



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Department of State Lands

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October 8, 2021

State Land Board

Kate Brown
Governor

Shemia Fagan
Secretary of State

Tobias Read
State Treasurer

Dr. Paul Henson, Oregon State Supervisor
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
2600 SE 98th Ave, Ste 100
Portland, OR 97266

Kim Kratz, Assistant Regional Administrator
NOAA Fisheries
1201 Northeast Lloyd Blvd, Ste 1100
Portland, OR, 97232

Dear Dr. Henson and Mr. Kratz:

I am pleased to submit our Elliott State Research Forest Administrative Draft Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) for review and action by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA Fisheries. As you know, this submittal is the product of many months of collaborative work with members of the public, stakeholder groups, and a technical team comprised of members of your staffs and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

With this submittal we understand the HCP, and the eventual issuance of federal permits, will need to be evaluated under NEPA, and that U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will lead that process. We have worked diligently to ensure this proposal includes changes requested by your staff and stakeholders, and as a result contains substantial conservation provisions for the covered species while setting clear sideboards that will promote robust research on the forest, that will itself support the goals of the Endangered Species Act and species recovery. The completion of this process will provide the conservation and operational certainty that all involved are anxious to have in place.

Please know we will continue to collaborate with your staff to answer questions and address whatever issues arise as the process unfolds in the coming months. Our hope is your evaluation under NEPA will be substantially complete on a timeline supporting the Department's ongoing work to meet the Land Board's vision for establishing the Elliott State Research Forest by the end of 2022.

Thank you for your work and partnership helping Oregon realize this new future for the Elliott.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vicki L. Walker". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Vicki L. Walker
Director

Enclosure

cc: Kate Brown, Oregon Governor
Tobias Read, Oregon State Treasurer
Shemia Fagan, Oregon Secretary of State
Jason Miner, Oregon Governor's Office
Ryan Mann, Oregon State Treasury
Dmitri Palmateer, Oregon State Treasury
Molly Woon, Oregon Secretary of State's Office
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Tom DeLuca, Oregon State University
Paul Odenthal, Oregon State University
Peter Harkema, Oregon Consensus
Troy Rahmig, Director Conservation Planning, ICF