



PACIFIC FOREST TRUST

Private Forests. Public Treasures.

From: Laurie Wayburn
The Pacific Forest Trust
920 SW 6th Street, Floor 12
Portland, OR 97204

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To: the Oregon State Land Board regarding the Elliott State Forest Project,

The Pacific Forest Trust (PFT) has provided comment in support of the decoupling process and of the direction and purpose of Oregon State University's ownership of the Elliott State Forest. We believe that the process can move forward both protecting the public interests in clean air and water, vital wildlife habitat, recreational access, and climate benefits and advancing research on promoting resilient, adaptive forests under climate change.

Recent events in the OSU forests have underscored why PFT is encouraging the State Land Board to consider the potential of a Working Forest Conservation Easement (WFCE) as part of the decoupling plan. Given that the public has already bonded \$100 million dollars, they deserve clarity on how that investment will benefit their interests. Moreover, we have consistently heard expressions of public desire for clear and durable conservation commitments as well as designations for area managed for timber production. A Working Forest Conservation Easement directly addresses these concerns.

A Working Forest Conservation Easement¹ would benefit the Elliott State Forest in several ways:

1. Increase the public's trust in the transfer of ownership through permanent protection of the land for its multiple values.
2. Allows for ongoing forest management which provides economic return and local jobs.

¹ Working Forest Conservation Easements are legally binding agreements that permanently protect forests as forests for all their values, including habitat, climate, and cultural values, in addition to supporting sustainable forest management. Working forest easements guide future management to achieve desired outcomes, in addition to preventing conversion, development and fragmentation. Annual monitoring and reporting by a third party is required for compliance with the terms of the easement, ensuring transparency, and reassuring the public that their goals from the bond are being met.

3. An easement would maximize the investment from the \$100 million bond through the purchase of public trust values, reducing the market value of the land while keeping it in desired productive use.
4. Easements can be used proactively to identify performance goals for management, while allowing flexibility in silvicultural approaches. WFCEs can place sideboards on forest management, providing enhanced benefits for water quality, climate resiliency, and wildlife habitat while also allowing flexibility at the stand level for different management approaches.
5. Easements can work in tandem with other conservation tools, providing permanent protection and a framework for a carbon project, a habitat conservation plan, and a research program.
6. Finally, easements are a flexible tool that can work in conjunction with any potential future owner and can be used as the foundation for an ongoing adaptive management plan.

PFT owns, manages, and conserves working forests. We currently hold WFCEs on approximately 10,000 acres of working, productive forest land in Oregon and more than 100,000 acres in California, and manage over 12,000 acres in both states. These properties are managed for timber production and profit as well as benefits to climate, wildlife, and water. Forest managers, loggers, truck drivers, as well as monitoring and conservation staff are all employed as part of meeting the terms of the easement and each landowner's objectives. We'd welcome the opportunity to discuss this tool further with the Land Board, potential public owners, and interested stakeholders. Please feel free to contact me by phone or email at your convenience.

Sincerely,



Laurie Wayburn
President and Co-Founder
Lwayburn@pacificforest.org
(415) 561-0700 x 14