

Montana State Digital Library

January 2006 – February 2006

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 concentrated much of its staff activity this period on configuring the new data center hardware and software, including:
 - Reorganizing the server room
 - Configuring a new blade server array as web servers, mapping servers, and database servers, each with failover to reduce downtime
 - Migrating the various Web sites to the new configuration
 - Planning for migrating our databases to the new configuration.
- Input and updating of Natural Heritage data is usually quite labor-intensive. Each record of a plant or animal observation that is submitted to the NHP must be checked for validity (i.e., to avoid mis-identifications). It is then entered into the Point Observation database, which forms the basis for mapping Occurrence polygons – areas known or highly likely to be occupied by a given species, based on the observation data and what is known of the species' habitat characteristics and home range size. Source or reference data is also rigorously documented for each Observation and Occurrence record.
- To expedite getting data into the NHP databases, staff have been working with partners to develop electronic data exchange protocols. This requires that each agency collect and record critical data in consistent ways. Agreement was reached at the Feb. 27 NHP Partners Committee meeting to form a Biological Data Management Working Group, led by MTNHP, to establish these standards among the various agencies collecting wildlife data in Montana. We are also working with the US Forest Service to develop digital data exchange procedures.
- 2005 NAIP Color Ortho-photography for the entire state had begun to arrive at NRIS in county bundles. NRIS staff are experimenting with various methods of serving these very large files to users over the Internet, as well as processing the data into smaller, more manageable, files to post on the website.

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:

- The NRIS website averaged about 3300 visitor sessions per day during January and February, while the NHP site averaged over 600 visitor sessions per day in January

and close to 800 visitor sessions per day during February. Overall, web usage continues to increase.

- NRIS staff filled approximately 100 online data requests this period in addition to the numerous questions and problems that came in via telephone and e-mail.
- The Natural Heritage Program responded to 1,213 requests in the past year (Feb 05 thru Jan 06); this reflects an average of just over 100 requests *every month* or about five requests every business day. Most of these are database searches to identify any Species of Concern that may be in proposed project areas. These reviews are required for environmental assessments and impact statements, many types of permitting, noxious weed control projects, and transportation projects. Major requestors include the MT Dept. of Natural Resources (339), the MT Dept. of Environmental Quality (189), and the MT Dept. of Transportation (111); however over 200 requests came from the private sector. These statistics reflect only requests involving direct staff assistance – other agencies such as MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks, the Bureau of Land Management and the US Forest Service make extensive direct use of NHP databases and web resources.
- The NHP completed a report and detailed vegetation map for Montana's Rocky Mountain Front area. The report, entitled *Montana's Rocky Mountain Front: Vegetation Map and Type Descriptions, February 2006*, is available in pdf format via the web.
- NRIS staff completed several projects under partnership agreements with other agencies, including work on the DEQ Remediation Site query application, the DNRC Water Right Query System, and extensive development with our partner FWP on existing and new mapping applications. NRIS special projects staff continue to work closely with DPHHS on the Environmental Public Health Tracking project, including mapping, database design, database augmentation, website design, and outreach to county health personnel.

Outreach:

- NRIS participated in meetings of the Montana Land Information Advisory Council, the Information Technology Managers Council, The Information Technology Board, the E-Gov Advisory Council, The NHP Partners Committee, the EPHT Advisory Council, the Ground Water Assessment Steering Committee, the Governor's Drought Committee, and the Homeland Security GIS Subcommittee.
- Natural Heritage Program staff made presentations at several conferences and meetings, including the Montana Chapter of the Wildlife Society and the Western Bird Working Group. NHP staff also gave presentations to for MDT Environmental Services staff and the FWP brown-bag series.

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

- The NHP Partners Committee, at its Feb. 27 meeting, recommended a \$150,000 increase in the state core funding for the NHP as well as pursuing an additional \$90,000 in funding for NHP core services from other sources (e.g., federal agencies and the University of Montana). The goal of these increases is to provide adequate funding for

10.5 positions that are essential for delivery of NHP core services (currently only about 4.5 positions are supported by state core funding).

- The NRIS Advisory Committee, at its March 22, supported the recommendation of the NHP Partners Committee discussed above, and also supported a similar increase in funding for the NRIS State program. The committee recommended that MSL request the support of the heads of the five funding agencies to bring these funding recommendations to the attention of the governor's office.

Library Information Services

LIS Goal 1: State employees have the information that they need to make good public policy recommendations and decisions.

- Outreach and Access Librarian coordinated and participated with 3 LIS staff and 2 NRIS/NHP staff in an Overview of Library Resources presentation, which was held on February 14 in the Montana State Library for 21 Montana State Government workers, and again on March 14 in the Montana State Library for 14 Montana State Government workers.
- Outreach Librarian presented at the Orientation for new state employees February 9 and March 16 in the Metcalf building along with advocates from other departments.
- Outreach Librarian organized and will participate with an NRIS representative in four Library Online Resources presentations to be held in Miles Community College, Miles City on March 27 and 28 for 30 Montana State Government employees.
- LIS in cooperation with the Census and Economic Information Center organized a ReferenceUSA database hands-on workshop for March 29 to be held in the Montana State Library Grizzly Conference room using the LIS lab computers.

LIS Goal 2: The staff of Montana libraries know about and have access to the professional literature that they need.

- LIS has been helping the Montana Historical Society with questions regarding copy cataloging, authority control, and participating in the Digital Archive Pilot Project. We also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with MHS to share in the expense of providing a ProQuest database dedicated to Montana's Sanborn Map collection to Montana libraries and state employees.
- LIS has worked with the Montana Department of Transportation Research Library get their contract catalogers up and running. The Catalog Librarian has provided copies of the MSC cataloging guidelines for them to use and has answered questions that they have regarding the Montana Shared Catalog.
- A class was provided to the Acquisitions Librarian on BCR/OCLC Local Holdings Maintenance. The class will help LIS when we have to create or edit our local holdings for periodicals/serials on OCLC. This product replaces the Union Listing on OCLC Passport.
- CONTENTdm: Basic Instruction for Users on was provided to Montana Librarians in the Grizzly Conference Room on Tuesday, on March 7, 2006 in anticipation of offering support to the Montana Memory Project.
- LIS staff participated in the Offline annual conference, co-sponsored by the Montana Library Association and the Montana Library Network on February 24 and 25.

- LIS hosted the OCLC Western Montana Members Meeting in February. This event brought together over 40 Montana Librarians with 7 OCLC staff to participate in break out sessions and lectures updating attendees on current library practices.

LIS Goal 4: Users have easy and comprehensive access to information through the library.

- The Circulation Librarian completed 328 interlibrary loan requests and circulated 205 items to state employees since the last commission report. This includes 69 loans of MSL materials to the public and other out of state libraries.
- LIS counted 2,475 separate visits to the physical collection (to-date) during the months of February and March. This includes workshop and orientation attendees from both LIS functions and other agency uses of the library's conference rooms.
- LIS purchased 63 new titles for the library's general collection. This includes reference books and monographs.
- LIS added 82 objects to the digital repository (we have started to call it the "ARC" because it is shorter than "the digital repository", the acronym brings to mind an image of an ark that saves objects that may be in both print and digital form and is short for "Agency Repository Collection. "

Total objects added since last commission report = 1035; total size in GB= 7.12; total number of separate entries 6503. As of March 22, we have 1113 objects in the ARC (which is different than files).

Cataloging of printed titles in Feb. = 17 new titles; To date for March printed titles = 53
Electronic titles in Feb= 5; Electronic titles in March= 5

OCLC Digital Archive Access Summary					
FEB-06					
Institution MZB					
Accessing					
Inst	Inst Name	Location	Access Requests	Objects Accessed	
MZB	MONTANA STATE LIBR	Montana	39	39	
MZF	MONTANA STATE UNIV, MSU LIBR	Montana	25	25	
ALM	UNIV OF ALABAMA	Alabama	3	3	
EM2	MONTANA STATE UNIV, BILLINGS	Montana	3	3	
OFM	UNIV OF OSLO	NORWAY	2	2	
E4G	EGE UNIVERSITESI	TURKEY	1	1	
KYLCH	LAKE CUMBERLAND HEALTH DEPT	Kentucky	1	1	
OCC	OCLC LIBR	Ohio	1	1	
Public	N/A		5	5	