

Scientific Review of the Elliott State Forest Management Strategies

Oregon Department of Forestry

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SCIENTIFIC REVIEW OF THE ELLIOTT STATE FOREST MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

INTRODUCTION

The *Elliott State Forest Management Plan* (FMP) provides management direction for all Common School Forest Lands and Board of Forestry Lands managed by the Coos District. This includes the Elliott State Forest proper, as well as scattered tracts of state forest lands in Coos, Curry, and Douglas counties, totaling approximately 98,000 acres. This plan supersedes and replaces the previous *Elliott State Forest Management Plan* approved in 1993.

This plan takes a comprehensive, multi-resource approach to forest management, as did the 1993 management plan. It includes a description of each forest resource, information about its current condition, and management for each. The resource management goals and strategies are intended to achieve a proper balance among the resources through a system of integrated management. For example, the key set of management strategies seeks to concurrently produce revenue through harvesting of forest products, while maintaining a developing desirable fish and wildlife habitats and forest biological diversity.

Scientific review of the draft strategies will ensure we are on the right track in developing Elliott State Forest (ESF) management strategies and that these strategies are based on the best available science. This process will serve to validate the strategies and help us improve them.

The review was designed with the intent of examining all aspects of the proposed management strategies. However, there are several important aspects of management of the ESF that are outside the scope of this review. Economic and social impacts are among these.

The review was developed with the intent to meet two primary objectives:

- Provide a credible review of the scientific basis of the landscape management strategies identified in the proposed Elliott FMP
- Assess the feasibility that the proposed strategies will achieve the objectives identified in the plan.

APPROACH USED TO CONDUCT THE SCIENTIFIC REVIEW

To accomplish the review objectives, it was determined that input and critique from a diverse group of scientists was necessary. The FMP covers a wide range of management approaches and management goals. As a result, the group of reviewers needed to include people with a breadth of scientific perspectives and expertise in a variety of areas.

Selection criteria for the reviewers included:

- Each reviewer should be recognized within the scientific community as a authority in a field appropriate to the review.
- Each reviewer should have a background that includes recent research in an area appropriate to the review.
- Each reviewer should have a record that includes recent publications pertaining to an area appropriate to the review, published in peer-refereed publications.
- Each reviewer should be available to conduct a review in a timely fashion.

The ESF Core Planning Team compiled a list of potential reviews that met the above criteria. Reviewers were selected from the pool of candidates in agreement with the ESF Steering Committee. A group of eight reviewers was established with expertise in forest ecology, silviculture, aquatic ecology, wildlife, and landscape management. The group included the following scientists:

Dr. Peter A. Bisson, Research Fish Biologist, USDA Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Research Station laboratory, Olympia WA.

Dr. William H. Emmingham, Silviculturist, College of Forestry, Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR

Dr. Eric Forsman, Research Wildlife Biologist, USDA Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Research Station, Corvallis, OR.

Dr. Robert E. Gresswell, Aquatic Ecologist, USGS Forest and Rangeland Ecosystem Science Center, Corvallis, OR.

Dr. Larry L. Irwin, Wildlife Biologist, National Council for Air and Stream Improvement (NCASI).

Dr. Janet L. Ohmann, Research Forest Ecologist, USDA Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Research Station, Corvallis, OR.

Dr. Chadwick D. Oliver, Pinchot Professor of Forestry and Environmental Studies, Yale University, New Haven, CT.

Dr. Peter Teensma, Forestry and Fire Analyst, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.

The ESF Core Planning Team, in concurrence with the Steering Committee, prepared a set of questions to help structure the review. The reviewers were asked to critique the documents for considerations pertinent to their areas of expertise and to answer the specific review questions. The reviewers were encouraged to critique any pertinent aspect of the documents not covered by the questions if they so desired, and to refrain from answering any question that they felt unqualified, unable, or unwilling to answer. Each reviewer was sent the following documents:

FMP Chapter 2 – Understanding the Forest: Planning and Resources

FMP Chapter 3 – Guiding Principles, Vision, and Goals
FMP Chapter 4 – Resource Management Concepts
FMP Chapter 5 – Resource Management Strategies
FMP Chapter 6 – Implementation
Guidance to Reviewers and Scientific Review Questions

The scientific review focused on Chapter 5 – Resource Management Strategies and how those strategies reflect the Resource Management Concepts as described in Chapter 4. Chapters 2, 3, and 6 were provided for reference as context to the overall FMP revision process.

Each reviewer submitted his or her responses to the ODF Coos District representative. All responses were compiled by question to facilitate summary and synthesis. The review comments are presented in their entirety without revision or any editing.

SCOPE OF THIS DOCUMENTATION

This documentation includes:

- Guidance to the reviewers
- Summaries of the documents provided to the reviewers
- Specific review questions
- Table of specific review comments
- ODF responses to the review comments
- Biographical sketches of the reviewers.