

PHOTO: OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY

## ELLIOTT STATE FOREST'S FUTURE TO BE DISCUSSED

The future of the Elliott State Forest still hangs in the balance and local environmental groups are dubious about a proposal to be discussed at an upcoming meeting of Oregon's State Land Board.

After years of fighting over the future of the forest, which includes coastal old growth trees and designated critical species habitat, the SLB, which is currently made up of Gov. Kate Brown, Treasurer Ted Wheeler and Secretary of State Jeanne Atkins, and the Department of State Lands (DSL), put forward the Elliott State Forest Ownership Transfer Opportunity Protocol, which called for selling 82,500 acres of the forest for exactly \$220.8 million. The plan would put public forestlands into private hands, but seeks to maintain public benefits.

The Elliott is largely comprised of Common School Fund lands that are supposed to generate money for the schoolchildren of Oregon.

Only one plan was submitted by the Nov. 15 deadline. The Lone Rock Timber Management Company, in cooperation with two federally recognized Indian tribes: The Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians and The Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians, with support and advice from additional organizations and tribes.

Lone Rock Resources says on its webpage about the Elliott that "Lone Rock has worked in and around the Elliott State forest for a half-century. Together with our tribal partners and conservationists, we are committed to sustainability and managing the forest for its environmental, recreational and economic benefits."

Robin Meacher of Cascadia Wildlands says, "We went though the proposal to see what it has to offer. It definitely fell short in our eyes."

She says the plan is "not clear in a lot of areas," and Meacher is concerned about a ramping up in the amount of trees that would be cut and a lack of clarity in the requirement to keep 50 percent of the forest open to public access.

Cascadia Wildlands doesn't see the Lone Rock proposal as "responsive" to the state criteria, Meacher says, and it is "definitely not in the direction the state should be going with this process."

In a Dec. 6 press release, while saying the Lone Rock proposal was responsive, the DSL and Oregon Department of Justice also noted areas that needed more clarity, including: public access rights, expectations regarding "harvest protection areas" where older forest stands are to be protected, allowable activities in streamside areas and finally enforcement mechanisms, including a conservation easement.

Jason Gonzales of Oregon Wild says: "After many years of grassroots organizing, Land Board hearings where hundreds of Oregonians have rallied and testified and the major public outcry of everyone from local hunters to national environmental NGOs, we are cautiously optimistic that the State Land Board will make the right decision and vote against the proposal to privatize the Elliott State Forest."

Gonzales says that a recent comment by Brown indicates she is investigating potential state bonding routes that could be used to save the Elliott, something he calls "certainly a welcome step in the right direction."

Gonzales says there is also still opportunity to further discuss the idea of trust transfer routes, which were previously proposed by incoming State Land Board member Tobias Read.

Read, who as the new treasurer will soon take a seat on the board, had introduced a bill in the 2015 Legislature to allow the State Land Board and a Trust Lands Transfer Commission to move any trust land such as the Elliott State Forest into different public ownership, such as the state's Parks and Recreation Department.

Gonzales says he hopes Read will use his new position on the board "to further advocate for creative solutions that allow Oregonians to retain ownership of and access too the Elliott State Forest, while protecting public access, native forests, pristine streams and coho salmon for generations to come."

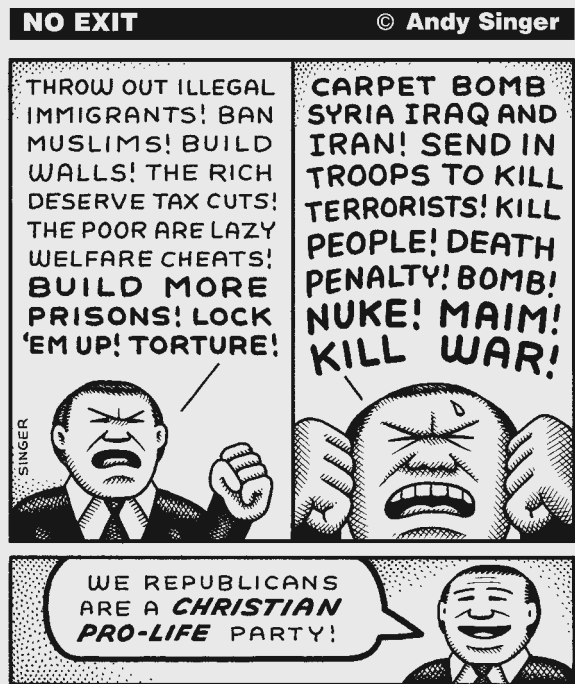
The DSL will provide information about the Lone Rock plan and take public comment at the State Land Board's Dec. 13 public meeting. The meeting is 10 am to 1 pm at the Keizer Community Center, 930 Chemawa Road NE in Keizer. ■

# SLANT

- It's time to celebrate the **victory for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe** after the Department of the Army announced Dec. 4 that it will not approve an easement that would allow the proposed Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) to cross under Lake Oahe in North Dakota. Congratulations to Native Americans, allies, veterans (particularly Native veterans), who impressively gathered to stand up to the pipelines. As they, and we, celebrate this win in the fight for clean water and indigenous rights, celebrants are rightfully also cautious. Fossil-fuel pipelines are still getting approved under a Trump administration, we fear Standing Rock's success could be limited. Keep fighting!

Want to support Standing Rock and raise money for the tribe and water protectors? At 6 pm Friday, Dec. 9, Hi-Fi Music Hall, 44 E. 7th Avenue, hosts a community-wide benefit for water protectors with speakers, comedians, live music and more. \$15 at the door. And further north, 350Corvallis.org is organizing an event that same night at 7 pm at the Odd Fellows Hall, 223 SW 2nd Street in downtown Corvallis. Local breweries and bars, including Nectar Creek Mead, Tye Wine Cellars, Flat Tail Brewing, Squirrel's Tavern, Oregon Trail Brewery and others, are donating beer, mead and wine for sale, and Earth Rising Foods will be selling food. \$10 suggested donation.

- We'll wager that the nearly new **Junction City psychiatric hospital** will not close in 2018, no matter what Gov. Kate Brown has proposed in her budget. It certainly will be a bargaining chip with the State Legislature and at this time it is impossible to predict the final budget numbers, but we're counting on Val Hoyle to fight for that hospital that she helped build. She's on track to go back to the Legislature in the senate seat Chris Edwards has vacated.



- Sports fans tell us that *The Oregonian's* coverage of the Ducks is better than that of *The Register-Guard* — despite how much manpower the *R-G* throws at UO athletics — because *The O* isn't as scared of having its media access cut off. Really? Who's scared of that? Well, looks like the UO sports machine embraced the Trumpian age before Trump even took office. According to an article on the website Corporate Counsel, the UO asked its general counsel "to look into whether the school's athletic department is violating university free-speech policies by allegedly threatening to pull the credentials of reporters who try to speak directly with student athletes." The UO Athletic Department tells the *Daily Emerald*, whose reporter tried to contact student-athletes directly, that "there are no restrictions on speaking with our student-athletes" but that "all requests for students and staff go through our athletic communication staff." A report from the general counsel in response to a request from the UO Senate for an investigation of athletic department for possible free-speech violation is due out Jan. 10, the *Emerald* says.

- Ouch! A long *New York Times* story on Dec. 3 examined Yale's evolving policy on renaming buildings and mentioned the **University of Oregon's "as an example of an overly broad policy."** Yale historian John Fabian Witt said the UO policy allowed for renaming buildings honoring anyone who demonstrated "discriminatory, racist, homophobic or misogynist views that actively promoted systemic oppression" or who "failed to take redemptive action" among other expansive criteria. Witt said, "There's a real risk that would catch up anyone alive before 1950." So the question lingers: How do we ensure minority students and other historically oppressed groups are comfortable and embraced on campus without erasing the names and history that we need to remember and learn from?

- Lorelei Juntunen, ECONorthwest project director, and John Van Landingham, Housing Policy Board member, gave the City Club of Eugene a short course on solving Eugene's affordable housing crisis Dec. 2. They talked about **inclusionary zoning**, available to cities and counties after Senate Bill 1533 passed in June, and construction excise taxes, currently used only by Bend, and favored by Van Landingham, a longtime advocate for low-income housing. This complex discussion makes us wonder how seriously the city takes the need for low-income housing as we watch student housing and high-end complexes shoot up around town.