Natural Resource Information System
Period January 20 - March 23

Goal 1. Acquire, integrate, maintain and ensure accuracy of spatial and natural resource data and information needed for managing Montana's natural resources and environment.

Activities:

Began actively working with Census 2000 Public Law data (population figures) in cooperation with the Census and Economic Information Center (CEIC).

Participated with the Montana Geographic Information Council (MGIC), the Montana Local Government GIS Coalition (MLGGC), and the Interagency Technical Working Group (ITWG) in the OMB I-Teams. The purpose of the I-Teams is to identify critical GIS data layers for the state, report on their status, and ensure that one primary contact is ultimately responsible for acquiring, updating, and maintaining the data.

Goal 2. Effectively disseminate natural resource data and information, ensuring broad accessibility, utilizing current technologies, and maintaining a strong emphasis on customer service.

Activities:

Deployed a variety of new web accessible datasets and programs including:

- The 2001 Montana drought site (http://nris.state.mt.us/drought)
- Updated 30 meter DEMs developed with data from NRCS.

The water and GIS web sites were very busy as usual during the period. The NRIS web pages (Water and GIS) took a combined hit rate of nearly 890,000 hits during this period.

Continued to add to and enhance the new Montana Drought 2001 web page. Staff created this page for the statewide Drought Monitoring Committee. The page has been well received and heavily used.

Answered numerous mediated data requests.

Goal 3. Ensure that NRIS products, services, and expertise are broadly known, effectively used, and highly regarded by those who require natural resource information and spatially referenced data.

Activities:

Attended:

- quarterly Wetland Council Meeting
- Water Quality Sub-Group Meeting
- GIS Users' Group Meeting
- Nature Conservancy's Marketing Workshop.

Published the winter quarter edition of the Montana GIS News.

Participated in National Spatial Data Infrastructure Clearinghouse Teleconference.

Provided training to state employees taking the Advanced ArcView GIS workshop on NOAA's Metadata Collector for ArcView.

Participated in the Yellowstone to Yukon (Y2Y) Meetings to ensure widespread

coordination and cooperation when developing and disseminating natural resource databases.

Goal 4. Establish, maintain and continually improve the program structure, resource(s), staff and operation required to successfully implement NRIS mission, vision and goals.

Activities:

NRIS, in conjunction with Program 1, is in the final stages of recruitment for an agency web manager. Two top candidates have been identified and will have on-site interviews in the first week of April. We hope to have a selection made shortly thereafter.

NRIS began recruitment for the manager of the newly formed User Services and Support Section. Screening and interviews will commence in April.

Staff participated in the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) workshop on Outcome Based Evaluations. The workshop helped NRIS to critically look at the program from the patron and influencers perspective.

Goal 5. Secure adequate and stable funding to successfully accomplish NRIS' mission and goals.

Activities:

The proposed 2002/2003 biennium budget remains intact as the legislative session draws nearer to closing. At this point, it is unlikely that the budget will be adjusted, with the exception of global changes (affecting all budgets) made by the legislature to address overall general fund deficiencies.

Both the core budget and the contract budget are adequate for the remainder of FY 2001. One significant concern is the failure of DEQ to provide $20,000 in funding that is built into the NRIS budget as core. Negotiations are underway to obtain those funds, and prospects are good that DEQ will follow through; if they do not, the NRIS equipment budget will be under-funded for this year.

Many of the current contracts can be carried into the next fiscal year, and discussions are underway with several users to establish new contracts for the coming biennium.