

Tillamook County



Land of Cheese, Trees and Ocean Breeze

Board of Commissioners
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Peter Daugherty, Oregon State Forester
Tom Imeson, Chair
Members of the Board of Forestry

For the record, I am Tillamook County Commissioner, David Yamamoto. Thank you so much for this opportunity to address this issue of potential addition of marbled murrelet to the Forest Management Plan (FMP) guidelines.

Moving forward, it is important that you take a very thoughtful, measured approach to your deliberations concerning additional FMP guidelines for a species about which very little is known against a backdrop of grave potential harm to the livelihoods of good, hard working people in rural areas such as Tillamook County. Over the past several decades, as Federal and State timber harvests dwindle, pressure on rural county budgets is nearing crisis levels affecting our schools, community colleges, emergency services, libraries, and many special districts.

In Tillamook County, many of our best paying, fully benefited jobs are closely tied to forest products. Our average annual wage in the private sector is just over \$36K. Wages in forestry, wood products manufacturing, and trucking range from \$43K- \$50K per year. These are important jobs that strengthen the social and economic fabric of Tillamook County. We are asking to be able to continue our livelihoods in the traditional natural resource-based industries that built our great county.

These additional FMP guidelines will have a devastating effect on Tillamook County and its residents in contradiction to current assessments of steady improvements of population trends for more than a decade. Additionally, with OSU starting the second year of their 10-year study of the marbled murrelet, it is counterintuitive to implement advisory survival guidelines for a species that is not in decline.

It was not more than a generation ago that conservation logic told us we needed to take every stick of wood out of streams and rivers because it was blocking the migration of salmonids up and down stream. Today, the exact opposite is true where we are told that putting as much complex wood structure as possible into the water is important for fish habitat.

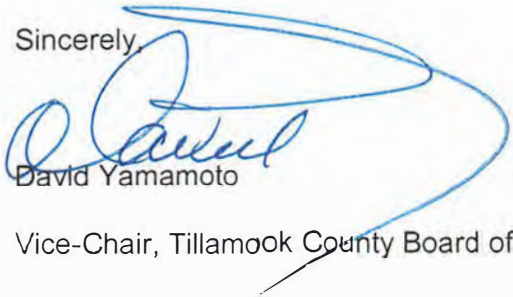
I feel, we are at this point today as we consider these additional FMP guidelines for the marbled murrelet. The first year of the OSU study proved to be enlightening in many ways. When placing monitors on marbled murrelet off the central Oregon coast, thinking was that these birds would nest in forests on the central Oregon coast. Researchers were surprised to find these birds in California and Washington.

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Scientists are unable to verify the locations of nests, instead relying on subcanopy behaviors and the observations of untrained members of the public who report that they heard the sound of marbled murrelets leaving their nests early in the morning to forage at sea. Trying to do good things when we admit that we don't know what we don't know creates a range of solutions in search of a problem. It is critical that we embrace the most recent science and include a detailed assessment of the social and economic impacts before jumping in to fix phantom problems. Knowing what we do know about current marbled murrelet population trends, the ever-increasing forest acreage because we are cutting far less than we grow, and the immaturity of the current scientific understanding of the marbled murrelet, it behooves this commission to consider the consequences of hastily doing the wrong thing versus considering what is best for Oregon and its people.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David Yamamoto", is written over a large, stylized blue scribble that extends across the page.

David Yamamoto

Vice-Chair, Tillamook County Board of Commissioners