

Michael Baker, Ph.D.
Forest Practice Biologist; Senior Environmental Scientist
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

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Kristina Wolf, Ph.D.
Senior Environmental Scientist
California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection

Dr. Wolf,

Please accept this brief letter of interest, attached statement of qualifications, and curriculum vitae in application for consideration of my potential service as a member of the Board of Forestry's Effectiveness Monitoring Committee. My interest in serving on the committee arises from my background as a research scientist specializing in applied questions of forest habitat suitability, patterns of resource use, and habitat preferences exhibited by birds and bats relative to forest management history, objectives, and silvicultural treatments.

I value the mission of the Effectiveness Monitoring Committee, in that an adaptive management approach to the continual evolution of Forest Practice Rules and associated regulations resulting from studies designed to evaluate the effectiveness of regulations promoting ecological benefits is both invaluable and necessary. The Effectiveness Monitoring Committee's commitment to the additional values of 'sustainable solutions' and 'public transparency' are integral to the adaptive management process and allow for fully vetted recommendations to the Board of Forestry that incorporate economic, social, and environmentally sustainable forest regeneration through stakeholder input, participation, and scientific collaboration. I appreciate that the goals and objectives of the Effectiveness Monitoring Committee, as enumerated in the committee's charter, provide specific guidelines for committee member participation in a broadly collaborative approach between public servants and stakeholders to advance continual improvement of the Forest Practice Rules and associated regulations in an adaptive manner, based on data pertinent to alignment of the rules with intended outcomes.

I believe that I possess the scientific background, collaborative nature, and willingness required to serve the state, natural resource agencies, and stakeholder public in advancing the laudatory goals and objectives of the Effectiveness Monitoring Committee.

Sincerely,

Michael Baker

I have been involved with applied research directed toward the management of wildlife since 1993 when I assisted with the capture of bats in separate studies of Virginia big-eared (*Corynorhinus townsendii virginianus*) and gray bats (*Myotis grisescens*). I also assisted with cave and rock shelter surveys and bat emergence counts. I gained my first experience with radiotelemetry as part of a team tracking Rafinesque's big-eared bat (*C. rafinesquii rafinesquii*) during foraging bouts in eastern Kentucky in 1995. As a graduate research assistant, I constructed pitfall traps and collected and identified herpetofauna and small mammals on the Daniel Boone National Forest in eastern Kentucky. I assisted in surveys for the copperbelly watersnake (*Nerodia erythrogaster neglecta*) on reclaimed surface mines in southern Indiana. My thesis (1996) and dissertation (2000) work were both applied studies of nongame avian ecology in relation to forest management activities. Through these projects, I have acquired experience with data analyses that result in forest management recommendations directed specifically toward informed and sustainable resource extraction with the continued provision of suitable forest wildlife habitat as an equally important consideration. I have been responsible for the application of experimental design considerations and statistical analyses to questions of forest wildlife response to a variety of forest management activities. Although my most recent areas of management, conservation, and research expertise involve Chiropteran species, I have experience, knowledge, and interests in a wide range of nongame and game wildlife species and can adapt my skills and abilities to a wider range of wildlife management and conservation issues.

Between 2014 and 2025 I have been employed as an Environmental Scientist, before September of 2016, and as a Senior Environmental Scientists (Specialist) for the Forest Practice Administration Program within the Natural Resources Management division of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, performing the duties listed in my attached curriculum vitae. Between 2012 and 2014, I worked as an Associate Environmental Planner (Natural Sciences) for the California Department of Transportation in Oakland, CA. During September of 2010, 2011, & July of 2012, I volunteered some of my vacation time to capture and radiotrack several species of bats on Yellowstone National Park in Montana and Wyoming to begin to determine whether bats migrate away from the Park in the fall or remain there through the winter. In these efforts I served as a collaborator on a small team of bat biologists working to establish an ongoing research project examining a range of bat behaviors on the Park in advance of the potential spread of White-nose Syndrome (WNS) across the western US.

Between April 2008 and January 2012, I was employed as a Conservation Biologist by Bat Conservation International. I started work as the Indiana Myotis Program Coordinator and assisted with the work of the Caves and Mines Program and the WNS Program. My work expanded to include assistance with the Wind Power Program when I was selected to supervise a field crew performing carcass searches on a wind farm in eastern Pennsylvania in late summer/early fall 2009. As part of this assignment, I was responsible for conducting the field portion of the first full-scale acoustic deterrent study at a fully-operational wind farm. I worked closely with the wind farm windsmiths and management, the designers of the acoustic deterrent devices, and the Pennsylvania Game Commission to successfully complete the project on-time and within budget. In August of 2010 my program expanded to become the Eastern Rare Bats Program, focusing on all threatened and endangered bats of the eastern US and those bats of special concern or likely to become species of concern in the near future. In this role I continued to work with BCI colleagues in the Caves and Mines and WNS programs on conservation measures in collaboration with partners from the USFWS and other federal and state agencies. I have been involved in habitat assessments, habitat restoration, workshop instruction, and research that may become invaluable to managers of critical habitats in the near future, including acoustic and GateKeeper beam-break detection of bat entry and exit behaviors at critical caves and other roosts in Kentucky, Indiana, and Arkansas. I have been active in the Western Bat Working Group, Midwest Bat Working Group, and the Southeastern Bat Diversity Network and I was selected as a consulting 'expert' by the US Fish & Wildlife Service for discussions related to the possibility of captive propagation for Indiana myotis (*Myotis sodalis*).

Between April 2007 and April 2008, I was employed by EcoTech Consultants, Inc, where I was responsible for conducting surveys for the federally endangered Indiana myotis in Ohio and Kentucky and scientific research on the use of managed forests by pallid bats (*Antrozous pallidus*) on the Plumas NF in California. Between January 2001 and April 2007, I was employed as a post-doctoral scholar in the Department of Forestry at the University of Kentucky. My primary office-based responsibilities in this position were the planning, logistics, and application of experimental design and statistical analyses to the first Northwest Bat Cooperative research project conducted in Washington (Okanogan-Wenatchee NF & Plum Creek Timber lands), Oregon (Fremont-Winema NF & US Timberlands), and Idaho (Clearwater NF & Boise Cascade lands). Between May and September 2001 through 2006, I have served as the on-site, lead field scientist for this project. In consultation with research scientists, land managers, and representatives of private industry and state and federal agencies, I have selected study areas and capture sites, hired, trained, and supervised field crews, procured permits and equipment, and arranged field housing and transportation. In these endeavors, I have demonstrated the ability to work well with representatives of a wide variety of state and federal agencies and private forest landowners and to effectively supervise the work of others.

I will provide copies of my work published in the *Journal of Wildlife Management*, *Journal of Mammalogy*, *Forest Ecology and Management*, *Wildlife Society Bulletin*, *Acta Chiropterologica*, and *Northwest Science* that demonstrate my knowledge of advanced principles of scientific method, biological techniques, wildlife biology, zoology, botany, statistics, forestry, and ecology on request. In my current position, I have demonstrated the ability to communicate and coordinate effectively with resource professionals and to communicate complicated subject matter effectively in writing. In this capacity, I have developed the ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with biologists from a variety of agencies and organizations, members of the general public and other partners. I am familiar with wildlife research and habitat management techniques and state and federal laws regarding the management of game species and the conservation of threatened and endangered nongame wildlife species. I am proficient in designing and conducting wildlife research projects and believe that this will allow me to be highly effective in providing wildlife ecology and habitat management advice and training to operational units. I have been responsible for the development and maintenance of financial budgets and the resolution of conflicts associated with personnel issues as they have arisen. I have demonstrated skill in directing and organizing wildlife research, management, conservation, and compliance with regulatory requirements. I have been responsible for the establishment of goals and objectives that advanced my research and conservation efforts, which required the identification of problems, evaluation of alternatives, and implementation of effective solutions. I have experience conducting ecological research and conservation projects & habitat assessments in northern Arkansas, southeastern Missouri, southern Indiana, eastern Ohio, central & eastern Kentucky, northwestern Louisiana, central & northern California, eastern Washington, southern Oregon, & northern Idaho.

I believe this application packet contains conclusive evidence that I have experience running complex research projects from inception to publication of results and have worked effectively with individuals of diverse educational and scientific backgrounds. Please contact my current supervisor and other references with any questions regarding my work ethic and knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics pertinent to the position. I will be pleased to arrange for sealed official copies of my doctoral, M.Sc., and B.Sc. transcripts to be forwarded to the appropriate office upon request. In closing, I would like to stress that I have always performed my job duties conscientiously and effectively, regardless of whether they were scientific in nature, as described in detail in this application packet, or primarily labor-intensive, as were my 36 months of Lexington Herald-Leader newspaper delivery, 54 months in the kitchens of Red Lobster Inns, and my 76 months at United Parcel Service. In the event that I am selected for the position, I am certain that my approach to the work and attention to detail will quickly make me an asset to the Effectiveness Monitoring Committee of the California Board of Forestry.

Thank you for your consideration,

Michael Baker