



Chair Imeson, State Forester Daugherty, and members of the Board, for the record my name is Seth Barnes, and I am a Forester with the Oregon Forest & Industries Council. I am coming before you to offer comment on the marbled murrelet.

For the past three years I have served as a representative of the forest landowning community on the dean's advisory panel for the OSU marbled murrelet research project. I have been a big supporter of this research project since it's inception, and with you, I continue to be impressed by the good work and valuable information that is unfolding as the project continues.

This research is new, and as is the case with this species, getting real data is both costly and difficult- obtaining information takes patience. As you've seen today, there are some very interesting pieces of information that are emerging, information that challenges much of what the "experts" thought they knew for decades. That is the real takeaway up to this point- we now know enough to know that we don't know a whole lot. That is to say, we need to continue to watch and learn as researchers continue to unfold a very interesting story about this species. One site does not define an ecosystem, just as one year does not make a trend. Good, sound investments take some time to mature and bear fruit, and the same is true for sound investments in large-scale research projects like this one.

Now some would urge this board to make hasty and far reaching decisions- and discourage a measured approach with an eye towards emerging science. In the very wise words of my grandmother- haste makes waste- the very best information we have clearly shows a population that is on the rise across Oregon and California, and a stable population across the entire range of the species. The only area showing declines in this species is up in Washington State where the Puget sound region, with its own land-use planning issues, appears to be a factor. I would further remind this board that this is a species that lives on the water. As strange as that is, this bird lives at sea, so those at-sea counts conducted by a consortium of state and federal agencies is the very best data we have. Furthermore, with an ever-increasing age class across very broad swaths of federal forests, one could make the case that hasty decisions have already been made prior to receiving new information, and perhaps its time to take a different approach and learn from the past before diving headlong into the future.

I appreciate the thoughtful approach of Dr Rivers and the other researchers involved in this project at Oregon State University, and I look forward to the education that will surely come as they continue this work.