



Institute for Natural Resources

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This document describes the 2nd half of the 17 July 2025 meeting outcomes as the video recording of that portion of the meeting is not available.

Request for proposal and review process and template RFP– IRST members discussed the RFP process development for the roads-stream connectivity and eastern Oregon steep slopes research agenda. They reviewed both the steps in the adaptive management process and the research agenda rules (629-603-0200), which specify the multi-research agenda.

The AMPC research agenda includes Priority 1, the road-stream hydrologic connectivity baseline assessment and sediment modeling, which is estimated to take 48-50 months to complete, and the Eastern Oregon steep slopes modified rapid systematic map, estimated to take 9-10 months to complete.

The third research project, amphibians (and potentially others) have yet-to-be determined milestones and project timeline estimates.

| PROJECT | PRIORITY | PROJECT COMPONENTS | BUDGET/YEAR | 2025-2027 BIENNIAL BUDGET | TOTAL BUDGET |
|-------------------------------------|----------|--|---------------|---------------------------|---------------|
| Road-Stream Hydrologic Connectivity | FIRST | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Pre-survey Options 1 & 2 save time and money by using geospatial data to identify optimal field work for the study; 2) Sample stratification based on differences in ownership (large vs. small landowner) and geography (eastern vs. western Oregon); 3) Baseline assessment of road-stream hydrologic connectivity soon after the start of the new Forest Practices Act (FPA) rules; and 4) Sediment modeling to assess trends in sediment delivery from roads to streams. | \$1.4 million | \$2.7 million | \$5.4 million |
| Eastern Oregon Steep Slopes | SECOND | <p>The AMPC modified the original proposal by IRST in two ways:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Include a second reviewer to minimize bias; and 2) Extract data from the relevant studies and provide those data in a database for potential future analysis. | \$80,000 | \$80,000 | \$80,000 |
| Amphibians/Other | | | TBD | TBD | TBD |

IRST members the top 2 priorities and their core components (as determined by AMPC), then discussed the need for IRST to develop a workplan to implement the research agenda by November 1 of odd-numbered years.

IRST members provided input to the annual workplan structure, noting the workplan should contain:

- Anything included in previous workplan that is not represented here and should be
- Objectives (e.g., implement research agenda, disburse RFPs, collaboration with AMPC on research questions)
- Meeting schedule (meet monthly)
- Tasks/milestones (e.g., posting an RFP – and other key elements of the RFP process, turning in amphibians scoping proposal, succession planning) by quarter
 - When / What / Who
 - Outside interactions
 - Build off Roadmap
- Contingencies / Uncertainties
 - Possible additional AMPC / BoF requests
 - What would happen if we can't meet our deadlines because of funding and/or budget uncertainties in other programs - contingency that discusses how we would pull back if funding were reduced or we are not able to fully implement flexibility (e.g., reduce sample size)
 - Potentially effectiveness monitoring, post-harvest rulemaking engagement

IRST members then discussed the RFP process and specific considerations, noting both packages would be competitive, as required:

Roads RFP - IRST members stated that the roads RFP should ask respondents to respond to a research proposal versus a scope of work, and that it needs to start with clear questions – the IRST wants interpreted information that answers the questions on the table.

IRST members stated they did not want to divvy up the roads package, awarding elements to different research teams, because it could create inconsistencies. They noted the primary contractor could subcontract to do some GIS work, but that it would create challenges for the IRST to pick and choose elements of numerous proposals. Some RFP respondents may not have the expertise to do the core research components, which may reduce the pool of potential applicants. Members discussed the potential to break up the RFP into 2 RFPs (one for stages 1-3, and the other for stage 4), noting if someone could do all 4, in stages, the IRST could accept responses as 1 single proposal, however, there was a differing perspective that noted the IRST would not want to separate 4 from the other steps. Because ODF is likely the holder of the data for #1, the IRST would like to ask them if they can provide that deliverable, and if so, by when. When the IRST has an answer from ODF on whether or not they can do step #1 (GIS analysis), the IRST could decide next steps. Members discussed needing to know what approach is reasonable before an RFP is advertised, i.e., is the road layer sufficient to allow it to be the basis for sampling?

Action item: Sean will send a request to ODF, asking if it is possible to complete the GIS analysis, and if so, by when. If ODF can do the work, then the IRST will issue an RFP to answer 2-4. If ODF cannot do the analysis, the IRST may wish to consider an RFP that is strictly for GIS analysis, then once the IRST receives that deliverable, it would advertise a 2nd RFP for deliverables 2-4.

Action item: IRST will restructure table with timelines and produce a decision tree graphic.

There was discussion about the timeline for #1 (Pre-survey options). It is estimated ODF would need 3-6 months to complete the work (if they can do it). The other piece of #1 is estimated to be a 13-month project completed by the university or a contractor, and would involve how to use GIS to get at some attributes.

Members discussed the rubric for reviewing submitted proposals and made 1 change: 1. Specific Project Criteria, d) Proposed project is **feasibly and** technically sound. They also noted that project team qualifications would differ based on project-specific criteria.

IRST members discussed criteria to use:

- Project timeline is achievable.
- Do we want something about adequate QA/QC of field effort?
- Apply different weights to different criteria (should be RFP-specific)
- Like quantitative scale in addition to narrative characterization – gives solid foundation for comparing across proposals
- Can INR develop a straw man scoring system, or can we designate an IRST subgroup for this?

Members discuss anonymity issues:

- During initial stage, is submitter going to be blinded? Rule states that until 2028, authors cannot be anonymous, even the reviewers (there are issues associated with knowing and no knowing authors).
- Rule states: *A peer review process that is transparent and addresses both study designs and study reports. The IRST shall not grant anonymity to authors, handling editors, or peer-reviewers before January 1, 2028. After January 1, 2028, the IRST may modify the anonymity requirements to peer reviewers by a substantial decision of the IRST;*
- Could we do it in a staged process – initial review blinded, but then evaluate based on experience, who, etc.?
- Peer reviewers would be listed on INRs website as “reviewers of proposals.” Comments would not be directly associated with an individual reviewer.
- How will submitter recruit field workers? A key question. Gets at QA/QC.

Members reviewed their notes from the previous meeting, and modified some of the language for the role of the IRST:

At least one member of the IRST participating in each review would be a “project lead” – go-to for steep slopes (e.g., Ellen would be the lead), etc. IRST members are most familiar with AMPC intent, which would serve the overall process. All IRST members would ~~have opportunity~~ **be encouraged** to read/review proposals. **Two potential levels of review – read/review and detailed review with ranking.** It was noted that more detailed, expensive projects may have more reviewers. Ranking, weighting, and reconciliation among reviewers – not just the focus on the numbers. Coordination and expense for reviewers is not trivial, and getting good reviewers is difficult. It was suggested the IRST build nominal honoraria into budgets.

Some context for how the IRST is going to be working with successful candidates should be included as part of the RFP.

Action item: INR will draft a rubric template.

Eastern Oregon steep slopes RFP – IRST members noted this proposal seems designed for a scope of work because the framework is narrow and there isn't a compelling opportunity for research discovery or new science generation, and \$80,000 is not a lot of funding. Front-end work by the IRST would help to ensure it receives the deliverable it is seeking, and members cautioned about not wanting to make the RFP seem like a pilot project with more work to be done in the future.

Public Comment – There was no public comment.