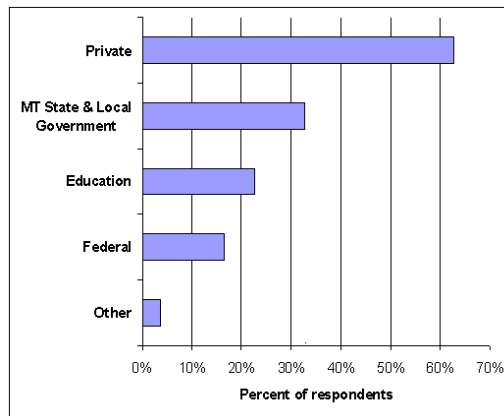# MONTANA
Natural Resource Information System

# Web User Survey Results
September 2002

In order to help us evaluate and improve our services, NRIS requested that users of NRIS Web pages complete a short on-line survey during the month of September. **During the one-month period immediately preceding the survey, the NRIS web-site received 930,000 "hits" during 53,500 visitor sessions, which lasted approximately 11 minutes each. That translates to over 1700 visitor sessions per day, or 316 person-hours each day spent on the NRIS site**. The purpose of the survey was to learn more about the users of our web services and the reasons for their use, and to learn what we can do to provide even better service to our users.
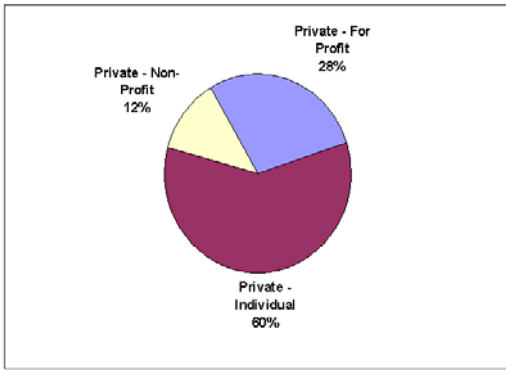
 We believe the survey was a great success. In all, we had 269 responses in the one-month period (after removing 26 surveys that were incomplete, obvious test entries, or entries by Montana State Library employees).

Question #1. What sector(s) do you represent? (Multiple answers were allowed.)
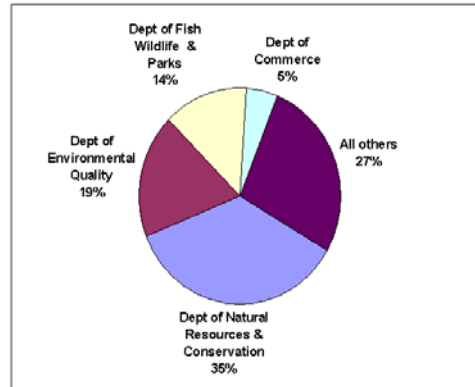

Allocation of the 203 respondents who indicated a public sector choice.	
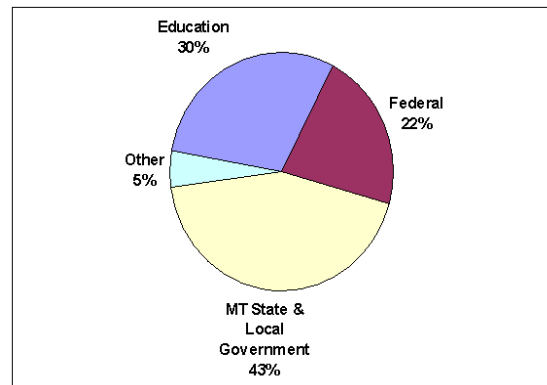
Allocation of the 169 respondents who indicated a private sector choice.

Allocations of the 59 Montana State Government respondents. In total they represented 12 different agencies.

## Question #2. What are your primary uses of NRIS information? (Multiple answers were allowed.)
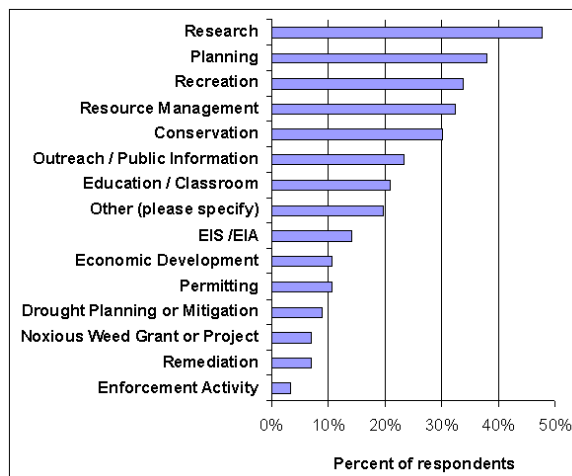
'Other' entries for question #2.
Accuracy
Agri Plant protection
Background maps to register our facilities to for operating and locating.

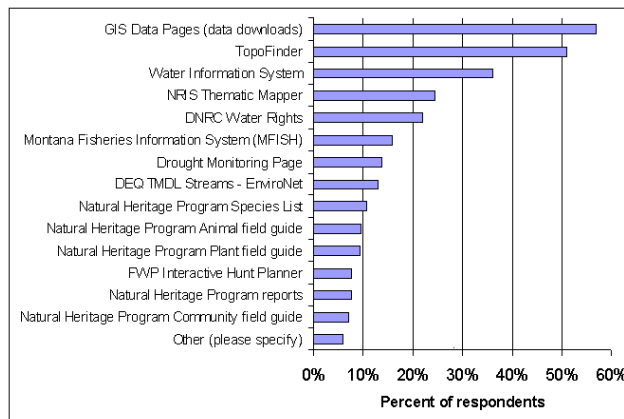| 'Other' entries for question #2. |
|---|
| Biological Assessments |
| Cartography |
| cartography |
| city and county government applications |
| College class projects |
| crops |
| Curiosity |
| data |
| data |
| Emergency Management |
| Engineering |
| Environmental Consulting |
| exploring back roads |
| Fire Management |
| Fire Protection |
| Fire suppresion |
| firefighting |
| Fishing |
| flood planning |
| FWP Bock Management |
| General GIS uses |
| general information mapping locating places all kinds o' stuff |
| general photography location |
| HUNTING |
| image rectification |
| irrigatio design |
| landbase for utility AM/FM |
| Natural Resource studies |
| Oil and Gas Production |
| Orthorectification/Referencing Imagery |
| Phase I ESA's Research |
| Quad Maps and Ortho Images |
| real estate appraisal |
| real estate/hunting/fishing |
| reference - library |
| relocation to MT information |
| Sale agricultural team |
| Source Water Protection Mapping and information verification |
| superfund base map |
| TMDL field work |
| To compare accuracy with existing data |
| Topo/aerial imagery for paragliding research. |
| US Senate |
| Used coverages from NRIS to show lack of (or great distance to) health care providers in the state. |
| vegetation mapping |
| water rights |
| Water rights |
| water rights |
| watershed work |
| Wildlife |

Question #3. How often do you visit the NRIS web site?
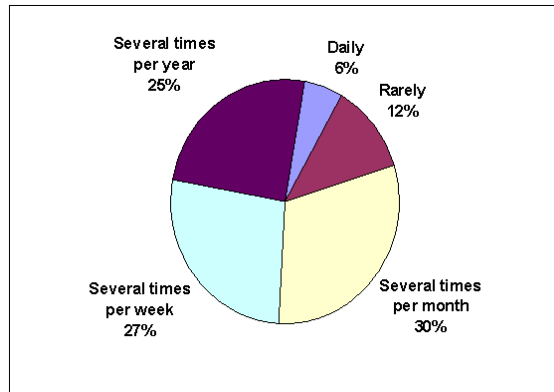
Question #4. How often do you use NRIS or NRIS supported online applications (TopoFinder, etc.)?
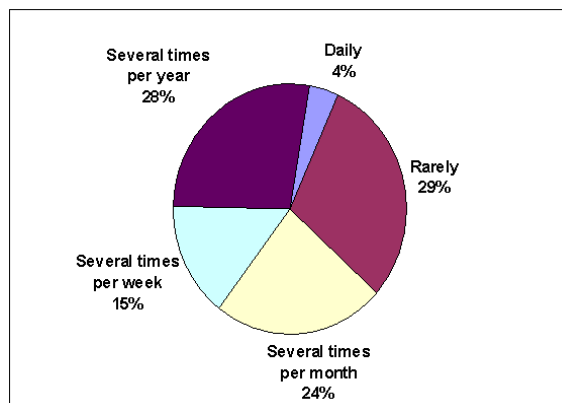
Question #5. What web services do you use the most? Multiple answers were allowed.

| 'Other' entry values for Question #5. |
| --- |
| air photos |
| commercial crops |
| DEQ Database |
| doq's |
| Ortho Photos |
| Orthomaps (aerial photos) |
| requests data development data access development |
| SWPP Map Query System |
| The five CDs of the DRGs that NRIS gave me. |
| this is the first one |
| wetland clearinghouse |

Question #6. What current web services (if any) do you have difficulties using?

Responses to Question #6: What current web services (if any) do you have difficulties using?
accessing the FTP site has been a problem..from time to time
All of them are almost impenetrable to me as far as quick answers are concerned. Wasn't your information more readily available to the layperson in the past? I now feel practically illiterate and certainly incompetent when I try to find information. But perhaps I am looking for answers which you aren't supposed to have.
all works fine for me
Comments & question on the drought monitoring page.
downloading orthophotos
I do not find your "MNHP data request form" or the new MFISH site as user friendly as the older versions.
I never knew that there were some of these services i have been limited to the GIS pages
I sent a recent question on how to map the water rights information as I thought I could do it in the past...
I stuble in all since I do so many different things and not frequent enough on each to become proficient. Overall though the guides are very good.
If it is web services provided by NRIS none.
It would be beneficial if DNRC Water Right Forms were in a download-able format for entering data on my PC rather than the pdf format which allows me to only print the forms (and then go to the typewriter to fill them out).
It's hard to use the DNRC water rights page. I dont understand how to use it very well. And I find the new look of Environet rather confusing. I'm sure a newcomer to the page would be very confused. One of the items on the Water Info system is the Montana Wetlands Council page. A lot of the links on their page dont work
layering the maps knowing how to access the info I want and really what information is available.
Map files are very large.
Map services
Most of the interactive mappers are difficult to use. You should feature more standard ArcIMS web sites that can be added to ArcGIS MXD projects.
Other states not providing data as well as Montana
Search box for Topofinder would be handier at top of page rather than bottom.
Simplify simplify & then simplify
Soils data is poorly documented and difficult to use. CAMA data is also complicated and poorly documented. I know the CAMA data is not totally within your control for distribution. Both data sets could benefit from having a "lite" version or two that could be used for generic application or even a general guide as to what fields are useful for helping answer some general questions.
The Thematic Mapper doesn't seem to provide the detail and level of accuracy I'm looking for.
Thematic Mapper (I might be trying to find info that isn't available and I have not thoughroughly read the instructions!)
this one
This spring I did a research project for a class I was taking in information systems and found (1) NRIS is about the bleeding edge in what they are offering; and (2) the data there is "dangerous" -- found much of it was a one time dump from agencies out of date or incorrect. For liability concerns have found I still need to bother the folks at MDEQ county govt etc. Hopefully they will come up to speed with their databases so that you may have a dynamic link and adequate data avaialble to put on your lovely maps.

Responses to Question #6: What current web services (if any) do you have difficulties using?
topo finder once every couple of months
Water Rights by owner and points of diversion
Water rights page - do not have access to update browser
Watershed maps could go to smaller orders 4th-8th to be really useful.
When searching for other map data I often get a "type mismatch" error that is very frustrating.

Question #7. Please rate the value of NRIS services to your agency business or personal needs.
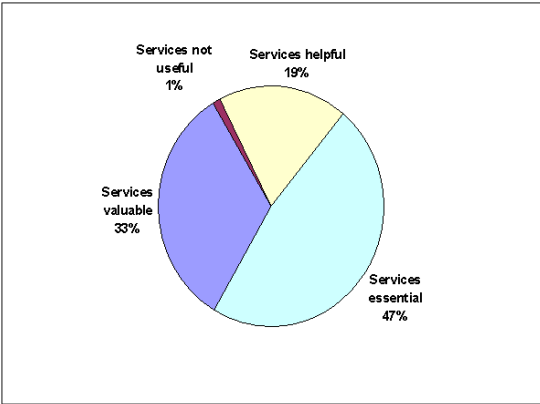
Question #8. Which of the following statements best describes your use of NRIS services?

Sixty-eight percent of respondents selected web services as their primary use of NRIS services. Since this was a survey targeted at web users, this result is not terribly surprising. The result does, however, support the commitment we have to continuing to invest a substantial portion of our resources in the improvement and expansion of our abundant web services. It is clear that this is one of the most cost effective and efficient mechanisms by which to serve our patrons.

Question #9. Please describe additional datasets not currently available at NRIS that would be of use to you.

Question #9 responses: Please describe additional datasets not currently available at NRIS that would be of use to you.
1) GAP 30 meter statewide landcover 2) 10 meter DEMs 3) The national hydro dataset in an ArcHydro Geodatabase format. 4) Projection files for all of the state shapefiles.
1. More information about non-threatened species in Montana to assist in identification (plants and animals)including distribution maps and descriptions. 2. User-friendly noxious weed database again with pictures descriptions and distribution maps. For plants something on the order of a subset of the NRCS site (USDA) for Montana. I know no $!!
1:24K NHD
10 meter DEMs
24K NHD for the Yellowstone 10m USGS DEM for Yellowstone 100K DEM
a set of all public lands (USFS USNPS BLM FWS) on one map
aerial photographs of towns/cities
As a natural resource program manager use of the thematic mapper has allowed me quick access to see a map and photo of a site where a potential or active project is located. Integration of gis information as an overlay to the thematic mapper would greatly enhance this use.
Bedrock or surficial geologic maps at 1:24000 or 1:100000
Better land use cover including reliable irrigated/non-irrigated info
Cadastral on NRIS website MT GAP analysis data NWI wetlands data for MT
cadastral survey land ownership informaton
Climate data in shape file or e00 satallite data (LandSat spot etc)
Completion of existing datasets e.g. DOQs Soils NWI etc. I know a lot of that is out of your control
Detailed land ownership maps depicting private vs public land
do not know
DOQ's Fergus County; endangered animal plant etc. maps by county;animal migratory patterns;archeaological sites;flood plain maps (yes I know the feds are doing this but SOOO slow)
Environmental assessements/Environmental Impact statements that have been prepared by various agencies to the extent that these documents are public information.
floodplain data
Full text of all reports. Complete species maps for all montana plant and animal species. Complete list of all specimens in MT museums.
GCDB and city maps registered to GCDB
Geodetic control
GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES SUCH AS NATIONAL PARKS FORESTED AREAS MOUNTAIN RANGES ETC HAZARDOUS WASTE HANDLERS
Geologic information such as surface geology
Geology Land Parcels More areal photos/Orthos
Hazardous Materials storage sites historical weather data state owned buildings and facilities(all) Natural and Technological Hazards I could go on and on... -I realize this does not "fit" in to the NATURAL charter but I have come to rely on your staff's ablilities with ALL types of GIS data.
Historical air photos
Historical orthophotos or historical aerial photography their lists including yead and agencies. This could be a service provided in conection with USGS).
I feel that perhaps the current datasets are more than superior at this point. There may in the future be additional information which would require expanded datasets as the states environmental condition changes.
I'd really like to see the USGS Geology layer and the land cover grid available. I know there are accuracy and other issues related to both sources but they are better than nothing for informed users. My comments below pertain to the Source Water Protection Program but getting a list of questions that some of your users want to answer would help you focus on how to make the Soils and CAMA data more usable and useful. Easier access to Soils and CAMA data that has been better documented and reformatted so as to to be readily usable would be good. Specifically what I am saying is to sift out fields that are useful for answering a handful of fairly generic questions like the following: Soils: Where are erodable soils where are highly porous and permeable soils or non-porous non-permeable soils. CAMA: which parcels lack public utilities which parcels have wells which parcels have septic systems which parcels are irrigated and what is the acrage generally what kind of buisness is operating on the parcel Are there hazardous materials stored (underground fuel tanks) on the parcel Is there a Burger King on the parcel :).......

Question #9 responses: Please describe additional datasets not currently available at NRIS that would be of use to you.
imagery other then doqq collection of locally generated datasets (ie. roads structures addresses gov units) that are often updated.
In the Thematic Mapping Interface it would be great to be able to dsiplay more than one informational layer at a time.
Incremental Precipitation
indian land acreage
Land Use/Land Cover is a critical missing piece.
large print out maps can we give you our own data and can you manage it for us? like water quality or digital photos etc.
list of current private landowner's names
Locations of cultural resource investigations (SHPO says sites will never be publicly available); A geographic fauna T&ES search rather than by species comparable to the plant search that is available; Better locations for USTs but that is MDEQ's problem not yours. A geographic database of permitted projects would be awesome -- just think if from a location I could find all the EA checklists etc. that every agency has done in that vicinity.
mines & mining
Montana State Lands data in both map and as raw data
More detailed geologic data. I know that MBMG is coming out with more and more and it oughta be up on the web by quad.
More information on species habitat and location. Easy way to get to a listing of all public lands. As in all BLM on a map of decent quality. Same for State and National Forest etc.
More remote sensing data of Montana
On-line quad-centered aerial photography overlapping for stereo viewing.
Other administrative boundaries; FW&P DNRC etc.
Please expand the topofinder capabilities expanded to include false color IR for use in identifying moist soil / riparian areas. Topofinder is a great tool we use for identifications of wildlife sightings (LatLog/UTM) for use in recording information in GIS.
railroad rights-of-way
realtime water rights data cadastral/cama data seismic data geology data
See my recommendations on http://www.cs.umt.edu/GEOLOGY/nrdp/NRDPmain.htm
Sorting and definations
SSURGO
survey bench marks more detailed topo (where available) more detailed DEM's (where available) bike/hiking trails
The addition of the Bald Eagle Nesting Territories of record that are currently kept by MTFWP would be great in an electronic format. But I understand that this may be privileged information and should not be made available to the general public.
The information available currently meets all of my needs...
This may be too large of a data file to be practical but... I would find useful a consolidated census block map layer for the entire state with race included in the population data in the .dbf file. It would be particularly useful for epidemiological studies and in targeting populations for specific program activities.
Trails. See answer to question 10; Tho something like an NRIS Thematic Health Care Mapper would probably be more appropriate than the datasets.
U.S. Forest Service Trails and Roads
Up to date satilite imagery at no cost. Ability to spatially query well logs and water quality monitoring data at a given well on the fly. Only a limited amount of water quality data is available through the Bureau of Mines and Geology.
USGS geologic maps
UTM NAD83 datasets State Geology Map Land Use Map
watershed sub basin delineations Satellite imagery
Will have to think more about this one. So many added lately that fills most of my needs
Would be nice (though difficult/impossible I'm sure) to have more up to date aerial imagery of the state. That perfect clear cut to use for a landing zone of course is now overgrown after 12 years. Still excellent site!
Your selection is handy. The list looks short but there is an awful lot in there! For myself urban data especially for Billings and Great Falls - like urbal land use street grids parks etc.

Question #10. Please describe additional information services not currently available at NRIS that would be of use to you.

Question #10 responses: Please describe additional information services not currently available at NRIS that would be of use to you.
A bulletin board with contact info where people could list: data layers they have produced aerial photography they have recently acquired remote sensing imagery they posses. It would make it easier for groups of various interests to possibly share what was available. The data would not have to served just a metadata type bulletin board.
although i don't know much about arc ims it may be prudent for nris to start moving to that platform of data serving. it is the latest technology and nris has always been at the fore-front of technology!!! go for it!
ArcIMS map services
Covered in 9.
crop specification by zone/comptete crop area
do not know
DPHHS does not currently have the GIS expertise nor time to create maps let alone do any type of geographic analysis. Yet these maps and analysis are critically important for educational and funding needs. As a citizen I think it is important for all Montanans to have a sense of where we have (sometimes enormous) gaps in health care.
extraction of image data for speciftic definable areas
I just want to say that your services and response times are excellent!!
Information regarding biosystems
It is available but need to take better advantage of training of available resources. Could maybe have quarterly training sessions.
It would be nice to have lots of layers as SDE services that we could hit to make maps but not have to download the base data. DRGs and DOQQs would be especially useful.
Make it possible to display multiple themes or data layers on the interactive mapper. Allow the users to draw simple graphics on the mapper (circles squares lines or arrows) Make it possible to clip and download grids.
Maps produced by state agencies such as Mines and Geology in Butte.
More current and higher quality DRGs would be nice
Of course if all this were available online I might become obsolete... Maps that are now available only in GIS are problematic -- such as USGS geologic maps -- because we are too small a company to yet justify the expense of ARCView (the viewer included w/ NRCS stuff is useless if you try to use a modem to download it -- multiple days etc.)
Please add links to Topofinder for other states (especially SD and WY.)
Satilite Imagery
Showing individual Land ownerships on parcels.
The information available currently meets all of my needs...
Web-based tutorial
You have recent aerial photos tied to your topofinder. It would be great if other years were available such as older photos.

Question #11. Please provide any other comments or suggestions about NRIS web services.

Question #11 responses: Please provide any other comments or suggestions about NRIS web services.
A great product which is very useful.
An excellent service and impressive when compared to similar sites of other states.
As always I'm impressed that Montana has an information system that is leading the nation.
Drought Monitoring page is very well set up. It is comprehehsive and useful.
Excellent Resource!!! Thank you very much for your work!
Excellent site. Easy to use if I can find my way around the site any one can. I can spend hours on the Topo site!
Excellent! I credit Velda
For purposes of real estate ownership information & recreation I use the Montana GIS at: http://gis.doa.state.mt.us several times a week. And when it's working I use the Gallatin County GIS. If you provide a link with these I missed it. If you do not perhaps it would be worth considering doing so using the NRIS site as a one-stop access means.

Question #11 responses: Please provide any other comments or suggestions about NRIS web services.
For the most part a very easy to use site - on-Line access is MUCH BETTER than trying to retreive the information manually!
Getting better all the time!
good site so far
Great Job! I don't know what we'd do without the services you provide!
Great Service Thanks
Great service--it's made my business activities viable
Great site keep up the good work!!!
great sites & NRIS is very helpful; hope this survey isn't indicating a removal of it!
Great system--please keep it up!!
Has come a long way - thanks for all the hard work
I am a reference librarian at Montana State University Bozeman. We frequently access information from NRIS with respect to our natural resource/life sciences programs and the needs of students faculty and the general public.
I am an environmental mechanic in texas for asteel company and my son is moving to montana and I thought I could find information here pertaining to his community
I am consistantly impressed with the data and ease of use of the NRIS system. You have a great hard wriking staff. Keep up the great work!
i am super happy with the program. i love to be able to get orhtophoto quads
I appreciate the information that I retrieve from the Environet web page. Thanks for making it available.
I can only comment that I hope that this service will provide me with the information I seek as an avid outdoorsman.
I can only say you're doing a great job with the funding and recognition you get.
I can't think of any suggestions at present. Sometimes I need to download data from surrounding states and sometimes encounter difficulties finding and/or acquiring their data. It causes me to appreciate your site all the more. I have found your staff to be most helpful when I have called with questions regarding data. Keep up the good work.
I find the datasets available for download on NRIS to be very beneficial.
I liked the lecture that Duane gave on the information available but need hands on or more instruction on how to access and layer the information.
I recomend NRIS site to consultants to assist them in researching ground water information.
I think it is a great web site and I hope you can continue to add data and gather higher accuracy point data.
I think that this is a great service to provide especially for those of us not located in Helena. Thanks
I think your services are extremely valuable to state government. Your location in the State Library is appropriate as the State Library has no regulatory attachments and NRIS is a provider of unbiased information.
I would like to thank all of you at NRIS! Without your help we in DES would not be attempting to implement GIS into Emergency Management in Montana.
If you start charging then the games over.....
In the past we relied more on NRIS staff however we have developed our in-house technical skills and now rely more on in-house staff. The updates of small scale data sets are valuable to our agencies.
In the Thematic Mapper - make it possible to look at multiple data layers at one time.
Incredible service to the state!
Invaluable
It would be helpful if the roads rivers ect. were divided into layers based on there size. So that they could be turned on and off depending on the scale that you are viewing the data.
It would be nice to have some type of index of the datasets that are not complete for the state but available by request from NRIS.
Just browsing around seeing what dnrc is about.
Keep it up...you're doing an amazing job!!!
Keep up the good work!
Keep up the good work!
Keep up the good work! NRIS is one of the most useabale and complete sources for GIS data. It is much better than other states in the area.
Keep up the good work. Montana needs your services and technical assistance. NRIS should continue to be fully funded no matter how tight the state budget becomes!
Keep up the good work. But revamp the old Map Objects driven web pages. They are so 20th century!
Keep up the great work! Thank you for all of your webfriendly interfacing and high quality data. I have used many other

Question #11 responses: Please provide any other comments or suggestions about NRIS web services.
state's GIS databases and Montana consistently comes up with top marks--A+
know that you are a library. in the most defined sense of the word. information. and laws defend that status. it could be useful in the world of today and maintaining nris. nris is a wonderful resource and i certainly would not be able to efficiently accommodate many of my work requests without the assistance of the excellent tools and brilliant staff available through the nris group. thanks so much!!!
Marvelous information avaiable. If needed and when needed. I located the terrain topo and photo site via information from a friend who lives in Spain.
Much of the content of your site is geared toward users of GIS software. As a librarian working with the general public it would be very nice to have that more clearly stated right from the start. I've had users get very disappointed/frustrated because they found what seemed like good information only to find out that the format is such that they can't use it.
Nice site self explanatory and easy enough for soccer-moms to use.
NRIS is a great site but a search box on the homepage would be helpful. And again more comprehensive coverage of Montana species would be very useful.
NRIS is a leader in GIS data sharing and an essential resource for GIS in MT and beyond. Please consider offering ArcIMS map services to support the new capabilities of ArcGIS.
NRIS is one of the greatest treasures in the Treasure State. Never has so much info been provided to so many by so few with so little funds. A Bargain! But think what they could do with more funds!
NRIS provides a very useful service to the public and other GIS users in the form of natural resource data base map data and other state- wide data that would otherwise be difficult to obtain. As a county GIS 100k data has limited use however.
NRIS provides a very valuable service to State and Federal agencies in combining data links and linking Federal and State resources. Their employess are very helpful
NRIS provides an excellent service for regional users of spatial data. Can't say enough good about their web services.
NRIS provides an outstanding service!
NRIS staff responds accurately and quickly to inquiries and questions
NRIS web services and information are critical to managing the state's environmental resources. I have found the NRIS web services staff to be very responsive and experts in their profession. I encourage NRIS to fill the vacent water information system staff position.
NRIS web site is very important for GIS use. The web sight has all most all the building blocks (coverages) for makeing great maps. Most Importantly it is free and I hope that it stays that way.
People in the GIS Community rely not just upon the data available through the NRIS website but also upon the wealth of programming expertise housed at NRIS. Thank you for consistently providing such a wonderful service to our community!
Really use and enjoy this website for information!
Seaching other state's clearinghouses for data sets I realize how lucky we are here in MT to have NRIS! Keep up the great work.
See previous comment.
THank you and please keep adding more data.
Thank you so much for providing such a wonderful service. I've talked to other GIS trainers from other states and very few of them have such a complete set of data for their use. Keep up the good work.
Thank you. I have attended a couple of training sessions at different conferences and they are always helpful.
Thanks for all the great data!!!!!!
Thanks for providing NRIS!
Thanks for the information that I occasionally use. It's an efficient way to supplement my classroom activities without having to do time consuming research.
The NRIS site is the most important data clearing house in the state of Montana. All efforts should be made to continue supporting and improving this site. Because if all GIS users are using the same data sets and improving these sets the better the end product and efforts of all GIS users will be. THANK YOU NRIS.
The NRIS site provides information that makes me more effective at my job.
This is an incredibly helpful survice. My life would be much more difficult without it. Thank you.
This is one of the finest services of its kind in the country. This type of service has the abilty to provide a vast amount of data to the public (for no direct charge) that would otherwise be buried in agency files and for the most part unavailable to the public.
This is one of the most useful sites on the internet!!!
This is th first time to use the service so maybe I will have better results as I come better aquainted with the system.
this is the first time for using any type webbase services of this kind. I am new to this type of searching.
This is very good. Nice to see that our GIS budget is being put to good use.

Question #11 responses: Please provide any other comments or suggestions about NRIS web services.
Under #1 ". What sector(s) do you represent?" you do not list "Library: Public Academic Special or School" Your division for "Education" is too broad. A Public Library is a bit more independent and public library patrons taking the survey would not know which sector to choose.
Valuable site. Keep up the great work!
Very good resource for all users in Montana and the region.
We save thousands and thousands of dollars using data from your site and are able to make better decisions with the data. We do not know what we would do without the site.
When I send a "Comment or Question" to the link: kdixon@state.mt.us it is returned to me by System Administrator postmaster@state.mt.us as "did not reach the following recipient" My original query was to find out the minutes of the 8/12/2002 meeting in Dillon which has not been posted yet. Looking forward to a speedy reply.
Wonderful and highly useful service. Keep up the good work!!!
You do a fine job and are well-worth supporting.
You guys are wonderful! Innovative and leaders in the web-based data service program. I think it is vital that Montana continue to fund such a successful program. It fits Montana's pioneering history. NRIS has pioneered data service.
Your service is very easy to use.
Your staff has been extremely helpful with every question I have. Very timely responses to solve problems.