

Natural Resource Information System

Period May 23 – July 16, 2002

Goal 1: Acquire, integrate, maintain and ensure accuracy of spatial and natural resource data and information needed for managing Montana's natural resources and environment.

Acquired, processed and mounted over 1,100 new Digital Aerial Photographs for Montana. This addition brings our inventory to about 93% of the state.

Completed preliminary processing of an updated abandoned mines database from the Bureau of Mines and Geology. The new coverage will replace an inventory completed in 1992, and includes information relating to mines on Forest Service and BLM lands.

Completed acquisition and processing of updated Digital Elevation Data from USGS.

Completed work on deploying a new dataset for FEMA floodplain mapping in Montana, in cooperation with DNRC. The system provides the means to locate scanned images of floodplain maps for a specified geographic area.

Completed processing of the new draft 2002 list of impaired water bodies (303d) for DEQ.

Solicited new information on the occurrence and status of rare and vulnerable species from key experts, in order to update the Animal and Plant Species of Concern lists. Entered new information and updated species ranks in the Heritage databases.

Compiled information on the ecology and management of plant species of concern.

Incorporated information from DNRC's state trust lands tabular database into the Heritage Program's Stewardship data layer, significantly enhancing its currency and accuracy.

Goal 2: Effectively disseminate natural resource data and information, ensuring broad accessibility, utilizing current technologies, and maintaining a strong emphasis on customer service.

The NRIS web pages took a combined load of over 1.5 million hits during the 8 week period. Staff also responded to numerous mediated data requests.

Continued to post the drought map series for 2002, and continued to add to and enhance the Montana Drought monitoring web page.

Completed enhancements to FWP Montana River's Information System, including modifications to the user interface and incorporation of lakes into the system. The new system, called the Montana Fisheries Information System, was deployed in early June.

Completed and deployed a new website for the National Hydrography Dataset (NHD). Web page can be found at <http://nris.state.mt.us/nsdi/nhd/>.

Completed and deployed new interactive query system for DEQ's draft 2002 303d water quality impaired list at <http://nris.state.mt.us/scripts/esrimap.dll?name=TMDL2002&Cmd=INST>.

Completed and deployed new web page for the distribution of USGS digital elevation data at <http://nris.state.mt.us/nsdi/nris/el10/dems.html>.

Completed and deployed new web page for Yellowstone River Corridor information at <http://nris.state.mt.us/yellowstone/>.

Published reports summarizing data and inventory results on "Ecological Communities of Red Rocks Lakes National Wildlife Refuge: Aspen and Wetland Systems" and on American White Pelican colonies in Montana. Both were also posted to the Heritage website at <http://nhp.nris.state.mt.us/reports.htm>.

Goal 3: Ensure that NRIS products, services, and expertise are broadly known, effectively used, and highly regarded by those who require natural resource information and spatially referenced data.

Made presentation on the NRIS web applications for the Department of Environmental Quality

Made presentations to the Montana Soil & Water Conservation Association annual meeting on information resources available for federally-listed species in Montana.

Attended the Data Access 'I-team' meeting, Groundwater Steering Committee meeting in Butte, and FGDC Spatial Data Infrastructure conference in Denver.

Conducted 2-day introduction and training for staff of the Legislative Audit Division on NRIS and GIS, at their request.

Attended meetings and assisted the US Fish & Wildlife Service in data preparation for statewide planning process.

Made presentation to local class of gifted & talented students on the process involved in creating the Heritage data provided over the Web.

Prepared news releases and gave interviews relating to many of the data acquisitions and deployments described above. These are being routinely printed by a variety of newspapers and association newsletters across Montana.

Continue to sponsor and host monthly Friday Afternoon Seminars, at which NRIS and other agencies, organizations, and businesses are able to present a topic of interest to the GIS community.

Goal 4: Establish, maintain and continually improve the program structure, resource(s), staff and operation required to successfully implement NRIS mission, vision and goals.

The framework data issue was presented at the joint MLGGC/ITWG meeting in May. Both groups had some questions about the issue and some procedural questions were also raised, so action was deferred until the July meeting. In the meantime, the Data Access 'I-team' has been tasked with exploring the issues of data dissemination in more detail

Catherine Love began work at NRIS as our new GIS Data Technician on June 10th.

Recruitment to fill the position of Water Information System manager resulted in the selection of a very strong applicant; however, we were unable to meet his salary demands. The position was subsequently re-advertised, however, with the current budget emergency, filling of the position is currently on hold.