

To: Oregon Board of Forestry
Date: 7/12/2021
Re: July 12th Board of Forestry Meeting
State Forester Recruitment

Dear Chair Kelly and Members of the Oregon Board of Forestry,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony for the Board of Forestry's July 12th, 2021 meeting. We, the undersigned organizations, are participants in the Oregon Climate Action Plan (OCAP) coalition's forest policy sub-table, tasked with coordinating stakeholder advocacy around implementation of Governor Brown's Executive Order 20-04 (EO 20-04). Choosing an effective State Forester to lead the Oregon Department of Forestry is one of the most critical roles the Board of Forestry can play in ensuring the agency is capable of meeting the new and emerging challenges of the 21st century. The agency is in need of strong leadership now more than ever before — in addition to reordering its financial management, ODF will need to contend with the growing threat of climate change and the biodiversity crisis. Given the wide scope of these needs, a new State Forester must be a visionary leader who is able to tackle the necessary structural changes within ODF. This position must have the ability to:

Lead culture change within the agency and demonstrate valuable interpersonal skills

- Demonstrate a visionary approach to reforming ODF — significant changes will be needed to position Oregon as a world leader in climate-smart forestry.
- Demonstrate a commitment to an open and transparent decision-making process that is inclusive of other state agencies, the public and other critical stakeholders.
- Demonstrate commitment to accountability (a new state forester must hold the agency accountable for meeting its goals and commitments, and must have a track record of achieving this).
- Demonstrate solid interpersonal skills for communication, active listening, outreach, and engagement within the agency and other stakeholders. A new leader must be able to repair damaged relationships with stakeholders.
- Value diversity, equity, and inclusion within ODF staff and with ODF collaborators and partners.
- Ensure dedication to addressing the ecological crises presented by climate change and biodiversity loss.
- Ensure a creative and adaptive approach to managing the needs of an evolving agency and an evolving state.

Ensure collaboration and interdisciplinary work with DEQ, OWEB, other state agencies

- The state forester must be inclusive of other state agencies who may have greater expertise than ODF in their relevant issue areas. This includes ODFW, DEQ, OWEB, and the OGWC and is especially critical with regards to carbon emissions tracking, drinking water reports, Clean Water Act compliance, stream typing, Endangered Species compliance, etc.

Ensure ecological forest management and demonstrate commitment to science

- Ensure ODF's future goals, strategies, and policies are anchored in the ecological and social needs of the 21st century. This means the agency must shift its focus from "forestry" and timber production to "ecological forest management," with a holistic approach that elevates all ecological values.
- Ensure ODF confronts climate change through both mitigation (emissions reductions and carbon sequestration) and adaptation (reducing future risks like more intense flooding, heatwaves and wildfire). Forests and trees offer numerous solutions to today's challenges, and Oregon's next state forester must recognize and advance these critical natural climate solutions.
- Demonstrate a commitment to valuing and understanding forest management science, climate change science, ecological restoration science, and social science. While it is too much to ask that a future state forester be an expert in numerous scientific fields (commitment to collaboration is more important), this leader should still value science highly and seek the views of scientists.

Prioritize wildfire emergency planning

- Ensure people and communities take priority when tackling the risk of wildfire in Oregon. Studies show that focusing fuel treatment efforts in the home ignition zone is a more effective strategy than logging operations in more distant forested regions. Factors such as the type of materials homes and buildings are made of and the design and maintenance of our infrastructure are huge factors in determining residential losses.¹ Addressing the threat to homes and communities should be a priority given limited funding.
- Prioritize building bridges to low income, rural, and BIPOC communities in Oregon to assess their needs first, and ask those communities what exactly they need to help them deal with the threat of wildfire and smoke.

We hope that the Board will strive to have an open and inclusive hiring process for a new State Forester that ensures a diverse applicant pool with a wide range of backgrounds and expertise. Ultimately, the most important qualities of a new state forester will be a commitment to

¹ Calkin, D.E., et al. 2014. How risk management can prevent future wildfire disasters in the wildland-urban interface. Proc. Nat. Acad. Sci. 111: 746-751. <https://www.pnas.org/content/111/2/746>

collaboration, science, and equity. In order to confront the threat of climate change, we must ensure the scope and scale of our solutions match the magnitude of the challenge, and ODF needs a truly visionary leader to fully recognize this ambition.

Sincerely,

Lauren Anderson
Forest Climate Policy Coordinator
Oregon Wild

Grace Brahler
Oregon Climate Action Plan & Policy Manager
Beyond Toxics

Alan Journet Ph.D.
Co-facilitator
Southern Oregon Climate Action Now

Rand Schenck
Forestry Lead
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Joseph Vaile
Climate Director
KS Wild

Julia DeGraw
Coalition Director
Oregon League of Conservation Voters

Catherine Thomasson
Chair
DPO Environmental Caucus

To: Oregon Board of Forestry

Date: July 11, 2021

RE: Oregon Board of Forestry July 12, 2021, Meeting Regarding Recruitment of a new State Forester

FROM: Ron Bunch

I am in receipt of a copy of the 7/12/21 letter submitted to the Board by the OCAP Coalition's Forest Policy Table regarding the qualifications and abilities of a new State Forester. I am in concurrence with the letter in all its aspects. Especially important is the ability of the new Forester to lead the agency and collaborate broadly to address the many ways that the climate crisis impacts Oregon's forests and other natural and working lands. This will require the demonstrated and contemporary abilities as outlined in the letter among which are sound political and administrative skills combined with vision, leadership, and a willingness to collaborate.

My family has agriculture, timber and wood products backgrounds and our experience is the new director must be able to thread the needle to ensure the sustainability of Oregon forests, the contribution to climate mitigation and the ongoing need for wood products and employment. This will require stellar communication and conflict resolution skills. Also, Oregon's forests and associated watersheds are essential to a lot of the state's agriculture. Forests are key to watershed health. This along with the other co-benefits of sound forest ecology s needs to be at the forefront of the new forester's agenda.

Finally, it is essential the new forester be a team player and engage with others to ensure the well-being and support of Oregon's forested lands. For example, the Department must support small woodland owners to address the multiple impacts of climate change. Furthermore, the state forester must ensure that their department coordinate with other state agencies and forst products business to ensure the preservation, resilience, and economic contribution of Oregon's natural and working lands.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

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To: Oregon Board of Forestry

Date: July 11, 2021

Re: July 12th Board of Forestry Meeting

Subject: State Forester Recruitment

Dear Chair Kelly and Members of the Oregon Board of Forestry,

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony for the Board's July 12th, 2021, meeting.

As a fifth generation Oregonian, I have witnessed many changes in Oregon's Forestry programs and management of our public and private forests. One thing, however, has always stood out to me when it comes to our landowners, citizens, recreational users, and the forests so vital to our nation's conservation goals.

There is a new generation, fully vested in the knowledge that they and their forests play a vital role and are key to a sound defense against climate change. They know full well that managed forests decrease carbon in the atmosphere, clean our air and water, protect wildlife habitats, mitigate devastating wildfires, and support rural economies.

Choosing an effective State Forester who can lead the Oregon Department of Forestry is therefore one of the most critical roles the Board of Forestry will play in ensuring the agency meets the new challenges in the decades to follow.

The agency needs strong leadership now more than ever if it is to responsibly demonstrate its role in contending with the growing threat of climate change and the biodiversity crisis.

A Director who will make a meaningful contribution addressing global climate change and other key conservation issues by overseeing a government policy environment that empowers forest owners and stakeholders to take voluntary actions in their forests critical to our nation's well-being.

ODF is a conservation agency focused on cultivating these benefits and making sure they are converted into demonstrated value for communities, companies, and landowners alike.

Success of whomever is chosen, means working in the government policy environment to create the right enabling conditions for forest owners to manage their land in ways that help them and have a measurable and verifiably significant impact on climate change, wildfire risks, biodiversity protection, and many other issues.

This individual must have the experience and ability to lead culture change within the agency and a

- Demonstrated ability to develop policy solutions and then see them adopted by policy makers.

- Visionary approach to reforming ODF — significant changes will be needed to position Oregon as a world leader in climate-impact forestry.
- Proven ability to think strategically, analyze critically, and translate ideas into actions.
- Experience on federal, state, and local policy issues, including tax, water, farm, and sustainability policies.
- Working knowledge of USDA, Fish & Wildlife Service, and other relevant forest and natural resource agencies at both the federal and state level.
- Demonstrated knowledge of operations of the legislative and executive branches of government.
- Experience communicating complex public policy issues in a succinct and understandable manner.
- Commitment to open and transparent decision-making processes that is inclusive of other state agencies, the public and other critical stakeholders.
- Experience in working effectively on both sides of the political aisle.
- Ability to thrive in a collaborative environment.
- Strong interpersonal skills with the ability to interact with a wide variety of constituencies, including co-workers, business and community leaders, partners, board members, volunteers, public officials, and the public at large, in a wide variety of settings.

Respectfully yours,

Randy L Knop

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To: Oregon Board of Forestry

Date: 7/12/2021

Re: July 12th and July 11st Board of Forestry Meetings

State Forester Recruitment--Agenda Item #1 7/21

Dear Chair Kelly and Members of the Oregon Board of Forestry,

Thank you for encouraging public engagement in the search for the next Oregon State Forester. This testimony is submitted on behalf of the Cascade Volcanoes chapter of The Great Old Broads for Wilderness, which is a national nonprofit dedicated to preserving and protecting wild lands.

The new State Forester will need to lead ODF through a major cultural shift. We are living in a time of biodiversity loss and rapid climate change, and the policies at ODF will need to change in response. The agency, as a whole, needs to shift its focus from timber production to ecologically focused forest management that increases carbon storage and protects forest species, especially cold-water aquatic species and older-forest dependent species. This will require a holistic approach that recognizes the ecological value of forests as part of their greatest permanent value.

In order for the State Forester to lead that culture change they should have a deep knowledge of ecology and climate change science. This intellectual framework will help shift agency priorities towards climate change mitigation, endangered and threatened species management, and water supply protection.

Changing the focus of forest management is important for Oregonians that are already experiencing the climate emergency. As you know, Oregon's forests can effectively sequester and store vast amounts of carbon. Their protection, especially the protection of mature forests, can help mitigate climate change. But large clear cuts and short rotations reduce the carbon storage of forests by as much as two-thirds. In addition, these logging practices degrade waterways. Culturally important salmonid species need clean, cold water to recover, but forest streams without adequate protection become warm and silted. Community watersheds that are heavily logged have struggled with loss of stream flow, siltation, and chemical pollution from pesticides in their water. The State Forester can lead a cultural shift in the agency towards managing forests for all of the services that they provide.

The State Forester is intimately involved in the management of Oregon's state forests, and this is an area where the Great Old Broads hope to see changes under new leadership. These public lands can be storehouses of carbon and biodiversity and refuges for the residents of Oregon, or they can be used primarily as a revenue stream. ODF has struggled to find the right balance between management priorities on state forests, but the development of a habitat conservation plan for the state forests in western Oregon is a step forward. We hope that the next State Forester will support this process, and prioritize the continued survival of endangered and threatened

species within the state forests. We recognize the budget and legal challenges to shifting state forest management, but we think there are creative solutions that meet Oregon's legal and ethical obligations to the species that rely on the state forests.

ODF also plays a major role in fire management in Oregon. As climate change drives hotter and larger wildfires this role within the agency will grow, so it is important that the state forester recognizes that protecting communities is the main role of fighting wildfire. At this point it is clear that long-term fire suppression is not a realistic way to manage forests, especially in eastern and southern Oregon, where the forests evolved with more frequent fires. Instead of focusing primarily on fire suppression, we hope that the new state forester will prioritize community safety in their approach to wildfire. This will mean dedicating department resources to preparing communities for fire by establishing defensible space and playing a role in updating building codes, as specified in recently passed legislation. Again, knowledge of fire ecology would be very helpful in managing this aspect of the agency mission.

As you consider who will lead this agency as we face the twin crises of climate and biodiversity, please look for an individual who has a long-term vision of the true value of our forests and a deep knowledge of ecology and climate science. Forestry decisions are often contentious, so the agency will also be well served by a leader with a track record of building consensus through inclusive collaboration. These skills will be essential for facing the challenges ahead.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Micky Ryan
Great Old Broads for Wilderness
Cascade Volcanoes Chapter