

Natural Resource Information System (NRIS)

November 17, 2003 – February 2, 2004

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.

Updated Corps of Engineers 404 permit (streambank stabilization) data. This database contains a full decade of permit data statewide.

Updated integrated Cadastral (land parcel ownership)/CAMA (computer assisted mass appraisal) data for viewing via the Digital Atlas. NRIS has merged the Department of Revenue data with the Department of Administration data and selected a subset of fields for display and summarization.

The Natural Heritage Program completed a series of published reports over the last couple of months. These include:

Carlson, J.C. and S.V. Cooper. 2003. Plant and Animal Resources and Ecological Condition of the Hanging Woman Basin in Big Horn County, Montana and Sheridan County Wyoming. Report to the Padlock Ranch and the Montana BLM. Montana Natural Heritage Program, Helena, MT.

Barton, D. and S. Crispin. 2003. Globally Significant Plants in Southeastern Big Horn and Southwestern Rosebud Counties, Montana. Report to the Bureau of Land Management. Montana Natural Heritage Program, Helena, MT.

Barton, D. and S. Crispin. 2003. Conservation Status of *Botrychium lineare* (slender moonwort) in Montana. Report to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Montana Natural Heritage Program, Helena, MT.

Crowe, E. and G. Kudray. 2003. Wetland Assessment of the Whitewater Watershed. Report to U.S. Bureau of Land Management, Malta Field Office. Montana Natural Heritage Program, Helena, MT. 34 pp. plus appendices.

Cooper, S.V. 2003. Assessment of Kootenai National Forest Vegetation Types with Potential for *Silene spaldingii* in the Tobacco Plains, Rexford Bench and Salish Range Foothills. Unpublished report to Kootenai National Forest, Supervisor's Office. Montana Natural Heritage Program, Helena, MT.

Lesica, P. 2003. Conserving Globally Rare Plants on Lands Administered by the Dillon Office of the Bureau of Land Management. Report to the USDI Bureau of Land Management, Dillon Office. Montana Natural Heritage Program, Helena, MT.

Crowe, E. 2004. Fire Ecology, Forest Succession, and Vegetation Distribution on Square Butte, Chouteau County, Montana. Report to the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, Lewistown District Office. Montana Natural Heritage Program, Helena, MT.

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.

Wrote a grant application to DEQ for the purpose of coordinating the development of a color infrared photography statewide data layer. The application was rated number one for funding on the basis of DEQ review, and will now be sent to EPA for final review. Funding under the grant would begin in FY05.

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: Nov 2003 – Jan 2004

	Jul-Feb FY03	Jul-Feb FY04	% Change
Mediated Data Requests			
Total Active Users*	NA	1,178	NA
NRIS State Requests	575	657	14.3%
NHP Requests	318	264	-17.0%
Web Services			
NRIS State Program			
Static Page Views	1,322,731	1,336,702	1.0%
Dynamic Page Views	1,474,789	1,449,205	-1.8%
GIS Files Downloaded	251,840	203,361	-23.8%
Visitor Sessions	314,496	340,125	7.5%
NHP			
Static Page Views	87,989	112,164	21.6%
Dynamic Page Views	60,269	96,356	37.5%
Visitor Sessions	51,430	84,176	38.9%

* An active user is defined as one who has made a request within two years prior to 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.

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. The application was rolled out in early December. The Field Guide can be accessed at <http://nhp.nris.state.mt.us/animalguide/>.

Released and announced the new three tier GIS data access framework on the NRIS GIS data page <http://nris.state.mt.us/gis/>.

Outreach:

Conducted extensive program and seminar on GIS day (November 19th), once again aimed at introducing students to GIS technologies. Hosted two fifth grade classes from a local school for three GIS-related presentations. Hosted a special version of our NRIS Seminar Series to roll-out our new three-tier data access.

Conducted NRIS site training to the annual conference of Dept. of Revenue employees in Great Falls.

Presented NRIS clearinghouse summary to the Environmental Public Health Tracking advisory group.

Presented NRIS site training at Annual Stockgrower's convention in Billings.

Presented NRIS program overview and demonstration to a symposium conducted by the Montana Independent Telecommunications System (MITS).

Met with outdoor editor from Billings Gazette to discuss animal guide. Gazette printed article on the application.

Hosted a press opportunity in Helena for the rollout of the Animal Guide.

January's NRIS Seminar was presented by Susan Lenard, Zoologist with the Natural Heritage Program. "Declining Grassland Birds of Northeastern Montana" 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.

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

Personnel Notes:

Completed successful recruitment of new web application developer, Perry Donnafield, who will start in mid-February in a position shared between NRIS and FWP.

NHP hired a new Program Botanist, Clint Emerson. Clint will begin work on February 16.

NHP is currently recruiting for Senior Zoologist, Web Applications Developer, and Biological Data Systems Coordinator. More information on these positions may be found at <http://nhp.nris.state.mt.us/employ/>.