



News

NEWS RELEASE – *for immediate release*

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Shutter Creek secured as Elliott State Research Forest Headquarters Site

Operations for the nation's largest research forest and other partnerships to be based at the former site of Shutter Creek Correctional Institution

NORTH BEND, Ore. – The former site of Shutter Creek Correctional Institution has been transferred to the Oregon Department of State Lands for use as the headquarters of the Elliott State Research Forest, state officials announced today.

The 49-acre site is anticipated to serve as the operations hub for the research forest, which will be overseen by the Elliott State Research Forest Authority and managed in partnership with Oregon State University. The proposed headquarters site will include laboratory, classroom, dormitory and office spaces and may also house potential partnerships with local and Tribal entities.

“The Elliott is about to begin a new chapter as a world-class research forest, which created this opportunity for Shutter Creek to have a new beginning as well,” said DSL Director Vicki L. Walker. “I’m excited Shutter Creek will continue to contribute to the local area and economy through its connection to the nation’s largest research forest, right here on Oregon’s South Coast.”

Senator Jeff Merkley and Senator Ron Wyden secured \$4 million for site renovations and rehabilitation in Congress’s fiscal year 2023 omnibus appropriations package.

Local residents will notice ongoing and increasing activity at the site as the transition proceeds, Walker said. DSL staff is onsite, managing and maintaining the property for redevelopment as well as those with legal access. Ongoing use of the communications tower on-site has been secured. Existing agreements with the City of Lakeside and other utility providers have been assigned to DSL, ensuring continuity of services to the site.

The site has great potential to honor and advance Tribal culture and partnership. Shutter Creek is within the traditional lands of the hanis (Coos) people. The Elliott State Research Forest is within the traditional lands of the hanis (Coos) and quiiich (Lower Umpqua) peoples. Descendants of the hanis and quiiich peoples are enrolled in the federally recognized sovereign nations of the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians and Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians.

Walker noted there is also potential for additional future partnerships on the site, saying, “DSL recognizes the history and future opportunity associated with this site. As part of valued ongoing discussions with the CTCLUSI and others interested in the site’s future, we welcome outreach and ideas from any potential partners.”

The Elliott State Research Forest will be officially created on January 1, 2024, as directed by the Oregon Legislature through Senate Bill 1546 in 2022 and Senate Bill 161 in 2023. A new state agency, the Elliott State Research Forest Authority, and a board that includes local residents will oversee the research forest in collaboration with Oregon State University.

DSL, OSU, the State Land Board, and the Elliott State Research Forest Authority prospective board are completing final steps to create the research forest, including submission of a habitat conservation plan to federal agencies, approval of a forest management plan, and approval of participation by OSU’s Board of Trustees.

"After multiple years of collaborative planning, OSU is eager to see the shared vision for the Elliott State Research Forest come to life," said Tom DeLuca, the Cheryl Ramberg-Ford and Allyn C. Ford dean of the College of Forestry. "The Shutter Creek facility is an ideal location to base research operations, placing our research teams in close proximity to the forest, the community and our partners at the CTCLUSI as we work together on co-stewardship plans for the research forest."

About the Shutter Creek Site

The site is a former federal property previously deeded to Oregon Department of Corrections by the U.S. General Services Administration at no cost for correctional uses through the federal [Public Benefits Conveyance Program](#) (PBC). The Department of Corrections used the property until the closure of the correctional institution as the needs and numbers of the Oregon prison populations significantly shifted over the past few years. The State identified another qualifying PBC use for the property. In this instance, the state requested a PBC program change of use from corrections to wildlife conservation. Federal approval was secured through GSA for the change of PBC use restrictions from correctional to wildlife conservation.

About the Elliott State Research Forest

The Oregon Department of State Lands and Oregon State University are working collaboratively to transform the Elliott State Forest into a publicly owned state research forest. The Elliott State Research Forest is poised to be the nation’s largest research forest – a place where scientists and managers work with Tribal partners to explore

forestry's role in addressing climate change impacts, restoring habitat and endangered species, and advancing responsible active management including timber and other forest products. The research forest brings great opportunity for partnerships important to community-based jobs, economic growth, recreation, education, conservation, and the advancement of Indigenous and non-Indigenous culture.

The State Land Board in December 2022 took historic action toward creation of the Elliott State Research Forest, [decoupling the forest from Oregon's Common School Fund](#) and prospectively appointing the first board of directors for the Elliott State Research Forest Authority, the new public agency that will be established in 2024 to oversee the research forest in collaboration with OSU.

[Learn more about the Elliott State Research Forest on DSL's website.](#)

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