



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Department of Fish and Wildlife

Office of the Director
4034 Fairview Industrial Drive SE
Salem, OR 97302
(503) 947-6044
FAX (503) 947-6202
odfw.com

April 15, 2019

Senator Lew Frederick, Co-Chair
Representative Susan McLain, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education
900 Court Street NE
Room H-170
Salem, OR 97301



Dear Co-Chairs,

Thank you for your consideration of further funding for the Institute for Natural Resources. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) has partnered with the Institute of Natural Resources (INR) for the purpose of developing further science and information on Oregon's wildlife and their habitats.

Oregon Conservation Strategy

The Oregon Conservation Strategy (OCS) is the state's action plan for protecting and conserving sensitive and nongame species. There are several important services provided by the INR related to management of wildlife information and the OCS that ODFW utilizes on a frequent basis. Those services include Oregon Biodiversity Information Center (ORBIC), Wildlife Viewer, Oregon Explorer and the Wetland Restoration Planning Tool.

ORBIC maintains a statewide compiled database of fish and wildlife observations, which integrates data from various organizations across the state, including federal and state agencies, non-governmental organizations, and universities. ORBIC also models these data into an Element Occurrences (EO) dataset, which portrays the likely occurrences of rare, threatened, and endangered species in any given location statewide. Additionally, ODFW and ORBIC have partnered to produce Oregon Conservation Strategy Habitat maps, which provide the most current and accurate portrayal of the 11 habitats of greatest conservation need statewide. ODFW relies on ORBIC's species and habitats datasets to make informed decisions on species status assessments, species and habitat conservation actions, and land-use permitting and development recommendations on potential wildlife impacts. These species and habitat data are vital resources for ODFW when undergoing statewide natural resource assessments, such as the 2016 Oregon Conservation Strategy Conservation Opportunity Area (COA) revision. Focusing investments in COAs can increase the likelihood of long-term success, maximize effectiveness over larger landscapes, improve funding efficiency, and promote cooperative efforts across ownership boundaries. These data are also incorporated into ODFW's Compass mapping platform, which provides staff, partners, and the general public with easy access to these important sources of data.

ODFW_INR Funding Letter for Ways and Means
Senator Lew Frederick, Co-Chair
Representative Susan McLain, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education
April 15, 2019
Page 2

ODFW staff frequently use species habitat distribution maps developed by ORBIC and displayed in Wildlife Viewer in planning for species surveying and data collection. ODFW also uses various maps, tools, and datasets maintained within the Oregon Explorer program. The Wetland Restoration Planning Tool, hosted within Oregon Explorer, is yet another dataset used within ODFW to highlight important wetland areas and habitats.

Greater Sage-Grouse

INR has been an integral component of the SageCon group working to recover and protect Greater Sage-Grouse in Oregon. Within that capacity, INR has been an important member of the Mitigation Technical Team which helped review and provide technical assistance on the Sage-grouse Mitigation Program's Mitigation Manual and other components of the program.

INR was instrumental in helping the Department conceptualize, organize, develop, and test the Greater Sage-grouse Development Siting Tool (DST). The DST is a web application that's available on the Oregon Explorer website to help project proponents appropriately site development in sage-grouse habitat. It provides a relative impact assessment for project specific data and other customized information relevant to the overall permitting process including; applicable OARS, description of mitigation hierarchy requirements, project considerations, and contact information. The DST is extremely functional and would not have achieved its current quality if it were not for INR's technical support.

INR has had a major hand in developing and testing ODFW's Habitat Quantification Tool (HQT) for assessing development impacts to sage-grouse habitat. Additionally, they have provided technical assistance in drafting and review of the HQT User Guide and Science Rational documents.

West Coast Population of Fisher

Wildfires and forest management change habitats in ways that can threaten at-risk wildlife species and alter the population dynamics and interspecific interactions of the forest carnivore community. Conservation concern for fishers (*Pekania pennanti*), a Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) in California and Oregon, include the combined threats of small population sizes and the potential impacts of landscape-scale disturbance, including uncharacteristically-severe wildfire and post-fire management

INR assisted with developing a project to investigate possible explanations for observed decreases in fisher density in a post-fire landscape in the Klamath-Siskiyou Ecoregion of southern Oregon and northern California. This project will also evaluate the responses of known fisher predators, competitors, and prey species and their influence on fisher density.

INR has partnered with ODFW on identifying sound forest management strategies that will improve outcomes for species of conservation need, help prevent the need to list them, inform the balancing of federal regulations, and support local communities that are

ODFW_INR Funding Letter for Ways and Means
Senator Lew Frederick, Co-Chair
Representative Susan McLain, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education
April 15, 2019
Page 3

reliant on forest industries. Understanding the mechanisms for observed fisher decreases in a post-fire landscape will lead to more informed and defensible forest management practices as wildfire size and total annual area burned continue to increase in western North America.

I understand the Legislature has tough decisions to make in regards to funding programs in the 2019 Legislative Session. I would just like to stress how important for our work that INR, and its staff, services, and products are available to the State of Oregon.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,



Shannon Hurn
Deputy Director for Fish and Wildlife Programs



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Department of Fish and Wildlife

Office of the Director
4034 Fairview Industrial Drive SE
Salem, OR 97302
(503) 947-6044
FAX (503) 947-6202
odfw.com

April 18, 2018

Senator Lew Frederick, Co-Chair
Representative Susan McLain, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education
900 Court Street NE
Room H-170
Salem, OR 97301



Dear Co-Chairs,

Thank you for your consideration of future funding for the Oregon Climate Change Research Institute. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) has found the Institute to be a valuable and unique partner in the state of Oregon and we appreciate the opportunity to share this information with you.

OCCRI consistently produces useful climate-related products that inform ODFW and the other state agencies' plans and programs. Having this consistent information improves the incorporation of climate information across the states' portfolio of work and reduces the duplication of effort that could occur from every agency pursuing this information independently. Staff at OCCRI also serve a valuable role as consultants to assist ODFW and other agencies with acquiring existing information that is relevant to our needs. For example, OCCRI was an important partner in the 2016 update of the Oregon Conservation Strategy, which identifies climate change as a Key Conservation Issue for Oregon's species of greatest conservation need.

Having most of Oregon's climate change research consolidated within OCCRI creates a natural hub for partnership, like hosting NOAA's Climate Impacts Research Consortium. Having this hub within Oregon State University also allows the state agencies to access partners in academia beyond OCCRI to produce cross-sector research on the impacts of climate change and potential responses from state agencies. This has allowed Oregon to be an impressive leader in the Northwest and nationally for development of reports such as the National Climate Assessment.

ODFW does see some opportunities to increase the benefits of OCCRI for the state of Oregon. The Institute has a very small staff that attempts to respond to a large volume of science needs identified by numerous partners across the state and the northwest. This can sometimes leave important opportunities overlooked or unfunded. ODFW sees an opportunity to improve this situation by having some formal guidance or a steering committee to identify research priorities for the OCCRI. Service could be improved by focusing on the co-production of science and information products with Oregon's state agencies. As the state agencies work together to identify state-wide climate adaptation goals and opportunities, it would be invaluable to have OCCRI as a formal convener and

ODFW OCCRI Funding Letter for Ways and Means
Senator Lew Frederick, Co-Chair
Representative Susan McLain, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education
April 18, 2019
Page 2

coordinator of identifying and completing the research needed to inform planning and implementation of adaptation actions.

I understand that the Legislature has tough decisions to make in regards to funding programs in the 2019 Legislative Session. I appreciate your consideration of the important work done by the Oregon Climate Change Research Institute. It is valuable for its staff, services, and products to remain available to the State of Oregon.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,



Shannon Hurn
Deputy Director for Fish and Wildlife Programs