



Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds About the IMST

History

The Independent Multidisciplinary Science Team (IMST) was established by the 1997 Oregon Legislature via Senate Bill 924, signed by Governor John Kitzhaber on March 25, 1997 as Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) 541.914 [formerly 541.409].

The Governor, the Senate President, and the Speaker of the House jointly selected the 7-member Team October 10, 1997 in accordance with Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) 541.914 [formerly 541.409]. The establishment of the Team reflected the 1997 agreement between Oregon and the National Marine Fisheries Service concerning coho salmon. After the 1997 agreement was terminated, Governor Kitzhaber issued Executive Order 99-01, which expanded the scope of the Oregon Plan and specified the continued role of IMST in the recovery of wild salmonids in Oregon. During the 2001 Oregon Legislative Assembly, additional direction was given to the Oregon Plan and IMST through Senate Bill 945 which was signed into law and amended ORS 541.920 [formerly 541.365] and 541.898 [formerly 541.405].

The IMST was not funded for the 2015-2017 biennium and is inactive because of the lack of funding and appointment of new Team members. With the passage of Senate Bill 202, the IMST will be abolished as of January 1, 2017.

Charter and Operations

The IMST operated under statute and guidance of the appointing authorities. IMST reported directly to the Governor's Natural Resource Office and the Subcommittee on Water of the House Agriculture and Natural Resource Committee (see Oregon's Legislative Committees). See Background Documents for more information on IMST operations and guiding principles.

Conceptual Scientific Framework

The IMST developed a conceptual scientific framework for the recovery of depressed stocks of wild salmonids in Oregon, first in relation to Oregon's forest practices and then covering all land uses and fish management. Although not testable in a practical sense, IMST believed this conceptual framework was consistent with generally accepted knowledge and scientific theory.

Reports and Reviews

The primary means of communicating results of the IMST's work to Oregon's Governor, Legislature, state agencies, and the public was through written technical reports and reviews. In technical reports, the IMST assessed the best available science as it pertained to salmonid and watershed recovery and the management of natural resources. IMST reports were addressed to Oregon's Governor, Senate President, and Speaker of the House. Reviews were addressed to the requesting agency or authority.

Recommendations and Agency Responses

Based on its assessment of science, the IMST made recommendations to state agencies or entities in Oregon. Recommendations can be found at the end of each technical report and in several reviews. IMST recommendations were directed to State agencies or entities that had the ability to implement or to affect changes in management or regulation that were needed for implementation.

State agencies were expected to respond to IMST recommendations within six months after a report was issued. ORS 541.914 [formerly 541.409] states, "If the Independent Multidisciplinary Science Team submits suggestions to an agency responsible for implementing a portion of the Oregon Plan, the agency shall respond to the Team explaining how the agency intends to implement the suggestion or why the agency does not implement the suggestion."

Once agency responses were received, the IMST reviewed the scientific adequacy of each response and if further action or consideration by the agency was warranted. The IMST's review of responses was forwarded to the Governor and the State Legislature.

When formulating recommendations, IMST took into account that changes in laws, regulation, or funding situations might be needed. IMST assumed that if an agency agreed that a recommendation was technically sound and would aid the recovery of salmonid stocks and watersheds, the agency would identify and work toward eliminating impediments to implementation, developing time frames and goals needed to meet the intent of the recommendation. If an agency already had ongoing activities that addressed IMST recommendations, such activities would be highlighted in their responses to IMST.