

## **Statute: Montana Natural Heritage Program**

The Montana Natural Heritage Program was established by statute in 1983, under the enabling legislation for the Natural Resource Information System. Key portions of the statute, pertaining to the NHP, are provided below. (MCA2-15-1514):

### **90-15-101. Purpose.**

It is the purpose of this chapter to establish a planning framework for the development of a natural resource information system, to implement the system, and to establish and ongoing Montana natural heritage program.

### **90-15-102. Definitions.**

"(3) Natural Heritage Program means a program of information acquisition, storage and retrieval for data relating to the flora, fauna and biological community types of Montana.

### **90-15-103. Funding.**

"The library and each principle data source agency may apply for and may receive funding from private and public sources for the purposes of this chapter.

### ***90-15-301. Establishment of Information System***

"The system is to be a comprehensive program for the acquisition, storage and retrieval of existing data relating to the natural resources of Montana.

### ***90-15-302. Natural Heritage Program***

(1) There is a Montana natural heritage program to be operated by the library. In order to establish the program, the library may contract with an independent contractor or may employ necessary staff. In order to minimize costs, the library or other state agencies may make available state resources and facilities to an independent contractor as part of a contract for services.

(2) The Montana natural heritage program shall be designed to be compatible with similar programs in other states. This program is to be an initial step in the formulation of the comprehensive natural resource information system referred to in 90-15-301 and is to be considered a part of the system.

### ***90-15-301. Availability of Information.***

(1) Except as provided in subsection (3), the library shall make information from the natural resource information system available to local, state, and federal agencies and to the general public... (3) If necessary, the library shall establish procedures to protect confidential information in the possession of state agencies.