(email sent to Oregon Department of State Lands deputy director, Bill Ryan on 11/6/20)

Dear Deputy Director Ryan,

In last night's Zoom meeting about OSU's draft plan for the Elliott State Research Forest (ESRF), I asked a question concerning the exceptionally short period for public outreach and comments (only 1 week left):

**My question:***You allotted less than a month for public outreach and input for this critical phase of the Elliott process - the public's first chance to comment on the draft plan.  OSU staff and the Advisory Committee worked for roughly 2 years to reach this point.  Just understanding the complexities of the plan takes a lot of time and effort.  Conservation groups are still digesting it and contacting their members.  Getting reporters engaged takes time.   How do you justify having such a short period for public input?*

**You Answered:  "***Yes, I do recognize that there's a lot of information to digest in a relatively short time, but we've been working under a very strong deadline from the land board of having a proposal to them by December of this year. So we've been working our tails off to try to get answers worked out and issues resolved to get to the point to be able to make a proposal by that time.  I will say that the Advisory Committee process has been open and we have been providing updates and information all along, so it's not as if this has happened completely in a vacuum...*"

I'd like to respond to the last part of your answer (concerning the transparency of the process and availability of information) - as it appears that we have very different impressions about this matter.  In my recent blog post about the OSU-Elliott process (<https://friendsofosuoldgrowth.org/2020/10/21/osu-elliott-update/>), I summarized DSL's response as follows:

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"Fast forward to September 28th, 2020, when OSU staff (under the leadership of their new Dean of the College of Forestry, Tom DeLuca) met with the Elliott Advisory Committee and Oregon Department of State Lands (DSL) staff in a video conference that was open to the public (but not available for subsequent viewing). If you were lucky enough to hear about the meeting in advance, you were able to witness significant friction and some unsettling developments....

Several members of the Advisory Committee expressed their reservations about the rushed schedule. Key financial information has yet to be presented by OSU, and work on OSU’s governance proposal had only just begun (more on that controversy below). It was hard to miss the sense of disconnect when Director Walker insisted, “*We’re almost there on the governance!*“. When asked whether any legislative action was anticipated, she replied, “*We have a bill…we have a bill.*..”, leaving everyone with more questions than answers...

**Lack of Transparency Excludes Public:** I’ve alluded to the lack of transparency within the Elliott process many times in the past, but it’s worth reviewing these concerns in more detail. When I first learned of OSU’s draft report on financial and carbon modeling for the Elliott in October of last year, I wondered why it was not available on either the OSU or DSL website. This 46-page report was the key planning document outlining the details of OSU’s proposed logging scenarios for the Elliott...

After the report was shared with the Elliott Advisory Committee (at their October 25th, 2019, meeting), I began sending emails to DSL staff asking why this important document had not been made available to the public. After weeks of delay and escalating requests, the report finally showed up in the document link for the October meeting. By not providing this report in a timely manner, DSL staff had deprived the public of their right to know these important details. Information has a shelf-life, and the delay in providing it diminishes its relevance.

A more recent example concerns the unwillingness of DSL staff to make the video of the Sept. 28th Elliott Advisory Committee available to the public (a relatively simple task with a Zoom video conference). After the meeting, it took weeks for DSL staff to post a meeting summary. While the written summary is helpful, it is no substitute for the actual recording of the meeting. A written summary always conveys the biases and choices of the writer, inviting criticism and suspicion. The video recording would allow people who missed the meeting to watch it later, while also providing an authentic record of comments and presentations. It seems contrary to DSL’s obligation to the public to NOT release the video recording of the meeting."

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The other half of the transparency issue concerns OSU.  While we greatly appreciate Dean DeLuca's leadership and commitment to transparency, the previous (Interim) Dean and his Elliott team had a decidedly opaque approach (despite their stated commitment to transparency).  The public was excluded from their planning meetings, and key documents and information were not shared with the public.  In addition, the Interim Dean and OSU administration blacklisted me and refused to even acknowledge my emails (you can read more about this in my blog piece here:  <https://friendsofosuoldgrowth.org/2020/09/29/why-self-governance-fails/>).  When I tried to get answers to basic questions about OSU's draft plan last fall, the author of the report, Tom Tuchmann, refused to answer.  I know other folks in the conservation community were stymied in a similar manner.  From my perspective, the process seemed designed to *exclude* the public.

I'm copying the Land Board on this message because I'd like to make sure they are aware of these concerns.  When public participation is limited due to a lack of transparency and short comment period, it fundamentally undermines trust in our institutions and elected leaders.  I request that you add this email to the public record comments for the Land Board's December meeting.   I sincerely appreciate your strong commitment to transparency and responsiveness within DSL.  Thanks for considering my input.

Sincerely,

Doug Pollock (Founder, Friends of OSU Old Growth - [www.friendsofosuoldgrowth.org](http://www.friendsofosuoldgrowth.org/))