

Messages and Articles on the Elliot State State Forest Sale

Oregonian Newspaper Article: December 14, 2016

Headline: Brown asks to explore other options

Andrew Theen

The Oregonian/OregonLive KEIZER — The Elliott State Forest's fate will wait until 2017.

After a more than four-hour meeting and hearing from dozens of residents Tuesday, Gov. Kate Brown directed the Department of State Lands to “work toward developing” an offer with Lone Rock Timber Resources and the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians, which together submitted the lone bid for the 82,500-acre forest.

But Brown simultaneously asked staff to explore a second alternative to the alliance's \$220.8 million offer: Issuing as much as \$100 million in general obligation bonds to free a portion of the forest from its constitutional requirement to produce timber revenue for the Common School Fund. Brown said that could allow the land to remain in public hands or come under tribal management.

“We left \$237 million of bonding on the table,” Brown said in an interview, referencing her state budget recommendations. “There's clearly the bonding capacity available under my proposal to do \$100 million.”

Tuesday's meeting of the State Land Board brought no closure to the long-standing controversy over what to do with the forest, and ensured the debate will stretch into the new year and, in all likelihood, the upcoming legislative session.

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FROM A1

The meeting attracted a standing-room-only crowd in Keizer, and most of the roughly 80 people who signed up to speak opposed the proposed sale. Dozens arrived at the Keizer Civic Center more than an hour before the meeting, carrying signs and banners.

During public testimony, a group of middle and high school students from the Portland area spoke together. A father from rural Lane County brought his two young children to argue against the proposed sale. Representatives of conservation groups from across the state also testified against the deal.

The Elliott forest spans Coos and Douglas counties and is home to such threatened species as coastal coho salmon, marbled murrelets and the northern spotted owl. Long a workhorse for the Common School

Fund, now valued at \$1.5 billion, the forest has in recent years become a money loser for the state. Logging plunged in 2012 amid lawsuits from environmental groups.

Josh Laughlin, executive director of Eugene-based Cascadia Wildlands condemned the proposed sale as a threat to public access.

“The steel gates will be slammed shut, the forest will be clear-cut and Oregonians will be left questioning what went wrong,” he said.

Bob Sallinger, conservation director at the Audubon Society of Portland, asked Brown to step up. “There’s simply no way around the fact that this is privatization.”

But some argued it’s long past time for the state to respect its financial obligation to the Common School Fund.

A representative from the Oregon Education Association, which represents nearly 50,000 public education officials, urged the state to sell the land.

The Common School Fund distributed about \$55 million in 2015 for schools, compared with the overall \$7.3 billion K-12 budget for the current biennium.

Some conservation groups have pushed for the state to sell or free itself of the constitutional requirement to make money off natural resources like the Elliott.

Jim Green, deputy executive director of the Oregon School Board Association, was more circumspect.

“We’re asking that you either approve this sale or divest,” he said.

Before the testimony, Lone Rock and tribal officials advocated for their unique collaboration. Michael Rondeau, president of the Cow Creek group, said the proposed deal is “aligned with our long-term land acquisition and management plans.” The tribe is landless, he said, and has suffered for more than a 150 years.

Jim Paul, director of the Department of State Lands, said before public testimony that the Lone Rock bid did meet the state’s general guidelines outlined more than a year ago. The plan calls for preserving public access on at least 41,000 acres, he said, and would set aside some 20,625-acres of older growth forest as protected from harvest.

But Paul acknowledged that the bid wasn’t perfect. “The plan does include some gaps, uncertainties and ambiguities,” he said. For example, the state needs reassurances about public access, he said.

Brown will be the only returning member on the State Land Board in 2017. Secretary of State Jeanne Atkins is retiring, and Ted Wheeler leaves at the end of this month to become mayor of Portland. They will be replaced by Dennis Richardson and Tobias Read respectively.

After dozens of speakers alternatively challenged the State Land Board to “show leadership” and find a way to decouple the land from the Common School Fund, Wheeler gave a roughly 10-minute speech expressing his thoughts.

While he, as did Atkins and Brown, thanked the tribes and Lone Rock for their involvement, Wheeler said he didn’t think the current plan was the right one.

“We’re on the right road,” he said, “But we’re not there yet.”

Wheeler then turned to Brown.

“We have heard a very clear consensus, governor, that we should separate the Elliott State Forest from state funding,” he said, referencing the \$1.5 billion Common School Fund. Wheeler said he wants the state to “step forward with public funds.”

“Gov. Brown, you are the right person to lead this effort,” he said, while adding that the audience needs to support Brown in 2017 while pushing the Legislature.

Brown said she is open to other partners emerging to work with Lone Rock and the tribes.

But the governor, elected in November to the final two years of Gov. John Kitzhaber’s term, had thoughts for those who have asked for other options: Come back in 2017 with more answers.

“I expect that you will work quickly and collaboratively and thoughtfully,” she said.

The land board is expected to meet again in February.





Linda's Message to Governor Brown, December 14, 2016

Dear Gov. Brown,

Thank you SO MUCH for the meeting yesterday of the State Land Board. It helped me clarify my concerns about the proposed sale of Elliot State Forest.

Here are my key questions:

1. How could Oregon sell its treasured resources to a Washington corporation, even if it has a "HQ" in Roseburg? (By the way, is Lone Rock Timber Management a Washington corporation because it has less tax burden in WA? How do they pay their fair share of taxes in Oregon?)
2. Lone Rock's 87.03% of the 110.4 million equity investment makes it a major player in this initiative. Is Lone Rock using the Cow Creek Band of the Umpqua Indians as sympathetic proxies for their corporate agenda?
3. How can we find more sustainable ways to fund our schools, ways that do not require the destruction of natural resources and wildlife habitat? Please help us find new ways to fund schools in Oregon.

Thank you for doing everything you can to protect this forest for our children and the future of Oregon.

With the highest regards and warmest wishes,
Linda Hartling

Linda's Message to Friends of Elliot State Forest: December 11, 2016

Dearest All,

It would be great if we could save an Oregon forest. Please read the article below and see what you think.

If you are inspired to do so, please kindly call Gov. Kate Brown today to stop the sale of Elliot State Forest to a private lumber company. Here's her office number: 503-378-4582

Here's my example:

"Greetings, Gov. Brown,

Thank you for everything you do to protect the natural resources and beauty of the great State of Oregon! Please do not sell Elliot State Forest to a private timber company. There are better ways to fund schools. Please save this magnificent forest for today's children and for future generations of Oregonians. Thank you."

If you would rather send your opinion to Gov. Kate Brown, please go to this link or call her office.
<https://www.oregon.gov/gov/Pages/share-your-opinion.aspx>

On behalf of the birds, the bees, many trees, and me, I am so thankful for your kindness listening to this message.

With a world of appreciation!

Linda

P.S. Please feel free to share with interested friends.



Opinion: From the Oregonian – Saturday, December 10, 2016

The Elliott belongs to all of us
Norman Turrill

[On Dec. 13](#), the State Land Board will decide the fate of the Elliott State Forest, Oregon's first state forest. The board, composed of Gov. Kate Brown, Secretary of State Jeanne Atkins and Treasurer Ted Wheeler, will decide whether or not to sell the Elliott State Forest to a private timber company. We believe this would be a mistake. The League of Women Voters of Oregon has repeatedly stressed the importance of preserving our public lands for future generations and keeping them in public hands.

The Elliott is part of our Common School Fund trust lands. This is due to an outdated arrangement that couples getting revenue from precious forestlands to school funding. Our schools and protection of our forests are both important and one should not have to be chosen at the expense of the other. Important ecosystems that provide public benefits like water filtration, climate stabilization, and carbon sequestration should be de-coupled from the school fund's portfolio.

In Oregon, the Elliott supports 25 percent of the wild Coho salmon productivity, which is important for our coastal fisheries. A number of endangered species such as the marbled murrelet call [the forest](#) home. In fact, the Elliott is one of the best remaining habitats for the small seabirds. The Elliott contains a large swath of old growth forest that has never been logged and it is the largest of Oregon's public legacy rain forests.

In part, because of the Oregon league's recent water studies, we favor careful landscape management. We believe increased logging in the Elliott could jeopardize water supplies. The Elliott has many steep slopes that, if logged, would cause [damage](#) to the local streams. Other conservation issues include the state of the endangered salmon and other fish and aquatic species using rivers and streams in [the forest](#).

In addition, the league puts a priority on recreational use of such areas. Protecting and preserving natural, scenic, cultural, historic, and wildlife sites is an appropriate use of this state forest. Preserving the Elliott and providing more recreational opportunities should be a part of this function. Hunting, fishing, swimming, picnicking and hiking — now a part of public experiences in the Elliott — need to continue to be accessible to all. Just as the South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve is a tourist draw in the Coos Bay area — as well as a treasure for local citizens — the Elliott should be preserved for future generations.

Oregonians recently voted overwhelmingly to support and expand Outdoor School experiences for the state's schoolchildren. The Elliott would be a wonderful venue for that opportunity. The incredible science experiences could not be matched anywhere else in Oregon.

Consideration of the effects of climate change, a concern of Oregonians and a priority of the league, was not addressed when the Land Board adopted a protocol to consider the sale of the forest. The legacy rain forests found on the Elliott are some of the most productive in the world at storing carbon. This is important for mitigating climate change, something that severely impacts the future of Oregon's children.

We believe decoupling the minimal revenue provided to K-12 schools from clear-cutting in the Elliott is a critical decision to make. Therefore, we support a solution that removes the Elliott from the Common School Fund portfolio by allowing the 2017 Legislature to adopt Trust Lands Transfer legislation and begin moving the value of the Elliott to a different state agency or other public ownership. Governor Brown recently mentioned possible bonding in the state budget that could be used for such a purpose. Oregon's legislators deserve the opportunity to consider this solution.

We need to keep our public lands public. We ask the State Land Board to reject the sole bid for the Elliott and pursue an option that protects the Elliott's remaining native forests, wild salmon and imperiled wildlife; safeguards the Elliott for public recreational and educational opportunities; and promotes local timber jobs in Oregon by restoratively thinning the second-growth tree farms.

Norman Turrill is the president of the League of Women Voters of Oregon.

The League of Women Voters of Oregon calls on members of the State Land Board to stop the sale of the Elliott State Forest and instead, to allow lawmakers to adopt legislation and transfer the lands to a different state agency or other public ownership. Oregon Department of Forestry

Follow the link below to view the article.

portlandoregonian.or.newsmemory.com/publink.php?shareid=0d1e351aa