

Pacific Northwest Regional Infrastructure Team

Questions & Answers Fact Sheet

- What is the Pacific Northwest Regional Infrastructure Team (PNWRIT)?
 - The PNWRIT is a federal-state partnership in Oregon, Washington, and Idaho to create an inter-agency forum where the federal and state governments can advance common infrastructure initiatives and goals in the region.

- What are the objectives of the PNWRIT?
 - Advancing infrastructure projects that spur job creation in communities
 - Furthering energy independence for national security
 - Managing climate change risk
 - Building and upgrading necessary infrastructure to support the Nation's economy
 - Ensuring environmental and natural resource stewardship

- How was the PNWRIT established?
 - The PNWRIT was established by Interior Secretary Sally Jewell, Oregon Governor John Kitzhaber, and Washington Governor Jay Inslee through a Declaration of Cooperation agreement ("PNWRIT Agreement") signed on May 23, 2013 in Portland, Oregon.
 - Idaho Governor C.L. Butch Otter signed the PNWRIT Agreement and joined the PNWRIT on September 25, 2013.

- Why was the PNWRIT established?
 - Independently, the federal government and the state governments in the Region have been pursuing several initiatives with common goals. The PNWRIT provides a forum for federal and state agencies in the Region to advance common infrastructure development goals of those initiatives.
 - The Obama Administration has been implementing a government-wide initiative through Executive Order 13604 to modernize the Federal permitting and review process, which aims to achieve better projects, improved environmental and community outcomes, and shorter decision-making and review timelines for infrastructure projects.
 - Governor Kitzhaber's December 2011 Executive Order 11012 established the Oregon Solutions Network to promote collaborative governance in the state of Oregon by using a cross sector approach to respond to challenges and opportunities that lead to statewide and regional solutions.
 - In Washington State, Governor Inslee is promoting government reforms to streamline the state regulatory system to improve the business climate and expand the workforce.
 - Idaho's Project 60 is a comprehensive plan to grow the state's economy by strengthening both rural and urban communities' ability to foster systemic growth and infrastructure development.

- What are the PNWRIT's goals and priorities?
 - The PNWRIT Agreement, signed by the Secretary of the Interior and Governors of Oregon, Washington, and Idaho, specifies three categories of priorities that respond to the infrastructure needs of communities, States, and the Region:

Pacific Northwest Regional Infrastructure Team

- 1) specific infrastructure projects that are Federal, State, or regional priorities for economic growth and job creation and that enhanced coordination could demonstrate, if approved, on-the-ground results in infrastructure development;
 - 2) pro-active solutions by collective, cross-agency and cross-jurisdictional leadership that respond to the long term vision of infrastructure development in each state and the Region and that help remove unnecessary barriers that generally prevent or slow infrastructure development; and
 - 3) cross-agency or cross-jurisdictional mitigation opportunities in infrastructure projects that could provide more ecologically effective project mitigation strategies for species or natural resources at a unified, watershed, or ecosystem level, and more ecologically effective mitigation options.
- How will the PNWRIT achieve its goals?
- The PNWRIT has developed an implementation plan that describes a number of steps taken to achieve its goals, including identification of challenges, establishing an organizational structure, and identifying strategies and ten regionally significant projects to move forward on the three categories of priorities listed in the PNWRIT agreement.
- Who is the PNWRIT?
- The PNWRIT is made up of a Steering Committee and PNWRIT Strike Teams for projects, but includes opportunities for agencies and other parties to inform its work.
 - The PNWRIT Steering Committee is a state and federal executive body with six members: (1) the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Region 1 Director, (2) the Bureau of Land Management-Oregon/Washington State Director, (3) the Bureau of Land Management-Idaho State Director, (4) Governor Kitzhaber's Regional Solutions Director, (5) Governor Inslee's Center for Regulatory Innovation and Assistance Director, and (6) Governor Otter's Office of Energy Resources Administrator.
 - Regionally significant projects that are the focus of the PNWRIT will benefit from state-federal PNWRIT strike teams, whose membership will include state and federal agency decision-makers and authorized officers of critical path permits, reviews, consultations, or milestones of PNWRIT projects that are expected in the next fiscal year.
- Will the PNWRIT take the place of agency staff and decision makers on projects?
- No, inter-disciplinary and inter-agency project teams made up of agency staff will continue to collect, review, and analyze data in accordance with agency requirements. Decisions related to permits, reviews, and consultations reside with individual agencies, in accordance with their statutory missions, requirements, and authorities.
 - Inter-disciplinary and inter-agency project staff teams will be asked to keep the PNWRIT Strike Teams and Steering Committee informed of a project's progress in its regulatory reviews. Agency staff and project managers working on PNWRIT projects are invited to use the PNWRIT Strike Teams and Steering Committee to ensure that project needs are met, project mitigation opportunities or efficiencies are leveraged, and inter-agency or cross-jurisdictional conflicts are prevented or resolved early.