

**For Immediate Release**

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Salem, OR – The Oregon Conservation Network (OCN) is pleased to see [the plan](#) released today from the Governor's office regarding the Elliott State Forest. As a coalition, we care deeply about Oregon's wildlands, and believe the state has an obligation to protect and enhance our vast forests, wildlife, and habitats. This is why the issue of the Elliott State Forest is such an important one to our members.

As Oregon's first state forest, the Elliott has become a symbol of both our enduring commitment to public lands, and the need to decouple our treasured wild spaces from the Common School Fund. There has been and will continue to be ongoing conflict between the need to preserve our environmental legacy and the need to fully fund our schools unless we take action now to create an alternative to the current system.

"The Elliott is an incredible stronghold for wild salmon, imperiled wildlife, clean water, and carbon storage. It is a place where recreational values can be realized, and it is symbolic of the larger battle at the federal level to privatize public places," said Doug Moore, executive director of the Oregon League of Conservation Voters.

Governor Brown has shown incredible leadership and vision, and we applaud her plan released today as further demonstration of her commitment to keeping public lands in public hands. We look forward to continuing to work with the Governor and the rest of the Land Board to enact a lasting plan for the Elliott that has conservation safeguards that Oregonians so desire.

"At a time when there are intense interests nationally to privatize public lands, we are deeply grateful for the Governor's vision and leadership to keep the Elliott State Forest public," says Josh Laughlin with Cascadia Wildlands. "This approach will ensure Oregonians can continue to access its great outdoors and that the Elliott's salmon and wildlife habitat are safeguarded into the future."

We believe the plan for the state to use bonding revenue to ensure this decoupling fulfills the state's fiduciary responsibilities while retaining the Elliott as a place of pride for this state and local communities.

Funding for children's education does not require cutting down forests. The plan released today by the Governor's office is an innovative approach to maintaining our commitment as a state to both education and the environment. We believe the Elliott can be a source of sustainable income for Oregon's schools – if it is responsibly managed.

We look forward to seeing the Governor's vision for the Elliott come to fruition. This historic and unique place can be a place where business interests, the public, and the tribes can come together to use the land responsibly; providing a model for other common school fund lands.

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