

# 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.**

Acquired, processed, and added 192 new digital aerial photographs to the NRIS Digital Orthophoto web site.

Updated Bureau of Mines groundwater well GIS coverage on NRIS systems.

The Natural Heritage Program completed a status survey report on the Slender Moonwort, *Botrychium lineare*, for the US Fish & Wildlife Service.

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.

Completed major EPA grant proposal to coordinate the development and completion of a new statewide, color infrared photography project.

**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-Oct 2003

	Jul-Oct FY03	Jul-Oct FY04	% Change
<b>Mediated Data Requests</b>			
Total Active Users*	NA	1,179	NA
NRIS State Requests	366	392	7.1%
NHP Requests	211	153	-27.5%
<b>Web Services</b>			
<b>NRIS State Program</b>			
Static Page Views	686,987	812,829	15.5%
Dynamic Page Views	819,811	831,258	1.4%
GIS Files Downloaded	132,453	128,713	-2.9%
Visitor Sessions	204,564	200,450	-2.1%
<b>NHP</b>			
Static Page Views	50,344	63,819	21.1%
Dynamic Page Views	35,712	47,435	24.7%
Visitor Sessions	27,063	46,592	41.9%

\* An active user is defined as one who has made a request within two years before 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. NRIS maintains this comprehensive source of drought information as a service to the Montana Drought Advisory Committee.

Designed and tested new addition of NHP 'element occurrence' data into NRIS Digital Atlas. Exact locations will not be included in this public view. NHP and NRIS staff worked with FWP staff to ensure accurate representation of the technical biological data in a way that can be readily understood by the general user.

NHP, FWP, and NRIS staffs completed a major expansion of the Animal Field Guide for Species of Concern under the IMLS project -- much more species information is now available, including photos and audio recordings of birdcalls. A planned official joint (with FWP) rollout of the Online Animal Field Guide is set for early December. The rollout will include television, radio, and newspaper coverage.

Conducted extensive work on the GIS data dictionary, web pages, and new GIS data bundler for November 19 GIS Day rollout. Additional details will be presented in the next report.

## Outreach:

Conducted 2<sup>nd</sup> annual NRIS web user's survey. We had 120 respondents. Results can be viewed at <http://nris.state.mt.us/survey/2003/>.

Met with representatives from the Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) and the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to discuss a new project called the Environmental Public Health Tracking (EPHT) network. This project will attempt to link public health data to environmental data with the intent of identifying relationships. Presented an overview of NRIS natural resource information integration to the EPHT advisory committee.

Made a training presentation to MDT's right of way group on NRIS Internet based map services.

Provided short demo of NRIS web services to DPHHS group taking ESRI GIS training course.

September's NRIS Seminar was presented by guest speaker T.O. Smith from Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks. "Montana's Fish and Wildlife Conservation Planning Process" was informative and well attended.

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

Natural Heritage staff met with BLM State Office contact to coordinate current and future services and collaborative projects and associated funding.

The EPA grant proposal described under Goal 1 (color infrared photography project) would provide funding to support existing staff beginning in FY04.

## Personnel Notes:

Dave Stagliano, the new NHP Aquatic Ecologist, joined the staff in early November. Dave was formerly an Associate Program Leader in Aquatic Zoology with the Michigan heritage program, and most recently, served as an invertebrate taxonomist for EcoAnalysts, a private

consulting firm in Idaho. He has also worked for the U.S. Geological Survey in Denver and the Tennessee Valley Authority in Tennessee. Dave has a B.S. in Ecology from Cornell University and an M.S. in Environmental Entomology from the University of Kansas.

Kathy Lloyd joined NHP in July as a Data Assistant. Kathy is a native of the Helena area, and has been very active in the Montana Native Plant Society, both locally and statewide. Her part-time work for Heritage has so far focused on cleaning up our reference database and uploading data for the on-line Field Guides, where her keen eye for detail has been a great asset.

Curtis Bjork joined NHP as a Botany Intern in July, as he was finishing his Master's degree in Botany at Washington State University. He brought an impressive knowledge of the northwestern U.S. flora and his excitement for Montana's plants and landscapes. Curtis made great contributions to our summer inventory projects, including surveys of Spaulding's catchfly and inventory work for the Dillon and Butte Offices of BLM.

NHP held interviews for the Botany Program Manager position during November.