



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

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

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

#### SERVICES

In fiscal 1995, SLR staff answered 4,741 information requests from state government, which included circulating 4,510 items and performing more than 400 on-line searches. SLR staff circulated 7,505 items to other libraries during fiscal 1995, including 4,544 state publications, and more than 250 on-line searches. In addition, SLR staff answered 3,842 information requests from public libraries and 4,834 requests from academic, school or special libraries.

During fiscal 1995, SLR staff consulted with librarians on issues related to library construction, 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 3,200 consulting contacts were made in fiscal 1995.

SLR administers federation support for public libraries through the Information Access Montana Act and the Coal Severance Tax, and grants through the Federal Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA).

LSCA grants are used to extend library services to underserved patrons or to those with inadequate services, for interlibrary cooperation, and for construction and remodeling projects. In fiscal 1995 SLR administered the LSCA-funded grant programs which: provided a LaserCat workstation in West Yellowstone, connected a number of Montana libraries and librarians to the information highway via Internet, and provided demonstration equipment for statewide library technology consulting. Construction projects still active in fiscal 1995 under LSCA Title II include those in Marion, Butte, Townsend, and Deer Lodge. New construction projects include those in Conrad and Hot Springs.

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

In fiscal 1995, SLR staff completed a Family Reading Program Manual which was cooperatively produced with the Office of Public Instruction and distributed to Montana school and public libraries. The Family Reading Program theme was "Get a Clue: Read." 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 application manual.

#### INSTITUTIONAL SERVICES

SLR staff coordinates library services to several state institutions including direct responsibility for the Patients' Library at Warm Springs State Hospital. This coordination takes two forms: consulting assistance and materials budgets for those institutions with staffed libraries; and contracting with nearby public libraries to provide library services to institutionalized residents.

On July 1, 1995, the responsibility for the Patients' Library at Warm Springs State Hospital was transferred to the Department of Public Health and Human Services.

#### COLLECTION

The State Library's general collection gained 849 new titles in fiscal 1995, while 241 titles were discarded. The total number of titles in the general collection is 69,388. The



Federal publications collection had 15,603 titles added for a total of 299,601 publications. The state publications collection gained 478 new titles for a total of 13,520 titles. The periodical collection added two titles, and weeded two titles for an ongoing total of 531 titles.

# Natural Resource Information System

The Montana Natural Resource Information System [NRIS] was formed in response to the growing need for quick access to the increasing amounts of natural resource information. NRIS was designed to be a comprehensive program for the acquisition, storage, and retrieval of existing data relating to the natural resources of Montana, In 1985, NRIS began by providing services through its Montana Natural Resource Index and the Montana Natural Heritage Program. In response to growing user needs, the program has modified its services to include the Montana Water Information System and the NRIS Geographic Information System [GIS]. Over the years, NRIS has striven to meet the growing information needs and challenges of Montana's governmental agencies, private business, and the general public by developing new services. NRIS now offers a wide variety of data management, information indexing, and data retrieval services.

### Activities

In fiscal year 1995 NRIS filled more than 2,300 requests for natural resource information and services. The Natural Heritage Program responded to more than 1,360 requests; the Water Information System responded to approximately 500 information requests; and the GIS responded to nearly 460 service and information requests.

The greatest accomplishment in NRIS during FY'95 was establishing an Internet presence. NRIS began by implementing a File Transfer Protocol [FTP] server. The FTP

server allows patrons to download data and files directly from our server to their computer via the Internet. NRIS also established new electronic mail services for all of the staff. These E-mail accounts enable rapid communication with a large number of patrons around the state and around the nation. NRIS also established a Telnet server that allows remote login to the NRIS network. This service is particularly effective when working to debug procedures or computer programs with people outside the building or to allow remote access by NRIS staff.

The most visible Internet service we established was our World Wide Web [WWW] site. The WWW site consists of a "Home Page" that describes the overall program and provides hyper links to other pages that provide details on all of NRIS's services and as well as access to natural resource data. The NRIS Web site averaged more than 1,000 users a week. The Universal Resource Locator [URL] for NRIS is http://nris.msl.mt.gov.

NRIS GIS program instituted a Wide Area Information Service [WAIS] server. The WAIS server allows a patron to search the GIS database for data, retrieve information documenting the data, view a sample of the data on-line, and then retrieve the data directly to their computer. The implementation of the WAIS server was part of a grant NRIS received from the Federal Geographic Data Committee. The purpose of the grant was to create a Montana node of the National Spatial Data Infrastructure [NSDI]. The NSDI includes a clearinghouse for locating and obtaining spatial data. Montana was the first state in the nation to implement a NSDI WAIS node.

### **Water Information System**

During 1995, the Water Information
System staff made great strides in fulfilling the mandate to provide users with the best sources of water information. Major progress was made in offering direct online access to water data and in increasing the number of information sources available through the Water Information System.

About 514 individual requests for water data were processed by Water Information staff during 1995. This amount represents a slight decrease in the number received by phone and walk-in patrons from the previous

year. However, through the Internet, the Water Information system processed about 2,500 requests which represents a phenomenal increase in the total number of requests from the previous year.

### Geographic Information System

During FY'95, the NRIS GIS program continued providing a diverse array of products and services to Montana's GIS community. Some services were the traditional mediated services where we assist GIS users on an individual basis. Some were new network-based services by which patrons themselves can access information published on the Internet.

With the maturing of Internet service during FY'95, the way NRIS GIS conducts business is fundamentally changing. We now have an increased ability to invest time and resources in building an information infrastructure that permits us to publish data and information that can and is accessed by many more users. After we publish data and information on the Internet, our patrons can access the information at their convenience and without impacting NRIS GIS staff. The new services allow us to meet the needs of a much larger community and free up resources to provide a higher level of service to those who need it.

During FY'95, 466 total requests were filled, and 5,803 products were developed through our mediated services. Although this number represents a decline in total requests for mediated services over FY'94, it must be noted that some larger analytical projects require a significant amount of effort but only show up as one or two requests. However, we also provided information to an additional 22,919 patrons through self service accesses. Thousands of maps, documentation, and databases were acquired by our Internet servers.

## Natural Heritage Program

During 1994 the Heritage Program responded to 1,360 data requests. This marks the fifth consecutive year of growth in service

demands on the program. Database growth has continued with results from Heritage staff and collaborators [primarily U.S. Forest Service personnel] contributing significant new information on the state's biodiversity. Total database records now equal 21,666, a 25% increase over 1993.

The program is expanding its emphasis and development into the access and delivery of information. A pilot project will be initiated between the Nature Conservancy and the National Biological Service to develop effective means of access and transfer of biological information across the Internet, allowing greater availability of information while safeguarding sensitive resources. Results of this project will be applied in other states as their data management and Internet capabilities allow. Linkages with GIS and development of new databases and systems have continued to allow us to stay abreast of the rising demands for information on biodiversity and land management.

# Montana Talking Book Library

The Montana Talking Book Library (MTBL) provides free library service to Montana citizens who cannot read standard print because of a physical or visual disability. 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.

There are 37,284 titles in the Talking Book Library. The collection consists of the same large variety of adult and children's books offered to people using print material in a public library. More than seventy popular magazines are available through the library. The collection does not include braille books, but the Montana TBL contracts with the Utah State Library to serve their braille patrons.

Circulation of books for FY '95 was 145,212 to approximately 2,600 patrons. The

library has six full-time staff, but because of the large number of books circulated, MTBL continues to rely on volunteers to help accomplish daily tasks.

During 1995 111 persons contributed to the Montana State Library and its programs through the auspices of the agency's volunteer program. This included all volunteer support at the State Library itself, and the Telephone Pioneers, who repair playback equipment, and the inmate employees of the Montana State Prison Recording Program. These volunteers and inmate employees contributed a total of 14,900 hours during 1995. The 1995 Volunteer Appreciation Banquet honoring Helena-area volunteers was held at the historic Montana Club. Guest speakers were Peggy Guthrie, Vice-Chair of the State Library Commission and daughter-in-law of A.B. Guthrie, and Montana author Sally Garrett Dingley.

The Montana Cassette Book Program, comprising volunteers who record materials by a Montanan or about Montana, continued to produce quality materials during fiscal 1995. Two recording studios are located at the Montana State Prison in Deer Lodge, and the third is at the State Library. In 1995, 49 books were recorded by volunteer and inmate recording teams. Montana, The Magazine Of Western History [four issues], Falcon Magazine [six issues], and several catalogs, newsletters, and special projects were also produced. Hundreds of additional titles remain to be recorded and completed books are in high demand.

The outreach emphasis in FY '95 was on raising awareness of the MTBL services among Native American populations. Public forums were held at Little Big Horn College and at Dull Knife Memorial College. Joining MTBL staff at the forums were representatives from other agencies serving people with blindness or low vision.

MTBL's descriptive video library continues to grow with a total of 80 titles. Descriptive videos are commercial films with voice narrators who describe or explain what action is occurring. This video collection, and

expenses associated with it, is completely funded with donations.

A Family Reading Program was held during the summer of 1995, with eleven juvenile patrons reading 145 books during the program. A bibliography of braille and recorded juvenile materials was compiled centering around the same theme as the statewide summer reading program.

# Administration

The State Library Commission was very active during the year in considering and approving various plans and documents related to Montana's Library Services and Construction Act [LSCA] funding. Because of efforts on the part of the Commission, Advisory Council and agency staff to bring Montana's LSCA process into compliance with federal schedules, the Commission faced decisionmaking encompassing several years during the course of this year. For example, it approved the 1995 update to the Long Range Program in August 1994, and the 1996 update at its December 1994 meeting; it approved the 1995 annual program in August 1994 and the 1996 version of this document at its May 1995 meeting. It also approved the 1997-1999 long range program during this time. In addition to this continual refinement of the LSCA process, the Commission approved the "Wiring Montana Libraries" project to demonstrate Internet access via Serial Line Internet Protocol [SLIP] or Point to Point Protocol [PPP] using a dial-up connection, and chose "Internet access, electronic and technological access" for all Montana libraries as funding priorities for the use of LSCA funds for several years running. This includes using a portion of the LSCA Title II funds [previously used primarily for public library construction/ renovation] for technology.

Other Commission activities included the selection of eight new Advisory Council members [who elected Andrine Haas of Dawson Community College library as its chair], and approval of members and a work plan for the Statewide Technology Committee, including a statewide technology strategic plan for libraries. The Public Libraries Internet Infrastructure Project [PLIIP] also was



approved to respond to federal funding exigencies and to begin to switch over additional public libraries to Internet access.

Legislative activities were heavy during the 54th Legislative Assembly, with additional funding for interlibrary loan reimbursement, approval of an automated system for the State Library, establishment of a gift-trust fund for the agency, de-earmarking of Coal Severance Tax money for federation and networking activities, the effects of proposed antiobscenity legislation on libraries and the creation of a blue ribbon panel on telecommunications topping the bill. The year ended on a high note when a librarian, Bill Cochran of Parmly Billings Library, was named as one of 15 members of the telecommunications panel. The Montana Library Association's legislative reception in the State Library/Justice Building was very successful with co-planners Patricia Roberts and Judy Meadows establishing stations demonstrating for legislators new library and information technology such as Internet.

Genevieve ["Gen"] Allen was presented the Excellence in Performance award by Governor Racicot. Gen serves as the State Library's volunteer coordinator working with some 111 volunteers in Helena and at the Men's Prison in Deer Lodge. Gen was cited for true dedication and a consistently caring manner toward all the volunteers that work with her.

Much energy and time during this year were devoted to regional meetings in Montana entitled, the "Library Futures Task Force."

These meetings, and follow up sessions, attempted to address how best to bring about library cooperation and improvement in Montana. The first regional meetings were held in Havre, Forsyth and Missoula, with subsequent gatherings in Lewistown. Six goals emerged with the development and implementation of a statewide master plan for library service, education, training and other areas being identified as the most important. The regional meetings were facilitated by State Library Commission member Mike Schulz.

One particularly satisfying accomplishment during this time was the initiation of the "Librarian" series benchmark process. This is a consideration of the various job titles which make up the "Librarian" series within state government, taking into account duties, skills, abilities, knowledge, and responsibilities of each position. Requests for this review to be completed under the auspices of the State Personnel Division have existed since well before 1989, and now it appears, that before the end of 1995 this process will be completed. This will allow state agencies and the university system to evaluate much more accurately the librarian positions they have on staff and to classify staff consistently.

Another very interesting development was the Task Force to Renew State government which was active during this time. This task force looked at all of state government to attempt to determine how it might be made more efficient and responsive to citizens. At one point the task force was considering the possibility of moving the State Library under the Department of Administration. However, testimony of various speakers from the library community including Commission Chair Anne Hauptman, Allan Cox and Richard Miller from the State Library, Patricia Roberts from the Census & Economic Information Center of the Montana Department of Commerce, Montana Library Association President Sue Nissen and Judy Meadows of the State Law Library, helped the task force reach the conclusion that this would not be a wise decision. The State Library worked with task force staff to distribute its reports to all Montana public libraries.

In-house, the State Library's Professional Development Committee became more active in attempting to involve staff in bringing about solutions to perceived problems. The committee hit upon the idea of instituting "The Happy Factor," a tested process whereby staffwide surveys relating to satisfaction within the workplace are taken on a regular basis. The use of this process has helped to increase involvement by staff in dealing with aspects of work which might be improved.