

# Natural Resource Information System (NRIS)

May 19, 2004 – July 26, 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 the Cadastral/Cama data in both June and July. We are attempting to formalize the update schedules of our most important, most dynamic data sets. Update schedules vary based on the expected rate of change of the data.

Updated entire NRCS SSURGO soil data set.

The Natural Heritage Program (MTNHP) published its *2004 Montana Animal Species of Concern* report, issued jointly with Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (FWP). The report is available in digital form on the MTNHP web site and in hard-copy format.

Provided enhanced views of Census 2000 data and new search options for census blocks in the Digital Atlas.

Issued Heritage Program Report: **Ecologically Significant Wetlands in the Missouri Headwaters: Jefferson, Lower Madison, Lower Gallatin, and Upper Red Rock River Watersheds, June 2004**

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.

A variety of Natural Heritage data collection projects are underway, including surveys of harlequin ducks, grassland birds in northeastern Montana, bats in eastern Montana riparian habitats, prairie stream ecosystems, sagebrush mammals and vegetation, and the plants Spalding's catchfly and Long-styled Thistle.

**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 2003 – Jun 2004

|                               | Jul-Jun FY03 | Jul-Jun FY04 | % Change |
|-------------------------------|--------------|--------------|----------|
| <b>Mediated Data Requests</b> |              |              |          |
| Total Active Users*           | NA           | 1,147        | NA       |
| NRIS State Requests           | 1111         | 1228         | 10.5%    |
| NHP Requests                  | 651          | 483          | -25.8%   |
|                               |              |              |          |
| <b>Web Services</b>           |              |              |          |
| <b>NRIS State</b>             |              |              |          |
| Static Page Views             | 2,591,628    | 2,408,840    | -7.6%    |
| Dynamic Page Views            | 2,521,938    | 2,823,608    | 10.7%    |
| GIS Files Downloaded          | 396,887      | 485,326      | 18.2%    |
| Visitor Sessions              | 645,115      | 644,053      | -0.2%    |

| <b>NHP</b>         |         |         |       |
|--------------------|---------|---------|-------|
| Static Page Views  | 165,538 | 200,635 | 17.5% |
| Dynamic Page Views | 119,348 | 204,100 | 41.5% |
| Visitor Sessions   | 102,151 | 151,820 | 32.7% |

\* 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, attended monthly drought monitoring meetings.

Revamped the Community Ecology section of the MTNHP website. The overhaul brings the look and feel of the site in-line with the remainder of the website, provides more descriptive background information and new information on ecological section descriptions for Montana.

**Outreach:**

Presented demonstration of NRIS services to Montana Stockgrower's in Lewistown.

Presented demonstration and training of NRIS services for Bureau of Reclamation resource staff in Billings. This training also included Natural Heritage Program web resources.

Provided training to Bureau of Land Management (BLM) staff on using Natural Heritage Program information and data in fulfilling NEPA requirements for oil and gas leasing.

NRIS staff met with the Montana Watercourse and Montana Water Center representatives in Bozeman to discuss program missions' and coordination opportunities.

Participated in a interview with the *Billings Gazette* that resulted in a feature article on the Natural Heritage Program's web based Plant Field Guide.

Rob Hazlewood of the US Fish and Wildlife Service presented "*From Montana to Mexico: The Western North American Migratory Bird Project*" at the **May NRIS Seminar**.

Mark Tripp, of ITSD presented the **June NRIS Seminar** on the state transportation framework project.

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

NHP submitted annual funding proposals to the Bureau of Land Management under BLM's Challenge Cost Share program, and also pursued funding for data collection projects with the US Forest Service and US Fish & Wildlife Service.

**Personnel Notes:**

We are very excited to announce that Tori Orr has accepted the position of manager of our Library Information Services section. Tori has considerable background in content management, electronic document publishing, and web design. Much of Tori's work has related to digital collections and libraries, with a focus on usefulness and usability. Tori will be a great addition to our staff. Once she is here, we will quickly fill the remaining open positions within the division, freeing up some of the workload that has been heaped upon existing staff and enabling us to move forward on digital library projects. Tori will begin work in mid-August.