

Marbled Murrelet Coalition – Sample comment letter & talking points

Help Protect the Marbled Murrelet in Washington State

Submit a comment on the Revised Draft Environmental Impact Statement (RDEIS) and proposed Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) amendment for the Long-Term Conservation Strategy for marbled murrelets!

This is where your voice matters – The deadline for the RDEIS comments has been extended to **5 p.m. on Thursday, December 6, 2018**. Your comments will be received by both the Department of Natural Resources and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Submit via the official comment portal: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MMLTCSRDEIS>

Or mail to: SEPA Center, PO Box 47015, Olympia, WA 98504-7015

Include the File No. 12-042001 in all your comments.

Not sure what to say? **See below for a sample comment letter with talking points, or write your own! Personalized comments will likely carry more weight.**

Learn more and keep up with the latest information:

- Marbled Murrelet Long-Term Conservation Strategy information: <http://www.dnr.wa.gov/mmltcs>
- Washington Environmental Council's information page with sample comments: <https://wecprotects.org/marbled-murrelet/>
- Murrelet Survival Project on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MurreletSurvival/>

Choose to include one or more of the talking points below, or write your own

Washington Department of Natural Resources and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service,

I'm writing to comment on the Revised Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Habitat Conservation Plan Amendment for the Marbled Murrelet Long Term Conservation Strategy (SEPA File No. 12-042001) because I support recovery efforts for the endangered marbled murrelets in the state of Washington.

As a Washington resident, I believe we can provide sufficient conservation for murrelets that will actually result in larger, viable populations of murrelets in the state over the next 50 years while also developing solutions that reduce financial impacts on timber-dependent communities.

A meaningful conservation plan and HCP amendment should and must help meet the long-stated biological goals for this species: to stabilize and increase its population, to expand its geographic range, and to increase resilience of the marbled murrelet to natural and human-caused disturbance.

- DNR's preferred alternative (Alternative H) doesn't do enough to support murrelet recovery primarily because it permits the harvest of too much of our mature and old forests over the next 50 years and does not conserve enough habitat as mitigation.
- Applying the most recent data available, DNR must protect all occupied sites, increase existing interior forest habitat, and establish buffers that will protect vulnerable murrelet chicks from predators.
- No Long-Term Conservation Strategy should include a net loss of habitat. In the North Puget region, Alternative H anticipates a net loss of over 1,000 acres after 50 years. The LTCS should include a net increase in habitat for murrelets across our landscape
- The LTCS should include more and larger murrelet-specific conservation areas to broaden the geographic distribution of murrelets in western Washington. Isolated conservation areas create and exacerbate murrelet population gaps that hinder the species' survival and recovery.
- The LTCS should lead to more murrelets across more of our landscape, not fewer murrelets in smaller forest patches. Broader geographic distribution helps reduce the risk that major human or natural disturbances (logging, roadbuilding, wildfire, increased nest predation) will wipe out significant portions of the murrelet population.

The plan must look to the future and protect murrelets from natural disturbances. DNR should more thoroughly evaluate the potential impacts of tree mortality, wildfire, windthrow, and our warming climate. Habitat loss and degradation from such disturbances should be accurately calculated and properly mitigated.

The LTCS should also better protect murrelets from the impacts of human-caused disturbance, especially in areas where murrelets are known to nest (occupied sites), the forest buffers around those sites, and the "special habitat areas." Disturbance such as road construction and the use of heavy equipment may result in "take" of murrelets that is not properly mitigated.

A meaningful Long-Term Conservation Strategy must set aside enough current and future old forest to not only offset the habitat the DNR plans to log but also to *improve* forest habitat conditions for the murrelet, without putting the existing population at further risk. The Long-Term Conservation Strategy must truly support real conservation for the murrelets for the *long-term*.

Sincerely,

<<Your Name>>