

MSdL - Natural Resource Information System (NRIS)

April 19 to May 26, 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.

Provided another complete revision of the Cadastral/Cama data as of May 15, 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 DEQ for providing up to date internet access to five key remediation databases; the DNRC to update and enhance the NRIS Water Rights application; and the DOA for work on data hosting, outreach and training for GIS products and services for the Homeland Security community.

NHP began a semi-annual update of the Montana Stewardship GIS dataset, as well as updating of distribution or "occurrence" data for a number of priority animal species.

Working closely with FWP staff, NHP zoologists conducted annual review of status ranks for Animal Species of Concern, using an innovative assessment process to provide more accurate, consistent and well-documented results. The NHP Botanist began reviewing and updating ranks for many plant Species of Concern as well.

NHP zoologists conducted annual census of Harlequin ducks on several streams in northwest Montana where they nest.

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 – Apr 2004

	Jul-Mar FY03	Jul-Mar FY04	% Change
Mediated Data Requests			
Total Active Users*	NA	1,179	NA
NRIS State Requests	953	1022	7.2%
NHP Requests	524	408	-22.1%
Web Services			
NRIS State Program			
Static Page Views	2,108,989	1,960,892	-7.6%
Dynamic Page Views	2,123,171	2,276,008	6.7%
GIS Files Downloaded	350,390	309,872	-13.1%
Visitor Sessions	540,133	511,755	-5.5%
NHP			
Static Page Views	136,027	166,307	18.2%
Dynamic Page Views	95,196	161,494	41.1%
Visitor Sessions	81,242	125,615	35.3%

* 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.

Added new search options to the Digital Atlas including the updated legislative districts and the CAMA parcel id.

Announced and rolled out a new Montana Fishing Guide in cooperation with Fish, Wildlife, and Parks.

Outreach:

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

Staff presented an NRIS overview at the Environmental Public Health Tracking Network's brown bag lunch series.

NHP provided training in the use of Species of Concern databases to the US Bureau of Land Management's Oil and Gas Leasing personnel in Billings.

Staff presented NRIS site training to DNRC water rights clerks.

Staff presented two four-hour workshops and three talks at the annual Montana – Idaho GIS user's conference in Billings.

Plans for the creation of a database to track outreach presentations/conferences are underway.

April's NRIS Seminar, "*An On-Line Demo of the Montana Fishing Guide*" was presented by Janet Hess-Herbert of Montana FWP. Her presentation was informative and very well attended.

Rob Hazlewood of the US Fish and Wildlife Service presented "*From Montana to Mexico: The Western North American Migratory Bird Project*" at the **May NRIS Seminar**.

The following media opportunities were arranged last month to publicize NRIS resources: Drought mapping/info resources, Lee Newspapers and MTN-TV as tie-ins to their coverage of the Governor's Drought Advisory Committee Meeting. [See *Literature Sampler Tab for story.*] Plant Field Guide story: *Billings Gazette*.

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

The new contract agreements with DEQ, DNRC, and DOA described under Goal 1, the approximately ten other agreements that will carry forward into FY2005, augment our core budget to adequately fund the program at its current operational level well into FY 2005.

NHP submitted annual funding proposals to the Bureau of Land Management under BLM's Challenge Cost Share program. NHP also received funding to conduct a full status survey and update of the Long-styled Thistle, which is endemic to the Big Belt & Little Belt Mountains of Montana, and to complete status surveys for Spalding's Catchfly (from the US Fish & Wildlife Service).

Personnel Notes:

Scott Mincemoyer recently joined the Natural Heritage Program as Program Botanist. Cedron Jones, formerly of the Natural Heritage Program, is returning to the program on a temporary basis to assist with updates to the Montana Stewardship GIS database.

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/>.