

# Minutes to NRIS Advisory Committee Meeting

March 22, 2006  
Montana State Library  
1515 E. Sixth Avenue, Helena  
Grizzly Conference Room  
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## 1. Call to Order

## 2. Welcome & Introductions - Chair (John Tubbs)

### Attendee's:

John Tubbs	(Dept. of Natural Resources, Conservation Resources Program)
Bud Evert	(Staff for Legislative Environmental Quality Council)
Darlene Staffeldt	(Montana State Librarian)
Mark Palmer	(Montana Historical Society)
_____ Stalone	(Montana Department of Agriculture)
Stan Stenberg	(Montana Dept. of Transportation)
Jen Hetcherbert	(Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks)
Dean Kolile	(Private Sector & Dept. of Environmental Services)
Bonnie Lovelace	(Dept. of Environmental Quality)
Donna M. Caban	(MT State Library)
Jim Hill	(Administrator of Digital Library, Housing Natural Resources Div, MT State Lib)
Alan Cox	(Systems & Services Manager, Dept. of Natural Res. Heritage Program)
Jerry Dowlin	(with NRIS since 1988) – who is this person? Is it suppose to be Gerry
Duamiller?	
Mark Dwire	(Dept. of Administration)
Gregg Matzel	(Dept. of Insurance & Services)

**(Get spelling of all names from Jim Hill)**

## 3. NRIS Core Report: (Jim Hill)

Basic Overview: Aims primarily at the core funding agencies and contracts. Contracts require reporting what has been done and what is intended to be done. Trying to figure out how to report to the agencies and have tried several different formats. Reports go to the Commission, Legislature, and outside. Have Bi-annual Reports to the Commission. State Library annual reports are tri-fold. Sue Crispin suggested a newsletter format for reporting to the agencies. Looking for feedback for what works and what doesn't.

Question: What was your overall initial goal of this report after the NRISation? What did you want to accomplish that would bring the message out? Want the agencies to understand that the money that they are putting into this program that is funding this program through other legislative appropriations and other means is going to serve something that benefits those agencies. And we want to present this in a way that they can start to understand, what it takes to keep NRIS here, what type of things NRIS is working on that they may not be directly related to that agency, but that it hinges them in some way, and that they can recognize the benefits, even if it does not hinge on them directly. We would like their understanding, additional use of the program, to give us good advice about how to change if we are going down the wrong pathway and their support.

Questions & Discussion: How broad of a distribution, is it real targeted audience, or what is it? The immediate target of this particular report is five funding agencies. However, in putting together this report we thought, why not make it something that is more useful to a wider audience. We want to satisfy the needs of the reports and those four funding agencies, as well as, just get the word out of the things that

are going on and use it for an education outreach tool. Then we would get more excited about doing reports and be of more benefit to them. The distribution was very broad and tried to get it out to a wider audience.

Did this in any way surprise you, because within your core contracts did you have reporting requirements in any way? That's true, the primary, and whether it meets that criteria or not we haven't heard back from any of the agencies as to whether they are thrilled with this reporting format or whether they think that what we are reporting on actually making sense. One of the things I would mention is that of a contractual perspective is that there isn't any kind of a financial update on the core expenditures. There was some discussion about whether there is some contractual obligation to meet certain standards, to accomplish certain things, and to have that financial report in before the bills get paid. We in fact argued pretty strongly against that. This is just open to objective (didn't hear). Certainly we need guidance if we're heading down the wrong path, the pathway that serves these agencies. It is line itemed in the agency's budget, essentially coming to us, but we should essentially be responsible for using that money well. From a fiscal perspective it is like a status report, not like getting your next check or 60% expended or done. We do report to the Library Commission every month and that includes a financial statement. It would be no additional work to add a financial statement.

Information is forwarded to managers by e-mail and they report back. Some managers would like to know more about it and that the information is there. Would like to keep getting information (core) in the same format. Ok if continue format, indicate core information, and progress quarterly/ongoing. Good level of detail, managers in agency like it, and are happy with it at this point and time.

Would like to see a shorter format. Would like to see different user's portrayed like a pie chart. Once we get into the funding issues we don't think we're really presenting the novice private sector, or non-core funding agencies here. This may be a valuable tool when we get into the discussions on core funding with the Legislature. For our immediate requests, those that call in and ask for staff assistance. They can be tracked as to who is calling in and what they are asking.. For web use, we can differentiate at this point between state users and the private sector. So with the pie chart we have two, state users and the private sector. In the future we are hoping that we can start differentiating various agencies and those who care about seeing whether their agency is not fully using the services.

On the private sector use though our data gets a little fuzzy though. We get a lot of consultants working on behalf of say MDT or DEQ. They could submit the request on a Saturday and if they don't fill out whom they are doing it for exactly we may not catch that. It is not by any means precise.

My opinion about quarterly reports is the shorter, the better. I always liked bullet formats. It's easier for me to sort of skim through the things that are with the first things that I can see the topic that has meaning to me. And, sometimes on some of these it is kind of nice to see a next quarter and what you in vision as work that you will be doing. Probably, if you did a bullet idea you might be able to cut down on the size a little bit. I don't know how the others feel, but there is so much to read and particularly sending it out to other people, it's nice whether I end up editing it to things that are more important to them or whatever, it's still I think easier to read when we make it a little more concise and with a few more readers using it. I think that there is good rationale behind each.

Bullet headings really provide an outline and can make the first page shows you the picture a little bit. The reader can decide to go to a section or two for more information and/or to just know that. Maybe that front page can be done in an outline structure to help the reader jump to the interesting things they want to look at.

It is probably okay what you've got here. I can see some fall down on my part not distributing this to

people who probably will use it. But when you point out new enhancements or do wrinkles in your system it would be kind of nice to know. With a lack of feedback from any of the agencies it is hard to know what you want or what is required. I think what you've got here is fine.

I'm ok with the format as it is and I tend to like bullets better than this. I don't see anything wrong with restating the core mission. We do get a lot of turnover in staff and this redistributes this stuff around. And this helps to understand what the program is all about, what its mission is. Just having updates as to what you're doing, what's new, and when there's new components being developed will be good.

From the perspective of a non-core agency, I like the report. I was telling Dan before the meeting that I thought it was written in a good style that was accessible to folks who aren't deeply involved with what you are doing, but to get a sense of all the things that you are involved with. I like the ideas about maybe a little catchy stuff at the beginning and an outline. I think that could add to it. I think it probably could become shorter as you maybe don't cover some of the basic stuff again, like indicating what your basic services are of the different core applications. Does that need to be in every quarterly report?

Again, not coming from a core agency, but coming from a legislative perspective, when I look at a document like this all I'm seeing is a blur of words. I think we talked about shortening it up, but I think I also like the idea of integration of your documents for an overall communication. Not to just the core agencies, but you should be able to insert this document or have it be a part of your business plan or your funding papers in which you can give to a legislative finance committee and they can breeze through it. It could be a piece of your overall communication plan. I know this is for the core agencies, but I think the legislature would like to see what it is that you're communicating with these agencies. And I think it is a good idea to have up front the purpose of this document is.

I just want to comment on what Janet said. What you want to focus on is what's changed, what were the objectives for this quarter, what was actually accomplished, and what are the objectives for the following quarter. By just getting it down to these components it doesn't have to be summed up (didn't hear).

#### Questions & Discussion:

What's our responsibility as an NRIS Advisory Committee Member? Clearly Bonnie set the standard and once she receives it, she gets it out to her management teams. We would feel like the bottom was falling out if NRIS went away or we didn't have that resource. Message is really important when you're in the agencies, especially at the administrative and manager team, because we are getting information all along, but we do need to keep track of important resources like NRIS. Maybe part of our responsibility, what we ought to be doing, maybe you can help us, send this to advisory council members and say you have a responsibility here to distribute information to your agency as a core team.

So is this the format you are going to use from here on out. Is this going to be a quarterly newsletter sent via e-mail? If I am going to take this to a resource staff level that first page of one page real summary would be critical. The mission, what's new, and what's planned. So it really does boil it down because I won't get readership on five pages here. It just won't happen, they just won't read it, and it won't grab them. So something to grab them, a quick what we're about, what we've done, big highlight, what we plan to do for next quarter, how can we help, something that elicits engagement, what we need from you as a core agency this quarter. The first page is going to satisfy some readers. And more in-depth will read on. Some need to outreach in their e-mails. The daily newsletter is not being sent out any more and an e-mail can be sent out similar to it and sent out quarterly.

#### **4. NRIS Strategic Plan: (Jim Hill)**

### Basic Overview: NRIS Draft Work Plan for Montana State Library (MSL) DRAFT

Darlene is attempting to bring the State Library under one strategic plan. Our past strategic plans have been handled by each division or program separately. She is attempting to get us all talking the same language and have an agency approach. We are all having some good times with that and some difficulties with that. The goals for the State Library are at the bottom of the first page. I can see where we find what we do with those goals, but they're not providing me the direction I need to continue on. So we've come to a second level beyond the overall agency direction goals to assess that really aligns themselves more with each of the divisions. And those are seen as a set at the top of page 2 under MSL Goal 1 there's a Digital Library Division Objectives. And in that section you'll see there's numbers missing. That's because there are several digital library division goals that don't relate to that or NRIS. And then under NRIS Sibyl is attempting to pull together what kinds of items and ideas would reside in a work plan for a couple of years for NRIS. You can see this is in very draft form.

Request & Discussion: We are very anxious to get input from all our partner agencies and any other users that desire to comment. The entire plan is on the web and comments can be made on the site. I think if you're interested in NRIS for a particular reason it's going to be easier for you to focus on a document like this. I would recommend that you read your ASN and circle what you like, cross out what you don't, and add what's missing. Feel free to edit to your heart's content and get it back to me. The format is the (can't hear) agency mission vision values and goals, followed by the interlibrary division library objectives and the NRIS work plan items under each of those. We're in the early draft stage, but one can make some progress. Certainly that can affect us as we rap up our EDP process and approach the next legislative session. It affects our IT plan, which is in ITSD hands and in draft form right now, but could be modified somewhat as this comes together. The sooner that we can make some good progress on this the better. I would ask that if you have any comments that we get to see them within the next two weeks. I would really like to hear any questions you might have on anything you see there and will try to help to understand what we are shooting for. Does anyone have any initial comments?

If anyone has any comments please forward them within the next two weeks which is April 5<sup>th</sup>. Jim Hill will take this to the Commission on April 12<sup>th</sup>. You could give inputs by the end of the month (March 31 2006). There is a MSL agency version on the web which is much cleaner for NRIS target groups.

How do you feel this is coordinated with the strategic plan? Was coordinating it problematic? We will learn from this process and make a course adjustments as necessary.

What are the business requirements, IT plan, and how do you get both to relate? Centralized IT group and members are located in different locations. State Library IT Group is their program group. Larger agencies may have separated groups with IT and programmers. It will take both, with issues on both sides, to understand completely.

Will you be required to issue a report every month and reference these items? The State Library reports to their commission every two months. We format the quarterly reports in the site. It is important that there be some monitoring with these reports.

Action Plan: Any input, suggestions and comments are due by March 31, 2006.

## **5. Proposed Web Survey: (Jim Hill)**

Basis Overview: Jim shared an overview of the survey on the web. There is some difficulty with using only the web. He would like to get this survey up and on the web within a couple of weeks.

Requests, Questions, & Discussion: Are there any questions that are to be asked at each agency, or anything else? The survey and questions for Heritage should get at the heart of what

trying to be accomplished and should get the value of what it means to the state of Montana.

Why are doing the survey and what is the intent? What is the value of the survey? Why does it exist?  
What are some concerns?  
usability, etc.

What is the role of the library in a more digital world? Bringing on resources to show that we are the best we can be and to bring the information to the public. All agencies need to think about how data interacts with NRIS, IT, and libraries in the future.

What other data or information do you need that is out of date? What projects do you have coming up in the future that we can assist you with?

Action Plan: Input or comments required by April 7, 2006.

## **6. NRIS financial update and planning**

Basic Overview: With questions, concerns, and work in progress....EPP questions/concerns – working with .....have a concept document in the process and Governor's office wants to support a sys's services center (data center), new to Helena, and another/2<sup>nd</sup> site....located in eastern mt. Include office facilities and agencies would use as a hosting site. (In this paragraph, I would try to make complete sentences.)

### Definitions:

Centralization – Locate each agency with infrastructure, along with economy of scale. Centralization would effect each agency, can provide certain services, however, located in different areas. Will provide high quality state of the art facilities with each agency and better environment for shared systems access. Getting indication that agencies will locate in this type of facility and very interesting in going forward with this. Majority consensus is on centralization, rather than consolidation. GIS used for critical part of business. Need to be as accommodating for each individual's needs and how we move forward is to be determined by David Newer and be cognizant that everyone is notified. Must start with the core concept and everything needs to get ironed out and all factors/roles/responsibilities need to be discussed further. Going to a more secure place to put each agency's information and need fundamental items ironed out first.

Consolidation - incorporating each agency and share part of platform for each system.

## **7. The NRIS Funding Model – Review: (Jim Hill)**

Brief Overview: Core program, contract and grant funding. Once each agency has come up to speed, State Library has stepped back, and (didn't hear).

Supplemental Core: Some agencies do not have a solid deliverable to meet the needs and acquire funding. Some agencies do have an exact deliverable to meet the needs and acquire funding. Some agencies have supplemental requirements to do along with the core. Funding has not changed for three biennia and is looking for additional funding needs to meet the needs of this program.

Question & Discussion: What are the sources of revenue? FWP - Federal Aid Program associated with highway. (didn't hear) DEQ - has various funding, from various agencies. State Library - same funding as with the universities. All indicated that it may require an increase in funding. One of the complexities you will find at the appropriations committee – keep it simple. Multiple appropriate committees are indicated. RIT funding process – there is an interim sub-committee.

Action Plan: Need support and suggestions..

## **8. Highlights and conclusions from the NHP Partners Meeting: (Alan Cox)**

Overview of NHP core funding: Support for primary data services. Data & info capture & review/validation. Data integration and management. Analysis and products: ranking, field guides Information dissemination & services. Expertise & Consultation.

NHP core service support requirements: Staffing: 10-10.5 FTE, Scientists in major disciplines, Information Management, \_\_\_\_\_.

MTNHP current annual core funding and proposed goals for FY 08-09 biennium: Current annual funding MTNHP core services: Approx. \$ 430,000. Amount needed for full core funding: \$ 633,000 – \$ 668,000. Proposed Amounts: additional need (to do core activities): \$ 205, 000 – \$ 240,000.

Strategy for core contract increase:

Goal: \$ 150,000 increase, (from \$ 303,000 to \$ 453,000)

Proposed strategy: Split 150,000 increase requested between general fund and 4 state.....

Scenario for increase request \_\_\_\_\_.

Result of proposed increases: \_\_\_\_\_.

MT Bird Distribution Core Application: Still awaiting word on finalization. Will also form a partner program with others. Inter agency data indication \_\_\_\_\_ standards for observation data.

## **9. Update: NHP contract transfer to UM: (Alan Cox)**

Brief Update and Discussion: Details transfer of employees and data to the university. Will stay in same offices and at same computer, and documents's will go to the university. In finalization station, still have some problems with leave. Leave (some sick and annual lost – cannot transfer and must compensate/work out, and/or loose it from stat employee to working for the university), employment and union status (moving from annual to hourly pay), and some other items. Authorization and funding for an additional FTE, deficit have to make up, after loosing other great personnel, (can't hear). Have had to go to broadband chart – funding 5.2 FTE personnel instead of 6 personnel.

## **10. Set date for next meeting (John)**

Next Formal Meeting Date: June 20, 2006 (9:00am to 12:00pm).

Compiled Action Plans: Comments due on Strategic Plan - March 31, 2006 and Web Survey - April 7, 2006.