



10 September 2020

Vicki Christiansen, Chief of the Forest Service
US Forest Service
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-0003
Via email to: Susan Beall sebeall@fs.fed.us

Re: Support for USFS acquisition of a key 40-acre parcel to support federally threatened
Marbled Murrelets, Northern Spotted Owls, and Coho Salmon

Dear Ms. Christiansen:

The Pacific Seabird Group (PSG) strongly urges the U.S. Forest Service to purchase a key 40-acre parcel along the Yachats River on the central Oregon coast, inland from the town of Yachats and adjacent to the Siuslaw National Forest. The forests in this section of the coast are critical to providing suitable habitat to the federally threatened Marbled Murrelet (*Brachyramphus marmoratus*), along with other threatened species including the Northern Spotted Owl and Coho salmon.

PSG is an international, non-profit organization that was founded in 1972 to promote the knowledge, study, and conservation of Pacific seabirds. It has a membership drawn from the entire Pacific basin. Among PSG's members are biologists and scientists who have research interests in Pacific seabirds, government officials who manage seabird refuges and populations, and individuals who are interested in marine conservation. PSG has served as an unbiased forum for government, university, and private sector biologists to discuss and resolve issues related to Marbled Murrelet conservation along the Pacific coast of North America.

The Marbled Murrelet is listed as a threatened species primarily because of the loss and fragmentation of suitable forest nesting habitat. Fragmentation of habitat through logging and development increases the risk of predation at murrelet nest sites, mainly by ravens and jays that thrive on edges and in fragmented habitat. The strategic acquisition and conservation of this 40-acre parcel will provide legal protection to critical mature and old-growth forest that murrelets require for successful nesting. This parcel is within a Late Successional Reserve and is located along the northern edge of a Globally Significant Important Bird Area for Marbled Murrelets. If this parcel is not purchased by the Forest Service and preserved, it will likely be clearcut by another landowner, thus losing the opportunity to create a large block of contiguous high-quality forest habitat that is so important for this unique seabird species.

We strongly encourage the Forest Service to purchase this key 40-acre parcel. Please contact us if you need additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter J. Hodum". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Peter" and last name "Hodum" clearly legible.

Peter Hodum, Vice Chair for Conservation
Pacific Seabird Group