



**Oregon State University**  
**College of Forestry**

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**RE: Next steps for the College of Forestry McDonald-Dunn Research Forest**

Dear College of Forestry Community and Friends,

As an undergraduate student, I spent considerable time in courses developing and studying forest management plans. That, coupled with experience gained throughout my career, has taught me that although no management plan is perfect, operating without a formal plan is unwise.

The impact of the 2009 suspension of the 2005 McDonald-Dunn Forest Plan clearly illustrates this point. While we followed the general framework of the plan even after its suspension, it is clear that not all of our management activities were consistent with the plan. As a result, McDonald-Dunn forest operations did not always meet the plan's goals and landscape-scale themes we value. In addition, we did not accompany the suspension of the plan with a process or path toward its reinstatement. Collectively, this has impaired our ability to lead by example, something that is a reasonable expectation of us, and we should expect of ourselves.

After months of review, conversation, and consultation, I am announcing additional interim measures as we continue to work on developing and adopting a new McDonald-Dunn Research Forest Plan.

Effective immediately, all operations on the McDonald-Dunn Research Forest will be conducted in accordance with the [2005 Forest Plan](#). This letter serves as a formal "un-suspension" of the 2005 Forest Plan, which will remain in place until the new, collaboratively developed forest management plan is complete. Should conditions arise where an exception to the management plan be deemed necessary (e.g., due to significant storm damage), a proposed variance will be provided to the Forestry Executive Committee for discussion and a recommendation made to the Dean, following the process outlined in the 2005 Forest Plan (p. 18).

I remain concerned that ambiguity in the 2005 Forest Plan exists around older trees and stands. Accordingly, I have directed our forest management team to collaboratively develop guidelines for retaining trees of unique character to ensure that trees of significant age, condition, structure, or habitat value remain standing following harvest operations. Once adopted, these guidelines will replace the temporary age-based direction I issued regarding trees of 160 years or older as restricted from harvest as they will be more effective at meeting habitat and conservation values.

Additionally, based on the age class distribution and stand structure, the remaining 36 acres in the Sulphur Springs/Baker Creek stand (where the No Vacancy harvest occurred) will be reclassified into our mature forest reserves and managed in accordance with the 2005 Forest Plan. Stands such as these have important ecological characteristics, and we will maintain them for future study and learning, as well as conservation benefits.

After holding two public sessions, as well as countless conversations with interested stakeholders, I believe a more robust engagement process will only benefit the quality of management, conservation, and recreation on our forests. I am consulting with public engagement experts to determine the best way to ensure that this robust dialogue continues. As a result, I anticipate our Research Forests hosting at least one forest tour and listening session to discuss the planned 2020 management activities.

As part of this process, I have also asked our forest management team to review and refine their communication and outreach practices to more effectively inform stakeholders of upcoming activities. I encourage you to sign-up for the [Research Forests e-newsletter](#), [follow them on social media](#), and regularly [check their website](#) so you can learn about harvest and recreation activities and understand how you can engage, provide feedback and ask questions.

These are initial steps towards enhanced transparency and clarity on the practices and expectations on the McDonald-Dunn Research Forest. Much more work and outreach are needed as we develop a new forest management plan. To that end, over the next few months, I will be working with our Forestry Executive Committee to identify the next steps in the Research Forests planning process. The work will include identifying those who will serve on a planning committee that will represent the various interests of our Research Forests. As we continue updating our forest inventory, a critical step in the planning process, my goal is for the committee to begin its work in January 2020.

I am hopeful that we can address these issues in our new plan, which must reflect ecological and financial considerations and build on the principle that informed stakeholders lead to meaningful partnerships. We also need to address and plan for the significant changes resulting from the impacts of climate change and identify potential mitigation strategies such as carbon storage while emphasizing management for diverse forest characteristics. When finished, the new management plan will support the entirety of the mission of our College, reflect our diverse values, and position the McDonald-Dunn to be a model of multiple value forest management.

Sustainable forest management is vital to Oregon's rural economies. We should use our Research Forests to highlight how a sustainable and progressive approach can provide building materials while conserving ecosystem functions and processes. Effectively implemented, we will enhance our ability to deliver multiple (and often conflicting) values from our McDonald-Dunn Research Forest. With the resulting mix of recreational uses, laboratories for study and learning, conservation of cultural resources and ecological habitat, and revenue to support the teaching, research, and outreach missions of our College we can truly advance the capacity to inform contemporary forestry in Oregon and beyond.

We cannot go back to change the past, but we can choose our path forward. The College of Forestry has been presented with an opportunity to learn and we are excited to engage in constructive discussions around multiple-use management of forests. Sustainable forest management is one of the most important conversations of our time, and I know from the work completed by the College's faculty, staff, and students that we are ready to rise to this challenge.

Sincerely,



Anthony S. Davis, PhD  
Interim Dean  
Oregon State University