



SAVING THE ELLIOTT STATE FOREST

Legislative action in 2015 is needed to protect an Oregon treasure—the 93,000-acre Elliott State Forest in the Oregon Coast Range northeast of Coos Bay that is home to some of the last remaining significant old-growth stands surviving on state-owned lands.

The Problem

Oregonians treasure our heritage of parks, forests, and other public lands, and we want to see them preserved and passed down for our children and grandchildren to use and enjoy. Oregon’s Elliott State Forest is caught up in a conflict between its historic and out-of-date tie to the Oregon Common School Fund and logging proceeds, and the Oregon public’s desire to protect our remaining old-growth forests, wild salmon, and wildlife.



School kids exploring threatened forest in the Elliott. (J. Laughlin photo)

A legal settlement between conservationists and the state has significantly reduced old-growth clearcutting on the forest. This has led to a decline in logging revenues, and prompted the State Land Board to consider selling some or all of the Elliott in order to generate funding for the Common School Fund. If sold to private timber interests, the majority of the Elliott would likely be clearcut. However, Oregon State Land Board members, who are the trustees of the Elliott, have repeatedly and publicly stated that they would like to find a conservation solution to the Elliott-Common School Fund conundrum. Currently, the Department of State Lands is conducting a broad stakeholder process to develop recommendations for future management of the Elliott.

The Framework for a Pro-Conservation Solution

Any pro-conservation solution on the Elliott should contain the following provisions:

- Resolve the conflict with a buy-out of the historic obligation to schools, thereby delinking school funding from old-growth clearcutting on the forest
- Protect the remaining trees over 100 years old and defend other important conservation values on the Elliott, including clean water, wildlife, and habitat
- Maintain public ownership of the Elliott
- Include sustainable rural economic development opportunities, including thinning projects that produce timber while enhancing environmental health
- Plan for increased recreational access to the Elliott, which is currently without even one hiking trail or campground.

For more information...

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