

ANNUAL REPORT FOR Fiscal Year 1994

MONTANA STATE LIBRARY

Statewide Library Resources

From July 1, 1993 until October 31, 1993 Darlene Staffeldt, Coordinator of Information Resources was also Coordinator of Library Development. As of November 1, 1993, the two Programs [Information Resources and Library Development] were merged into one program known as Statewide Library Resources.

Sheila Cates, Coordinator of Library Development, passed away on August 13, 1993. Ms. Cates came to Montana in 1981 and was the Library Media Specialist for the Montana Office of Public Instruction prior to taking the position at the State Library. Sheila's work, both at the Office of Public Instruction and the Montana State Library, and as a former member of the State Library Commission, exemplified professional excellence. Some

people work in libraries. Some believe in libraries. Some love libraries. Some are library advocates. Sheila was all these things, all the time. We miss her deeply.

Statewide Library Resources [SLR] is the library within the State Library agency. SLR provides reference and information services to state agencies, state employees, librarians across Montana, and the general public. It lends materials either directly to users or through public, school, special or academic libraries.

SLR provides centralized library materials acquisition, cataloging and technical processing, and operates the state's documents depository center.

Staff members of the Statewide Library Resources program also consult with librarians, administer grants, produce publications, conduct workshops and otherwise assist librarians to serve their patrons with a high degree of professionalism.

Services:

In FY 1994, SLR staff answered 16,840 information requests, circulated 4,615 items and performed more than 400 online searches for state government. SLR staff circulated 7,718 items, distributed 3,930 state publications, and performed more than 250 online searches for public libraries. In addition, SLR staff answered 4,289 information requests from public libraries and 3,869 requests from academic, school or special libraries.

During the year, SLR staff consulted with librarians on issues related to censorship, literacy, automation, children's services, public relations, collection management, budgeting, voluntary certification, library designs, friends and foundation groups, board development and policies, and other areas. More than 2,190 consulting contacts were made.

SLR administers federation support for public libraries from the "Access Information Montana Act" and from the Coal Severance Tax



plus grants through the federal Library Services and Construction Act [LSCA].

SLR administered the LSCA-funded grant programs which: made a LaserCat [computerized regional bibliography] available to eight additional Montana libraries; provided for 106 librarians to participate in the Internet Training and Access project; developed the DOS and WINDOWS workshop project designed for those who experience hesitation at leaping forth into a brave new world of technology; completed the Helena Reference Point and LincNet projects; got the Arlee Outreach project underway, and started the Partners in Resource Sharing project in Hamilton. Construction projects took place in Marion, Townsend and Columbus.

SLR staff worked with the Collection Management Committee on statewide projects.

SLR staff completed a Family Reading Program Manual which was cooperatively produced with the Office of Public Instruction and was distributed to Montana school and public libraries. The Family Reading Program theme was "Reading is a Natural." Users of the manual reported great success for the many happy participants.

Other SLR publications include an annual library directory, public library statistics, brochures, press releases, and the LSCA grant application manual.

Institutional Services:

SLR staff coordinates library services to some state institutions and has direct responsibility for the Patients' Library at the Montana State Hospital. This coordination included consulting assistance and material budgets for those institutions with staffed libraries, and contracting with nearby public libraries to provide library services to institutionalized residents.

Collection:

The State Library's general collection gained 954 new titles in FY 1994, while 758 titles were discarded. The total number of titles in the general collection is 68,840. The federal publication collection had 8,516 titles added for a total of 283,998 publications. The state publication collection gained 454 new titles for a total of 13,042 titles. The periodical collection added two titles for a total of 531 titles.



Montana Talking Book Library

The Montana Talking Book Library [MTBL] provides free library service to Montana citizens who cannot read standard print because of physical or visual disability. The MTBL lends books and magazines in a variety of formats to eligible individuals and institutions. Special playback equipment is also provided. All materials and equipment are provided at no charge and are mailed "Free Matter" both to and from patrons. The MTBL is a regional branch of the Library of Congress which provides recorded books, braille materials and special playback equipment.

During FY 1994, circulation continued to grow with more than 135,000 books being circulated to approximately 2,600 patrons. This growth occurred without an accompanying growth in staff. MTBL continues to rely on volunteers to help accomplish daily tasks. The library has six full-time staff members.

Through the auspices of the agency's volunteer program, 111 persons contributed to the Montana State Library and its programs. This included all volunteer support at the State Library itself, the Telephone Pioneers, and the inmate employees of the Montana State Prison Recording Program. These volunteers and inmate employees contributed a total of 15,669 hours during FY 1994. The MTBL recognized all Helena-area volunteers with a dinner at Frontier Town. Guest speakers were Steve Prine, consultant with the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped and Pat Domme, President of the Montana Association for the Blind.

Two recording studios of the Montana Cassette Book Program are located at the Montana State Prison in Deer Lodge, and a third is at the State Library. In FY 1994, 56 books were recorded by volunteer and inmate recording teams. Hundreds of additional titles remain to be recorded and completed books are in high demand.

The recording studio located at the Montana State Library was completely remodeled and dedicated. It is now a state-of-the-art recording environment where volunteers record materials by Montanans or about Montana. The Honorable Marc Racicot, Governor of the State of Montana; Bill West, Audio Book Specialist from the National Library Service, Washington, D.C.; and Dr. Robert Johnstone, a professor of literature and MTBL patron were guest speakers at the dedication.

Outreach continued to reach the many eligible citizens who are not yet receiving MTBL services. Two public forums were held by MTBL staff to give the library an opportunity to publicize the program and to interact with its already existing patrons.

A summer reading program was

held during the summer of 1994 with 30 of the approximately 150 juvenile patrons participating. A bibliography of braille and recorded juvenile materials was composed centering around the same theme as the public libraries' reading program.

Natural Resource Information System

The Natural Resource Information System [NRIS] is a program of the Montana State Library. Serving government agencies, business and industry, and private citizens, NRIS operates a clearinghouse and referral service to link users with the best sources of information.

The Montana State Library houses the NRIS program for two reasons. First, the State Library is an agency that remains neutral [no bias or advocacy] in its information distribution. This neutrality is especially important on issues regarding environmental conflicts and other controversies. Second, the State Library already has the ongoing function of providing information to those who need it.

NRIS's program goals are to operate a natural resource information clearinghouse, support interagency data coordination and provide user support.

NRIS has three programs:

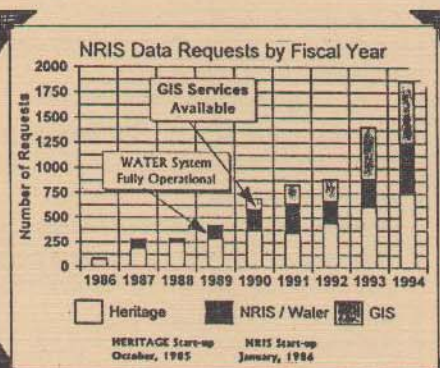
The Montana Natural Heritage Program [NHP] maintains a computer-assisted inventory of Montana's biological resources, emphasizing rare or endangered plant and animal species and

biological communities.

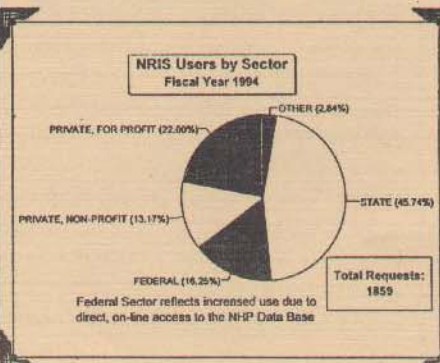
The Montana Water Information System [WIS] is the starting point for locating water resources information in Montana, such as data on surface water, groundwater, water quality, riparian areas, water rights, climate data and more.

The Montana Geographic Information System [GIS] provides technical and data acquisition assistance for statewide GIS projects and to agencies developing in-house GIS capability. NRIS inventories available GIS data and coordinates GIS data standards and sharing throughout the state.

NRIS filled more than 1850 requests for natural resource information and services during FY 1994. This bar chart displays the growth of information requests since 1985.



NRIS serves all Montanans: private citizens, business, state and federal agencies, and local government. This pie chart depicts the breakout of the various groups of patrons we served in FY 1994.



Activities

Fiscal year 1994 was a busy time for NRIS. We filled more than 1850 requests for natural resource information and services. The Natural Heritage Program responded to more than 740 requests; the Water Information System responded to more than 500 information requests; and the Geographic Information System responded to nearly 600 service and information requests.

Water Information System

The year 1994 was a busy and productive one for the Water Information System staff. Substantial progress was achieved in providing water information clearinghouse services, upgrading computer software and hardware, providing public access to data, continuing training of staff on the use of GIS, expanding the number of data sources, securing stable and high speed access to sources and users, and in outreach and promotion of the Water programs.

About 520 individual requests for water information were received during 1994. This represents an increase of about 75% over the previous year. The request patterns indicate the WIS is fulfilling its original mandate to improve the management and accessibility of water information. It is significant to note the WIS experienced a sizable increase in use each year since 1987. It is also significant to note that staffing for the WIS has remained the same. Efficient use of skilled staff and computer resources accounts for the program's ability to handle significantly increased request load.

Geographic Information System

As the use of GIS technology for managing and analyzing

natural resource data continues to grow, NRIS GIS finds demands for its services from all sectors increasing—not only is the number of individual requests increasing, but the number of products per request is increasing. During FY 1994 we filled 598 total requests and developed 6,953 products. This growth represents a 14% increase in number of requests and a 43% increase in the total number of products produced.

As just one example of the services rendered by NRIS, it has filled more than 655 Superfund information and service requests for 150 individual people in the past two and a half years. Those requests resulted in more than 1,100 data transfers; composition of more than 800 maps; and the printing of more than 8,000 copies of maps.

Natural Heritage Program

Several new projects initiated this past year are noteworthy. The Columbia River Basin Assessment is a multi-year, multi-state biological assessment undertaken by the US Forest Service (USFS) by directions from Congress. Another project to identify abandoned mines with significant biological resources was initiated with the Department of State Lands (DSL), Abandoned Mines Reclamation Bureau. This project entailed work on three mining districts to determine the status of bat use and other rare species in or near these adits. Zoology staff worked with DSL Coal Bureau staff to review impacts and proposed mitigation and monitoring for several coal mines in eastern Montana. Botany staff worked with Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (FWP) Parks Managers to identify rare plants and advise on weed control measures.

Data requests increased again, continuing the trend for a more service-oriented program. We responded by placing more

emphasis into the access and delivery of information. Linkages with GIS and development of new databases and systems, have positioned us to stay abreast with the rising demands for information on biodiversity and land management.



Administration

The Administrative unit of the State Library supports the overall personnel, payroll, fiscal, property control, and purchasing activities for all sections of the agency, ensuring consistency with state and federal laws and regulations. It also provides overall supervision of the agency.

In fiscal year [FY] 1994 the Administrative unit hired a new part-time secretary. The unit participated in the decision to move the mail operation to the state's centralized mail facility following a study of costs and other factors, and presented the nomination of Darlene Staffeldt as the "Employee of the Year" to be honored by Governor Racicot. The unit also provided support for the regular meetings of the State Library Commission, as well as those of the Library Services Advisory Council. Eleven new members of the Advisory Council received orientation training. The Administrative unit prepared materials and arguments for a special session of the State Legislature which met to determine how to reduce state government expenditures. The agency suffered only a few budget reductions as a result. Under a retirement incentive approved by the Legislature, three longtime employees of state government left the agency.

The State Librarian continued to

serve as an ex officio member of the Montana Library Association executive board, attended MLA's board retreat and the directors' meetings. He also served as an active member of the state's Information Technology Advisory Council [ITAC]. He worked with two subcommittees – Access and Privacy, and Coordination – to contribute to a state government-wide strategic plan for information technology. This process began with a two-day strategic planning session, and culminated in the production of the plan itself.

The Administrative unit worked actively with the Montana Telecommunications Advisory Council [MTAC]. MTAC is sponsored by Governor Marc Racicot and U.S. Senator Conrad Burns. The State Librarian served as secretary to this group and spoke at its symposium on the topic of "Teledemocracy."

The Administrative unit worked with the Center for the Book, headquartered at the State Library, to sponsor a visit from John Cole of the Library of Congress's Center for the Book, and to write a grant proposal which brought the writer T. H. Watkins to Montana under the "Writing Life" project. Three other venues also were funded under this grant, bringing together Montana writers with citizens. Other activities included the annual report on libraries to the Joint State Board of Education, attendance at meetings of the Task Force to Renew State Government, and speaking at the dedication of the renovated Chouteau County Library. Meetings also included the joint Montana Library Association/ Pacific Northwest Library Association Conference, Western Council of State Library Agencies, the American Library Association Annual Conference, and Library Legislative Day and Center for the Book meetings in Washington, D.C.