



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

November 2019

Happy Holidays!

Another year, and we're here — continuing with your help — to fight the battles that have engaged us for years, even decades. Our heartfelt thanks to you for staying with our small, but mighty, organization as we soldier on.

As you know too well, OFCO — along with colleagues across the land — work under the dark cloud of a national administration that is indifferent, if not openly hostile, to protecting public lands, along with the plants and animals that call them home. Victories and solid successes do not come easily in such an environment. But as we work and hope for favorable policy changes, OFCO continues to stand guard over our cherished Peninsula, pushing the Federal and State agencies to protect our forests, rivers, and waterways. And we won't give up or back down.

Here are a few updates:

- We litigated and won a very important case against Pacific Seafoods (parent company of Coast Seafoods in Quilcene), one of the largest seafood corporations in the world. The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the giant corporation must apply for a Clean Water Act permit for discharging effluents into Quilcene Bay. There is much more to do: the legal case is not over, and we must make sure the permit that is approved by the Department of Ecology protects the bay. The permit may have to be challenged. In the meantime, testing this fall shows the bay continues to suffer and it is now showing dangerously hypoxic conditions.
- Public Lands Commissioner Hilary Franz invited OFCO to join the newly created Solutions Table (operating under state legislation introduced by Rep. Mike Chapman) to find a way to ensure schools and essential services in our communities are funded while protecting forest habitat. At the center of the battle is the Marbled Murrelet, the little seabird listed as "threatened" in 1992.



- Although OFCO successfully litigated back in 1997 for listed species habitat designation under the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), 22 years have elapsed without a finalized plan for Murrelet protection. And the loser has been the little bird; the Murrelet population on the Peninsula has been

decreasing by 3.8 percent annually for the past decade. Meanwhile, DNR has allowed Murrelet and Spotted Owl habitat to be harvested – to the detriment of both species.

- A decision will likely be announced in early December (even as this letter reaches you) allowing an incidental "take" of 38,000 acres of Murrelet habitat, and releasing thousands more acres for harvest. Despite some caveats that would delay timber harvests on some tracts of higher quality Murrelet habitat, the plan is not nearly good enough to stop or slow the Murrelet's decline. OFCO and the Murrelet Coalition are fighting hard and will continue with every advocacy tool possible to win more habitat for Murrelets, funding for essential services, and thriving local economies.
- OFCO continues to work in partnership with the Olympic Forest Collaborative and the U.S. Forest Service, a program designed to open overly dense forests and increase timber harvests with innovative forestry techniques to foster ecological restoration. OFCO won funding and helped establish a monitoring and evaluation protocol for the Collaborative that continues in 2020. Representative Derek Kilmer and the Collaborative hosted a Congressional delegation this fall to showcase our restoration work.

Because of, and despite, the national Administration's efforts to roll back protections on all federal lands, the battles will continue. Our environment has been attacked by office holders and appointees who do not understand, nor perhaps not even care, that our sacred trust as human beings is to protect and restore ecological treasures for future generations. Bear in mind that these lands and waters belong to all of us. Raise your voice in defense of wildlife, waterways, salmon, and the majestic trees that give us life.



Your donation this season will help us continue our protection efforts for the Olympic Peninsula. Please use the enclosed envelope or go to our Donations page on our website (olympicforest.org).

Thank you, and warm holiday wishes,

Connie Gallant
President