

## **Natural Resource Information System (NRIS)**

September 19 - November 22, 2002

**NRIS Goal 1:** To fulfill its mandate to be the source for natural resource information in Montana, NRIS acquires, integrates, maintains, and documents natural resource data and information needed for understanding, managing and utilizing Montana's natural resources, and environment.

Added a variety of new GIS data layers to our inventory and provided access through the GIS data page. New data layers included statewide noxious weed coverage at the section level, in partnership with MT Dept. of Agriculture.

Continued extensive work on integrating raster data into the NRIS spatial database (topographic maps, aerial photos, etc.). Completed development of seamless topographic maps and aerial photos.

Completed a major new data project with DNRC allowing for near 'real-time' data access via the Internet to DRNC's water rights database.

Heritage staff completed a report summarizing new and existing information on the vegetation and plant Species of Concern in Powder River County

Inventory of primary datasets in the NRIS clearinghouse is approximately 85% complete.

Completed installation and began using BIOTICS, a new customized software platform for managing spatial data of the Natural Heritage information system

NRIS staff continue to play an active role to encourage and support the development and refinement of priority datasets, serving on most of the MGIC Implementation Teams (I-Teams) and chairing four.

**NRIS Goal 2:** A broad range of user groups can easily locate data in effective formats. Users find that this information is augmented with related datasets to increase its value. Potential NRIS users are well informed of information available through the clearinghouse and trained in the use of NRIS tools. Staff assistance is available when needed to assist users in locating and utilizing data.

### **Use and Requests:**

Web site use continues to grow. The NRIS web is now averaging nearly 1,000,000 hits per month.

Requests for staff-assistance in locating and obtaining data remain steady, even as web-site usage grows.

Completed and reported on the September web users survey. Survey results were very helpful and generally very positive.

### **New Services:**

Deployed updated 'real-time' water rights access data system.

Completed updates and deployment of 2002 TMDL data in cooperation with DEQ.

Added over 10 Heritage Program reports to those available on the Web in viewable and downloadable formats.

Deployed new water quality data access system.

Continued updates and maintenance of the MT drought monitoring page. NRIS maintains this comprehensive source of drought information as a service to the Montana Drought Advisory Committee.

**Outreach:**

Hosted our October seminar relating to wildlife habitat corridors November seminar on the new DNRC water rights data access system. This was covered by Channel 12 in Helena.

Sponsored a booth at the Venture Outdoors conference in Billings. The booth highlighted access to natural resource information for recreation purposes.

Staff attended the transportation data layer working group meeting.

Submitted several news releases relating to NRIS activities.

Hosted an open house, GIS poster gallery, and training in honor of GIS day on November 20.

**NRIS Goal 3:** In order to fulfill its mandate as described under Issues 1 and 2, NRIS secures adequate and stable funding.

Entered into facilitated negotiations with ITSD regarding the definition of roles and responsibilities for NRIS and ITSD related to GIS in Montana. Negotiations are ongoing. We hope to reach some common agreement before the legislative session begins.