

Testimony to the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education

Senator Sollman, Representative Ruiz, and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education, my name is Lisa DeBruyckere, and I'm President of Creative Resource Strategies, LLC, a small woman-owned consulting business certified by the State of Oregon. My business has been in existence for 23 years providing facilitation, strategic planning, outreach, and technical analyses to federal, state, and local natural resource agencies, nonprofits, and others throughout, primarily in the western states and Canadian provinces.

I'm here today to testify in support of Oregon State University's Institute for Natural Resources. The State of Oregon is fortunate to have an entity like INR - INR supports science-based information development and sharing to inform management and policy decisions at a variety of scales, from community to watershed to ecoregion to statewide to Pacific Northwest – and they do it with a dedicated, talented, experienced, service-friendly staff housed at Oregon State and Portland State Universities.

INR is a non-partisan organization – their footprint reaches the rangelands of eastern Oregon and Washington to the temperate coastal forests west of the Cascades to our urban and suburban areas.

I want to share with you a few examples of the value of the work INR provides as a result of my direct experience working with INR and its staff. The first role I want to discuss is their role as an **impartial convener**:

- INR brings people together to navigate difficult and challenging conservation issues, and produce results-oriented actions. A few examples of their role as conveners include:
 - the Mid-Coast Water Resource Planning Project, which resulted in the development of a prioritized action plan to help Oregon mid-coastal communities address water quality and quantity issues.
 - the Natural and Working Lands project, completed for the Oregon Global Warming Commission, with the purpose of setting goals for carbon capture and storage on Oregon's natural and working lands – all working lands, from the sagebrush and rangelands of SE Oregon to Cascade ecosystems to state and private forestland. This project required establishing and working with an advisory committee, developing a net carbon capture inventory methodology, developing climate-smart management practices, considering workforce and training needs for Oregon, and identifying community impact metrics.
 - Serving as the Housing Agency for the state's Independent Research and Science Team (IRST), which was established by the Oregon legislature to assist the Board of Forestry in adaptive management decisions. INR facilitates meetings of the IRST, serves as a liaison between the IRST and the Oregon Department of Forestry's Adaptive Management Committee, and helps to ensure the IRST meets both deliverable deadlines and state requirements for public meetings. The outcomes of the IRST help to provide information used by the Oregon Department of Forestry to ultimately inform forest management and policy outcomes.
- The 2nd INR role I wanted to highlight is the critical role they play in **developing user-friendly online tools** to share the outcomes of their work with Oregonians, practitioners, and policy makers.
 - One example is their management of the Oregon Biodiversity Information Center. A dataset of vertebrate animals in the Cener was used to identify which fish and amphibian species were proposed for coverage in the Habitat Conservation Plan for the Oregon Private Forest Accord.
 - Another example is *iMapInvasives*, a GIS-based reporting and querying tool that provides information on invasive species to land managers, planners, and people that prevent, control, and manage invasive species. Oregon uses this tool to help in early detection, rapid response efforts,

which is critical to responding quickly to new invasions, saving the state millions in annual future management costs.

INR plays a critical role for Oregon collaborating with data producers and data users to compile, integrate, and interpret data, and serve that data and information in a variety of formats, from datasets and maps to tools and databases.

- The 3rd INR role I want to highlight is **implementation of landscape-ecosystem level work**.
 - INR administers landscape assessment and monitoring projects, which creates science and knowledge delivery modules to advance 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 creates a strong decision support system for land managers to produce better, timely, strategic management decisions.
 - INR's Assessment, Inventory and Monitoring Program (also called AIM) provides information on the status and trends of public rangelands, including the production of threat-based ecostate maps that characterize rangeland vegetation condition in Oregon.
 - INR's NW Forest Plan Watershed Assessment resulted in the creation of a 25-year assessment of watershed conditions in the 24 million acre NW Forest Plan area.

In summary, INR plays critical roles for the State of Oregon as an impartial convener, developer of science-based user-friendly online tools, and implementer of landscape-level ecosystem work, all of which advance understanding and stewardship of our natural resources.

I want to express my strong support for continuing state funding for OSU's Institute for Natural Resources because of the unique, non-partisan, neutral, approach the organization and its experts take to delivering science-based, critical tools, products and services to Oregon entities and those in the Pacific Northwest.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you today and thank you for your service to the State of Oregon.

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