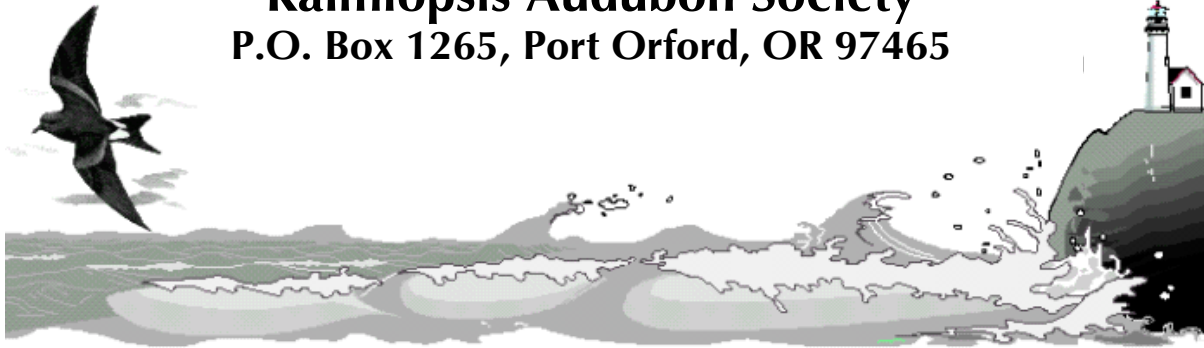


**Kalmiopsis Audubon Society**  
**P.O. Box 1265, Port Orford, OR 97465**



March 12, 2019

To: Curry County Commissioners  
Re: Floras Lake Land Exchange proposals

Dear Commissioners Paasch, Boice, and Gold:

I am writing on behalf of the Kalmiopsis Audubon Society, a local conservation organization with more than 380 members who reside throughout Curry County, to express strong support for moving forward with a land swap with Oregon State Parks.

This would be a **win-win-win** for the county, the community, and for state parks.

The proposed land swap has the potential to provide Curry County with a very accessible piece of property right on Hwy 101 that could readily be used for public purposes or to generate revenue while also helping to keep the scenery of Floras Lake intact, thereby continuing to help generate revenue for the County at the Boice-Cope County Park and campground.

Meanwhile, the local community would benefit from clear conservation for a greater portion of the scenic lake front that is the basis for the tourism economy in Langlois and for local residents' quality of life. State Parks (OPRD) would benefit from conserving and amplifying the scenic and conservation values of its Floras Lake State Natural Area, thereby enhancing recreation opportunities.

The appraisal conducted by the independent appraiser, Marineau and Associates, in Oct. 2018 for \$7,350 confirms that the county property under consideration for the proposed landswap has no road access and poor timber value.

The appraiser found:

- *"significant wetlands are to the north, east and south of this site."*
- *"accessing the property from the east is not practical, as this route would require crossing significant wetlands with new road construction. In summary, road access is economically unfeasible and access by boat or by foot through the adjacent State Park are the only means of reasonable access to the property."*
- *property owner to the south does "not want to open up their property to outside access."*
- *"severe constraints and costs mitigate any merchantable timber value on this tract."*
- *"mostly marginal timber adjacent to the extensive slough or waterway areas, and in general, the subject site is a very poor site for the growing of timber"*

These findings confirm what local citizens have contended for years and what county staff found through research conducted in 2017.

Moving forward with the proposed land swap is a **practical action** that would finally allow the county to obtain a property that could be readily used to provide value.

The Hwy 101 lands currently owned by the state were once slated to be a "Port-Orford-cedar forest wayside." The trees were cut back in the 1960s but have grown again into a Port Orford-cedar forest. Some ideas for what the county might be able to do with these Hwy 101 frontage properties include making it an anchor to develop a county forest, harvesting timber, using it for communications, disaster preparedness, a county campground, or some purpose related to the high school.

For more background information about the county's Floras Lake lands, please see the attached time line, which outlines what has happened to date.

It's important to recognize that many options have been considered through the years but none have proven feasible. This background makes the practical proposal before you now especially attractive.

Regarding the 2 options proposed by OPRD to balance the economic disparity of values as determined the appraiser, we see pros and cons of either approach.

Option 1 is the most straightforward fee-simple option that requires only that the county vacate "paper" roads.

Option 2 would provide for better conservation of the scenic values of the lakefront, which we favor, but will require the extra steps of developing the easement language and agreement. Before pursuing this option, we encourage you to ask State Parks who would hold the conservation easement? who would do the work and carry the costs of developing the easement agreement and surveying the lands?

In closing, recent Curry County Commissions (starting with Rep. David Brock Smith, Susan Brown and Tom Huxley in 2015) have built on the work of their predecessors and have supported advancing consideration of this land swap.

However, no other previous board has been able get this project over the finish line.

We urge YOU to be the Board of Commissioners to finally get this done!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ann Vileisis".

Ann Vileisis  
President, Kalmiopsis Audubon Society

## **CURRY COUNTY, actions related to lands south of Floras Lake, BACKGROUND timeline, 2005 to 2019**

**2005, One County commissioner (unbeknownst to others) flies to Parks Commission hearing** in eastern Oregon aiming to secretly negotiate a land swap to access lands south of Floras Lake with intent to develop –no local public notice/involvement/ plan  
*Outcome: Major public opposition, public mistrust of county, no action*

**2010, County Natural Resources Committee, board-appointed citizen group inventories all county-owned lands**  
*Outcome: Property inventoried and described as having short-term timber value if clearcut: thinning possible but would be costly and cause problems with gorse and windthrow*

**2011-2012, County proposes to take-over part of Floras Lake State Natural Area to lease for golf course development, secret dealings, test pits dug illegally within state park**  
*Outcome: MASSIVE public opposition, public mistrust of county, no action*

**2015-Real Property Task Force (RPTF), board-appointed citizens' panel reviews all county-owned lands and make recommendations**  
*Outcome: Recommendation to Curry BOC to pursue consideration of land swap with state parks for county lands south of Floras Lake, no action*

**Dec. 2015- April 2016, Land-swap with developer proposed/ considered instead**  
Curry County Commissioners consider swap with developer who suggests possibly building kids' golf course or residential development on lands south of Floras Lake  
*Outcome: Major public opposition, County Commissioners recommend reconvening RPTF to again consider options for Floras Lake lands and direct staff to engage and involve north county residents moving forward*

**April 2017, County Community Development Department hosts workshop in Langlois**  
Curry County conducts transparent public process, with collaborative community workshop. About 150 local people show up –from ranchers to retirees, landowners, business owners –to consider 4 options for lands: recreation, conservation, forest management, or development  
*Outcome: Overwhelming support for conservation/ recreation options*

**Sept. 2017, County Commissioners direct staff to pursue options for moving forward,**  
*Outcome: County staff researches property and revenue-generating opportunities, including land swap and community forest, researches deeds and confirms lack of public access, initiates dialogue with State Parks*

**Aug.-Sept. 2018, State Parks proposes to swap ~34 acres on Hwy 101 for ~70 acres of Floras Lake property adjacent to Floras Lake State Natural Area**  
*Outcome: Curry Commissioners approve funds for appraisal to inform consideration of swap*

**Mar. 2019, Curry County Commissioners consider adjusted proposal based on appraisals**  
*Outcome: ?*