

# Elliott State Forest



News from the Oregon Department of Forestry

"STEWARDSHIP IN FORESTRY"

September 2005

## You Are Invited to Share Thoughts on Final Draft of Elliott Forest Plan

You are invited to provide input on the final draft of the Elliott State Forest management plan.

Your input will be shared with the Board of Forestry and the State Land Board when they make their decision on plan approval in early 2006. **Comments are due by Oct. 21.**

Meetings are scheduled this month:

**Tuesday, Sept. 20, in North Bend**

from 6 to 8 p.m. at the North Bend Public Library, 1800 Sherman.

**Wednesday, Sept. 21, in Roseburg**

from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Douglas Forest Protective Association office, 1758 NE Airport Road.

Copies of the draft plan will be available at the meetings and also are available in advance on the Web and by calling the Oregon Department of Forestry's Coos District Office. That information appears on page 4.

## Forester Thanks Participants and Asks for One More Look



I want to thank those who participated in the planning effort that led to the proposed new forest management plan. We believe this plan is true to the constitutional mandate for these lands (producing school revenue) and it contains many of the suggestions we heard.

I invite you to take a look at the final draft. Your input will be shared with the state boards that will consider approving the plan.

If you have questions, don't hesitate to contact us. Thanks again for the help.

**Jim Young**  
Coos District Forester

## Plan Seeks to Meet Legal Mandate and Achieve Broad Range of Goals

The management approach for the Elliott State Forest synthesizes the knowledge from various fields, including forestry, fisheries, wildlife and hydrology.

It is an approach to forest management that seeks to meet the legal mandate for the land and to achieve a broad range of resource goals that provide social, economic, and environmental benefits from the forest over time.

In addition, this landscape approach manages forests by using silvicultural tools emulating natural disturbances to provide forest products, maintain forest health, and retain a high level of social value.

The basic concepts for managing the Elliott State Forest in this plan focus on:

- **Sustainable Economic and Social Benefit** – economic, environmental and social values of the forest are interdependent. All three elements of sustainable forest management are woven throughout the forest management plan (FMP) and within the strategies.

- **Sustainable Forest Ecosystem Management** – application of silvicultural tools attains the desired landscape condition. Resource management objectives of the FMP will be met with an array of forest stand structures and habitats across the landscape in a functional arrangement that provides for the social, economic and environmental benefits called for in the management direction for these lands.

These benefits include a high level of sustainable timber harvest and revenue, diverse habitats for native species, a landscape level contribution to properly functioning aquatic systems, and a forest that provides for diverse recreational opportunities.

- **Integrated Resource Management** – the design and application of management practices must consider the effects and benefits of all of the forest resources in achieving the goals in the FMP over time and across the landscape.

It does not mean that all management practices must treat all resources equally or that management



**The Elliott State Forest produces timber revenue for schools while maintaining habitat for native wildlife and fish.**

practices must provide for all resources on every acre at all times. The integrated resource management concepts that are key to managing the Elliott State Forest combine the landscape-level approach with site-specific strategies for other resource values.



# Stable Income for Schools Drives Plan

The goal for the new forest management plan is to produce a sustainable, even-flow harvest of timber and maximize revenue for the Common School Fund over the long term.

The plan is designed to supply this stable income through sustainable timber harvests, while providing for fish and wildlife habitat.

When the northern spotted owls and marbled murrelets were listed as threatened species, it affected the harvest levels on the Elliott State Forest. From 1991 to 1996, harvesting averaged about 18 million board feet a year.

In response to this decline, the Oregon Department of Forestry developed management and conservation plans in the mid-1990s to allow consistent harvesting and also protect habitat for these species.

The current planning seeks to continue and improve on this two-fold goal to harvest and protect habitat.



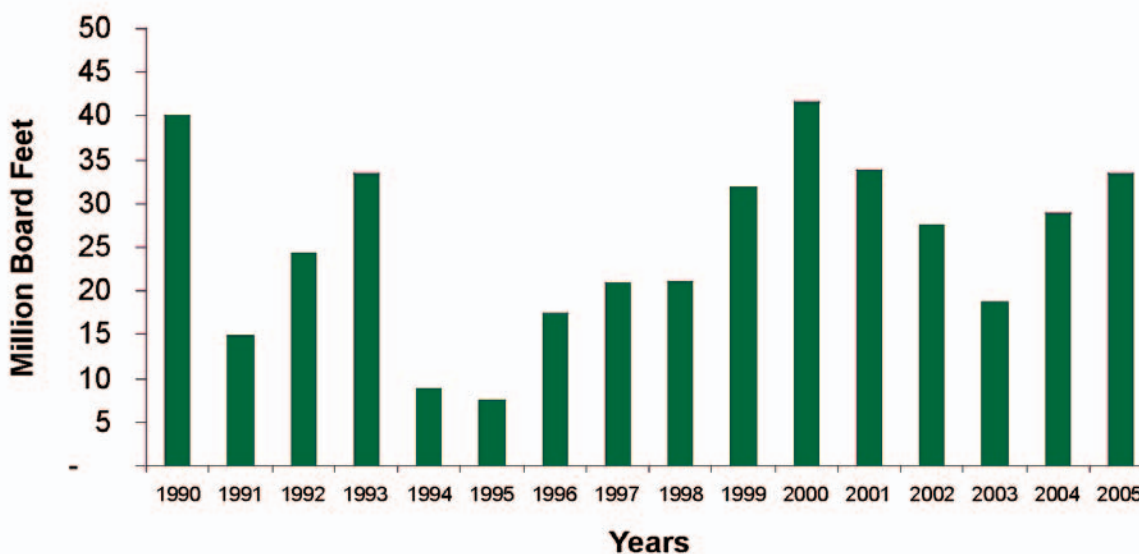
Most of the Elliott State Forest consists of Common School Land, with timber revenue – about \$15 million a year – going to support schools.

## Study Shows Timber Income Still Important to SW Oregon

Southwest Oregon has a much larger percentage of its workforce employed in wood processing than the state as a whole.

According to a 2001 study coordinated by the Oregon Department of Forestry, timber-related industries generate about 10 percent of Coos County's total income. Douglas County, which processes about half the timber harvested from the Elliott State Forest, has 17 percent of its workers employed in the lumber and wood products industry.

## Elliott State Forest Harvest History



A board foot is a unit of wood that measures a foot square and an inch thick. There are about 13,000 board feet of framing lumber in an average house and 7,000 board feet of plywood or similar panels. A log truck carries about 4,500 board feet.

## State Constitution Says . . .

# Forest Exists to Provide School Funding

Most income from the Elliott State Forest goes to the state Common School Fund and helps support Oregon's public schools.

This reason for existence is not just found in state law; it's right in the Oregon Constitution.

Because of this, the Oregon Department of Forestry works to generate the greatest amount of revenue in the long term, consistent with sound techniques of land management.

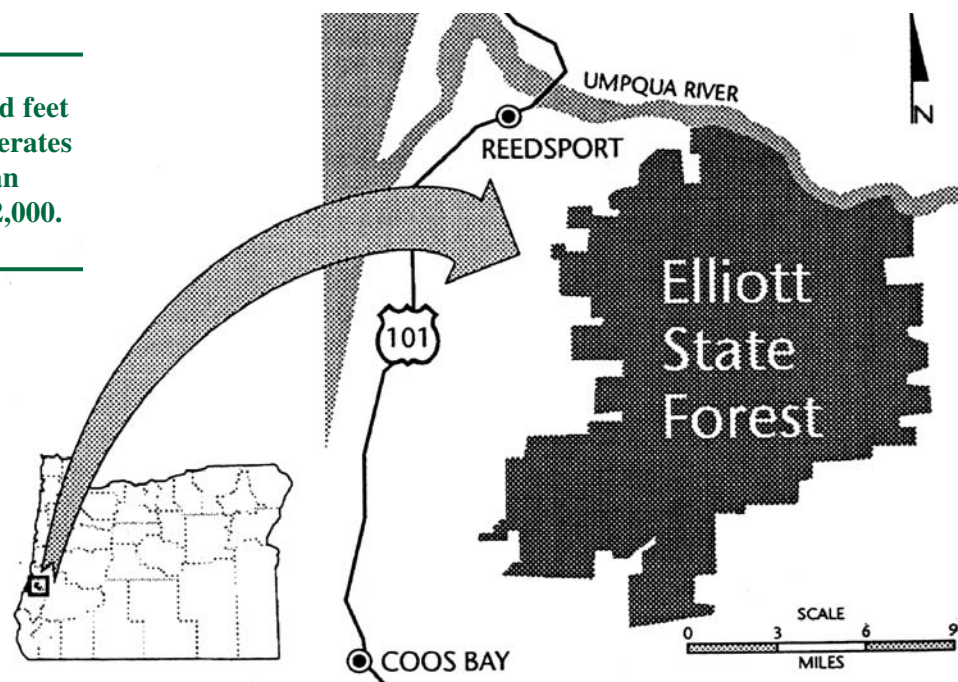
The Forestry Department manages these lands under contract with the State Land Board, which

owns 90 percent of the Elliott State Forest.

An attorney general opinion in 1992 said the constitutional phrase, "greatest benefit for the people of this state," means to maximize long-term revenue to the Common School Fund.

It is believed that the revisions in the management plan and habitat conservation plan will result in more flexibility and allow for higher timber harvest levels, along with continuing environmental protections.

Each 1 million board feet from the Elliott generates 11 to 13 jobs, with an average wage of \$32,000.



The 93,000-acre Elliott State Forest is in the Coast Range between Coos Bay and Reedsport.



# How the New Forest Plan Works . . .

## Structure, Not Just Age, Signals Wildlife Habitat

The new plan uses what actually exists in the forest to determine wildlife habitat.

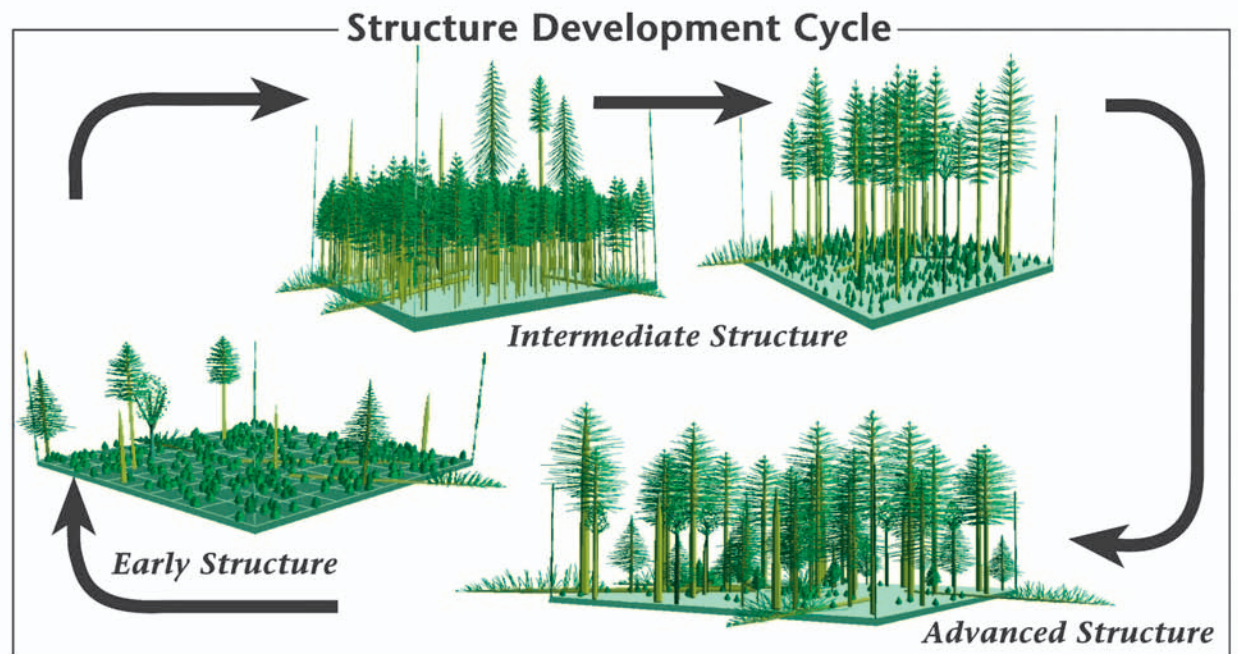
This would seem to make sense, but in the past habitat often was designated simply by the age of a stand of trees.

The things – or “structures” – they look for in forests go from the obvious (the size and type of trees) to the more obscure (standing dead trees and decaying logs).

This structure-based method recognizes that the forest has a predictable development cycle and foresters can influence this cycle by using different harvesting treatments. Thinning a stand by reducing the number of trees, for example, results in faster growth of the remaining trees.

Leaving more trees after a clearcut harvest means there will be bigger trees mixed in with the younger stands over time. This makes for a more diverse forest.

This ability to influence development is important because the new plan has specific goals for the different stages. Stands will be managed so they move through the cycle and maintain certain percentages called for in the plan.



## Conservation Areas Tied to Threatened Species

Under the new plan, conservation areas can be found where the threatened species are located.

These are areas where no timber harvesting is likely to occur.

Threatened species that typically use these conservation areas – mostly older forests – are northern spotted owls and marbled murrelets. These birds use larger trees to nest, and they favor forests with mul-

tiple canopies that provide protection for their nests.

The plan divides the forest into 13 management basins. Within each basin, the conservation areas are linked to those areas with advanced structure. This supports habitat.

Long term, the new plan calls for 40 to 60 percent of the forest to be in the advanced structure stage. This percentage includes conservation areas.

### Forest-wide Structure Percentages

<b>Advanced Structure</b>	<b>40 - 60 %</b>
<b>Intermediate Structure</b>	<b>35 - 45 %</b>
<b>Early Structure</b>	<b>5 - 15 %</b>

The forest will be actively managed to produce both timber for revenue and structure for habitat.



The marbled murrelet (above) and the northern spotted owl (right) are threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. Special precautions in the management and conservation plans protect the habitat of these birds.

## Proper Stream Function Preserves Water Quality

Streams and streamside areas are being protected under the new plan.

The goal is to maintain or restore properly functioning stream conditions. This means maintaining water quality for fish and other species by limiting disturbance.

Special protection areas extend 160 feet from the edges of fish-bearing streams.

Roads are designed and maintained to have a minimum impact on streams. Fish passage is maintained where roads cross fish-bearing streams.

## Progress Toward Goals Monitored with Changes Where Appropriate

Are we doing what we set out to do? Is what we set out to do still the right target to shoot for?

These are the key questions that will be asked as the new plan is carried out. This monitoring is built into the plan.

Specific monitoring projects will be developed to determine if the strategies in the plan are achieving their objectives. The plan is designed to adapt to new research and science.

## Contact Information & How to Comment

Copies of the Elliott Forest Management Plan, Habitat Conservation Plan and Implementation Plan are available on the ODF web site. Paper copies also are available.

**Written comments on Forest Management Plan are due by Oct. 21.**

**Mail:** Bob Fields  
Coos District Office  
Oregon Department of Forestry  
63612 Fifth Road  
Coos Bay, OR 97420

**Web:** [http://oregon.gov/ODF/STATE\\_FORESTS/elliott.shtml](http://oregon.gov/ODF/STATE_FORESTS/elliott.shtml)

**Phone:** 541-267-1775

**Fax:** 541-269-2027

**E-mail:** [rfields@odf.state.or.us](mailto:rfields@odf.state.or.us)

## Public Planning Process

### 2000

- ✓ Planning process begins in January for revision of Elliott State Forest Management Plan and Habitat Conservation Plan
- ✓ State Land Board in August provides direction to Oregon Department of Forestry to develop multi-species Habitat Conservation Plan

### 2001

- ✓ Public meetings held in Coos Bay, North Bend, Roseburg and Salem in January and February to provide background on reasons for revising Forest Management Plan and Habitat Conservation Plan, and to seek public input on management of the Elliott State Forest
- ✓ First issue of Expectations newsletter published in May; background and purpose of forest, reason for revision (several more issues were published throughout the course of the planning process)

### 2002

- ✓ Open written comment period from September to October for public input on proposed management concepts of Forest Management Plan

### 2003

- ✓ Peer (scientific) review of draft landscape strategy in November and December

### 2004

- ✓ Board of Forestry tour (public invited) in April
- ✓ Forest Management Plan draft strategies available to public in May
- ✓ Public meetings held in Salem, Coos Bay and Roseburg in June to discuss Forest Management Plan strategies
- ✓ Open written comment period on draft Forest Management Plan from June through August

### 2005

- ✓ Public Scoping Meetings in May for Environmental Impact Statement on Habitat Conservation Plan (in conjunction with U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and Nation Marine Fisheries Service) in Roseburg, North Bend and Salem

**Public meetings in September on draft Forest Management Plan, including initial drafts of Habitat Conservation Plan and Implementation Plan**

### 2006

- Board of Forestry will be asked in January for approval of Forest Management Plan, contingent upon successful Habitat Conservation Plan process
- State Land Board will be asked in February for approval of Forest Management Plan in February, contingent upon successful Habitat Conservation Plan process
- Public comment period in spring for draft Environmental Impact Statement
- Prepare final Environmental Impact Statement in summer
- Issuance of Incidental Take Permit for Habitat Conservation Plan in December

## Plans Fit Together to Form Forest Vision and How to Get There

The various plans mentioned here chart a course for the future, and they are linked to show how the vision for the forest can be achieved by implementing the strategies through on-the-ground operations

The **Elliott State Forest Management Plan** builds a strategic framework. First in the framework are the strategies – structure-based management, conservation areas and streamside protection – that make up the heart of the FMP.

Next, the proposed **Elliott State Forest Habitat Conservation Plan** (Elliott HCP) develops more specific conservation strategies for fish and wildlife species of concern. The Elliott HCP is a separate document subject to approval by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA Fisheries.

Issuance of an **incidental take permit**, through an approved Elliott HCP, is considered to be a key tool for fully implementing the strategies described in this forest management plan over the long term.

Using the strategic framework in the FMP and Elliott HCP, the Coos District **implementation plan** is developed to achieve the FMP's management goals and the Elliott HCP's conservation objectives for a ten-year period, and move toward the forest vision.

Finally, **annual operations plans** describe site-specific projects and how those projects are designed to contribute to the goals of the FMP for a one-year period.

The four planning levels provide a framework for **adaptive management**. Agency staff, through identified review and approval processes, can make changes as needed at the various levels, ranging from strategic, landscape-wide changes to the FMP and HCP, to specific, tactical changes at the district and project level.

## Long Planning Process Comes to an End; Comments Shared

The Oregon Department of Forestry has invested more than five years in the planning process for developing and gaining approval of a revised forest management plan and a habitat conservation plan for the Elliott State Forest.

The time-consuming process allows for consideration of alternatives, public comments and scientific review.

Comments received on the final draft Elliott State Forest Management Plan will be shared with the Board of Forestry and the State Land Board as they consider approval of the plan.