NRIS Core Services (excerpt from 2002/2003 Core Funding Agreements)
NRIS Advisory Committee discussion document
January 23, 2002

1) **Services - A.** NRIS will utilize its General Fund allotment, RIT allotment, and funding passed through from selected agencies under House Bill 2 (hereinafter referred to as core funding) to provide a basic set of services to governmental agencies, universities, private business, organizations, and the public, with emphasis on service to the agencies providing funding under House Bill 2 (hereinafter referred to as source agencies). Such services will include:

    i) Maintain the NRIS clearinghouse for important natural resource data, including:
        a) Obtaining data-layers of interest made available through governmental agencies, organizations and the private sector, as resources allow, and integrating them into the clearinghouse. Priority will be given to integrating source agency data layers into the clearinghouse and updating agency data within the clearinghouse at a frequency commensurate with the need as expressed by the source agencies;
        b) Documenting, managing and providing searchable access to metadata relating to clearinghouse data as well as data-sets not available through the clearinghouse to facilitate access;
        c) Compiling, updating and disseminating sensitive plant and animal lists for Montana, accessible via the Internet;
        d) Compiling and updating status, distribution and occurrence information on sensitive and T/E plant and animal species;
        e) Developing and maintaining classification, conservation ranking, and distribution data on native vegetation communities in Montana and locations of representative or high quality examples;
        f) Maintaining and updating information, generally compiled using non-core funding, on high quality wetlands and other sites of ecological and biological importance, including location, sensitive species and significant communities present, and conservation status;
        g) Maintaining and updating detailed and illustrated summaries, generally compiled using non-core funding, of the distinguishing characteristics, habitat and distribution of Montana's sensitive plant and animal species, accessible via the internet; and,
        h) Providing access to statewide digital mapping of lands under conservation ownership and easements.
    ii) Provide mediated (staff assisted) access to clearinghouse information and the preparation of maps and reports utilizing clearinghouse information, giving priority to source agency service;
    iii) Develop and maintain generic (not user, program or database-specific) information access tools to provide users with immediate unassisted access to clearinghouse data via the Internet; solicit and respond to input from source agency personnel to refine and customize web-based data-delivery applications;
    iv) Develop and provide source agency library data support through web-based applications that allow source agencies to manage, maintain and search web-based bibliographies for their agency collections;
    v) Provide user technical support, including group and individual training, on-line tutorials, and phone support, for access to clearinghouse information and use of information access tools, giving priority to source agency service;
    vi) Participate in and promote interagency coordination and sharing of information through active participation in the activities of the Montana Geographic Information Council, the Interagency Technical Working Group, the Montana

Local Government GIS Coalition, the Montana GIS Users Group and similar groups, and through participation in planning and reporting meetings with source agency representatives;

vii) Host source agency web sites and provide technical support for source agency web services; and,

viii) Make NRIS GIS and database capabilities available as resources allow to support source agency information systems development.

B. Consultation on additional services and products: NRIS will provide the products and services described above and will process user requests to the maximum extent possible using the resources supported through core funding. If source agency information assimilation, management or dissemination needs extend beyond the services described above or if source agency requests for NRIS products and services exceed the ability of NRIS to respond in a timely manner, NRIS will work with agency staff to develop strategies and identify resources to meet agency needs.