

## Key Points Related to Marbled Murrelet Long Term Conservation Strategy (LTCS)

### How to Comment:

Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities: <http://healthyforests.org/action-center/>

DNR Public Comment Portal: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MMLTCSRDEIS>

### Key Points to Include in Comments:

- DNR must select Alternative B to comply with its fiduciary duties to trust land beneficiaries. Alternative B protects all areas that are or could become marbled murrelet habitat, so it complies with the Endangered Species Act (ESA).
- In 1997, essentially nothing was known about how, if at all, marbled murrelets use DNR trust lands for nesting. As a result, in 1997 an “interim” strategy that was considered overly protective of the marbled murrelet was put in place while further studies were carried out.
- The studies that have occurred since 1997 confirmed that the murrelet is an old growth species.
- Many existing DNR policies already protect old growth on state lands, including the 2006 Policy for Sustainable Forestry and the habitat protections for the Northern Spotted Owl.
- **All** the LTCS alternatives also protect **all** sites that are occupied by the marbled murrelet.
- The land that is primarily, if not exclusively, impacted by the proposed LTCS alternatives are second growth forests, not old growth stands that could potentially be marbled murrelet habitat. Field examinations have confirmed these stands are not now suitable marbled murrelet habitat. Nor will these stands become suitable marbled murrelet habitat between now and the end of the LTCS (when the HCP expires in 2067) because it will take many more decades for these stands to become marbled murrelet habitat (if that is even possible).
- Special Habitat Areas are intended to be “no touch” areas. Management and other land uses are to be restricted. This includes all of the non-habitat located within the boundaries, regardless of age.
- The LTCS does not address the real forces that are adversely impacting the marbled murrelet - ocean conditions that have led to the decline of suitable food for the marbled murrelet. In fact, the RDEIS acknowledges that it is uncertain that any of the LTCS alternatives will have any impact on the marbled murrelet population. With or without the LTCS, it is likely that population of the marbled murrelet will decline unless foraging conditions are improved.
- DNR’s fiduciary obligation to trust beneficiaries requires that DNR select the highest volume alternative that complies with the Endangered Species Act and HCP.
- Each of the LTCS alternatives meets DNR’s obligations under the Endangered Species Act and the HCP. Therefore, DNR must select Alternative B. Anything short of Alternative B not only violates DNR’s trust obligation, but it does so without providing any benefit to the marbled murrelet.

- Although the RDEIS does not describe economic impacts of the LTCS alternatives, several of the alternatives have potentially catastrophic consequences on beneficiaries, including those in Southwest Washington, Northwest Washington, and on the Olympic Peninsula.
- Many communities rely on timber sale revenue from DNR land to fund their day-to-day operations and provide a host of public services, including fire protection, road building, emergency services, and libraries. The reduction in DNR’s manageable land base **will significantly reduce revenue from timber sales for these communities**. These consequences must, at a minimum, be adequately analyzed in the EIS under SEPA (WAC 197-11-444). More critically, these consequences make it clear that communities will be catastrophically impacted if DNR chooses to set aside significant land as marbled murrelet “habitat” that has no demonstrable conservation benefit to the marbled murrelet and exceeds its obligations under the ESA and HCP.
  - DNR has not completed a fine-scale analysis of the economic and revenue impacts to affected Junior Taxing Districts, including the Cape Flattery, Quillayute Valley, Naselle, and Willapa Valley School Districts as well as library, fire, hospital, and EMS districts in all counties impacted by this decision.
    - School districts across the range of the murrelet stand to lose out on significant revenue from timber harvests on State Forest Board Transfer lands (“County Trust Lands”) removed from management under the LTCS.
  - By not including this fine-scale analysis of the fiscal and revenue impacts to the beneficiaries in the RDEIS the Board of Natural Resources and the commenting public cannot understand the scale of economic impacts of the LTCS – a violation of SEPA.
  - Lack of economic analysis as required by NEPA to address impacts to local communities. The details of this requirement and much of the input data is readily available from sources accessible on the internet. Census data, unemployment figures, poverty rates, school data, etc.
  - Lack of determination of the impacts to jobs and other revenue streams supporting county services from direct and indirect jobs associated with harvesting, hauling, and processing timber from trust lands managed by DNR.