

Natural Resource Information System (NRIS)

February 3, 2004 – April 9, 2004

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.

Performed a major update of integrated Cadastral (land parcel ownership)/CAMA (computer assisted mass appraisal) data for viewing via the Digital Atlas. NRIS has merged the Department of Revenue data with the Department of Administration data and selected a subset of fields for display and summarization.

The Natural Heritage Program published several reports during the period. These include:

- *A Plant Community Classification for Kootenai National Forest Peatlands*, March 2004
- *Using Vegetation to Assess Wetland Condition: a multimetric approach for temporarily and seasonally flooded depressional wetlands and herbaceous-dominated intermittent and ephemeral riverine wetlands in the northwestern glaciated plains ecoregion, Montana*, February 2004
- *Conservation Status of Botrychium lineare (slender moonwort) in Montana*, February 2004

Continued to play an active role to encourage and support the development and refinement of priority datasets, serving on most of the Montana Geographic Information Council (MGIC) Implementation Teams (I-Teams) and chairing four.

Secured new contract agreements with; the State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) for providing an internet portal to archeological and cultural data, the DEQ for providing internet access to air quality data, and the Department of Public Health and Human Services for assistance and participation in their Environmental Public Health Tracking (EPHT) project. The EPHT project will attempt to recognize links between environmental conditions and public health outcomes.

We are in the wrap up stage of a major project with the USFS and NRCS to complete the delineation of '6th code' subwatersheds for Montana. Subwatersheds are subdivisions of a watershed based on hydrology, generally corresponding to the area drained by a small tributary, as opposed to a major river.

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.

Web Use and Requests: Jul 2003 – Mar 2004

	Jul-Mar FY03	Jul-Mar FY04	% Change
Mediated Data Requests			
Total Active Users*	NA	1,179	NA
NRIS State Requests	575	904	57.2%
NHP Requests	318	326	2.5%
Web Services			
NRIS State Program			
Static Page Views	1,841,396	1,742,834	-5.7%

Dynamic Page Views	1,912,049	1,983,837	3.6%
GIS Files Downloaded	321,002	279,481	-14.9%
Visitor Sessions	432,722	451,938	4.3%
NHP			
Static Page Views	119,054	147,740	19.4%
Dynamic Page Views	82,322	130,609	37.0%
Visitor Sessions	70,034	109,945	36.3%

* An active user is defined as one who has made a request within two years prior to the last month shown in the column heading. This data is not available for the FY02 period because our new consolidated request log information goes back only to July 1, 2001.

Services:

Continued updates and maintenance of the MT drought monitoring page, including conversion of this site to the NRIS standardized template-driven model.

Outreach:

Began a series of six **watershed group trainings** on NRIS services around the state as part of an EPA grant for watershed planning assistance.

Staff attended **national EPHT conference** in Philadelphia as part of new contract work.

Staff attended **national Government Information Locator Service (GILS) conference** in North Carolina.

February’s NRIS Seminar, *“Using Census Data with GIS”* was presented by Kris Larsen of the CEIC/Montana Department of Commerce. It was an informative and well-attended presentation.

Marjean Magraw and Christine Korhonen with the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services were guest speakers at the **March NRIS Seminar**. Their presentation was *“GIS and the Environmental Public Health Tracking Program.”*

NRIS received **print coverage** in February for its new three-tier data access system and updated cadastral/CAMA shapefiles.

NRIS was the subject of a **feature story** in the March 29th *Bozeman Chronicle*. [See *Literature Sampler tab for story.*] Began a series of six watershed group trainings on NRIS services around the state as part of an EPA grant for watershed planning assistance.

Staff attended national EPHT conference in Philadelphia as part of new contract work with DPHHS. Also provided an introduction to NRIS information and on-line tools to county and tribal staff who are participating in the EPPHT project.

Staffed a booth highlighting NRIS geospatial information access at the state-sponsored e-9-1-1 conference.

Staffed a booth highlighting NRIS information and on-line tools at the Montana Outdoor Recreation Exposition (MORE) in Billings.

Heritage staff attended a week-long BLM biologist training meeting in Billings during March. HNP staff made several presentations there, including training sessions for BLM biologist on using the NHP EO Portal—a web based application that allows access to Montana Species of Concern information (Element Occurrences).

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

Due to the amount of work requested of NRIS by other agencies, NRIS core funding is adequate for the remainder of FY 04. We continue to struggle with balancing work on internal projects in support of our core mission with work on other agency' projects that align closely with that mission. At this point, there is likely enough work to justify additional staff; however, work in support of other agencies has historically fluctuated, resulting in the need to reduce staff during lean times.

The EPA grant proposal described under Goal 1 (color infrared photography project) will provide funding to support existing staff beginning in FY04.

The EPHT agreement with DPHS will provide funding for existing staff as well as funding for a full-time temporary GIS analyst position through September 04, and will likely continue through the next federal fiscal year (through September 05).

Personnel Notes:

NHP hired Linnaea Smith as a part-time Database assistant to help with data entry and quality control.

NHP is currently recruiting for Senior Zoologist, Web Applications Developer, and Biological Data Systems Coordinator. More information on these positions may be found at <http://nhp.nris.state.mt.us/employ/>.