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# INDEPENDENT MULTIDISCIPLINARY SCIENCE TEAM (IMST)

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## FACTS

**Date Started:** 1997

**Legislation:**

Senate Bill 924, signed on  
3/25/1997 as ORS 541.914

**Products/Deliverables:**

- Formally requested reviews by Oregon Plan partners
- Independent reviews initiated by IMST
- Independent technical/scientific syntheses (projects)
- Recommendations requiring formal responses
- Technical workshops and workshop reports on topical issues
- Advice/clarification on technical issues (primarily written) on matters relevant to the Oregon Plan
- Briefings to Governor's Office and state legislative committees
- Scientific literature/publication database

## MISSION

The IMST is an impartial scientific review panel charged with advising the State on matters of science related to fish recovery, water quality improvements, and enhancing watershed health.

The IMST provides independent, scientific analysis and evaluation of state actions and policies under the Oregon Plan.

The Legislature and Governor's Office charged the Team to scientifically evaluate the Oregon Plan's contributions to species recovery and watershed rehabilitation.

## BENEFITS AND USE OF FINDINGS

Enhanced credibility of the Oregon Plan through recognition that actions taken under it are based on best available science.

Improved design, implementation, and monitoring of actions by Oregon Plan partners to achieve specific outcomes related to Plan goals.

Increased exposure to and understanding of relevant science on the part of salmonid and watershed restoration communities.

State agencies are expected to respond to IMST recommendations within 6 months after a report is issued.

If the IMST submits suggestions to an agency responsible for implementing a portion of the Oregon Plan, the agency shall respond to the Team explaining how it intends to implement the suggestion or why it does not. The IMST reviews the scientific adequacy of responses and whether further action by the agency is warranted. The IMST's review of responses are forwarded to the Governor and State Legislature.

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## SUBJECT AREAS

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Science related to fisheries, fish recovery, artificial salmonid propagation, stream ecology, water quality improvements, enhancing watershed health, forestry, range, and agricultural management.

## COMMITTEE

The seven members of the IMST are scientists from universities, federal agencies, or the private sector. The Governor, Senate President, and House Speaker (appointing authority) jointly appoint IMST members for 4-year terms under provisions of ORS 541.914. The appointing authority must unanimously agree on each appointment. Subsequent legislation, SB 945 (2002), established a system for staggered reappointments and new appointments. IMST members serve until completion of their terms unless they resign or are removed by the appointing authority.

All real and potential conflicts of interest regarding an IMST project must be declared by respective IMST members. The IMST Charter stipulates that the IMST could recommend removal of a member for cause. This requires a majority vote taken at a meeting of the IMST. Cause for recommending removal is for extraordinary reasons, e.g. unwillingness or inability to function with the IMST, conduct that seriously detracted from the Team's ability to fulfill its responsibilities, or a continuing conflict of interest. In the event that the IMST recommends removal of a member, the Chair would also request that the appointing authority name a replacement.

## OVERSIGHT

ORS 541.409 states that the IMST is to be "governed by generally accepted guidelines and practices governing the activities of independent science boards such as the National Academy of Sciences" (NAS). The IMST adopted many but not all NAS practices. Like the NAS, the IMST does not release draft documents until they are finalized so that: 1) facts are current and accurately represented; 2) the IMST agrees on the content including minority opinions; and 3) draft language is not misinterpreted. Unlike the NAS, the IMST discusses its work in public meetings rather than in private.

A subcommittee is formed with one IMST member assigned lead responsibility for management of each product selected for consideration. This includes development and implementation of a plan for completing the product and reporting progress at IMST meetings. Members of the public may attend all public IMST meetings and workshops, and may comment orally at the meetings during designated times or in writing anytime to the IMST. All IMST products are available to the public.

The IMST maintains a Memorandum of Agreement with the host institution (OSU) to provide institutional space and computer support for the Team's technical and administrative support staff.

## FUNDING SOURCES

Oregon State Legislature  
appropriation, renewed biannually

### **Q: What "triggers" a review?**

*A: Independent products on the scientific basis for management of resources relative to the Oregon Plan are identified and initiated by the IMST itself. Review products are initiated when the IMST agrees to review the science of ongoing or proposed programs and activities that could influence accomplishing the Oregon Plan mission. The Governor's Office, state legislature and agencies regularly make requests for IMST review of draft documents and the technical/scientific basis for proposed policies. Other groups (e.g., watershed councils, natural resource organizations) may also request IMST reviews.*

### **Q: How long does it take a product to be completed?**

*A: Timelines vary according to the product and agreement with review or product requestor.*

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