

The mission of the Olympic Forest Coalition is promoting the protection, conservation and restoration of natural forest ecosystems and their processes on the Olympic Peninsula, including fish and wildlife habitat, and surrounding ecosystems.



Olympic Forest Coalition

Fall 2016

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We thank all our members and donors for their financial support. If you have not yet contributed, we hope you will become inspired to do so.

We are including a self-addressed envelope for your convenience or, if you prefer, you can donate to OFCO online on our website: <http://olympicforest.org/>.



Connie Gallant

President's Column

OFCO members are celebrating victories and losses, and gearing up for significant challenges. Our work is needed now more than ever.

- More than 4,800 acres of pristine Hood Canal tidelands and bedlands will be protected for the future after a Jefferson County gravel firm [dropped its appeal](#) of a conservation easement granted the U.S. Navy by the Washington State Dept. of Natural Resources (DNR).
- Peter Goldmark, outgoing Commissioner of Public Lands and head of DNR, [proposes to add](#) 4,345 acres to Dabob Bay and 415 acres to Devils Lake Natural Resource Conservation Areas.
- The Harder Foundation provided second-year support for OFCO technical assistance and advocacy on the Olympic Forest Collaborative. (See update on page 5.)
- OFCO Board members Marcy Golde, Fayette Krause and Toby Thaler are leading efforts with the Washington Forest Law Center to challenge significant decisions by DNR, the U.S. Forest Service, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the Habitat Conservation Plan for the Marbled Murrelet. (See article on page 3.)
- OFCO and the West Coast Action Alliance won a Freedom of Information Act request challenge for information on the Navy's testing operations in the Olympic forest. (See article on page 4.)
- The U.S. District Court, Western District Washington (Tacoma) denied Coast Seafoods' motion to dismiss OFCO's Clean Water Act case on Coast's Quilcene operations in June. Coast is appealing to the U.S. Court of Appeals, 9th Circuit. Board member Paul Kampmeier represents OFCO in the case to protect Olympic-associated marine waters habitat. For updates, click [here](#).
- OFCO was one of the sponsors at two recent screenings of "[Sonic Sea](#)," a film about protecting life in our waters from the destructive effects of oceanic noise pollution. Produced by the Natural Resources Defense Council, it is a stunning portrayal of the dangers all sea mammals and birds are facing.

OFCO Executive Director

OFCO recently welcomed Patricia A. Jones as the Executive Director. Patricia's strong background in environmental justice and human rights law and policy has centered largely on safe drinking water and sanitation, domestically and internationally.



Patricia served as the senior program manager for the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) for the past decade, and has been an advocate for environmental and social justice issues in Port Townsend, Seattle, in the U.S. and internationally for 40 years. Her experience includes shareholder advocacy with major U.S. corporations, advocacy at the utility, local, state, national and international levels on the human right to water.

Patricia's most recent publication is a [co-authored report on water justice](#) in the U.S. for UUSC. Patricia holds a PhD and Masters of Law (LL.M.) in international water law from the UNESCO Centre for Water Law, Policy and Science in the U.K.; a law degree (J.D.) from the Washington College of Law, American University, and a Bachelor of Arts degree (B.A.) in international studies from the Jackson School of International Studies, University of Washington.

Upper Fork Skokomish Site Visit

The Skokomish Watershed Restoration Action Team (SWAT) updated its [plan to restore the river watershed](#) for endangered species and conservation. OFCO staff participated in the joint SWAT/U.S. Forest Service field visit to the Lower South Fork Vegetation Management Project, the South Fork Large Wood Enhancement project Phase 2, and the Prairie Burn research project.

The SF Large Wood Enhancement Project uses large wood, engineered log jams to stabilize the river course and create fish habitat. The Prairie Burn project is testing methodology to restore traditional tribal "burn" areas and to document cultural plant species like beargrass. Research indicates that beargrass life span in the research area is at least 60 years; beargrass plants can live from 100–200 years.

Oil Spill Preparedness on Hood Canal and Marbled Murrelets

OFCO participated in a Washington State Department of Ecology (DOE) workshop on oil spill preparedness in August for the 704 miles in the newly designated Hood Canal Planning Area, below the Hood Canal Bridge. The major topic was risk to endangered species from spills along the roads and rails around the area, recreational and military vessels, and the Naval Base at Bangor.

The [Hood Canal Geographic Response Plan](#) coordinates the team of responders, the prioritization of response, and types of response around the state. The Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) drafted the policy on endangered species for the plan, according to Max Gordon, the coordinator for DOE. During a response, the responders create, in real time, a specific Incident Action Plan that guides the response.

WDFW is one of the groups that would participate in any response and, as such, they can provide the rest of the team with up-to-date information on natural resources in the area, including Marbled Murrelets. There is currently no specific information about endangered species, nor clear direction during nesting season (or other critical times) about how to respond to endangered species in a spill.

OFCO requested the analysis documents on murrelets developed by WDFW. The final plan for the Hood Canal zone will be published in December 2016. There are [Geographic Response Plans](#) for sensitive waters of Washington, which also may be vague on the issue of endangered species protections.



– Larry Eifert

What's Happening on DNR-managed Land in the OESF?

by Marcy Golde

After more than 10 years, the Dept. of Natural Resources has issued the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), analyzing the Olympic Experimental State Forest Land Plan. The Plan itself has not yet been issued. It is expected in a month or two.

The planning process has been long and tortuous. The formal scoping hearings came in August 2007, followed by the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) issued in June 2010, followed with a Revised DEIS in October 2013, and at last this FEIS in August of this year. OFCO submitted several hundred pages of comments throughout this extended process.

What are the results of all this analysis, which covers the next 100 years? In DNR's own words:

"An increase in the number of acres of state trust lands in the Structurally Complex stand development stage."

"A decrease in the number of acres in the Competitive Exclusion stand development stage."

"A reduction in the number of acres of state trust lands considered to be in a high forest health risk category because of overstocking (too many trees)."

"A gradual improvement in riparian conditions, as demonstrated by improvements in the composite watershed scores."

"An increase in the number of acres of modeled northern spotted owl habitat." and

"All potential high impacts related to the road network are expected to be mitigated to a level of non-significance through current management practices ... "

OFCCO is waiting to see the final Forest Land Plan and considering its options.

Murrelet Protection Strategy Creeps Along

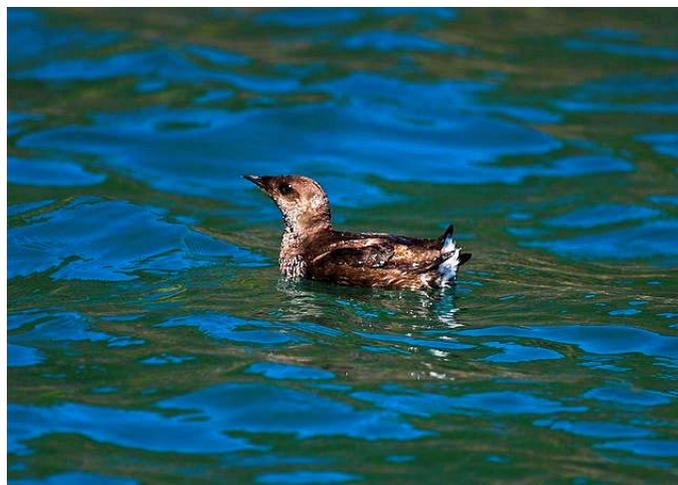
by Marcy Golde

The slow progress to add the Long Term Conservation Strategy for Marbled Murrelets to the DNR Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) continues. We're now awaiting the last piece of protection to be developed by DNR to implement their 1997 HCP, a formal contract among

DNR, the National Marine Fisheries Service, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, jointly called The Services.

The joint scoping hearings for the original plan took place in 2006, followed by a thoughtful volume, "Recommendations and Supporting Analysis of Conservation Opportunities for the Marbled Murrelet Long-Term Conservation Strategy," prepared by (but never accepted by) the Washington State DNR (Olympia, Wash., Sept. 2008). We call it the Science Report. In April 2011, new joint scoping hearings were held. Despite intensive joint work by DNR and USFWS staff since then, no DEIS has yet been issued for public review. It is currently scheduled for release in late 2016 or early 2017.

The Board of Natural Resources has been learning about this issue, with repeated presentations from DNR staff alone. Six alternatives were identified to be examined in that DEIS. The latest presentations and computer modeling show that none of the six would lead to the long-term survival of the murrelet, but the benchmarks of all harvest or no harvest, also show that survival and recovery is possible on state lands and in Washington state.



Now the challenge is to create a path forward for the murrelet and also find ways to help the Trust beneficiaries meet their revenue needs, which up to now have been filled by harvest of a small part of forest acreage needed now and in the future by the murrelet. This is a big challenge and it's going to take both determination and intelligence to find a way forward.

Stay tuned, as you must make your voices heard if we are to succeed.

Navy Warfare Games Threaten Olympic Peninsula's Forest & Marine Habitats and Local Communities

by Patricia Jones & Karen Sullivan

The U.S. Navy is moving forward with plans for electronic warfare testing over the Olympic Peninsula forests and seascapes. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) signed its biological opinion (BiOp) in July 2016, allowing Navy plans to go forward, but did not release the BiOp to the public. OFCO Board President Connie Gallant requested that the USFWS release its findings on impacts to Marbled Murrelets, bull trout, Northern Spotted Owl, and Short-tailed Albatross to the public.

The agency did release its BiOp to OFCO, but the information did not include the supporting scientific data and analysis listed as available for public review. Gallant points out a serious flaw in the BiOp and the Navy's assessments: They are based on the Naval Prowler jets and data from 1994. Prowlers were phased out in 2005; the Navy is now using "Growler" jets, which have a sonic impact vastly greater than Prowlers. OFCO submitted a Freedom of Information Act request for all documentation and all communications between the USFWS and the Navy.

Karen Sullivan, retired USFWS biologist and co-founder of the [West Coast Action Alliance](#) is leading the effort to require the Navy to fulfill its legal obligations under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Endangered Species Act (ESA). The Alliance published the released BiOp on its website along with documents obtained from a whistleblower.

The Navy's process has been fraught with inadequate public disclosure, misinformation, incorrect scientific analysis, and serious gaps in data and information. Sullivan questions the increased area the Navy claims for its electronic warfare testing range without public input, and the impacts of warfare maneuvers on wildlife and livelihoods in communities around the Olympic Peninsula forests, San Juan Islands and coastal and offshore waters in the Salish Sea and Pacific Ocean. Planned Naval war activities overlap with a National Wildlife Refuge, Olympic National Park, and the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary, as well as tribal lands, including important traditional sites.



Figure 2. The Navy's Northwest Training and Testing Offshore Area, part of the action area that includes the northern Pacific Ocean from the Washington coast to the Aleutian Islands of Alaska.

Sullivan also points to the inadequate science the Navy has supplied to the USFWS to use in their BiOp: "The Navy also insisted on drawing a clear line between permanent and temporary 'Threshold Shift,' a fancy name for hearing loss." Sullivan said. "Their long-held position—that temporary hearing loss and behavior changes are not harm—is explained in [a letter](#) to the Superintendent of the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary.

The problem is, where do you draw the line on hearing loss for species that depend on hearing for survival? How do you know what damage is permanent and what's temporary, in a rare, tiny and secretive Marbled Murrelet?

Answer: You don't, but if you're the Navy, you insist the USFWS use a [1974 study](#) by the military on domestic chickens, ducks and geese to calculate 'probabilities'."

Gordon Hempton, the Emmy-winning sound technician and acoustic ecologist who founded One Square Inch,

recently hosted the National Parks Conservation Association, OFCO and the West Coast Action Alliance on a field visit in the Hoh Rainforest to [One Square Inch](#). Hempton established it as a sanctuary for the natural soundscape of the forest in Olympic National Park. Explaining the Naval testing and commercial air traffic impacts, Hempton said the auditory horizon is 20 miles on both sides of an aircraft, which drags a cone of noise of more than 1,000 square miles. In 1965, when the Olympic Park was first surveyed, Hempton said there were noise-free intervals of at least an hour; today, it is less than 20 minutes.

Commercial air traffic from SeaTac has tripled since the 1980s, and is expected to increase by another 30 percent. Species like owls need quiet for hunting, and prey species like the shrew need quiet for survival. Hempton cites the Noise Control Act of 1973, which regulates the impact of harmful noise on humans. The pain threshold for humans is 120 decibels; permanent impairment to hearing occurs with three hours of exposure at 85 decibels.

Growlers have not been properly tested and analyzed, but emit approximately 150 decibels at takeoff near communities on Whidbey Island; at 3,000 feet, 114 decibels have been recorded. Northern Spotted Owls have over 20 times the hearing sensitivity of humans. Hempton's work to preserve "one square inch" of natural soundscape—without extraneous noise—has the potential to conserve 1,256 square miles of the Park's 1,400 square miles. His "seeds of silence" program is inspiring movements around the world to preserve natural soundscapes and the species, including humans, that depend upon them.

Gallant adds, "We are grateful and appreciative of the armed services and the sacrifices made by our service members to protect us. We are also protectors—of the natural beauty and wilderness that their and our families and communities enjoy and need to thrive. We can find a common ground in other alternatives and not the plans the Navy is now pursuing."

Next steps: According to Sullivan, the U.S. Forest Service will soon issue its Record of Decision, and will be a *fait accompli*, despite the inadequate science, lack of public information, and no comment period for potentially affected communities and environmental advocates. The Navy's permits to "take" (kill)

endangered species managed by the National Marine Fisheries Service have been issued; the USFWS permit is pending. OFCO and the West Coast Action Alliance are asking members to write their congressional representatives and local governments to support full disclosure of data, science, future plans, and to afford adequate public comment opportunities. The Navy must fulfill legal requirements for Environmental Impact Statements and permits, and seek readily available alternatives that will not harm wildlife or communities.

Olympic Peninsula Forest Collaborative Federal Forests Update

by Jill Silver

The Olympic Forest Collaborative (OFC) has held public consultations in Forks, Aberdeen, Quilcene, Shelton and Port Angeles. The Collaborative is sharing its governance policy, purpose and goals, agreed to by Collaborative members in May 2015. OFCO board members Jill Silver and Toby Thaler are OFCO consultants for the OFC efforts to restore and conserve Olympic forests, and to represent OFCO and other environmental community goals on Collaborative projects. Transparency is a key value of the Collaborative. The governance documents, and other information, are available [here](#).

The OFC is a multi-stakeholder (U.S. Forest Service, conservation groups and industry) and is a forum where those with different perspectives work together to implement the [Northwest Forest Plan](#). The NWFP was adopted in 1994 to help resolve the conflict between conservation efforts to protect remaining Northern Spotted Owl habitat and timber sales in federal forests, including Olympic National Forest.

Timber sale proceeds in federal forests are generally deposited in the U.S. Forest Service general fund, but the NWFP allows for Stewardship Contracts which direct revenues from timber sales to restoration and conservation projects in the same federal forest area. This is a tool on which OFCO is focusing to address road and sediment issues, to add woody debris or diversity of plant species in forest stands, to perform stream restoration where needed, and to ensure timber sales meet conservation goals and do not threaten habitat. Decisions of the Collaborative are made by modified consensus.

September Site Visit to the Queets AMA

by Jill Silver

Jill Silver and Toby Thaler led the OFCO team on a September 2016 OFC site visit to review and evaluate four potential test sites for stewardship contracts in the Queets watershed: two Adaptive Management Area 60–65-year-old stands of hemlock and mixed hemlock and alder, and two 53–60-year-old dense, hemlock stands in Late Successional Reserve.



One of the AMA stands has an old debris flow track in a narrow and very steep tributary, scouring all the woody debris and staircase profile to the road below. This provides an opportunity for restoration with woody debris inputs. The desired outcome for these projects is increased growth of the conifer trees including the diameter, height, crown and limb diameter (the latter required by Marbled Murrelets), more diversity of tree species (adding Sitka spruce, Western redcedar, and deciduous trees to the Western hemlock), more shrub and groundcover diversity on the forest floor, and more standing and down dead wood for nutrients, water retention, and homes for birds, wildlife and invertebrates.

Aquatic habitat protection is particularly important with roads being reopened, and these projects provide opportunity to reduce road impacts through careful planning, and best implementation and monitoring outcomes. Next steps are to work through all implementation and cost issues among the partners, identify and agree to the stewardship projects at each, and develop site-specific prescriptions.

Our work in OFCO often involves dealing with very local forest management issues; we look (for example) at prospective timber sale design, problems with erosion and mass wasting, damaging land-use designations, and the laws and policies that bear on the work of grassroots activists. We grapple with questions of when, and whether, it's best to leave the forest entirely to its own devices to recover from natural or man-made disturbance, and consider how human intervention can improve watercourses or hasten the recovery of a damaged stream bank or hillside.

But now it's clear that we have to keep our eyes on the elephant in the room, the room being the entire globe—climate change—and keep it in mind even as we continue with all the accustomed work forest activists have done for decades. We thought it would be appropriate to take a look at the extent to which public land management agencies, state and federal, have incorporated climate science into their policies, and how much attention has been devoted specifically to the impacts of climate change on the forests and natural systems of the Olympic Peninsula, and the role of the forests in mitigating the impacts of global climate change locally and more widely. We also wondered how local and county governments on the Peninsula are reacting, and the mindset of the people of these communities.

A recent study, "[Climate Change Preparedness Plan for the North Olympic Peninsula](#)," brought together a large group of stakeholders in Clallam and Jefferson counties. It provides some interesting insights and suggests some avenues for our future thinking about climate change and forest protection. Thanks to Cindy Jayne, who co-wrote the study document, for this contribution.

North Olympic Peninsula Climate Action Strategies Gain Support in Clallam County

by Cindy Jayne

The global climate is rapidly changing and these changes will affect the people, ecosystems, economy, and culture of the North Olympic Peninsula (NOP). Scientists and planners agree that the most noticeable impacts on forest and related waters in our area will likely include diminishing snowpack and river flow in summer drought season, shifts in precipitation creating high stream flows and flooding, and extended warm temperatures causing rising river water temperatures, enhanced wildfire risk, decreased soil moisture, and stressed forests through disease and insect outbreaks.

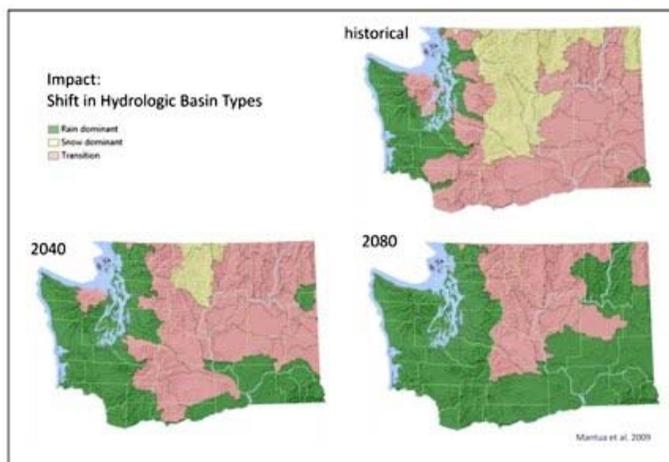


Figure 34: Shifting hydrologic basin types in the PNW under climate change, see reference 123, report.

More than 175 stakeholders from local government and communities, tribes, nonprofit organizations, natural resource managers, and scientists worked to develop a climate change plan of action for Jefferson and Clallam counties, convened by the North Olympic Peninsula Resource Conservation and Development organization. The plan focused on impacts to ecosystems, water supplies and critical infrastructure on the NOP.

The project synthesized the best-available climate change projections with local stakeholder expertise to develop climate change preparation strategies for the NOP. The Project developed a [Preparedness Plan](#) that includes a regional **Vulnerability Assessment** and **Adaptation Plan**. The project utilized the most current scientific research available, including the U.S. [2014 National Climate Assessment](#). State-specific reports helped the project, many developed by the Climate Impacts Group at the University of Washington, such as the recent "[Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation in Washington State: Technical Summaries for Decision Makers](#)."

A compilation of literature on the "[Climate Change Effects and Adaptation Approaches for Ecosystems, Habitats, and Species](#)" completed in 2013 for the North Pacific Landscape Cooperative, analyzed more than 250 documents and conducted more than 100 interviews to assess how climate change is already affecting, and is projected to affect, the species and habitat of the region. The project identified adaptation strategies that are the most targeted and effective actions the region can use to prepare for the impacts of climate change. Natural resources conservation of forests, for wildlife, and

associated waters, cut across the focus of the project. Some of the applicable strategies are:

- Enhance efforts to encourage breeding and planting of drought-tolerant, resilient plant species and utilize climate-sensitive tree species in riparian buffers
- Enhance efforts to restore and develop wildlife corridors
- Add climate impact overlays to existing "Critical Areas"
- Monitor and analyze climate change impacts at salmon stream restoration sites
- Identify and monetize environmental services
- Encourage forestry practices promoting water retention within the watershed
- Map water retention values for ecosystems and manage/enhance upstream watersheds

The results of the Climate Preparedness project were presented to the public and many of the local jurisdictions in both Jefferson and Clallam counties. Clallam County has passed a resolution (27, 2016) calling for its departments to consider adaptation strategies contained in the "Climate Change Preparedness Plan for the North Olympic Peninsula" and ensure that these strategies are reflected in their respective 2017 budgets and incorporated in the Comprehensive Plan and the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan for the county.

That said, there is much more to do to improve the climate resilience of the NOP. The North Olympic Peninsula Resource Conservation and Development organization continues to look for more opportunities and funding to continue work in this area; see www.noprkd.org for more information. Additionally, there are two local grassroots organizations that were part of the preparedness planning and are continuing to look for ways to move the adaptation strategies forward: in Jefferson County, the Local 20/20 [Climate Preparedness group](#), and in Clallam County, [Olympic Climate Action](#). See their websites for more information and how to get involved.

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