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To whom it may concern:

The marbled murrelet was provincially and federally listed as threatened south of its Alaska breeding range in 1990 and 1992, respectively. Unlike similar species who nest on coastal cliffs and offshore rocks, marbled murrelets primarily nest in trees in older-aged coniferous forests. After nearly two decades of management, several concerns still exist for forest managers related to current applications of science for the marbled murrelet. The remaining unknown aspects of murrelet ecology are largely a product of limited scope and funding for past research efforts. The Oregon State University research team's policy option package proposal for murrelet research will address many of the most pertinent issues regarding how murrelets use inland nesting habitat.

If funded, researchers expect to be able to quantify the degree to which murrelet occurrence can be used to predict nesting activity and reproductive success. Several behaviors of marbled murrelets at inland sites have been considered indicative of nesting, yet follow-up work to confirm purported correlations have been lacking due to the expense of telemetry studies required to achieve nesting confirmation. The OSU research team will also determine the efficacy of at-sea captures of murrelets for attaching tracking devices to locate active murrelet nests. Prior efforts off the coast of northern California and southern Oregon proved that adequate numbers of murrelets can be captured for telemetry studies, although not without significant expense. The last substantial telemetry efforts in this region to assess inland behavior of murrelets occurred 13 years ago. Since that time, new satellite transmitters weighing less than 2 grams are on the market that will allow researchers to program satellite data transfer times and achieve nighttime (nest location) fixes from breeding murrelets. The new transmitter technology will also allow researchers to quantify the extent to which nesting murrelet nests are spatially clustered and potentially whether birds return to the same tree, patch or stand in subsequent years.

This proposal represents a unique confluence of research expertise, collaboration and new technologies for tracking marbled murrelets. These factors, combined with the requested funding, will be necessary to better understand the behavior of this secretive bird, and ultimately to provide the scientific basis to guide coastal forest management in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jake Verschuyf', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Jake Verschuyf, PhD