

Montana State Digital Library

May 15, 2005 – July 15, 2005

Natural Resource Information System (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.

NRIS completed and posted new data offerings:

- Added Precision Topographic and Bathymetric Mapping Data files for the Yellowstone River Conservation District. These data will support ongoing hydrologic, hydraulic, and geomorphologic studies in the Yellowstone River Corridor.
- Posted two final watersheds for public review. NRIS has been hosting the public review process for two years as part of a cooperative effort between NRIS, the US Forest Service and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to finalize boundary delineations for Montana's several hundred sub-watersheds at the 1:24k scale.
- Added Species of Concern search tools to the Natural Heritage Program (NHP) website, including search by geographic area and/or status.
- Completed significant design improvements to the NHP web pages, making them easier for users to find the most frequently used applications and resources.
- Completed annual update of the Land Stewardship database (Public and Conservation Lands), which forms a key data layer for many NRIS and NHP web applications.
- Completed reports summarizing the distribution and status of the Pygmy Rabbit (with Bureau of Land Management [BLM] support), a multi-state status update for Water Howellia (federally listed; with US Fish and Wildlife Service [USFWS] support), and the vegetation of Ecological Sites, a land classification created by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (BLM support).

Goal 2: A broad range of user groups can easily locate data in effective formats. Users find this information 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:

- At the request of the Governor's Budget Office, NRIS produced a series of maps about school district funding levels
- Updated the NRIS statewide soils coverage in cooperation with NRCS. This information supports agricultural planning.
- NRIS has begun processing the National Hydrography Dataset (NHD) at the 1:24k scale. This high-priority dataset is not yet complete for Montana. As the NHD steward, NRIS will host the data, mediate future updates, and provide training for natural resource professionals on making changes to the NHD

- Provided hospital data to the Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) Public Health & Safety Division to help with their emergency preparedness exercise, Last Chance One, which took place on June 20-24,2005.
- Deployed new Image Management System that will result in vastly improved management and accessibility of the NHP digital image archive. Also digitized the entire NHP botany slide collection, totaling over 1000 images, so that they can be integrated into the digital image archive.
- Revised Montana Bird Distribution database and updated about 1000 records for Species of Concern.
- Updated database structure for NHP Point Observation Database and added several hundred new records gleaned from existing reports.

Outreach:

- Attended two GIS planning meetings for the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC). DNRC hopes to implement an agency-wide Geographic Information System over the next five years.
- Attended the Critical Infrastructures I-team to provide data about Montana's hospitals.
- Attended meetings of the Address Data Modeling Group. This group has been working on a standardized database structure for storing address data. The adoption of this model will enable public agencies to spatially represent any kind of information that is stored in a database and referenced by a street address.
- Served on the GIS Subcommittee of the State Emergency Response Commission.

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

- NRIS has renewed interagency agreements with state agencies for FY06. In addition, new agreements are in place with the Sun River Watershed Group and the Yellowstone River Conservation District to host data specific to their projects.
- NRIS has begun working on FY06 renewals for agreements with federal agencies. For the most part, federal agreements expire on September 30.
- Conversations on the future administration of the NHP have continued with key partners, including the University of Montana, which has indicated strong interest in assuming The Nature Conservancy's contractor role. Many issues will need to be examined before the State Library can fully evaluate this option.

Library Information Services

We are making good progress testing the use of OCLC's Digital Archive software to capture electronic publications for the State Publications Center. We have 339 items in the new digital repository as of 7/15/05. There have been some problems with harvests failing. We are working with OCLC on addressing some of our bug reports and wish list items. OCLC has been very responsive and within a day, the problem is usually solved.

We are discovering there are many issues with how State agencies post information. At present, we cannot harvest anything that is in PDF form containing internal links to other portions of the report. This is an issue that OCLC is already aware of and is working on. Related to that issue is the inability to harvest anything that includes a link that goes off the mt.gov domain. We have not yet attempted to harvest any of the NRIS maps. We are looking into metadata cross-walks and continuing internal discussions in an effort to come up with feasible solutions to reference these types of objects in the collection. Tori is attending the ESRI (mapping software) conference at the end of July in order to investigate partnerships or solutions that already exist but that we may not be aware of. We have been archiving Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology Open File Reports presently stored on CDs. It's been a slow process since the reports first need to be transferred from the CD to the MSL server so they can be harvested with the web harvesting tool.

Another issue up for staff discussion is to determine the priority of archiving electronic state documents already on the shelf in formats subject to imminent obsolescence (e.g. 3 ½ " floppy discs, zip drive discs, etc.) and how much time and manpower we can afford to spend digitizing older materials while still moving forward with the new.

In addition Jim Kammerer has been compiling data and information to share with the permanent public access committee so that we may make an informed, united decision as to the definition of a state publication and move forward with any necessary documentation required for the next legislative session in order to update current statutes regarding publications.

Roberta Gebhart attended the Library of Congress "Workshop for the States" along with Molly Kruckenberg, State Archivist, and Patty Borsberry, State Records Manager. MSL was invited by the Library of Congress as part of their National Digital Information Infrastructure Preservation Program (NDIIPP). The workshop was basically a fact finding mission for LC. They wanted to know what types of information states are interested in preserving, what states are doing to preserve this information and what role LC should play in this process. They held three of these workshops so they could get input from all the states and US territories. A final report should be forthcoming from the information gathered at these workshops. It is nice to know that we are about in the same situation as all other states in regards to preserving state government information. We encouraged LC to continue these types of meetings so that we can build a community of knowledge that can help each other as we tackle these issues.

Acquisitions has been working with Library Development purchasing, processing and adding 100+ new titles to our professional Library collection aimed at serving librarians throughout the state. Additionally we have been compiling a complete list of journal titles that are available electronically and in paper form through the library. This list does include titles accessed separately through our various subscription databases. These databases are Ebsco Journal Service, Proquest Journal Service, and BioOne. The spreadsheet includes the following information: titles, contact person, if a license agreement is needed, online access urls, and passwords if they are necessary.

Construction and lack of signage hinder smooth administration of the public portion of the physical library but we are looking forward to a finished conference room and public space sometime in late August.

Personnel Notes:

Tim Metcalfe accepted the GIS Programmer/Analyst position that NRIS advertised in June. We hope to backfill his previous position, EPHT Coordinator, by August 15th. The EPHT Coordinator is a temporary position funded by DPHHS.

Dave Ratz accepted the Web Applications Developer position that was advertised this past spring. Dave splits his time equally between NHP and NRIS. Since he started in June, Dave has finished a Heritage web application, helped with the NRIS blade server migration and performed an audit of the Water Information System website.

TJ Abbenhaus has departed NRIS to work for Kitsap County in Washington State. The GIS Programmer/Analyst position he vacated was advertised before he left, closing on his last day, July 15th. We are in the process of evaluating the pool of applicants and will conduct interviews in early August.

NRIS also advertised for a part-time Web Systems Manager in June and July. The position closed on July 21st. We are in the process of evaluating the pool of applicants and will conduct interviews in mid August.