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2019 Elliott State Research Forest Feasibility Study Summary of College of Forestry Work Plan

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Purpose of this Work Plan

By the end of this year, the College of Forestry at Oregon State University (OSU) is to have assessed the feasibility of converting the Elliott State Forest into a Research Forest. The outcome of this process is to be presented to the State Land Board at a December 2019 meeting. This document outlines the key processes that the College will undertake to determine the necessary terms for a proposal to create an Elliott State Research Forest.

Broad involvement and transparency will be vital throughout this process, and the College and University commit to providing regular messaging and written materials on an ongoing basis. The activities noted here are not an exhaustive list and the timeline is intentionally fluid. The Department of State Lands (DSL) has additional tasks and activities and OSU will collaborate, participate, and communicate with all DSL initiatives as appropriate to ensure both that DSL and OSU processes are informed and coordinated.

1. Establish the OSU Elliott State Research Forest Exploratory Committee.

This group will convene to act as the College of Forestry's inclusive body on issues that arise as the potential for conversion to a research forest owned by the University and managed by the College is examined and framed.

Goal: To maximize participation and dialogue in the College around the feasibility and opportunity for establishing an Elliott State Research Forest. Charged by the Dean of the College of Forestry, this group will be presented with updates from internal and external experts, partners, and other information sources. This group will be charged with the following work:

- Objective 1: Identify what a world-class research program at the forest would include, recognizing the existing parameters around the objectives of the Land Board in the decoupling process.

- Objective 2: Collaboratively develop the vision and goals that would position the Elliott State Research Forest to serve as a world-leading source of scientific knowledge and discovery to advance forest management and conservation.

Deliverables: Provide a vision and mission for the research forest. Establish a charter that serves as the foundation for non-research activity that reflects Habitat Conservation Plan requirements of the federal Endangered Species Act and public values articulated by the Land Board.

Timing: Q1 – Q4. Establish the group in February 2019. Initial draft addressing high-level components to be completed in May 2019 to ensure draft HCP terms are aligned and complementary. Subsequent work will continue throughout 2019 to refine and develop specific opportunities.

Team: This OSU process will be convened by and report to the Dean of the College of Forestry and will be chaired by Associate Dean Katy Kavanagh.

2. Begin Stakeholder Outreach and Engagement.

OSU and DSL will pursue multiple avenues aimed at creating a transparent and participatory stakeholder engagement process on issues associated with the creation and management of a proposed research forest and the issues associated with decoupling from the Common School Fund.

In addition to the OSU-led engagement process outlined below, DSL intends to form and support an Elliott Stakeholder Advisory Group. This group will act as a forum for stakeholder review, comment, and guidance on the broad scope of project components relevant to successfully decoupling the forest from the Common School Fund. This will include; but not limited to, HCP development, public access, carbon sequestration potential, financial terms, and governance. DSL and OSU will ensure collaboration across these two processes.

Conduct Listening Sessions. OSU will meet with Tribal governments, traditional and nontraditional stakeholder groups, community thought-leaders, activists, local, state, and federal elected officials, and other interested and informed parties. Input from these listening sessions will be considered as components of a research forest are developed.

Key Question: How can OSU incorporate, honor, and build on a variety of perspectives to create a world-class research forest that reflects the goal of the University's land grant mission?

Goal: To develop a shared understanding and vision for a research forest, offer opportunities to discuss issues related to the process and OSU's intentions, ask questions, and identify opportunities to incorporate a spectrum of views into the College's vision for management of a world-class Research Forest.

Timing: Q1 – Q4. Outreach to schedule listening sessions will start in February 2019 and continue throughout the year.

Team: OSU process led by Associate Dean Jim Johnson and Associate Dean Randy Rosenberger presenting regular updates to the Exploratory Committee.

3. Operational workgroups:

A. HCP Development.

The terms of the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) are a critical consideration to ensure appropriate protections are in place for species of interest and serve to facilitate, or restrict, research that could be of critical importance in future conservation and management scenarios.

Key Question: How will draft HCP terms negotiated with federal regulatory agencies support OSU's vision for a world-class research forest?

Goal for 2019: Complete draft HCP documents with terms that reflect and promote intended management of the Elliott as a research forest with multiple ancillary uses; including, but not limited to: recreation, conservation, timber harvest, carbon sequestration program eligibility, and educational partnerships.

Timing: Q1 – Q3. Draft documents completed by June 30, 2019, with the understanding that the HCP process will continue while other work components utilizing the draft HCP terms are developed.

Team: DSL consultant-managed process with OSU participation. OSU will convene an HCP workgroup, who will present updates to the Exploratory Committee for broader discussion. The OSU-HCP workgroup will be chaired by Director of Strategic Initiatives Geoff Huntington.

B. Carbon Market Assessment and Feasibility Analysis.

A strategy document is needed to assess the viability of enrolling the Elliott in available carbon markets, forecast the potential revenue stream that may be generated by doing so, and to understand potential tradeoffs between potential research objectives, HCP terms, and other factors.

Key Question: What opportunities and barriers are likely to emerge in developing a monetized carbon program that fits within the purpose of the research forest and likely HCP parameters.

Goal: Produce a strategy and scoping document that assesses the potential to monetize available carbon on the Elliott. Articulate the steps needed to implement a plan that would contribute to a financial model that will create a self-sustaining research forest that is decoupled from the Common School Fund.

Timing: Q1 – Q3

Team: Using internal and external expertise and consultants as needed, the workgroup composition is to be determined. Workgroup will present updates to the Exploratory Committee for broader discussion.

C. Forest Management and Cash Flow Modeling and Investment Analysis.

This will serve to assess potential forest management scenarios, understand the impact of harvest on the landscape, relationship to potential research and conservation activities, and the potential contribution to the local economy (including jobs created and sustained). This will require robust modeling of forest management scenarios based on updated stand characterization data.

Key Question: What are the financial, landscape, and social implications of different forest management scenarios conducted within the allowable scope of a draft HCP? Are they consistent with prioritization of research over time?

Goal: Model multiple, accurate revenue scenarios for managing the forest that would contribute to a financial model that will create a self-sustaining research forest that is decoupled from the Common School Fund.

Timing: Q2 - Q3

Team: Using internal and external expertise and consultants as needed, the workgroup composition is to be determined. Workgroup will present updates to the Exploratory Committee for broader discussion.