


Chapter 3

Guiding Principles, Vision, and Goals



This chapter discusses the guiding principles, forest vision, and resource management goals that set the direction for the *Elliott State Forest Management Plan*. The ODF uses the guiding principles, along with legal and policy mandates, to develop goals and strategies for long-range forest management. This chapter also presents the working hypotheses that support achievement of the vision and resource goals for the Elliott State Forest. The main headings in this chapter are:

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Guiding Principles

- 1. The FMP will recognize that the goal for CSFLs is the maximization of revenue to the CSF over the long term, consistent with sound techniques of land management. The goal for management of BOFLs is to secure the greatest permanent value to the citizens of Oregon by providing healthy, productive, and sustainable forest ecosystems, that over time and across the landscape provide a full range of social, economic, and environmental benefits to the people of Oregon.**

The Oregon Constitution (Article VIII, Section 5) requires the State Land Board to manage CSFLs:

...with the object of obtaining the greatest benefit for the people of this state, consistent with the conservation of this resource under sound techniques of land management.

According to a 1992 opinion of Oregon’s Attorney General, the “greatest benefit for the people” standard requires the State Land Board to use the lands for schools and the production of income for the CSF. The resources of the lands are not limited to those such as timber, which are currently recognized as revenue generators for the CSF. The State Land Board should consider other resources, such as minerals, water, and plant materials, which may offer revenue for the fund. In addition, the State Land Board may take management actions that reduce present income if these actions are intended to maximize income over the long term.

OARs 629-035-0000 through 629-035-0100 describe the BOF’s guidance to the State Forester for managing BOFLs:

“To secure the greatest permanent value of these lands to the state, the State Forester shall maintain these lands as forestlands and actively manage them in a sound environmental manner to provide sustainable timber harvest and revenues to the state, counties, and local taxing districts. This management focus is not exclusive of other forest resources, but must be pursued within a broader management context that:

- a) Results in a high probability of maintaining and restoring properly functioning aquatic habitats for salmonids, and other native fish and aquatic life;
- b) Protects, maintains, and enhances native wildlife habitats;
- c) Protects soils, air, and water; and
- d) Provides outdoor recreation opportunities.”

- 2. The ODF will employ an adaptive management approach to ensure that the best available information is acquired and used efficiently and effectively in forest resource management programs.**

The FMP will consider a wide range of available natural resources data for the Elliott State Forest. However, new information will continue to become available after completion of the FMP. Some information may be the result of specific research activities. Other resource information will be collected through ongoing work conducted by state agency resource specialists.

New information will also become available through monitoring. The ODF is committed to an ongoing monitoring program.

As new information becomes available, the ODF will review and analyze its applicability to the management of the Elliott State Forest. Management of the Elliott State Forest will be adapted in light of the best available scientific knowledge.

- 3. The FMP will be developed within the context of the Elliott State Forest as a managed forest.**

The majority of Elliott State Forest is composed of CSFLs. The ODF manages these lands under an agreement with the State Land Board to prepare and carry out programs for the management, control, and protection of the CSFLs. The management of the Elliott State Forest is implemented through the preparation and implementation of a comprehensive, integrated FMP.

BOFLs are owned by the BOF. The statutes governing this agreement are contained in Chapter 530 of the ORS. OARs Chapter 629, Division 35 direct that these lands will be actively managed. Active management means applying practices, over time and across the landscape, to achieve site-specific forest resource goals using an integrated and science-based approach that promotes the compatibility of most forest uses and resources.

- 4. The FMP will recognize that the forest is intended to be an important contributor to timber supply for present and future generations.**

The Elliott State Forest (and scattered tracts in the plan area) encompasses 97,022 acres of forest land, and is an important contributor to the current and future timber supply for the local and regional area. Douglas-fir is the dominant species, with lesser amounts of western hemlock, western red cedar, red alder, and bigleaf maple.

- 5. The FMP will be a comprehensive, integrated plan that takes into account a wide range of forest values.**

An integrated FMP provides for development and protection of forest resources across the landscape. For each resource or issue, the FMP includes a description of the current condition, a summary of key information, the management goals for development and/or protection of the resource, and the strategies that will be used to accomplish the management goals.

The FMP considers the following commodity and amenity resources:

- Agriculture and grazing
- Air quality
- Aquatic and riparian systems
- Cultural resources
- Energy and minerals
- Fish and wildlife
- Forest condition (health and ecology)
- Land base and access
- Plants
- Recreation and scenic resources
- Social and economic resources
- Soils
- Special forest products
- Timber

6. Lands will be identified and managed for long-term revenue production while providing for a sustained contribution to biological capability and social values. The FMP will recognize that trade-offs will exist between revenue-producing activities and non-revenue-producing activities.

An important aspect of Elliott State Forest management is long-term sustained yield. Short-term gain will not be sought at the expense of the long-term capability of the forest.

As part of the planning process, all lands will be inventoried, and data will be collected on a number of resources. The planning process will also evaluate the economic and social effects of management decisions and the overall role of the Elliott State Forest in local economies. As dictated by its constitutional and statutory obligations, the Elliott State Forest will be managed to produce long-term revenue.

7. The FMP will examine opportunities to achieve goals through cooperative efforts with other agencies, user groups, or organizations.

Management goals can often be achieved more effectively and efficiently through collaboration with others. An example of cooperative efforts is the relationship between the ODFW and the ODF. These agencies work together to provide increased forage for big game through forage seeding and pasture land management, to reduce harassment of big game by closing roads, and to incorporate fish and wildlife considerations in timber sale plans by collaborating with local biologists.

Additional opportunities will be explored in the forest planning process to pursue cooperative efforts with adjacent landowners, user groups (both commodity and amenity oriented groups), and other individuals and groups who are interested in the management of the Elliott State Forest.

- 8. The FMP will be developed through a collaborative and cooperative process involving the State Land Board, the BOF, the Department of State Lands, the public, local and tribal governments, and other resource management agencies (including the USFWs and NOAA Fisheries – collectively known as the “Services”).**

The Elliott State Forest planning process is based on the concept that consideration of diverse viewpoints is useful in gaining understanding, acceptance, and support from the public, local governments, and resource management agencies.

The goals for involvement are to:

- Seek insight, opinions, and data on planned management actions on the Elliott State Forest.
- Build understanding, acceptance, and support for the forest resource management planning processes and decisions.
- Offer information about forest systems and forest stewardship.
- Provide opportunities for meaningful comment that can affect planning decisions at a time when involvement can contribute positively to the planning decisions under consideration.
- Provide and maintain a flow of communication with the State Land Board, the BOF, the public, local and tribal governments, and resource management agencies on processes and decisions related to the planning effort.

- 9. The FMP will be goal driven.**

A goal-driven FMP begins by defining overall management goals for the forest. By focusing on goals for land management, the FMP will avoid an issue-driven approach that deals with issues in a piecemeal fashion by analyzing and addressing specific concerns.

Examples of overall goals for the forest are found in these guiding principles. Once the overall goals have been established, resource-specific goals can be developed.

- 10. The FMP will present the Elliott State Forest in both a local and regional context.**

Consistent with OARs and principles of good stewardship, planning will consider various geographic scales: the immediate physical area, the watershed level, and the overall landscape (including other public and private ownership).

In southwest Oregon (Coos, Curry, Lane, Douglas, Jackson, and Josephine counties), approximately 62 percent of forest land is in public ownership, mostly federal (58 percent). The Elliott State Forest constitutes approximately two percent of the total forest land in southwest Oregon (Lettman et al. 2001).

In the south Oregon coast region, approximately 49 percent of forestland is in public ownership. The Elliott State Forest constitutes 10 percent of that total (Sessions et al. 1991), and should be viewed in context with other ownership in the region. This FMP will define the role of the Elliott State Forest in timber production and other forest resources in conjunction with other public and private ownership in the south coast region.

11. The FMP will consider the overall biological diversity of state forestlands, including the variety of life and accompanying ecological processes.

OAR 629-035-0000 defines biological diversity as the “genetic variation and the abundance of microbial, plant, and animal life, the range of ecological functions, and the physical process at any local or landscape scale.” This definition has been used throughout the planning process. It emphasizes process and the interactions that lead to landscape, ecosystem, species, and genetic diversity.

Managing for biological diversity requires management at various levels of biological organization: species, genetic variation within species, communities of organisms, and functional diversity. Functional diversity includes the many processes by which organisms transfer energy with each other and the physical environment.

Strategies for biological diversity must deal with resources at two spatial levels: the forest stand and the broader landscape.

Managing for biological diversity also requires the recognition that certain concepts and many details of managing ecosystems require further testing and refinement. To account for unknowns and new information, an adaptive management approach is required that integrates management, research, and monitoring to accomplish goals and objectives.

12. The Elliott State Forest will be managed to meet state and federal ESAs while fulfilling the State Land Board’s responsibilities under the Oregon Constitution and the BOF’s statutory responsibilities.

The FMP complies with all federal and state laws. Although many laws apply to the management of state forest lands, legal requirements for protection of threatened or endangered species are expected to have the most significant effects. Compliance with the state ESA will recognize the State Land Board’s constitutional responsibility to maximize long-term revenues from CSFLs.

13. The FMP will satisfy the constitutional mandate for CSFLs, and will recognize that ecosystem and watershed health are among the goals of this FMP.

Most of the Elliott State Forest has resulted from natural seeding of Douglas-fir and other species after the Coos Bay Fire of 1868. For the past several decades, the Elliott

State Forest has been carefully managed under the goals of the State Land Board. As in most watersheds, the Elliott State Forest experiences natural and human-caused conditions that promote restoration activities. For example, successful rehabilitation of under-productive acres has occurred over many years on the Elliott State Forest, and the Elliott State Forest has been involved in cooperative restoration and enhancement projects with local watershed associations.

The FMP will emphasize a continuing commitment to restoration activities and to the Elliott State Forest's vital contribution to the success of large-scale regional efforts such as the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds.

14. The FMP will be designed to achieve a specific desired future condition across the landscape, and to provide flexible strategies for achieving that condition without a highly prescriptive approach.

At any one time, the Elliott State Forest retains complex and interrelated resources and issues that constitute the forest landscape. The FMP will recognize a vision of the future, without the constraints of current conditions, that will achieve the goals for all resources. The FMP will be designed to achieve a future condition, which encompasses a wide range of social, economic, and environmental values.

There are many pathways to the desired future condition, and the approach to achieving that condition will change over time. The FMP is designed to be flexible and incorporate new information as it becomes available through research and adaptive management.

Forest Vision

The vision for the Elliott State Forest is the preferred view of its future composition; the FMP refers to this vision as the “desired future condition.” The management strategies in Chapter 5 and in the district IP describe the manner in which the Elliott State Forest will evolve from its current condition to its desired future condition, while meeting the purpose of the lands.

The forest vision is written in the present tense, as if the future is now and the desired future condition for the Elliott State Forest has been achieved.

Under the Oregon Constitution, the primary consideration for the future of the Elliott State Forest is to provide the greatest benefit for the people of Oregon, consistent with sound techniques of land management. Greatest benefit means that the lands are used for schools and revenue to the CSF is maximized over time. While achieving the greatest benefit standard, an appropriate balance of economic, social, and environmental values are maintained using adaptive management strategies and techniques.

The Elliott State Forest is a working forest that produces a sustainable timber harvest, generating jobs and revenue for the benefit of the state, counties, and local taxing districts. The management approach reduces economic risks by producing a diverse mix of stand structures and associated timber products, leading to increased asset value of the land over time.

The diversity of forest structures is maintained over time, providing for a broad range of social values important to Oregon citizens. The diverse forest structures contribute to the range of fish and wildlife habitats necessary for all native species, and to broad biological diversity. The forest provides a range of conditions to achieve the goals for all resources, and the strategies used to achieve these goals have substantial and broad scientific, stakeholder, and public support.

The Forest

The landscape of the Elliott State Forest contains a broad range of forest structures and native tree species. The forest stands are predominantly conifer, although hardwoods are intermixed in most stands. Some stands and drainages are dominated by hardwoods. Typical stand structures are listed below.

- **Early Structure**—Young stands with newly established trees, grasses, herbs, and shrubs.
- **Intermediate Structure**—This stage begins when trees fully occupy the site and form a single, main canopy layer. As the trees grow, they compete for light, nutrients, and moisture, and eventually less competitive trees die. Snags and downed wood begin to appear in the stand. The surviving trees grow bigger and have more variation in height and diameter. Near the end of the stage, a sufficient amount of trees have died and the living trees have enough variation that small gaps form and understory trees, shrubs, and herbs begin to reappear.

- **Advanced Structure**—This stage occurs later in stand development. Though advanced structure can be quite dense because several layers of trees exist, it is generally characterized by a relatively open overstory, with significant understory development. Vigorous herbaceous and shrub communities combine with tree crowns to create multiple canopy layers. Tree crowns and shrubs create a complex vertical structure from the forest floor to the tops of the tallest trees. Some advanced structure stands have large trees; multiple, deep canopy layers; substantial amounts of coarse woody debris; large snags; and other structures typically associated with older forests.

Well-stocked, healthy, and vigorous forest stands are the rule. Insect and disease agents are present at low levels, and are considered a normal part of a healthy forest. Insects, disease, minor windthrow, other natural events, and active management create gaps throughout the forest. Gaps are relatively small openings within a stand, or small patches of a different vegetation type within a more general stand type. Stands vary in size from a few acres to hundreds of acres, and generally have irregular shapes.

Although the Elliott State Forest maintains the same general balance of structures over the landscape through time, individual stands are changing continuously. Some stands are harvested more often than others. This shifting mosaic of forest structures maintains vigorous timber-producing stands, contributes to the diversity of plant communities and wildlife habitats, and enhances overall biological diversity throughout the forest. The diverse mix of habitats includes habitat for species associated with older forest structures.

The Elliott State Forest contributes to the range of habitats needed by native fish and wildlife species. Although the locations of specific types of habitat may change over time, the shifting forest mosaic provides an overall stability in the amount and distribution of various habitats. Individual structural habitat elements, including hard and soft snags and down wood, are present across the landscape and are located in all stand types. These features provide for soil productivity as well as for habitat needs. Because of the forest's amount and arrangement of habitats and provision of important habitat elements throughout the landscape, the risk is significantly reduced that species will become threatened or endangered because of forest habitat conditions.

Many recreational uses are available in the managed forest, but dispersed, lightly managed recreation activities predominate. Recreation occurs across the whole landscape—in areas intensively managed for timber, as well as areas where fewer management activities are planned.

Thinnings, partial cuts, and regeneration harvests produce a predictable and dependable supply of timber and revenue. Smaller diameter wood is produced from thinnings in the early stages of stand development. High quality timber is produced through silvicultural techniques and harvested through partial cuts and regeneration harvests. Timber harvest and silvicultural activities contribute to employment in local communities, and to sustainable volumes of timber and diverse wood products flowing into local economies.

Riparian areas are a mixture of stands dominated by large conifers, and stands that are primarily composed of hardwoods for several decades before growth of shade tolerant conifers or disturbance changes their composition. Healthy herb and shrub communities

are part of the riparian environment. Many snags and downed logs are found in and around streams. The riparian conditions support diverse tree, plant, and animal species, and contribute to healthy aquatic habitat elements. Although the specific locations of channels, deep pools, and other habitats shift over time, the mosaic of stream habitats has an overall stability. High quality fish habitat exists in most areas.

Management Perspective

The forest is actively managed to produce the various stand types in much shorter time frames than would occur in unmanaged stands. Management activities are scheduled to provide a sustainable flow of timber and revenue while maintaining the desired array of forest structural conditions over time. When natural events such as windstorms or fires affect forest structures, management activities are adjusted as needed.

Stewardship—The ODF practices good stewardship of the Elliott State Forest and its many resources. The ODF coordinates with other state and federal agencies, non-government organizations, neighboring landowners, and other interested individuals to achieve the management goals for the Elliott State Forest. The management program is adequately staffed to achieve forest management goals.

Monitoring—The Elliott State Forest continues to be an outstanding example of an adaptively managed forest. Monitoring is an integral part of forest management and provides feedback for adaptive management.

Resource Management Goals

Agriculture and Grazing

- Permit agriculture and grazing, to the extent that they are compatible with other resource goals.

Air Quality

- Contribute to meeting National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) and Prevention of Significant Deterioration standards established under the federal Clean Air Act (42 USC 7401 et seq.).
- Manage prescribed fire to comply with the Oregon Smoke Management Plan.
- Maintain compatibility with Oregon's Statewide Planning Goal 6 (Air, Water, and Land Resources Quality) to maintain and improve the air resource of the state.

Aquatic and Riparian Systems

Water Quality

- Maintain a level of water quality sufficient to support beneficial uses of the waters of the state, including propagation of fish and aquatic life, wildlife, domestic, agricultural, industrial, municipal, recreational, and other legitimate uses (ORS 468B.015 (2)).
- Maintain water quality that meets standards established by Oregon under the mandates of the federal CWA (33 USC et. Seq.).
- Maintain compatibility with Oregon's Statewide Planning Goal 6 (Air, Water, and Land Resource Quality).

Water Supply

- Maintain healthy watershed conditions to support the beneficial uses of the waters of the state.
- Maintain natural watershed storage capacity processes.
- Protect water-related functions of riparian lands.

Wetlands

- Maintain the natural functions and attributes of wetlands over time.
- Ensure that no net loss of wetlands occurs as a result of management activities.

- Maintain compatibility with Oregon’s Statewide Planning Goal 5 (Open Spaces, Scenic and Historic Areas, and Natural Resources).

Cultural Resources

- Preserve and protect archeological sites, or archeological objects in accordance with state law (ORS 97.740 to 97.760; 358.905 to 358.955; and 390.235).
- Conserve historic artifacts, and real property of historic significance in accordance with state law, in consultation with the Secretary of State and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) (ORS 358.640 and 358.653).
- Protect additional cultural resource sites that are determined by the ODF to have special educational or interpretive value.
- Maintain compatibility with Oregon’s Statewide Planning Goal 5 (Open Spaces, Scenic and Historic Areas, and Natural Resources).

Energy and Minerals

- Manage gas, oil, and mineral resources on CSFLs to maximize long-term revenues to the CSF.
- Manage gas, oil, and mineral resources on BOFLs to provide revenues to counties and local taxing districts.
- Provide products useful to society, while minimizing impacts to surface resources (i.e., forests, fish, wildlife, etc.).
- Maintain compatibility with Oregon’s Statewide Planning Goal 5 (Open Spaces, Scenic and Historic Areas, and Natural Resources).

Fish and Wildlife

- In a regional context, provide habitats that contribute to maintaining or enhancing native wildlife populations at self-sustaining levels, and contribute to properly functioning aquatic habitats for salmonids, and other native fish and aquatic wildlife.
- Meet the requirements of federal and state ESAs.
- Contribute to maintaining fish and wildlife populations at levels that allow recreational and commercial opportunities, including fishing, hunting, and wildlife viewing.
- Maintain compatibility with Oregon’s Statewide Planning Goal 5 (Open Spaces, Scenic and Historic Areas, and Natural Resources).

Forest Condition (Health and Ecology)

- Maintain or restore healthy forest conditions, thereby promoting sustainable, productive, and resilient ecosystems.
- Maintain biological diversity across the landscape.
- Maintain long-term forest soil productivity.
- Protect forest resources from unwanted fire and damaging pests.

Land Base and Access

Land Base

- Conserve the state forest land base to maintain resource values.
- Maintain compatibility with all Oregon Statewide Planning Goals and the Oregon Coastal Management Program.
- Maintain a land ownership pattern that can be efficiently managed.
- Identify and accomplish land exchanges and/or purchases that will enhance management efficiency.

Access System

- Develop and maintain a cost-efficient access system suitable for fire protection and management activities.
- Minimize potential adverse environmental and biological effects of roads and other components of the access system.
- Provide for public access where it is compatible with resource development protection and management activities.

Plants

- In a regional context, provide habitats that support the maintenance or enhancement of native plant populations at self-sustaining levels.
- Meet the requirements of federal and state ESAs.

Recreation and Scenic Resources

Recreation

- Provide diverse recreational opportunities that supplement, rather than duplicate, opportunities available in southwest Oregon, as defined in the SCORP (Oregon Parks and Recreation Department 2003).

- Provide opportunities for interpretation and outdoor education on state forest lands.
- Manage recreational use of the forest to minimize adverse effects to other resources and adjacent ownerships.
- Manage recreational use of the forest to accommodate a wide variety of existing uses while minimizing conflicts among user groups.
- Maintain compatibility with Oregon’s Statewide Planning Goal 8 (Recreational Needs).
- Maximize efficiency and diversify funding of recreational management through development of partnerships with user groups, neighboring landowners, and other agencies.

Scenic

- Meet the scenic protection requirements of the Oregon FPA for visually sensitive corridors associated with designated scenic highways (ORS 527.755).
- Manage the forest to minimize visual effects in areas designated by the ODF as visually sensitive.
- Maintain compatibility with Oregon’s Statewide Planning Goal 5 (Open Spaces, Scenic and Historic Areas, and Natural Resources).

Social and Economic Resources

- On CSFLs, maximize long-term revenues to the CSF.
- On BOFLs, provide sustainable timber harvests and revenues for the state, counties, and local taxing districts.
- Select sound forest management practices that promote sustainable state and local economies.
- Provide for a mix of resource outputs and amenity values that promote the long-term social health and economic viability of state and local communities.
- Enhance public understanding of forest resources and forest resource management.
- Maintain compatibility with Oregon’s Statewide Planning Goal 9 (Economic Development).

Soils

- Maintain long-term forest soil productivity.

Special Forest Products

- Manage special forest product resources to allow sustainable harvests of special products on all lands suitable for such activities.

Timber

- Manage the timber resource to maximize long-term revenues to the CSF consistent with sound techniques of land management; to provide sustainable timber harvest and revenues to the state, counties, and local taxing districts; and to contribute to Oregon's timber supply.
- Produce a sustained yield of timber harvest from state forest lands.
- Promote the maintenance, growth, and development of forest trees and stands through the use of appropriate silvicultural techniques.

Working Hypotheses

The forest vision described earlier in this chapter provides an idealized view of the future. It describes a type of forest and an approach to forest management that the ODF believes will achieve the resource management goals. The forest management approach will thus satisfy the constitutional mandate for CSFLs to maximize revenue to the CSF over the long term, while remaining consistent with sound techniques of land management. The assumptions on which the forest vision is based are as follows.

Forest management is a complex endeavor—ecologically, socially, and economically. The ODF’s understanding of forest systems is substantial, but incomplete. As more is learned through monitoring and research, a strong adaptive management framework is essential to successful implementation of this FMP. At the very heart of this FMP, and fundamental to the adaptive management program outlined in Chapter 6, is a set of working hypotheses. These working hypotheses relate to broader assumptions that, if validated over time, create the foundation for attainment of the desired future condition, and thus the benefits that accrue from that achievement.

These key working hypotheses are:

- The citizens of Oregon will continue to support integrated and active management of the Elliott State Forest to provide for multiple outputs and benefits.
- An active and integrated forest management approach will provide for greater levels of sustainable and predictable timber and revenue, while concurrently recognizing that ecosystem and watershed health are among the goals of this FMP.
- Identification and protection of key habitat areas for specific species will maintain existing populations as a source to colonize new habitat.
- Species will colonize new habitats as they develop.
- A diverse array of stand structure, composition, age, patch size, and distribution will, at various times, provide for achievement of all of the resource goals outlined in the previous section of this chapter.
- Ensuring biological diversity at the landscape level requires providing for an array of forest stand types through time and space that emulates conditions created by historic disturbance regimes.
- Providing for a diverse array of forest conditions through time can be accomplished in a managed context through the application of silvicultural principles.
- A diverse array of forest conditions will enhance overall forest health and reduce the risks of catastrophic loss from insects and disease.

- Active management through a combination of landscape-level strategies and site-specific standards will result in the maintenance and restoration of properly functioning aquatic and riparian habitats.
- A balanced approach to forest management will achieve the goals of the FMP. Balance does not mean an equal allocation of resources; balanced forest management involves areas of little or no management (conservation areas), areas of moderate management where other resource values are emphasized along with timber production, and areas where timber production is the primary emphasis.
- A diverse array of conditions will provide diverse recreational opportunities on Elliott State Forest lands.
- Long-term management of natural resources can only succeed within a framework that provides for change.

Collectively, these working hypotheses form the basis for the set of integrated forest management strategies described in Chapter 5. They also provide the foundation for the key questions that must be explored through time, as this plan is implemented, to ensure that change occurs in an appropriate and timely manner.

