



News

NEWS RELEASE – *for immediate release*

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State Land Board establishes Elliott State Research Forest

The plan approved today ensures Oregon’s first state research forest will support conservation, local economies, recreation, education, and nationally relevant research

SALEM, Ore. – Oregon’s first state forest is officially its first state research forest.

The State Land Board today approved the Elliott State Research Forest Management Plan, which establishes the forest as a nationally important center for forest science and management that also contributes multiple benefits to Oregon.

The forest management plan will guide the Department of State Lands in managing the research forest for multiple values, including conservation, education, recreation, Indigenous culture, and support for local economies.

“Coming to agreement on the Elliott’s future as a publicly owned research forest was in itself an amazing achievement. Putting that vision on paper as a forest management plan took tremendous effort by many,” said Oregon Department of State Lands Director Vicki L. Walker. “The plan approved today honors the foundations laid in years of collaboration, while also allowing space for ongoing efforts to realize the research forest’s many benefits.”

The Elliott was created as Oregon’s first state forest in the 1930s but had been mired in controversy since the early 2000s. People of many different perspectives – including conservation, timber, school funding, recreation, local government, and Tribes – came together to explore and ultimately endorse a research forest as the right solution for the Elliott.

“At all points, this process has tasted and smelled like Oregon,” said Keith Tymchuk, a member of the Elliott State Research Forest Advisory Committee appointed in 2019 to inform research forest work and a current member of the Elliott State Research Forest Board of Directors. “This has been an effort where multiple interests, values, and

perspectives have come together—through argument, collaboration and compromise—to move beyond gridlock and shape where we are today with the research forest approach represented by the management plan.”

The State Land Board’s approval of the initial forest management plan keeps the Department on track for beginning operations in 2025. Next steps for implementing the plan include resolving the research partnership roles, continuing engagement with Tribes, and further developing plans for recreation, education, and aquatic restoration and monitoring in collaboration with government agencies, interested Tribes, local and statewide partners, and community members.

Based on its size, location, and approach, the Elliott is a one-of-a-kind research forest, said Brett Brownscombe, the ESRF transition director, and the management plan reflects that.

“The research forest advanced by this plan is unique, not just for Oregon but nationally,” Brownscombe said. “Combining a Habitat Conservation Plan, a carbon project, and a research forest all on the same landscape would be precedent setting. In implementing this plan, we will be moving the Elliott into not only a new chapter in its history but a new realm of state land management.”

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About the State Land Board and the Department of State Lands: The State Land Board consists of Governor Tina Kotek, Secretary of State LaVonne Griffin-Valade and State Treasurer Tobias Read. Established by the Oregon Constitution in 1859, the Land Board oversees the state’s Common School Fund. The Department of State Lands is the Land Board’s administrative agency, managing the lands and resources that help fund Oregon’s public schools and protecting the state’s waterways and wetlands for the many benefits they provide.