

Elliott Forest sale moves forward

By CLAIRE WITHYCOMBE
Capital Bureau

SALEM — At odds with the governor, the Oregon treasurer and secretary of state voted Tuesday to go ahead with a plan to sell a hotly debated swath of coastal forest to a partnership between a timber company and a Native American tribe — albeit with some changes.

At issue is the sale of an approximately 80,000-acre parcel of the Elliott State Forest in Coos and Douglas counties. Environmental groups have fought for keeping the land in public hands.

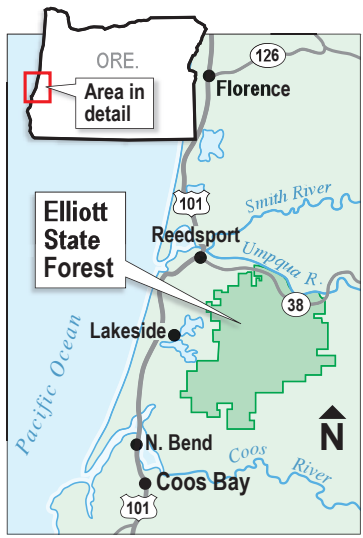
The State Land Board — the governor, treasurer and secretary of state — oversees certain state-owned lands. Treasurer Tobias Read and Secretary of State Dennis Richardson endorsed moving forward with the sale over Gov. Kate Brown's objection.

Read proposed an amended version of the original sale protocol that he says includes "enhanced recreation and conservation measures."

Brown, over Richardson's objections, directed the state lands department to come up with a proposal for public ownership of the forest. The department reports to Brown.

The sale of the Elliott is a complex issue, in part because the land in question is essentially a trust — the state must collect money from harvesting timber or other activities for the state's Common School Fund and the land board is the fiduciary of that fund.

In 2015, the land board — then



Capital Press graphic

comprised of Brown, then-Treasurer Ted Wheeler and then-Secretary of State Jeanne Atkins, all Democrats — voted to go ahead with a multi-step sale protocol that included an assessment of the land's value and a set of criteria for the sale.

Over a year later, only one group, a timber company out of Roseburg called Lone Rock Resources — in partnership with the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians — submitted a proposal for acquiring the forest. The Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians would, under that proposal, hold a conservation easement.

In light of the tribes' involvement, the sale of the Elliott also now raises questions about the government's duty to "right some historic wrongs," in the words of

Treasurer Read. Native Americans were systematically removed from their ancestral lands as the United States and Oregon took shape — a truth especially poignant on the state's 158th birthday Tuesday.

Brown said the requirements for the sale were too stringent.

The state set the price at \$220.8 million, and required bidders to have detailed plans for employment on the forest and maintaining certain features, such as old forest stands and riparian areas. Several public agencies had expressed interest in the property, but none ended up submitting an acquisition proposal.

Brown wants not only to keep the land public, but decouple some or all the land from the Common School Fund.

Brown wants to use \$100 million of the state's bonding capacity to purchase especially sensitive habitat areas in the forest, such as steep slopes. She also wants to negotiate a new habitat conservation plan with federal agencies on the rest of the land, while also providing an opportunity for tribes to exercise ownership.

Prior to the vote Tuesday, the Oregon Senate President, Peter Courtney, D-Salem, suggested using revenue bonds payable from revenues generated by the forest.

Courtney, although he believes the land should stay in public ownership, said he wanted to help the board, regardless of its decision.

Read, the state treasurer, said he was reluctant to sell the forest

but felt that the state had to meet its fiduciary responsibilities first.

"I think it is the best and most realistic proposal we have in front of us," Read said of the protocol, before proposing some changes.

The amendments Read proposed include: allowing the state to buy back up to \$25 million worth of acreage in high-value areas; having the department's negotiations include certain conservation principles; clarifying plans to protect old forest stands; and include a right of first refusal for the five federally recognized Native American tribes in Western Oregon, should any part of the land be put up for sale again after it is sold to the LLC proposed by the Cow Creek Band and Lone Rock.

Warren Brainard, chief of the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians — which under the Lone Rock proposal would hold a conservation easement on the land — said that he understood that the land board had a difficult decision to make and that the tribes would maintain an interest in the land regardless.

Tension arose between Brown and newly minted Richardson — the only Republican on the land board and an advocate of the sale.

He voted for Read's proposal and argued the state would otherwise be renegeing on its promises.

"I feel in a very difficult position because I am not in favor of selling the forest and I would not have voted for it," Richardson said. However, he said, he felt that the "deal" had to be abided by.

Lawmakers consider consolidating marijuana regulation

By PARIS ACHEN
Capital Bureau

SALEM — State legislators are moving toward consolidating the state's medical and recreational marijuana industries into one regulatory system.

The co-chairwomen of the Joint Committee on Marijuana Regulation have dropped several bills that would move regulation of medical marijuana from the Oregon Health Authority to the Oregon Liquor Control Commission, the regulatory agency for recreational sales of the drug. Another proposal would establish a separate agency specifically for cannabis regulation.

OHA has regulated the medical marijuana program since it was

created through Ballot Measure 67 in 1998. When voters legalized recreational cannabis use with Measure 91 in 2014, regulation of the new program was assigned to the liquor commission, while the health authority retained its oversight of the medical program.

Health authority officials from the beginning were reluctant overseers, said Tom Burns, a marijuana policy consultant and former health authority administrator.

The Oregon Health Authority's tardy and ill-conceived rollout of rules and dedication of resources to the program was an "unmitigated disaster," Burns said.

In time, it became apparent that two separate systems made

little or no sense because of OHA's disinterest in regulating the program, he said.

"The medical suppliers, growers and patients said let us get it out of OHA to somebody who does want it and will work with us to make a program that works for us," Burns said.

But that sentiment may not permeate the entire medical marijuana industry and its patients, said Rep. Carl Wilson, R-Grants Pass, a member of the legislative marijuana regulation committee.

"I think we all realize that there is a big push to have everybody under OLCC," said Wilson, whose district covers the marijuana-fertile lands of Southern Oregon.

Part of the idea of splitting up

regulation was to keep medical costs down for patients. OLCC instituted much more strict and expensive regulations to report and track product, while OHA's system relied largely on self-reporting. OHA also charges lower fees for registration and licensing.

Hesitation in embracing the OLCC stems largely from the higher cost of producing marijuana in the recreational system, where fees are higher for almost everything and regulation is more onerous.

Wilson said he would support consolidation if lower fees were charged medical growers and suppliers and if medical growers could sell into the recreational market, which they are now prohibited from doing.

BRIEFLY

UO considers raising tuition 10.6 percent

EUGENE (AP) — The University of Oregon is considering raising in-state undergraduate tuition by 10.6 percent in the fall to pay for increased salaries, health care and retirement costs for school employees.

The Register-Guard reports that under a plan backed by UO President Michael Schill, annual tuition for full-time, in-state undergraduate students would increase \$945 as of the 2017-18 academic year. Mandatory fees would also increase \$186. Out-of-state tuition would also increase by \$945, or three percent.

An in-state undergraduate student taking 15 credits per term would pay \$9,855 for a three-term school year under the proposal. The student would also pay \$2,037 in fees. An out-of-state student would pay \$34,572 in tuition and fees.

Schill said in a letter to students and staff that the state's fiscal problems leave him little choice but to accept the major tuition increase. He said UO's operating expenses are rising steadily. In particular, retirement benefits under the state Public Employee Retirement System are requiring large contributions from the university.

La Grande entrepreneur killed in snowmobile crash

LA GRANDE (AP) — Authorities say a 32-year-old Eastern Oregon man died in a snowmobile accident.

The Union County Sheriff's Office says Cole Clemens of La Grande died at the scene Saturday about 25 miles southeast of Union.

Sgt. Nick Pallis says a doctor and a veterinarian were at the scene performing CPR before paramedics arrived. The sheriff's office has yet to provide details of how the crash occurred.

The Observer newspaper of La Grande reports that Clemens and his brother Jeff co-founded an online/wholesale sporting goods business.

On his Facebook page, Jeff Clemens said he was blessed to talk with his younger brother the night before the crash and tell him he loved him. He encouraged those with siblings to do the same, because you never know if it will be the last time you see them.

Corrections

The East Oregonian works hard to be accurate and sincerely regrets any errors. If you notice a mistake in the paper, please call 541-966-0818.

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AccuWeather.com Forecast

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
39° 38°	46° 30°	43° 31°	40° 30°	44° 30°
38° 37°	46° 31°	45° 34°	41° 29°	44° 31°

ALMANAC

PENDLETON

through 3 p.m. yesterday

TEMPERATURE	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	38°	25°
Normals	46°	29°
Records	66° (1898)	-4° (1936)

PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m. 0.00"
Month to date 0.34"
Normal month to date 0.59"
Year to date 1.99"
Last year to date 2.17"
Normal year to date 1.97"

HERMISTON

through 3 p.m. yesterday

TEMPERATURE	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	29°	23°
Normals	48°	29°
Records	65° (2011)	-11° (1929)

PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m. 0.00"
Month to date 0.22"
Normal month to date 0.49"
Year to date 1.91"
Last year to date 1.34"
Normal year to date 1.77"

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today	6:57 a.m.
Sunset tonight	5:22 p.m.
Moonrise today	10:38 p.m.
Moonset today	9:22 a.m.

Last	New	First	Full
Feb 18	Feb 26	Mar 5	Mar 12

REGIONAL FORECAST

Coastal Oregon: Breezy today with rain.

Eastern Washington: Ice, then rain toward the Cascades today; a little rain near the Idaho border.

Cascades: Periods of rain today.

Northern California: Periods of rain today, but a shower in spots in the interior mountains.

Eastern and Central Oregon: A bit of ice, then rain across the north today; rain in central parts and near the Cascades.

Western Washington: Rain today. Rain, some heavy tonight.

REGIONAL CITIES

	Today			Thu.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Astoria	56	47	r	50	39	sh
Baker City	37	34	pc	40	25	sh
Bend	45	37	r	46	28	sh
Brookings	58	48	r	51	43	sh
Burns	38	28	r	41	25	sh
Enterprise	39	35	pc	41	27	r
Eugene	59	47	r	51	38	sh
Heppner	40	33	i	46	30	sh
Hermiston	38	37	i	46	31	sh
John Day	43	37	r	46	28	r
Klamath Falls	49	38	r	46	32	sh
La Grande	43	39	r	44	30	r
Meacham	43	38	r	42	30	r
Medford	62	44	r	53	38	sh
Newport	56	49	r	52	40	sh
North Bend	63	50	r	54	42	sh
Ontario	35	32	pc	42	27	sh
Pasco	36	32	i	47	27	sh
Pendleton	39	38	i	46	30	sh
Portland	51	44	r	52	37	sh
Redmond	52	40	r	49	31	sh
Salem	55	47	r	51	37	sh
Spokane	41	37	i	44	30	sh
Ukiah	42	35	r	44	28	r
Vancouver	52	45	r	52	36	sh
Walla Walla	40	39	r	47	33	r
Yakima	38	35	i	47	27	c

WORLD CITIES

	Today			Thu.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Beijing	53	34	pc	46	24	c
Hong Kong	68	59	s	70	63	s
Jerusalem	46	37	sh	42	31	sh
London	52	39	sh	53	37	c
Mexico City	75	47	pc	71	46	pc
Moscow	28	13	c	25	17	pc
Paris	61	43	pc	55	39	c
Rome	59	38	s	59	41	s
Seoul	43	28	s	51	32	pc
Sydney	81	69	pc	88	74	s
Tokyo	50	38	s	55	44	s

WINDS

(in mph)	Today	Thursday
Boardman	VAR 2-4	ESE 3-6
Pendleton	SE 4-8	SE 4-8

UV INDEX TODAY

0	1	2	1	0	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: Snow showers will stretch from the Great Lakes to the interior Northeast, while rain and thunderstorms push to the southern Atlantic coast today. Rain and wind will blast the coastal Northwest.

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)
High 84° in Hollywood, Fla. Low -7° in Antero Reservoir, Colo.

NATIONAL CITIES

	Today			Thur.			Today			Thur.			
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W	
Albuquerque	55	30	r	60	33	s	Louisville	46	30	pc	52	40	pc
Atlanta	58	35	r	59	39	s	Memphis	54	35	pc	62	43	pc
Atlanta City	54	33	c	43	25	pc	Miami	55	68	s	62	58	c
Baltimore	51	28	pc	42	23	pc	Millwaukee	33	24	pc	35	29	c
Billings	56	38	s	60	37	pc	Minneapolis	36	26	c	44	32	c
Birmingham	56	32	pc	60	39	s	Nashville	49	30	pc	58	39	s
Boise	49	40	pc	47	34	c	New Orleans	61	45	c	63	46	pc
Boston	42	29	sn	38	23	pc	New York City	46	29	c	37	26	pc
Charleston, SC	69	38	r	63	41	s	Oklahoma City	57	31	s	68	40	s
Chicago	44	25	sf	42	31	pc	Omaha	50	29	pc	64	37	s
Chicago	36	24	pc	39	29	c	Philadelphia	51	29	pc	41	26	pc
Cleveland	35	23	sf	32	21	c	Phoenix	75	51	s	75	54	s
Dallas	62	38	s	69	48	s	Portland, ME	37	25	sn	34	18	sn
Denver	65	37	s	70	37	s	Providence	42	26	r	37	21	pc
Detroit	35	21	sf	33	21	pc	Raleigh	55	32	r	52	32	pc
El Paso	58	33	s	64	40	s	Rapid City	60	36	s	66	36	s
Fairbanks	24	5	pc	23	-2	pc	Reno	60	43	pc	58	36	r
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