



**Oregon State
University**

**Geography and Geospatial Science
College of Earth, Ocean, and Atmospheric Sciences**
Oregon State University
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Corvallis, Oregon 97331
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4/22/21

**Letter in support of the Institute for Natural Resources
Submitted to the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education**

Co-chairs Frederick and McLain,

I am writing to you in support of the Institute for Natural Resources (INR). INR, its staff, services, and products are a cornerstone of natural resource management in Oregon. It is essential that its core activities and services continue to be financially supported by the state of Oregon.

My name is Dr. Michael Harte and I am a Professor in the College of Earth, Ocean, and Atmospheric Sciences at Oregon State University in Corvallis. I am an economist and physical geographer by training. As well as working in academia, I have worked around the world for primary industry, environmental non-governmental organizations and also as a senior manager in government agencies. I have worked with INR for 15 years on outreach, research and educational initiatives and have found their assistance, productivity, quality and value to be unparalleled. In 2017, I participated as a member of an external team reviewing INR's performance over the prior decade.

I and many others throughout the State and USA are impressed by the breadth and depth of expertise, contributions to science and policy, public engagement, education, and leadership in regional natural resource and water issues demonstrated by INR. Stakeholders regularly laud INR's responsiveness, professionalism, and product quality—contracts were completed on time and on budget—and there is a broad perception of unbiased, high-value or value-added products produced by INR.

INR provides a critical links between Oregon's public universities, state agencies, industry and natural resource stakeholders. It currently supports a network of 30 researchers and early career scientists across a range of institutions and agencies. It has supported 100s more over its existence. Its closure, because of defunding, with the loss of this expertise from Oregon, would be a tragedy for the state. State funding, albeit reduced in these fiscal circumstances, will still be spent on obtaining natural resources-related services and products. If INR ceases to operate there is huge risk to Oregon's environment, state agencies and stakeholders from biased, lower quality and poor value scientific and technical products and services.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Michael Harte (PhD)
Professor
Geography and Geospatial Science
College of Earth, Ocean, and Atmospheric Sciences
Oregon State University



April 30, 2021

RE: Letter in support of the Institute for Natural Resources Submitted to the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education

Dear Senator Frederick and Representative McLain:

My name is Lisa DeBruyckere, and I am President of Creative Resource Strategies, LLC, an Oregon certified woman-owned business that has been providing consulting services to natural resource organizations in the western states and Canada since 2002.

I am writing to you today to share my strong support for the role the Institute for Natural Resources plays in advancing science-based natural resource information for the state of Oregon.

My company (www.createstrat.com) has provided services to federal, state, and local governments, nonprofit organizations, academic institutions, and tribal sovereign nations to advance science-based conservation that enhances the quality of life for all Oregonians. The Institute for Natural Resources has played a pivotal role advancing science and information on numerous important projects. For example:

- They manage *iMapInvasives*, the state's invasive species database, which tracks the existence and management of invasive species statewide. This tool has allowed land managers to share invasive species across jurisdictions, and has advanced the state's ability to manage invasive species in an adaptive management context. The *iMapInvasives* database was integral to the success of many initiatives of the Oregon Invasive Species Council during my 7-year tenure as their contract coordinator.
- INR administers the Historical Vegetation Mapping Project, which allows land managers to understand the composition of past landscapes to better understand our changing ecosystems. This project has been integral to a variety of projects I have worked on with natural resource partners.

- INR administers the Integrated Landscape Management Project, which creates science and knowledge delivery modules to advanced understanding of watershed-level prioritization of fuel treatments, integral to addressing stressors associated with climate change, such as water supply and drought conditions. Integrating economics with science in a systematic way allows land managers to operate using an optimized decision support system, which results in better, timely, strategic management decisions.

INR has worked on many other projects and databases other than the three I have listed above. Their staff are helpful and knowledgeable, and are highly regarded among the western states and provinces.

I strongly encourage you to support continued funding of the Institute for Natural Resources to ensure that sound science is available to inform the challenging management issues land management and agencies face, particularly in light of emerging climate change stressors and other threats to Oregon.

Thank you for your continued service to the citizens of Oregon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lisa A. DeBruyckere". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized initial "L" and "D".

Lisa A. DeBruyckere, President
Creative Resource Strategies, LLC 6159
Rosemeadow Lane NE Salem, OR 97317
(503) 371-5939; cell (503) 704-2884

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April 14, 2021

Honorable Senator Lew Frederick, Education Subcommittee Co-Chair
Honorable Representative Susan McClain, Education Subcommittee Co-Chair
Oregon State Legislature, Joint Interim Committee on Ways & Means
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chairs:

I write to you in support of the Institute for Natural Resources (INR). It is important for all of Oregon that INR, via its staff, services, and products, continues to be supported by the State of Oregon.

I am the current Chair of the Oregon Geographic Information Council (OGIC). The legislature formed OGIC and charged it with promoting geospatial data sharing across all Oregon public bodies. Since 2000, the Council has worked closely with the Institute for Natural Resources to ensure that geospatial Framework data in the public domain is accessible to both the public and to all government agencies State-wide so they can achieve their missions for all Oregonians.

The Institute for Natural Resources maintains and administers the Oregon Spatial Data Library, a public facing web portal for geospatial data. That Library receives over 150 million hits annually. The Library is a vital part of the mission of the Oregon Geographic Information Council, as specified in ORS 276A.506. Furthermore, the Spatial Data Library is a vital component of the ongoing COVID-19 response work being performed by Oregon Emergency Management and the Oregon Health Authority. Support for this global emergency and all other emergencies, large and small, is a critical reason we all need INR and the Oregon Spatial Data Library to continue. As such, the Council very strongly supports the Institute receiving the funding it needs to continue its work.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeff Frkonja".

Jeff Frkonja
Metro Research Center Director
Chair, Oregon Geographic Information Council

File Code: 2670
Date: April 21, 2021

Senator Lew Fredrick, Co-Chair
Representative Susan McLain, Co-Chair
Subcommittee on Education, Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Oregon Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Senator Fredrick and Representative McLain:

The Institute for Natural Resources (INR) and Oregon Biodiversity Information Center (ORBIC) provide valuable support to the Forest Service in Region 6. INR/ORBIC are resources the Interagency Special Status and Sensitive Species Program (ISSSSP) is reliant on for reliable and relevant rare flora and fauna species status and information on rarity, threats, and trends (habitat/population). The information allows our agency to efficiently and confidently build the Regional Forester Sensitive species list, knowing conservation is provided to the most vulnerable species in Oregon. Data services is another key role INR/ORBIC provides to the Region 6. The data shared from the Forest Service to ORBIC is integrated into their rare species database (Biotics) along with data from other federal and state partners. This data is accessible to the national forest biologists and botanists and utilized to inform proposed land management actions. INR's expertise has been utilized to develop species habitat models; these models provide efficiencies to Forest Service biologists when project planning, determining survey needs, and assessing project effects (which all contributes to environmental decision-making). The value that INR/ORBIC provide to the Forest Service cannot be filled by any other agency or organization. Their data expertise, species expertise, and species status assessment expertise are vital to Region 6 of the Forest Service and our natural resource management needs.

Sincerely,

John Chatel

JOHN CHATEL

Regional Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species Program Manager

cc:



College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Dean's Office

Post Office Box 751

Portland, Oregon 97207-0751



April 29, 2021

Sen. Lew Frederick, Co-Chair
Rep. Susan McLain, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Subcommittee on Education
900 Court St. NE, H-178
Salem, OR, 97301

RE: Support for Institute for Natural Resources

Dear Co-Chairs,

I am writing to you in support of the Institute for Natural Resources, a joint project between Portland State University and Oregon State University.

The Institute for Natural Resource's goal is to advance the use of centralized, science-based natural resource information to benefit Oregon and the Pacific Northwest. They conduct research; manage, analyze, and interpret data; provide technical assistance and analysis; and link science to natural resource decision making. In this time of emerging climate threats and imperiled biodiversity, their work is more important than ever.

Although most of INR's work is funded by agreements with state and federal partners, some amount of stable state funding is required for program administration. Without legislative support, continued existence of INR will depend on the ability of the universities to provide resources. In past years, legislative funds have been used to support the Director's salary, to hire students, and as a required match for federal funds. These state funds allow INR to leverage federal dollars to continue their important work.

At Portland State University, the Institute for Natural Resources is housed in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, where they provide unique work, research, and mentoring opportunities for students and early career professionals interested in careers in natural resource management. Their close engagement furthers student persistence and success.

INR provides Oregon an exceptional value. It serves as a one-stop information clearing house, efficiently making decision-ready natural resource information available to state and federal partners. INR is able to provide these services to state agencies at a lower cost than if individual agencies maintained the information themselves.

I strongly encourage you to support continued funding of the Institute for Natural Resources and the important work they do to aid informed natural resource decision making.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Todd Rosenstiel".

Todd Rosenstiel, Dean, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

April 28, 2021

Written testimony in support of the Institute for Natural Resources

Senator Lew Frederick Co-Chair
Representative Susan McLain, Co-Chair
Education Subcommittee of the Joint Committee on Ways & Means:

The Oregon Invasive Species Council (OISC) is a coordinating group of state and public agencies, tribes, scientists, land managers, industry leaders, educators, and members of the public who lead the effort to protect Oregon from invasive species. Our mission is to protect Oregon's natural resources and economy by planning and leading a coordinated and comprehensive effort. **Our mission requires collaborative, cross-agency participation including educational institutions that implement important invasive species prevention and early detection programs for the state.** Invasive species have direct impacts on our food and water systems and infrastructure. They also can pose serious threats to many different economic sectors such as trade, forestry, agriculture, water resources, outdoor recreation, and tourism, to name a few.

On behalf of the OISC, I am writing to express strong support for the Institute for Natural Resources (INR). The INR provides direct support for the [Oregon Invasive Species Online Hotline](#) by collecting data on invasive species sightings and coordinating follow-up by experts. **The actions implemented by the INR address key Early Detection & Rapid Response strategies**, as outlined in [Oregon's Statewide Strategic Plan for Invasive Species](#). INR works diligently to maintain the state's online reporting system, support invasive species practitioners across Oregon, and coordinate invasive species and conservation information nationally. **Without the INR playing this role in Oregon's collaborative invasive species prevention network, the state of Oregon will become even more vulnerable to the unrelenting threat that invasive species pose to our natural resources and economy.**

After prevention, early detection is our next line of defense against the establishment of invasive species. **Importantly, management of invasive species is not only most effective but also orders of magnitude less**



expensive when invasions are prevented or detected early and action plans immediately implemented. Therefore, it is important to Oregon's natural resources and fiscally wise to develop and maintain programs for pest and weed detection by both agency experts and by community members. INR's system enables the input from community members and thus is a vital part of detection and rapid response.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,

Catherine E de Rivera

*Catherine de Rivera, 2020 Chair
Oregon Invasive Species Council*



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Department of Forestry
State Forester's Office
2600 State St.
Salem, OR, 97310
503-945-7200
www.oregon.gov/ODF

April 15, 2021

Sen. Lew Frederick, Co-Chair
Rep. Susan McLain, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Subcommittee on Education
900 Court St. NE, H-178
Salem, OR, 97301

Re: Support for OSU Institute for Natural Resources and Oregon Explorer

Dear Co-Chairs,

The Oregon State University Institute for Natural Resources (INR) and the Oregon Explorer program are essential services that help the Oregon Department of Forestry and the research community conduct natural resource education and outreach. We have partnered with INR for many years to help deliver wildfire risk data and other natural resource educational resources to Oregonians through tools like the Oregon Wildfire Risk Explorer.

Over the past four years, in partnership with the Washington office of the U.S. Forest Service, ODF and INR updated the Oregon Wildfire Risk Explorer with the most current wildfire risk assessment available for the Pacific Northwest (Washington and Oregon) – the *2018 PNW Quantitative Wildfire Risk Assessment*. INR developed the mapping interface, data download capability, links to relevant research, and custom interpretive and summary reports for homeowners, community groups, and county and state emergency planning personnel.

The interpretive summary report from the Explorer support planning efforts in county offices that do not have sophisticated mapping or wildfire risk interpretation capabilities. Thanks to INR's work, data and summary reports can be localized and placed directly into county and state Community Wildfire Protection Plans and Natural Hazard Mitigation Plans. The interpretive summary report for homeowners provides an estimate of their property's wildfire risk and provides valuable information about wildfire in their local area. The report also provides homeowners with a guide for creating fire-safe landscapes around their homes and community, including contact information for their local fire officials for more information and support.

Wildfire risk assessments are updated every several years as fire occurrence, vegetation, and weather conditions change. We intend to continue working with INR to update the Oregon

Wildfire Risk Explorer as new risk assessment data become available. Continued funding of both INR and the Oregon Explorer will help improve the life, health, and safety of Oregonians by supporting the critical partnership between the research community and fire management and analysis practitioners in the region. The work we do with INR allows for the delivery of the most current science in an accessible, user-specific format that helps homeowners and communities protect themselves and supports county and state decision-making and risk mitigation planning around wildfire.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Doug Grafe".

Doug Grafe

Chief, Fire Protection Division