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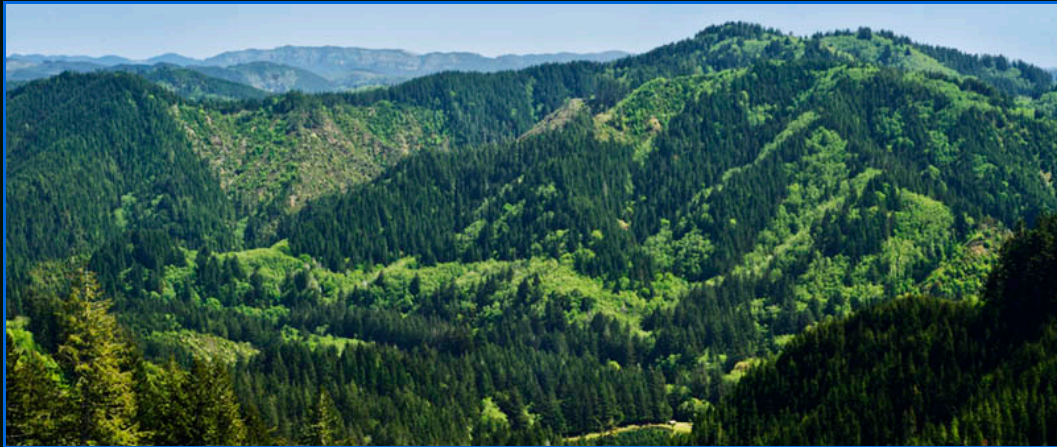
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REVIEW: THE ELLIOTT - AN ANTHOLOGY



Bob Zybach and I have been friends and co-conspirators for more than 30 years. I still remember the day we met. I had driven from Grants Pass to Corvallis to interview him.

He had publicly criticized the federal government's owl/old growth scientists for their assertion that the Pacific Northwest had been a vast sea of old growth for eons – and they could find no evidence to the contrary.

Bob was living in a small house in Corvallis and was working on his undergraduate forestry degree, but unlike every other forestry student at Oregon State, he had been a successful reforestation contractor for many years before enrolling.

When he opened the door, I could hardly believe what I was seeing. There he was: tinted wire-rimmed glasses and a pony tail. I remember thinking to myself, "What the hell have I gotten myself into?"

With a peek over his shoulder I answered my own question. The living room and dining area were stacked high with book boxes containing research material he had gathered to support his claim that the government's claim was ridiculous on its face.

I wondered how he managed to dredge up so much information affirming his claim that the region's Douglas-fir forests had burned many times over thousands of years – some fires set by lightning and many others deliberately set by Native Americans to create sunlit openings where

berries and nuts – two of their food sources – could grow quickly.

Hence, while there was old growth, there never was a vast sea. The nearby photograph was taken in 1888 on the Millicoma, a coastal stream east of Coos Bay, in the heart of the present day Elliott State Forest.

Burnt snags, downed timber and the orchard in the foreground tell a much different story than the one anti-forestry activists tell today. The orchard was planted where Indians camped for thousands of years. They fished and swam in the Millicoma.

“Where’d you get all this stuff Bob,” I asked of dozens of boxes that held reports, maps and pictures he had photocopied.

“Oh, that’s easy,” he replied. “I have a library card.”

“There is nothing in the President’s proposal for managing federal forests in the Pacific Northwest that suggests an understanding of this region’s human history,” he explained. “Because many of the plan’s goals are founded on erroneous historic assumptions, the plan itself is fundamentally flawed.”

Probably without realizing it, Bob had just charted the course of his life for the next 30 years. When we finished our interview, we walked outside so I could take a picture of Bob on the sidewalk that ran past his rental. It’s on the cover of the March-April 1994 edition of *Evergreen Magazine* and appears nearby.

So began our lasting friendship – years in which we have co-authored countless essays, mostly for our *Evergreen* website and a few for Cristy Rein’s *Oregon Fish and Wildlife Journal*. Two things have changed over the last 30 years. We’ve both aged – and now I’m sure we could not fit Bob’s voluminous research into my 1,200 square foot office.

I have watched Bob think – and work – for so long that I can almost see what’s coming next. He approaches the task the same way that a seasoned detective approaches dusty boxes of evidence from an unsolved murder case.

It is thus an understatement to say that Bob does his homework. His penchant for detail and his ability to weave research and narratives together in a very readable story are unmatched in the world of forestry. Several of our collaborations are posted on our *Evergreen* website.

Search: "Bob Zybach" www.evergreenmagazine.com

Virtually all of Bob’s writing has been focused on the Douglas-fir region, mostly west of the Cascades from the Columbia River south through the Willamette Valley and on to Coos Bay, then east to Roseburg and the Cascades, then north to the Santiam Canyon and back west to the Oregon coast.

Beyond doubt the most productive forests on Earth. No wonder they are so hotly contested by those who favor science-based forestry and those who for reasons of their own think it is a sin to cut down a tree. At this juncture, the anti-forestry mob is winning the battle. Forests and forestry are struggling to survive.

For the last five years, Bob’s work has focused mainly on the Elliott State Forest, 93,000 magnificent acres spanning Coos and Douglas counties. The best of the best, largely due to the tireless efforts of the late Jerry Phillips, who joined the Elliott staff in 1956 and was Chief Forester for 19 years before his retirement in 1989. Phillips chronicled his work and Elliott’s history in *Caulked Boots and Cheese Sandwiches*, a book he completed in 1996.

I never met Mr. Phillips, but he was one of five now gone mentors who had a significant influence over Bob’s work. I knew the other four very well:

- **Wayne Giesy**, who with Bob’s help, assembled a quite credible plan for replacing the 1994 Northwest Forest Plan that Bob took apart in our 1993 interview.
- **Bob Buckman**, PhD, former Deputy Chief of Research for the U.S. Forest Service, former Director of the Pacific Northwest Forest Experiment Station in Portland and former Vice President of the 115,000-member International Union of Forest Research Organizations.
- **Ben Stout**, PhD, forest ecology, undergraduate degrees, forestry and silviculture; managed Harvard University’s Black Rock Experimental Forest, 1950-1959; Rutgers University forestry faculty and associate provost, 1959- 1978; Dean, University of Montana School of Forestry, 1978-1985; Director, acid rain research, National Council for Air and Stream Improvement at Corvallis, 1985 until his retirement.
- **Mike Newton**, PhD botanist and OSU silviculture professor for 60 years. Mike was an Evergreen Foundation board member for several years and a friend from *Evergreen’s* earliest days. He guided Julia and me through his Tree Farm west of Corvallis several times, never failing to remind us that the Real Estate Investment Trusts that own timberland in western Oregon are leaving lots of money on the table because they are harvesting their trees at least 25 years too soon. We readily agreed with Mike’s observation because he had the written records to prove it.

records to prove it.

It is not a stretch to say that Bob is very much a product of the Phillips-Giesy-Buckman-Stout-Newton collaboration. Which brings me to Bob's mammoth effort to keep the Elliott out of the hands of the Oregon Land Board effort to turn it into a no-harvest research forest.

The idea took root in the anti-forestry, anti-capitalism fever swamps in Portland and Eugene several years ago. The nearby graph tracks forestry's progress on the Elliott since its formation – and the horrific politically contrived damage the anti-forestry mob has done over the last decade.

Under the guise of saving old growth in service to the climate change banner, the mob had hoped to cover their tracks by convincing the Oregon State University College of Forestry to take over management of the Elliott.

Fortunately, OSU President, Jayathi Murthy saw through the politically charged scheme. What's to research in a forest in which there is no harvesting and thus no way to compare, measure or analyze the positive and negative impacts of natural and human-caused disturbances? You can read the letter [here](#).

Bob's long-running contribution to a now very public dialogue that includes litigation has been to assemble *The Elliott: An Anthology* that includes everything he's written about the Elliott that was published in the *Oregon Fish and Wildlife Journal* between March 2012 and January 2024.

Twenty-three well researched and well written essays beginning with "Forest Restoration: Problems and Opportunities" in 2012 and ending with "Requiem for a Boondoggle": The Elliott State Research Forest last month.

Bob's essays provide a well-footnoted chronology aimed squarely at restoring the Elliott State Forest's obligation to provide local jobs and revenue for Oregon's Common School Fund.

This is the crux of Dr. David Sullivan's lawsuit, which seeks to prevent the Land Board from turning the Elliott into a no-harvest reserve. Sullivan is a retired OSU business professor and highly regarded Oregon Tree Farmer.

The cover of Bob's anthology features [left to right] Giesy, Phillips, and David Gould at the Silver Creek Heritage Grove in 2017.

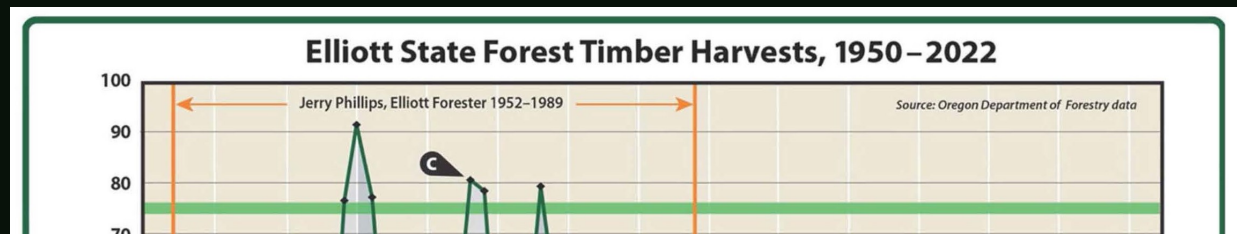
Mr. Gould, descended from a pioneer Elliott State Forest family, was the second generation owner of a logging company now run by his son.

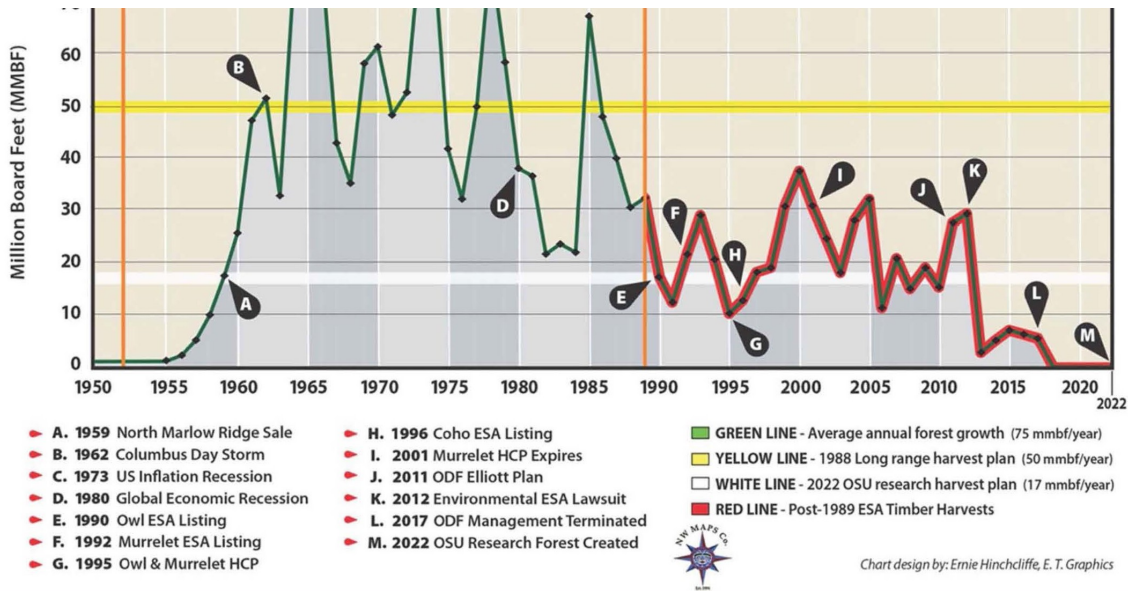
Many considered Gould to be the heart and soul of the Elliott. He and Zybach were strong supporters of the Board of Oregon Advocates for School Trust Lands, which was founded by Sullivan and his wife. Gould donated thousands of dollars to the Advocates and to Zybach's research. He died earlier this year.

When the Oregon State Legislature founded Elliott State Forest in 1930, it intended that revenues generated from growing and harvesting timber would be allocated to Oregon schools.



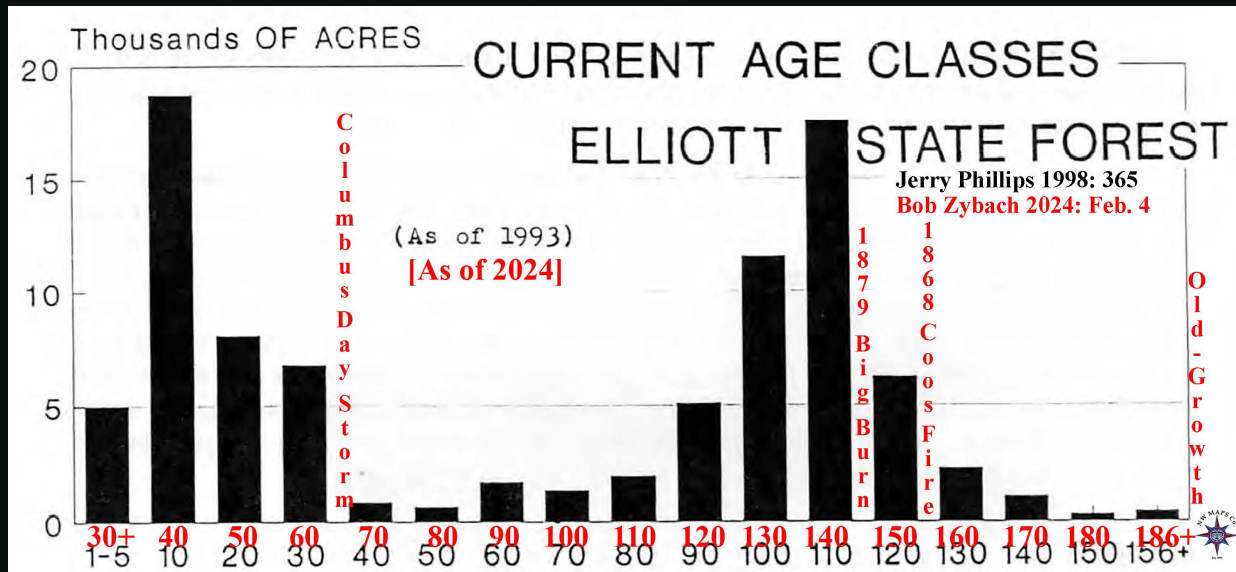
As the graph below indicates,, litigation and politics have compromised the fund over the last 10 years. Click on image for additional information.





The Green Line represents average annual amount of growth of Elliott State Forest trees;
 The Yellow Line represents average allowable cut for the Elliott in the 1988 harvest plan;
 The White Line represents OSU's planned annual harvest of the Elliott w/ no snag salvage;
 The Area between the Green Line and Red Line represents Elliott fuel increases since 1989.

Another graph tells Oregonians everything they need to know about this charade. The anti-forestry crowd claims their plan will “save” 41,000 acres of old growth forest But the Elliott State Forest holds less than 1,000 acres of old growth. Click on image to view full sized.



Bob explains:

“The 60-year-and-younger trees are almost entirely plantations following logging of mostly 70-year-old second-growth salvaged following the 1962 Columbus Day Story. The 120-150-year-old trees seeded in the burns following the catastrophic 1868 and 1879 fires – which had likewise mostly seeded in from reproduction following the 1770s fires and the 1840s fires.”

Knowing that Bob brings scientific and tree planting credentials to this rodeo, I asked him what he would do now if the Elliott State Forest was his to manage.

Here’s his answer:

“The plantations were created almost entirely for one purpose – to log. They should be systematically clear-cut and replaced with an enlightened combination of plants in many

systematically clear-cut and replaced with an enlightened combination of plants in many locations.

“Trees over 150 years old should be nurtured and cared for and middle-aged trees should be carefully thinned for now. I don't think many of the trees in the 60-to-120-year class will last as long or be particularly 'critical' to one species or the other, but it does seem like individual stand histories should be a critical factor in determining where timber sales located are research options are designated.”

These essays and the colorful photographs, maps and graphs that support Bob's narratives should be required reading in every forestry school in the nation. Why every school? Because every forest in every state is under attack from the same cadre of well-funded anti-forestry activists who would rather see these forests die and burn than see them managed collaboratively for the publicly cherished values that they hold.

Read Bob's anthology – and know the truth.



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Read Jim's latest: *"Timber Wars Redux"*
in the WESTERN NEWS
(link below)



Jim Petersen is writing a series of op-eds for [Healthy Forests Healthy Communities - News Roundup](#)

You can also find these articles in several



Montana newspapers:
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[The Western News](#)
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