



September 14, 2022

Mr. Jim Kelly, Board Chair, Oregon Board of Forestry  
Mr. Calvin Mukumoto, Oregon State Forester  
Oregon Department of Forestry  
2600 State Street, Building B  
Salem, OR 97310

**RE: Support for Capital Funding - Oregon State Forester's Building**

Dear Mr. Kelly and Mr. Mukomoto:

We strongly support the Oregon Department of Forestry's (ODF) effort to secure funding for the rehabilitation of the Oregon State Forester's Office Building and associated landscape. It is the cornerstone of the Department of Forestry's Headquarters Campus in Salem, Oregon and represents the best design and highest degree of historical integrity among the facilities constructed by the Department. Designed by U.S. Forest Service architect Linn A. Forrest, (who also designed the historic Timberline Lodge), the building was constructed under the auspices of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) to house the Department following the Capitol Building fire April 1935.

An August 1939 Oregonian article dubbed the building a "**Symphony in Oregon Woods**," explaining that the new structure featured "nearly every variety of timber growing in Oregon." Native Oregon hardwoods and conifers were used to finish the ceilings, walls and floors, with each room featuring a distinct wood or combination of woods. The interior of the building is as much a work of art as the exterior. The exterior of the State Forester's Office Building includes the use of random-coursed masonry cladding and hand-hewn timber framing to emphasize the structure's rusticity. Many works of the building's craftsmanship extend into the cultural landscape with stone walls and pathways that create outdoor rooms and are mimicked in a stone retaining wall along the creek.



*(Images Courtesy: Historic American Buildings Survey)*

In 1982, the State Forester's Office Building was listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). As stated in the nomination, the building "meets the criterion of exceptional significance as the outstanding example of Depression era facilities in the National Park Style on State Forest land. It is among the three or four outstanding examples of the National Park Style in the state. **It ranks second only to Timberline Lodge** on Mt. Hood, which is the highest expression of the National Park Style in Oregon."

Our organization has already been focused on the preservation of WPA-era resources through the successful addition of a Multiple Property Document Form (MPDF) to the National Register. Through a grant from Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, Restore Oregon hired historian Sarah Munro to complete the first comprehensive statewide study of Oregon's existing New Deal properties, the two programs that made them possible (the PWA and WPA), and the ways these public work relief projects changed Oregon's infrastructure in the decade between 1933 and 1943. Prior to completion of this MPDF, no known list of all New Deal projects in Oregon existed, nor was there a complete list of surviving Oregon New Deal resources. This MPDF process newly identified over 300 individual New Deal resources, only a handful had been listed in the NRHP (including the State Forester's Office Building).

The State Forester's Office Building is a very significant place and cultural resource for Oregon. It is of paramount importance to invest in its rehabilitation now. ODF developed the 2014 Preservation Plan, has recently updated it for today's capital needs and has identified this to be a critical priority project. **Restore Oregon supports your full funding request to the State Legislature in 2023 to implement a full and necessary rehabilitation** that will increase its use capacity for department staff, make it disaster resilient, and help the State reduce its carbon footprint through its retention and reuse. It is time to bring the "Symphony in Oregon Woods" back in harmony and vitality for the next 100 years.

Sincerely,



Nicole Possert  
Executive Director



Rebecca Ziegler  
President, Board of Directors

cc: Bill Herber, Deputy Director for Administration  
D. Chris Stewart, P.E., Program Manager, Facilities Capital Management Program  
Restore Oregon Board of Directors  
Carrie Richter, Chair, Restore Oregon Policy & Advocacy Committee