

PLAN MAINTENANCE
FISCAL YEAR 2004

Refinement and clarification of requirements for marbled murrelet surveys.

This plan maintenance pertains only to the management of potential marbled murrelet nesting structure within younger stands and only to situations where thinning prescriptions are proposed.

This plan maintenance clarifies and refines ROD/RMP requirements that were intended to protect marbled murrelet nesting habitat from habitat modifications but were not intended to prohibit or discourage habitat modifications that would benefit murrelet conservation. Logic presented by the Level 1 Team clearly indicates that this plan maintenance would have a negligible effect on murrelets. This action encourages the enhancement of habitat immediately surrounding potential nesting structure.

Management direction for marbled murrelet is found on page 48 of the Roseburg District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan. Plan maintenance is appropriate for this action because the action clarifies the intention of current ROD/RMP requirements for the murrelets and the biological information provided by the Level 1 Team indicates that this refinement of requirements will not result in an expansion of the scope of resource uses or restrictions.

Management direction found on page 48 of the Roseburg District ROD/RMP is refined through the addition of the following language:

If the following criteria are met, then the action is not considered a habitat disturbing activity and no surveys for marbled murrelet are required.

I. Characteristics of Potential nesting Structure

A tree with potential structure has the following characteristics:

It occurs within 50 miles (81 km) of the coast (U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service 1997:32) and below 2,925 ft. (900 m) in elevation (Burger 2002);

It is one of four species: Western hemlock, Douglas-fir, Sitka spruce or western red cedar (Nelson & Wilson 2002:24, 44);

It is ≥ 19.1 in. (49 cm) (dbh) in diameter, > 107 ft. (33 m) in height, has at least one platform ≥ 5.9 in. (15 cm) in diameter, nesting substrate (e.g., moss, epiphytes, duff) on that platform, and an access route through the canopy that a murrelet could use to approach and land on the platform (Burger 2002, Nelson & Wilson 2002:24, 27, 42, 97, 100);

And it has a tree branch or foliage, either on the tree with potential structure or on a surrounding tree, that provides protective cover over the platform (Nelson & Wilson 2002:98 & 99);

Any tree that does not meet all of these characteristics would be unlikely to support nesting murrelets.

Because murrelets respond to the landscape-level availability of nesting habitat (Burger 1997, Burger 2002, Cooper *et al.* 2001 and Raphael *et al.* 2002), a tree with potential structure might provide murrelet nesting habitat depending on where it occurs on the landscape.

Increasing distance from the ocean becomes a negative factor in murrelet inland site selection after 12-20 miles (19.5 – 32.5 km) (Anderson 2003, Burger 2002, Humes 2003, U.S. BLM 2003, Willamette Industries 2003 and Wilson 2002).

Habitat with < 6 trees with potential structure within a 5-acre area, and located > 20 miles (32.5 km) inland, has a negligible likelihood of use by nesting murrelets (Anderson 2003, Humes 2003, U.S. BLM 2003, Willamette Industries 2003 and Wilson 2002).

Exclude potential nesting structure within the project area and apply protection measures to ensure that the proposed action would not adversely affect murrelets.

Design the unit prescription, for units with potential structure, in accordance with LSR management standards.

Exclude from projects the removal or damage of potential nesting structure.

Design habitat modifications that occur within a distance equal to one site-potential tree height of potential structure to protect and improve future habitat conditions. Examples include protecting the roots of trees with potential structure, and removing suppressed trees, trees that might damage potential structure during wind storms, and trees that compete with key adjacent trees that are, or will be, providing cover to potential nest platforms. Apply management actions that aid limb development and the development of adjacent cover.

Do not create any opening (*i.e.*, a gap \geq 0.25 acre [0.10 ha] in size) within a distance equal to one site-potential tree height of potential structure.