



Kate Brown, Governor



OREGON
WATERSHED
ENHANCEMENT BOARD

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Senator Frederick, Co-chair
Representative McLain, Co-chair
Joint Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Education

Co-chairs Frederick and McLain,

The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board supports continued funding for the Institute for Natural Resources (INR). While we recognize that this is a challenging budget year and tough decisions need to be made, the small amount of funding provided to support the work of the INR provides benefits well beyond the scale of the state's investment.

OWEB and its partners have utilized the expertise of INR in a variety of ways over many years. INR hosts the Oregon Explorer website, which OWEB leverages to serve out data and information about its grant-making. Reports on all of OWEB's over 9,000 grants are housed on that website, along with more than 18,000 records from the Oregon Watershed Restoration Inventory. The tools serving these data provide transparent, accountable, public access to the state's investments in native fish and wildlife habitat and water quality.

In addition, we utilize the staff at INR to support critical work related to sage grouse conservation (SageCon) work in eastern Oregon. INR staff have developed data and information to support sound processes for local communities to better understand the impacts of the decisions they make in sage steppe habitats.

Most recently, INR has provided technical support for our work with the Tide Gate Partnership, which is exploring options to address the challenges caused by failing tide gate infrastructure along Oregon's coast. INR is helping to develop a statewide inventory of tide gates using existing data and incorporating new approaches to identify tide gates where inventories have not been completed. This work will help to better understand the scale of the issue and develop strategies to address tide gate repair and replacement needs up and down the coast.

These are just a few examples of INR's strong partnership in support of watershed health in Oregon. We value their expertise. This unique model is critical to move watershed health issues forward across the state.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,



Meta Loftsgaarden
Executive Director