# Montana State digital Library (MSdL) – Natural Resource Information System (NRIS)

January 15, 2005 – March 15, 2005

**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.**

NRIS completed and posted new data offerings:

- Posted high-resolution (1 foot pixel) natural-color aerial photos of Anaconda, Butte, Cut Bank, Deer Lodge, Glendive, Great Falls, Hamilton, Havre, Helena, Lewistown, Miles City, and Sidney on our web site at http://nris.mt.gov/nsdi/orthophotos. Orthophotos of 8 other Montana areas are in the pipeline, but may be delayed due to problems at the firm contracted to post-process the images. The bulk of this imagery is made possible through an Office of Domestic Preparedness (ODP) Homeland Security Grant. The Helena imagery is provided through a cooperative project between the City of Helena - Lewis and Clark County GIS Center and the USGS Montana Partnership Office in Bozeman, MT.

- Heritage Program continued a big push to update species occurrence records in the BIOTICS database. Progress through the Jan – Mar period, is shown below, totaled over 3000 updates and over 200 new records. The data backlog for plant Species of Concern has been about 95% processed, and staff are now focused on updating the much larger backlog of data for animal species.

| For Jan-Mar 05 | New records | Modified records |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Plants | 154 | 1361 |
| Animals | 66 | 1684 |

- Scanned about 60 NHP zoology reports (pre-2000) for posting on the web.

NRIS and FWP coordinated and cost shared to implement a SQL Server failover system that will provide for continuous access to our on-line services in the event of server failure.

Program statistics are not available due to the loss of personnel. Web statistics will be generated for this period when systems staff positions are filled.

**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.**

**Services:**
- Made significant enhancements to the NHP web application that provides deep database access to state and federal agency biologists. Began developing a plan for full deployment and training with agency personnel, and a strategy for resolving the current 10-user limit.

- Began work on an application to provide improved access to DEQ remediation site information.

- Continues work with Department of Public Health and Human Services databases to add a location component to facilitate linking health data to environmental data. This will be

a multi-year project for the agency, as their many databases all differ in terms of how addresses are managed.

- Began work on development of an access portal for state air quality a for the Department of Environmental Quality.

- Negotiated an agreement with the Department of Environmental Quality to develop an improved interface for accessing their Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) data. This agreement will begin in FY05 and continue through December of FY06.

**Outreach:**
- Heritage Program launched a web survey to get broad input on NHP services, priorities and future administrative options. The response was overwhelming both in volume (64 respondents from 260 email notices sent!) and expressions of support, and generated excellent input on priorities and future options.

- Participated in DPHHS planning session related to their Environmental Public Health Tracking (EPHT) project.

- Participated in a planning session with the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation to help them plan for implementation of an enterprise GIS for the agency.

**Goal 3: In order to fulfill its mandate as described under Issues 1 and 2, NRIS secures adequate and stable funding.**
- Held a meeting of the NRIS Advisory Committee, focusing on future administration of the NHP. Meeting included representatives of major federal agencies (BLM, USFWS, NRCS) as well as NRIS state "Source Agencies," the private for-profit and non-profit sectors, and the University of Montana. Partners emphasized strong support for the continuity of NHP products and services and identified key elements for the program's continued success. The University expressed interest in potential administration the NHP. Results of this meeting will be used to inform the Alternatives Assessment being developed.

- Review is underway of NRIS interagency agreements for FY06. Although it is unlikely that current agreements are adequate to carry the program through FY06, it is apparent that there is much work to be done and agencies are in need of assistance.

# Personnel Notes:

Sibyl Govan began work on April 4 as NRIS Projects Manager. Sibyl comes to us from the Network Technology Services Bureau at ITSD.

Pam Chriske was hired as NHP Finance/Office Assistant, a half-time position.

Recruitment was successful for an Ecologist for the NHP; Linda Vance will begin work on May 1.

John Redmond, who performed system administration tasks during his service in the Air Force, began work as our Network Administrator on March 14.

Following a round of interviews, the Web Application Developer interview team decided to reopen the recruitment for two more weeks. The second recruitment closes on April 11.

The Library Systems Specialist position was offered to the top candidate from the first round of interviews. Unfortunately, he declined the position. A second recruitment is underway.