

Submitter: Lynn Herring

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and Wildfire Recovery

Measure: SB1546

Dear Oregon Legislators,

An extraordinary opportunity is before you! I urge you to pass Senate Bill 1546-1 to create an Elliott State Research Forest that would ensure strong protections for older forests and imperiled species with an accompanying funding mechanism to decouple logging the Elliott to support the Common School Fund.

As a decades-long proponent of protection for Oregon's temperate rainforest ecosystems including the Elliott State Forest, I consider this a heralded opportunity to protect over 90% of the remaining mature and old growth forest habitat on the Elliott and provide a foundation for scientific research and education.

Ecosystem-wise this plan would also do the following:

- establish an approximately 92,000 Elliott State Research Forest;
- ensure the forest increases in age and complexity;
- create a contiguous 34,000+ acre permanent reserve on the west wide of the Elliott and smaller reserves across the rest of the Forest;
- within the reserves, restore previously logged stands to become once again older forest;
- increase carbon storage to mitigate climate change;

Species-wise, this plan would do the following:

- protect all known Northern Spotted Owl activity centers on the Forest;
- approve a Habitat Conservation Plan by the USFWS and NOAA Fisheries for Endangered and Threatened Species, including the Spotted Owl, Marbled Murrelet, and Coho Salmon.
- approve a Forest Management Plan that further specifies agreed upon species, watershed, scenic and other protection measures;
- improve streamside protections for salmon and other aquatic and riparian species;
- minimize aerial application of herbicides that could impact non-target species.

Administration-wise, this bill would accomplish the following:

- create an Elliott State Research Forest to be retained in public ownership by the State of Oregon with management by Oregon State University;
- form a new state agency, the Elliott State Research Forest Authority, to be overseen by an independent stakeholder advisory board appointed by the State Land Board and subject to state public record laws and providing accountability.

The proposed legislation SB 1546-1 has support through a 3-year consensus process among diverse stakeholders including conservation, timber, recreation and education interests, tribes, and counties. Conclusion: Let's make this happen!

In Stewardship of the Elliott,

Lynn Herring