State Land Board (Land Board) meeting. As such, she encouraged Committee members to view the research forest as a whole, rather than single pieces that form the proposal. Vicki noted that if the group does not come to consensus on an ESRF proposal, the alternative will be for DSL to use the HCP as a map to manage the forest, which will allow the agency to harvest in certain areas. She thanked the Committee for bringing their values, perspective, balance, and thoughtfulness to the process. Vicki noted it is time for the Committee to come to an end, but recognized three remaining issues for resolution, which were the following: 1.) agreement on a research platform 2.) comfort with the proposed governance structure; and 3.) the research forest to be financially self-sustaining over time. Vicki reiterated the Land Board will not delay action on a research forest proposal and the last Committee meeting will be in November. She remains hopeful the group will come to agreement, and stressed the group's work thus far has been invaluable.

Oregon State University

Randy Rosenberg shared Oregon State University (OSU) was recently awarded a \$290,000 New Beginnings for Tribal Students grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. OSU Extension led the effort collaborating with SouthWest Oregon Community College, Confederated Tribes of Coos Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians, and OSU College of Agriculture Science and College of Forestry. Through this grant, Randy shared OSU is developing educational programs for pre-college and current students at OSU with any native affiliation. He noted the grant will support summer camps, paid internships, and scholarships for students. Randy shared the grant is an example of the type of collaborative partnership and education opportunities for students that could be done on an Elliott State Research Forest.

OSU Research Platform Presentation

Overview of Elliott State Research Forest Vision and Opportunity

Tom DeLuca, Dean of OSU's College of Forestry, provided a broad overview of the College of Forestry's vision and thoughts on potential opportunities for an Elliott State Research Forest. This included Dean DeLuca reiterating that having only joined the group in June, and all the work that has been done over the last two years, a key element that was established between the Committee was trust. OSU's role of establishing a research forest is from a starting place of trust the University will continue to build and maintain. Dean DeLuca emphasized that science is the primary underpinning of an ESRF and is necessary for achieving informed decision-making. He shared that by establishing a research forest, there is an opportunity to conduct research that will inform the management of the research forest and broader landscape into the future that encompasses multiple values. He shared OSU is committed to continuing to build trust now and moving forward.

Dean DeLuca then provided a general overview of OSU's proposal, which included a review of the table of contents, vision, and OSU's commitments, which build on the guiding principles, with

Committee members. The Dean shared he is excited about the established research platform and noted it leaves flexibility for additional ideas to be brought in; address issues of sustainable forest management; and guide towards a more sustainable management approach. As a result of negotiations regarding the research platform, OSU will be rerunning the financial estimates to better understand the total amount of revenue that will be generated, as well as plan to conduct an assessment of the projected research program and infrastructure costs to have a better understanding of the initial startup and operational costs associated with the forests. Dean DeLuca shared the economic analysis will help the University understand the costs and associated revenue of running the forest, and determine whether an ESRF will be able to be a reality.

Comments, questions, and reactions from Committee members were related to the following:

- There was a concern that the Advisory Committee will not meet the mid-November deadline to come to consensus on the remaining substantive issues related to governance, OSU's research platform, and decoupling. Some noted that elements of OSU's current document are not substantive enough to address those concerns, and there was a desire for additional time for members to work through remaining issues before the Committee's work comes to a close. A couple members highlighted transitions at OSU, wildfires, and impacts related to COVID had impacts on the process and lend to reasons why there needs to be more flexibility in the timeline.
- There was a concern that Advisory Committee members have not seen the updated financial analysis information and were uncomfortable 'signing off' on a proposal without seeing the remaining information. OSU shared they were waiting on an agreed upon approach from Advisory Committee members regarding the research platform prior to running the financial analysis. An agreement was reached recently and OSU has begun that analysis.

Dean DeLuca stated that a proposal will be delivered to the Land Board on December 8th. Dean DeLuca hoped the Committee would find consensus on the proposal, or general agreement on many of the elements included in the document. He shared there may be remaining issues to be resolved after December 8th, and assumed there will be additional opportunities for AC members and others to provide input after the conclusion of the ESRF Advisory Committee process. DSL stressed a proposal will need to be submitted to the Land Board at the December 8th Land Board meeting and DSL is drafting legislation that is expected to move through the legislature. Committee members generally agreed there is more work to be done to come to a complete proposal and provide additional details beyond the December 8 timeframe.

Updates to the Research Platform

Dr. Katy Kavanagh, OSU College of Forestry Associate Dean of Research, shared her excitement about the ESRF process and hoped the collaboration built over the past two years continues as it goes forward. Katy stated OSU is excited about the potential to have a forest that is guided by research, and what research can deliver both locally and globally. She stated that the Elliott and the research plan has the potential to move the field of forestry well beyond incremental changes and

that it would be an adaptable, enduring, lasting platform to provide research at a uniquely large scale. Katy then reviewed the updated changes to OSU's research platform based on Advisory Committee members' input and discussions (*see PPT presentations for additional details*).

Following Katy's presentation there was considerable discussion regarding concerns related to additional OSU Marbled Murrelet data that was not incorporated in OSU's current modeling. One Advisory Committee member shared that members have been working hard to come to consensus on the research platform and found it troubling additional data within OSU was not included, and requested it be included to identify whether it would result in any changes on the ground. OSU and DSL stated that at the beginning of the process there was a decision made to use Oregon Department of Forestry data and additional context behind that decision making. OSU shared a commitment to integrate new information and examine what changes have been made. Dean DeLuca then stressed that once OSU has management of the forest and is able to conduct surveys for a thorough inventory, he anticipates more complete data will be known before treatments are made on the ground. Dean DeLuca then shared appreciation for the important discussion. Other Committee members raised comments related to early complex seral habitat; recreation; and fears about ongoing changes and implications related to the research platform.

Governance: Randall Rosenberger (OSU) shared the outline of a potential ESRF governance framework with the Committee. Generally, the governance framework was as follows (see draft proposal for additional details):

- OSU directly manages and operates the ESRF. This structure allows for public access and accountability through representation on an ESRF Advisory Board and active communication and engagement with the College of Forestry Dean and ESRF Executive Director. This structure provides OSU with the highest level of control over the forest regarding research, management, operations, access and use.
- **College of Forestry Dean.** The COF Dean is vested by the OSU Board of Trustees with full authority to make all ESRF management decisions, subject only to the statutory oversight authority of OSU's Board of Trustees and the OSU president, and in compliance with the research design and commitments to the public, management plans, and with relevant and applicable state and federal laws as well as a Habitat Conservation Plan.
- **Executive Director.** The ESRF Executive Director leads long-term strategic planning, implements research and other allowable activities (e.g., timber harvesting, recreation, conservation, and education/outreach) activities, oversees forest management and operations, and engages the public. The Executive Director will be an OSU employee who reports directly to the Dean of the College of Forestry and be stationed at the ESRF (i.e., lives in the surrounding community).
- **Advisory Board.** An ESRF Advisory Board is established and appointed by the College of Forestry Dean. The purpose of the Advisory Board is to advise the Dean and ESRF Executive Director at a pre-decision level regarding nearly all aspects of research and operations activities on the forest, among other responsibilities. The Board would function

similarly as the DSL Advisory Committee in co-creating an ESRF proposal and additionally sustains the continuation of transparency and collaboration between public and private entities, OSU and the State of Oregon.

Comments and questions from Committee members were generally supportive of the direction of the governance structure, but flagged remaining issues to be discussed in further detail e.g. transparency, direct accountability to the public, public transparency laws, and right of reversion. OSU shared that the University is not a state agency, and as such, some of the tools that were referenced may not apply in the same ways. Randy shared he anticipates OSU to talk with their lawyers to determine whether and if OSU can enter into different agreements to address transparency and public accountability. One Committee member shared that many in the conservation community, and others from different perspectives, think of the Elliott as a public forest and give the public certain accountability mechanisms. OSU shared they are trying to put in place a structure that engages the public and utilizes an Advisory Board and other mechanisms to ensure transparency and accountability.

Decoupling

Land Board Assistant, Dmitri Palmateer, shared discussions are underway among the Land Board Assistants about timing and structure for decoupling, and ways to engage state agencies, the federal delegation, and other potential funding sources. A meeting with State Agencies has been scheduled to help the Land Board Assistants think through various potential funding sources in which agencies might be helpful. Dmitri shared that the Land Board would like to see that there is a viable path around financing, but noted there is time to think through financing and decoupling specifics beyond December.

There was then a question about the potential to extend the December 8 Land Board deadline. Dmitri noted the Land Board would like the work to be concluded by the December meeting, but there may be some flexibility for members to continue to collaborate in some form to work through remaining conversations. Ultimately the Land Board would like to know in December if there is sufficient support to convert the Elliott into a research forest.

Additional Updates

The following additional updates were presented to Committee members:

- *DSL Public Engagement:* DSL provided a brief overview of DSL and OSU's upcoming public engagement efforts related to the ESRF. DSL and OSU--together and individually--will continue to provide multiple opportunities for ways to learn about plan elements and provide input prior to the December Land Board meeting. The value of the input will be demonstrated throughout the process and DSL will communicate how that input will be used and be reflected in the concept. There was a suggestion for DSL and OSU to think about how the public will be engaged after December 8th.

- *Habitat Conservation Plan:* Troy Rahmig (ICF) provided a brief HCP update to the group. ICF has been tracking the evolving progress of the research platform. Once the details of the research design are finalized, ICF will be able to incorporate the design into the draft HCP language. It is expected a first draft of the HCP will be completed in January/February. Agencies will respond to the draft and then the HCP will go through a NEPA process.
 - There was a question from a member regarding assumptions in the HCP about Marbled Murrelets. Troy noted that within an HCP there are many options, however, the HCP is being constructed with the assumption that there would be effects to Marbled Murrelets in areas open to harvest. He noted that this is the purpose of an Incidental Take Permit.

Next Steps

Peter invited members to provide any final reflections. One Committee member shared she was encouraged by OSU's vision and commitment to an Elliott State Research Forest and thanked Committee members for their work. Another noted there are remaining issues left to be discussed, and looked forward to having time to look at the additional data and results of the platform modeling and financial analysis. Peter thanked Advisory Committee members for their continued participation and engagement in the process. He shared he remains hopeful the group will reach consensus on many of the elements of the proposal and encouraged members to continue their hard work.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.