

Bill would end Elliott State Forest logging

By HILLARY BORRUD
Capital Bureau

Environmental groups hope a bill in the Oregon Legislature will permanently end logging of the Elliott State Forest and rule out a sale to private investors.

Legislation introduced earlier this month would establish a system to protect state trust land such as the Elliott State Forest, by allowing officials to transfer the land to a state agency that will manage it for conservation.

Rep. Tobias Read, D-Beaverton is the chief sponsor of House Bill 3474 to create a trust lands transfer commission similar to a system in Washington. It was introduced March 2 and is currently at the House Committee on Rural Communities, Land Use, and Water. Sen. Arnie Roblan, D-Coos Bay, was drafting similar legislation and the legislators are now coordinating on the issue.

Protecting the Elliott State Forest would be a big win for conservationists.

"It's really been a primary conservation campaign for us for 10 years," said Josh Laughlin, in-

terim executive director of Cascadia Wildlands.

Logging of the Elliott and other state trust lands historically generated revenue for Oregon's Common Schools Fund, which provides approximately 1 percent of revenue in the state education budget and is managed by the State Land Board. The arrangement generated more controversy and less revenue in recent years, after lawsuits related to federally protected species in the forest caused the state to reduced timber harvests.

Oregon lost \$3 million on the Elliott State Forest in fiscal year 2013 and nearly \$392,000 in 2014, because management costs exceeded revenue. The prompted the state to auction off three parcels of land in the forest in 2014, before the State Land Board decided to halt any additional auctions. Members of the board — then Gov. John Kitzhaber, then-Secretary of State Kate Brown and State Treasurer Ted Wheeler — said in December they wanted to sell the Elliott State Forest to another government agency or public-private

partnership. Other options still under consideration would maintain the forest's revenue-generating relationship with the school fund, if the state can identify a plan to balance logging with habitat conservation for protected fish and birds. Employees at the Department of State Lands are currently developing a process to solicit new ownership proposals for the 84,000 acres in the Elliott forest tied to the state schools fund. The agency is scheduled report on their progress at a June meeting of the State Land Board.

The State Land Board was vague about the type of public-private partnership that could apply to purchase the Elliott State Forest, but a consulting firm tied to the Kitzhaber administration was already working on just such a proposal. Tom Tuchmann, a contractor advising Kitzhaber on forestry and conservation finance policy, revealed in a conflict of interest disclosure that his consulting firm, US Forest Capital, LLC, was working with a group of equity investors and other entities on a proposal.

The idea that the forest could

be sold to an entity that would continue logging caused concern among environmental groups, and raised the stakes for them to work on legislation that would provide another option.

"(Tuchmann) was promoting an approach we weren't supporting at all," Laughlin said. "You're basically just moving the conundrum from the common school fund to equity investors."

Read's bill would allow the State Land Board and a new Trust Lands Transfer Commission to move any trust land such as the Elliott State Forest into different public ownership, such as the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, and it would set up a fund to compensate public schools for lost logging revenue.

An open question is where the state would get the money to fund transfers of trust land, since it is required to reimburse the Common Schools Fund for the fair market value of the land. Read's bill would allow lawmakers to appropriate money to the fund, and it could also accept gifts, grants, bequests and donated property.

BRIEFLY

WSU officials respond to fraternity racial incident

PULLMAN, Wash. (AP) — About 100 people met with Washington State University president Elson Floyd this week to discuss a February incident when a member of the Phi Delta Theta fraternity allegedly made a racial slur against a group of young black women.

The incident sparked some racial tension on the Pullman campus. The *Moscow-Pullman Daily News* reported that at a meeting on Thursday, Floyd apologized on behalf of the university.

But he says he cannot immediately shut down the fraternity or remove university recognition without a formal process.

Floyd says the fraternity member involved in the verbal exchange was terminated immediately from Phi Delta Theta by its members.

Black Student Union President Cristina Medina says she is worried the investigation is moving too slowly.

Cougar sighting reported in Baker City

BAKER CITY (AP) — Baker City Police are looking for a big cat.

The *Baker City Herald* reports that a resident saw a cougar Friday morning in the southwestern corner of the city.

Police received several reports of sightings in late February. Subsequent searches, including ones with tracking hounds, failed to find a cougar.

Gov. declares emergency drought in parts of Wash.

SEATTLE (AP) — Gov. Jay Inslee on Friday declared a drought emergency for three regions in Washington state, clearing the way for state officials to provide money and other relief to those experiencing drought hardships.

The emergency was prompted by near record-low mountain snowpack, which supplies much of the water in the region when it melts in drier summer months.

Officials said the worst drought conditions are in the Olympic Peninsula, the east side of the central Cascade Mountains including Yakima and Wenatchee, and the Walla Walla region.

The Department of Ecology has requested \$9 million in drought relief from the Legislature. The money, if approved, could be used to help drill emergency wells or deepen existing wells for cities, farms and fish hatcheries, lease water rights or build pumps or pipelines.

Early bloom in Rogue Valley too early for many bees

By VICKIE ALDOUS
Mail Tribune



AP Photo/The Medford Mail Tribune, Bob Pennell

Bee expert Sarah Red-Laird looks at early flower and orchard bloom on Thursday, March 12, 2015 in Medford.

MEDFORD — Warm weather has triggered a Rogue Valley fruit tree bloom that has come too early for many bees.

Wild bee populations die back in winter, and many newly hatched bees aren't old enough yet to fly about gathering nectar and pollen, said Sarah Red-Laird, founder and executive director of the Ashland-based Bee Girl organization, which promotes honeybee conservation and educates beekeepers.

"Bees just aren't quite ready to capitalize on this bloom," she said.

Meanwhile, many commercial beekeepers have their insects in California pollinating almond trees, which usually bloom early. Southern Oregon orchardists, including pear growers, are scrambling for commercially kept bees to pollinate their trees, which flowered early during recent unseasonably warm temperatures.

"Pear growers are calling. We'll get our bees back as quickly as we can to pears," said John Jacob, a commercial beekeeper and founder of Old Sol Apiaries, based in the town of Rogue River.

He went down to California on Thursday to retrieve his bees from

almond orchards and bring them back for Rogue Valley orchards.

To get his bees ready to pollinate early-blooming almond trees, Jacob feeds them pollen substitute patties each year. That triggers earlier reproduction so his company will have enough bees to meet the demand in California.

Commercially kept bees come back from the almond orchards with their colony numbers boosted by nutritious nut tree flowers. Usually

Jacob takes them to holding yards and splits the colonies apart to discourage swarming, in which bees divide on their own and fly away.

There is typically a two-week gap between the California almond bloom and the Rogue Valley pear bloom. This year, there is no break between the blooms, he said.

Jacob will have to take his bee colonies to the pear orchards and split them in the field, a much

harder job than dividing them in holding yards.

"I would never tell a pear grower, 'No, I can't bring you bees.' If they need them, we make sure we get them, even if it means more work for us," he said.

Without commercial bee pollination, pear crop yields could fall by 70 to 90 percent. Almond trees are even more dependent on commercial bee pollination, Jacob said.

In the Rogue Valley, wild bees and hobby beekeepers keep non-commercial bee hive numbers high enough to allow for some orchard pollination, he said.

This year, Red-Laird said, many wild bees are out of sync with the blooms.

About half of wild bees naturally die off during winter. They begin rebuilding their numbers in the spring, she said.

"Wild bees don't overwinter in a huge cluster because they have finite resources in the winter. The ones that don't die cuddle together and try to stay warm," Red-Laird explained. "This spring came so early and bees haven't had time to catch up with the bloom with the populations they have. The bloom seemed to pop in days and it takes three weeks for bees to go from egg to adult bee."

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211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton 541-276-2211
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• Stephanie Burkenbine
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COMMERCIAL PRINTING
Production Director Jake Duquette
541-966-0815 • jduquette@eastoregonian.com

AccuWeather.com Forecast

TODAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
Cloudy and mild with a shower	Rain at times	A couple of morning showers	Partly sunny with a shower	Beautiful with sunshine

PENDLETON TEMPERATURE FORECAST				
67°	49°	58°	43°	60°
49°	58°	43°	60°	41°

HERMISTON TEMPERATURE FORECAST				
69°	49°	60°	38°	62°
49°	60°	38°	62°	35°

ALMANAC

PENDLETON
through 3 p.m. yesterday

TEMPERATURE	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	73°	40°
Normals	54°	35°
Records	74° (1934)	8° (1906)

PRECIPITATION
24 hours ending 3 p.m. 0.00"
Month to date 0.04"
Normal month to date 0.50"
Year to date 1.59"
Last year to date 3.34"
Normal year to date 3.01"

HERMISTON
through 3 p.m. yesterday

TEMPERATURE	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	69°	35°
Normals	57°	34°
Records	75° (2003)	13° (1941)

PRECIPITATION
24 hours ending 3 p.m. 0.00"
Month to date 0.01"
Normal month to date 0.41"
Year to date 1.07"
Last year to date 2.13"
Normal year to date 2.65"

SUN AND MOON

	New	First	Full	Last
Sunrise today	7:11 a.m.			
Sunset tonight	6:59 p.m.			
Moonrise today	2:56 a.m.			
Moonset today	12:40 p.m.			

Mar 20 Mar 26 Apr 4 Apr 11

REGIONAL FORECAST

Coastal Oregon: Rain today, but a passing shower in the south.

Eastern Washington: Showers today.

Eastern and Central Oregon: Variable cloudiness today with a shower; mild; however, dry in the south.

Cascades: Periods of rain today; however, a shower in the south.

Western Washington: Rain, heavy at times today and tonight. Mostly cloudy tomorrow with a little rain.

Northern California: Mostly cloudy today. A shower tonight, except dry in the interior mountains.

REGIONAL CITIES

	Today			Sun.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Astoria	56	43	r	54	39	r
Baker City	62	47	c	59	42	r
Bend	61	42	c	54	36	r
Brookings	59	52	c	56	48	r
Burns	67	45	c	61	35	r
Enterprise	58	42	c	52	41	r
Eugene	62	50	r	55	43	r
Heppner	63	47	c	53	40	r
Hermiston	69	49	c	60	38	r
John Day	63	47	c	56	39	r
Klamath Falls	62	45	c	57	38	r
La Grande	62	49	c	58	42	r
Meacham	59	41	sh	53	37	r
Medford	68	52	c	61	48	r
Newport	55	46	r	52	43	r
North Bend	62	54	sh	56	47	r
Ontario	69	50	c	66	43	r
Pasco	68	46	c	61	37	r
Pendleton	67	49	c	58	43	r
Portland	60	47	r	56	43	r
Redmond	65	45	c	56	35	r
Salem	61	50	r	55	42	r
Spokane	57	44	sh	55	37	r
Ukiah	62	44	c	53	39	r
Vancouver	61	46	r	56	42	r
Walla Walla	66	52	sh	60	48	r
Yakima	69	43	sh	62	35	r

WORLD CITIES

	Today			Sun.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Beijing	57	36	pc	62	38	s
Hong Kong	75	69	pc	75	69	pc
Jerusalem	61	42	s	59	42	s
London	46	40	pc	47	38	sh
Mexico City	67	50	r	62	48	sh
Moscow	42	24	s	42	26	s
Paris	50	39	s	47	36	c
Rome	59	48	pc	56	50	r
Seoul	47	28	pc	50	31	s
Sydney	78	65	pc	75	64	sh
Tokyo	51	40	r	53	43	pc

WINDS

(in mph)	Today	Sunday
Boardman	SW 7-14	N 4-8
Pendleton	SW 8-16	N 6-12

UV INDEX TODAY

0 1 2 2 1 0

8 a.m. 10 a.m. Noon 2 p.m. 4 p.m. 6 p.m.

0-2, Low 3-5, Moderate 6-7, High; 8-10, Very High; 11+, Extreme

The higher the AccuWeather.com UV Index™ number, the greater the need for eye and skin protection.

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NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY

Shown are noon positions of weather systems and precipitation. Temperature bands are highs for the day.

National Summary: Rain and the risk of flooding will extend from the Gulf Coast to southern New England today. Snow will fall on northern New England. Rain will soak the Northwest. The Southwest and Plains will be warm.

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)
High 92° in Fullerton, Calif. Low -5° in Saranac Lake, N.Y.

NATIONAL CITIES

	Today			Sun.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Albuquerque	63	38	pc	71	38	s
Atlanta	72	56	sh	73	46	pc
Atlanta City	53	42	r	50	36	c
Baltimore	60	42	r	54	34	pc
Billings	73	53	pc	73	33	c
Birmingham	73	55	c	72	46	pc
Boise	70	53	c	67	48	r
Boston	44	36	r	39	25	sn
Charleston, SC	75	60	t	78	47	pc
Charleston, WV	60	39	r	55	35	c
Chicago	58	34	pc	58	44	s
Cleveland	51	32	sh	43	35	c
Dallas	67	47	pc	68	50	pc
Denver	68	42	s	78	46	pc
Detroit	55	33	pc	53	38	pc
El Paso	68	43	pc	69	44	s
Fairbanks	-3	-27	pc	6	-2	pc
Fargo	63	49	s	73	39	pc
Honolulu	78	65	s	79	66	s
Houston	74	51	c	72	57	pc
Indianapolis	60	35	pc	59	42	c
Jacksonville	81	61	t	83	54	sh
Kansas City	67	39	s	72	49	sh
Las Vegas	81	58	pc	84	59	pc
Little Rock	63	54	sh	67	48	pc
Los Angeles	93	65	pc	92	64	pc
Louisville	64	41	r	64	41	s
Memphis	68	54	sh	69	48	pc
Miami	84	70	pc	85	69	pc
Millwaukee	57	34	pc	57	44	s
Minneapolis	60	39	pc	68	45	pc
Nashville	69	46	r	68	39	pc
New Orleans	74	58	pc	74	59	c
New York City	51	40	r	51	36	sh
Oklahoma City	67	41	s	72	46	s
Omaha	68	40	s	74	48	s
Philadelphia	59	42	r	53	34	c
Phoenix	88	62	pc	88	64	s
Portland, ME	40	33	sn	37	19	sn
Providence	46	34	r	43	25	sh
Raleigh	70	51	sh	66	38	pc
Rapid City	75	42	s	82	39	pc
Reno	76	49	c	74	49	c
Sacramento	82	57	r	79	53	c
St. Louis	64	41	s	68	47	s