
Elliott State Forest Management Plan Public Comments Reponses:December 2005

Topic <i>Social/Recreation</i>

Sub-topic**Scope** **FMP**

Comment Number 89

As a group of responsible and law abiding outdoor enthusiasts, we strongly believe in multiple use of our public lands. We fully support the goal and position of the state to harvest timber to support the common school fund. We believe that recreation is also important to the local economy, and we would like to see motorized recreation (especially class 2 ORV) considered in your forest management plans.

According to the Oregon Statewide Comprehensive Plan of 2003, off-road driving is increasing 2.9 percent per year, and we would like to see the Elliott state forest possibly begin an ORV program, similar to the ORV program on the Tillamook state forest.

According to the Public Review Draft of the Elliott State Forest Management Plan.” The Elliott could also support off-road driving, with careful management of other forest uses in potential conflict of that activity.” (pg. 2-60.

We would like to offer our help in any way, to get a motorized recreation plan established in the Elliott state forest.

Response

Coos District would be willing to review any proposed motorized recreation plans for the Elliott that are compatible with the Coos District Forest Management Plan and proposed Elliott Habitat Conservation Plan.

Comment Number 103

Also if ODF were to construct hiking trails in the Elliot there would be more recreation there.

Interpretive trails along some of the most productive salmon streams could really reconnect people with the forest and the salmon that call it home. 5,000 dollars is a pathetic amount for recreation. It probably barely covers the cost of the toilets at Loon Lake.

Response

An upland interpretive trail is planned to be built at the Millicoma Interpretive Center on the West Fork Millicoma River. This trail will complement a trail that ODFW as already built with volunteers along the river. Another trail loop has been discussed with a local Coos County Trail organization for the Loon Lake area. The trailhead would be at BLM's Loon Lake Recreation Area. Funding has not been secured for this trail.

Elliott State Forest Management Plan Public Comments Responses: December 2005

Comment Number 128

Section 6.2.1.4 Recreation on page 6-8 points out that hunting is the main recreation use on the Elliott State Forest. Section 6.2.1.3 Hunting on page 6-8 points out that big game populations support a recreational hunting industry with significant local and regional economic benefits. Improving big game forage conditions on the Elliott State Forest directly benefits big game populations, which in turn benefits this recreational use.

Response

Response: The increased clearcut harvest levels proposed in this plan will significantly increase the forage available for big game.

Comment Number 129

Trails & Roads

The DFMP identifies the need to plan and develop trails for off-highway vehicle (OHV) use. OHV trail designation can attract and concentrate OHV use to an area. A carefully planned trail system is vital to maintaining compatibility with other forest resources. ODFW recommends that ODF consider accommodating OHV use on the Elliott State Forest by using the existing road system as much as possible. This approach offers several benefits:

- A good network and road base for trails already exists;*
- Minimize the need to break new ground to create new trails;*
- Minimize financial resources necessary for implementation; and*
- Minimize adverse impacts on other resources such as big game, big game habitat, and water quality.*

ODFW looks forward to participating with ODF to identify appropriate OHV use roads and trails on the Elliott State Forest.

Response

We appreciate and agree with these valuable comments and will seek ODFW's help when considering OHV use on the Elliott.

Elliott State Forest Management Plan Public Comments Reponses:December 2005

Comment Number 169

The Implementation Plan says that the Elliott State Forest “is well known for ... recreational opportunities...” To bad this isn’t true. In reality, the Elliott doesn’t even have one mile of a recreational trail. We made extensive comments on this in our previous FMP comments. The ODF has responded with claims that the public only wants dispersed recreation, and that is why there are no hiking trails. We disagree. The ODF is not basing this claim on any realistic data.

The ODF claims there is no hiking, horseback riding, or mountain biking on the Elliott currently, therefore there is no need for trails. “Hiking and mountain biking trails have not been developed, as use if fairly infrequent”. The ODF fails to recognize that the reason there is no hiking is because there are no trails. If there were recreational trails, with some welcoming information, the beauty of the never-before-logged, native, coastal rainforests would be a significant draw to the area. After all, the surrounding area is already inundated with tourists due to the nearby Umpqua Lighthouse State Park, Winchester Bay recreation and other ocean recreational opportunities, Dean Creek Wildlife Habitat ACED adjoining Elliott to the North, and the Silver and Golden Falls State Park only a couple of miles south of the Elliott. People even kayak on the West Fork Millicoma within the state forest. But the ODF simply concludes that “recreation use within the Elliott is concentrated in several small areas of the forest, with the rest of the forest receiving little recreational use.” It is that way only because the ODF has not made any effort to implement any of the recreation goals of past plans. In spite of the requirement to do so under the current FMP, the ODF has never made a move to welcome the public. The new FMP is simply a repeat of the broken promises of the past. Instead, the FMP should recognize the many recreational opportunities that are available that would not even disrupt logging activities.

For instance, the old-growth forests next to some of the West Fork Millicoma River would make a spectacular hiking trail and dry-weather equestrian trail. This is within the riparian buffer that can’t be logged anyway.

There is one mile of Loon Lake shoreline on the Elliott State Forest. Loon Lake is a very popular recreation area with a campgrounds and a resort. Yet the Elliott has never encouraged any public recreation on state managed lands, even though the shores of Loon Lake have the greatest potential of anyplace on the Elliott to bring in recreational income for the common school fund.

In the Scholfield Creek basin there is the “Windy Ridge old-growth stand.” In the Big Creek basin there are “11 acres set aside for a myrtle grove conservation area along Murphy Creek”. Some of these areas should be evaluated for public education and hiking trails.

In the Marlow Glenn basin, “the Heritage Grove is a surviving mature Douglas-fir and western hemlock stand from the 1868 Coos Bay Fire and is designated as a conservation area because of its unique status. This site is approximately 72 acres and is located in the Silver Creek drainage...” This site should be evaluated for hiking trails. This Heritage Grove was left off of the “Key Resource Consideration” list in the Implementation Plan. This should be corrected in the next draft.

In the Millicoma Elk basins, “Land use classifications include Special-Recreation in several allocations along upper West Fork Millicoma River

Elliott State Forest Management Plan Public Comments Responses: December 2005

and along Elk Creek.” ODF should evaluate a hiking trail here.

Response

We believe that the data on recreation use is realistic since the data was collected during two different polls that were separated by a number of years. The data is reliable since it was collected in the Elliott by talking to the people who were in the Elliott recreating. In addition, the results of these two recreation surveys are consistent with what Elliott staff observe while working in the Elliott.

An equestrian group (Coos Backcountry Horsemen) did volunteer to help the Elliott develop a horse camp at Elkhorn Ranch. Some progress was made over a period of about 3 or 4 years. A small area was developed so horsecampers could park their horse trailers and other vehicles. With volunteer labor and materials supplied by ODF picnic tables were constructed as were fire pits. This group also flagged out a few horse trails, one which followed an old CFPA fire trail down the West Fork below the 2300 bridge. Before the camp could be completed the group lost interest and didn't renew their agreement with ODF.

An upland interpretive trail is planned to be built at the Millicoma Interpretive Center on the West Fork Millicoma River. This trail will complement a trail that ODFW as already built with volunteers along the river. Another trail loop has been discussed with a local Coos County Trail organization for the Loon Lake area. The trailhead would be at BLM's Loon Lake Recreation Area. Funding has not been secured for this trail. The idea discussed was that the trail would loop up to the ridgetop in the Elliott and back to Loon Lake.

Comment Number 170

Scattered Tracks: The Winchester Bay scattered track should be turned over to the Umpqua Lighthouse State Park to manage for recreation. High recreation use areas immediately adjoin and encircle this 200+ acre parcel. This track is clearly inappropriate to manage for intensive timber production. This parcel offers excellent hiking and equestrian trail opportunities. Since the State Park lost almost a third of it's acres to Douglas County, now dedicated to ATV recreation, the Winchester Bay scattered track parcel would help balance the recreation between the motorized and non-motorized recreation.

Response

The Winchester Bay tract was not included in the HCP because it was recongized that the Department of State Lands may decide on a use other than timber production for this parcel.

Comment Number 172

ATVs: There is only one recreation welcomed by ODF on the Elliott in Annual Operation Plans, and that is ATV use. We have see extensive soil damage and stream side vegetation damage from ATV use (and have sent the pictures into the Coos District), yet the FMP, IP and HCP fail to recognize the damage, attempt to mitigate it, or control it in any way.

Response

ATV use on the Elliott is very limited. The strategy for recreation in Chapter 5 provides for managing recreation to minimize adverse impacts on other resources such as water quality.