

Elliott State Research Forest Project Update

The July 19, 2021 meeting of the Elliott Forest Advisory Committee was canceled to accommodate scheduling challenges faced by participants. The following is a progress update on items scheduled for discussion at the meeting. This update is being provided to Advisory Committee members and those individuals on the DSL Elliott mailing list, and posted on the DSL and OSU Elliott State Forest website.

1. **Development of a Habitat Conservation Plan (DSL Update).** A draft of the HCP document was posted for public review from May 17th to July 2nd. DSL and OSU held two public information sessions, and talked with multiple stakeholders individually during this time. Approximately 400 comments were received and are posted on the DSL website now. Meetings with federal agency representatives also occurred during this time with meaningful input provided addressing areas of the document needing further clarification.

DSL and OSU are now working with the ICF team under contract to assist with the HCP application process to adjust and improve the working draft in response to the feedback received. Below is a link to a Power Point slide deck the Project Lead for ICF (Troy Rahmig) was prepared to present at the Advisory Committee meeting. It summarizes some of the key conservation attributes of the draft currently under revision, and reflects adjustments made to date in response to comments.

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/pk4r5rbrr6en8i7/HCP%20Presentation%20to%20July%2019%20ESRF%20Advisory%20Committee.pdf?dl=0>

DSL anticipates finalizing revisions and submitting a complete document to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA Fisheries in early August, requesting those agencies to initiate the federal process for review and action under the Endangered Species Act and NEPA. That process will also include opportunity for public review and comment on the HCP terms proposed by the State. We anticipate federal agency review to require more than 12 months to complete.

2. **Decoupling from the Common School Fund (DSL Update).** Work continues on multiple pathways toward accounting for approximately \$121 million needed to fully decouple the Elliott from the Common School Fund obligations. Most recently, DSL has been exploring viable options for obtaining federal funds for a portion of that amount. It is still early in the process, but we are encouraged by opportunities we see in programs administered under the umbrella of the federal Land Water Conservation Fund.
3. **Updating the 2016 Appraisal (DSL Update).** DSL has taken steps to begin the process of “refreshing” the 2016 appraisal of the Elliott forest. The firm of Masson Bruce Girard has been contracted to provide services to frame and conduct an independent assessment of the value of the forest. The contractor will undertake work in 2021 that is foundational to conducting the evaluation, and is expected to complete the updated appraisal sometime in 2022.
4. **Forest Management Planning Working Group Update (OSU Update).** On July 9th, the FMP working group met and OSU presented an updated timeline for FMP development with

committee input checkpoints and a summary of the feedback received on the draft table of contents from the meeting prior. There was also a presentation to provide background and context on FMP development in order to guide the discussion on how to edit the table of contents according to working group suggestions. The following is written to share the sentiments and input relayed in the FMP working group meeting and provide an update on plans to address the various issues raised in the meeting.

Particularly, we heard the desire for more and broader expertise on the project, either as a part of the FMP working group or as partners in another forum. We'd like to reiterate that the FMP working group is not our only source of input for the FMP, and that we have worked extensively with marbled murrelet experts, forest managers, and scientists from other disciplines to develop our proposal. These partners remain committed to us as we move forward to develop the FMP, and we will continue to meet with them to gain their perspectives. Furthermore, we are actively seeking suggestions for others who may want to partner with us in this endeavor. If you have suggestions, please send them to us directly and we will be eager to reach out.

5. **OSU Elliott Project Manager Hiring Update (OSU Update).** Our hiring process for the Project Director has led to a point where we feel that hiring an internal candidate allows us to best meet our objectives while contracting with an external private consultant with expertise in management of coastal forest ecosystems of the Pacific Northwest.
6. **Upcoming Public Engagement Opportunities (DSL and OSU Update).** DSL and OSU are working together to plan and conduct a series of open house events in early fall. These events will be structured to provide members of the public with an update on all the different workstreams associated with the project, and an opportunity to ask questions and dialogue directly with DSL and OSU. Meeting dates will be calendared and noticed a month prior.
7. **Discussions Regarding Future Governance Structure for the Forest (OSU Update).** Since requesting feedback on the draft governance summary at the April 22, 2021 Advisory Committee meeting, OSU has met with responding stakeholders to discuss the governance structure. The ESRF Governance Working Group will meet on July 30, 2021 to further the work done to date.