

## **STAFF REPORT**

Agenda Item No.:	8
Work Plan:	Forest Resources Division
Topic:	Implementing Legislative Direction
Presentation Title:	Update on the Adaptive Management Program
Date of Presentation:	January 8, 2025
Contact Information:	Josh Barnard, Division Chief, Forest Resources Division, ODF, Josh.W.Barnard@odf.oregon.gov; Terry Frueh, Adaptive Management Program Coordinator, Forest Resources Division, ODF, Terry.Frueh@odf.oregon.gov; Seth Barnes, Co-chair, AMPC; Stacey Detwiler, Co-chair, AMPC. Kelly Burnett, Chair, IRST; Lisa Gaines, Director, IRST's Housing Agency (OSU/Institute for Natural Resources)

### **SUMMARY**

This Adaptive Management Program Committee (AMPC) Co-chairs, the Chair of the Independent Research and Science Team (IRST), and staff from both OSU/Institute for Natural Resources (INR) and ODF will report on the progress of the adaptive management program.

### **CONTEXT**

The legislature directed the board to set up an adaptive management program. The program will help inform future rulemaking and support an application for a programmatic habitat conservation plan (HCP), and subsequent incidental take permits from NOAA Fisheries and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The goal of the program is to use the best available science to assess the effectiveness of rules for achieving the biological goals and objectives described in the HCP.

### **BACKGROUND**

In February 2020, a coalition of conservation groups, the Oregon Small Woodlands Association, and forest industry representatives agreed to revise the Forest Practices Act and administrative rules through a memorandum of understanding, which included mediated discussions, known as the Private Forest Accord (PFA). The bill set the timeline and topics for making changes to the Forest Practices Act and rules from which the Board could apply for a programmatic HCP. The PFA concluded in late 2021. In March 2022, the legislature adopted the PFA recommendations through Senate Bills 1501 and 1502, and House Bill 4055. Senate Bill 1501 incorporated by reference the Private Forest Accord Report dated February 2, 2022. The PFA Report further detailed the recommended changes to the Act and rules and a pathway for an HCP. The HCP has a statutorily-mandated approval deadline of Dec. 31, 2027. A key part of the rules is the adaptive management program. In addition to the Board, this program has two primary participants:

1. The AMPC develops the policy direction for the program.

2. The IRST oversees the research and monitoring to address the policy direction.

## ANALYSIS

This analysis summarizes past and future work of the two committees of the adaptive management program, the AMPC and the IRST.

In 2024, the AMPC:

- Provided an update to the Board in January;
- Added development of an effectiveness monitoring strategy to their list of priorities, and took initial steps in developing the strategy;
- Refined a periodic process for proposing and prioritizing preliminary research questions into their workplan;
- Developed two sets of preliminary research questions and associated contextual information. These questions address eastern Oregon steep slopes, and hydrologic disconnection of forest roads;
- Provided feedback to the IRST to finalize the aforementioned two sets of research questions; and
- Collaborated with the IRST on a field tour to learn more about the amphibians covered in the HCP.

In 2025, the AMPC will focus on:

- Revisiting the AMPC charter;
- Updating the Board on the status of AMPC work;
- Collaborating with the IRST to develop an effectiveness monitoring strategy;
- Reviewing IRST-developed scoping proposals on the research questions;
- Completing preliminary research questions and associated contextual information on the amphibians topic;
- Providing feedback to the IRST to finalize the aforementioned amphibians research questions; and
- Using IRST scoping proposals and AMPC priorities to finalize the research agenda and sending the associated budget to the Board for a vote.

In 2024, the IRST:

- Met 14 times, and have two more meetings scheduled in December 2024;
- Have held monthly meetings of the IRST chair and chair-elect with the INR staff to develop IRST meeting agendas and clarify direction from the IRST to INR;
- Developed and approved the charter;
- Elected IRST chairs;
- Finalized the structure for scoping proposals;
- Developed standards for best available science;

- Formalized a process for nominating new IRST members, and then followed that process to nominate two new members for Board approval;
- Worked with the AMPC to finalize research questions addressing eastern Oregon steep slopes, and hydrologic disconnection of roads;
- Developed the scoping proposal on the eastern Oregon steep slopes literature review from the AMPC, with an anticipated delivery to the AMPC of December 31, 2024; and
- Made significant progress on the scoping proposals for research questions related to hydrologic disconnection of roads.

In 2025, the IRST will focus on:

- Completing scoping proposals by March 1, 2025 for the previously-delivered AMPC research questions on hydrologic disconnection of roads;
- Finalizing the 2025 work plan upon receiving direction from the AMPC and/or the Board. Anticipated direction includes:
  - New research questions from AMPC, which will initiate IRST scoping proposals on amphibians; and
  - Any approved research agenda and budget, which will initiate steps by the IRST that establish projects to further the research agenda;
- Collaborating with the AMPC on developing an effectiveness monitoring strategy; and
- Reporting to the AMPC and the Board on progress of the research agenda.

The IRST will continue to meet at least monthly during 2025, and already has meetings scheduled through March 2025.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

This item is information only.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

None