

MONTANA WETLAND AND RIPARIAN MAPPING CENTER

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A new wetland and riparian mapping center has been established for Montana that will map to USDI Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) standards using the National Wetland Inventory (NWI) and the System for Mapping Riparian Areas in the Western United States classifications. Unlike most of the U.S., the NWI was never completed in Montana and our equally important riparian areas also lack comprehensive mapping. All mapping follows USFWS quality control procedures and will be incorporated into the NWI national geodatabase after final USFWS approval. Mapping data will then be available to the public through

the USFWS NWI and the Montana Natural Resource Information System (NRIS) websites. Mapping is delineated on year 2005 1-meter resolution color infrared aerial imagery. Field verification follows to increase accuracy in problematic areas and to gather data about specific sites of high ecological significance (this data is entered into our Natural Heritage database). A guide to the vegetation, ecological functions, and management considerations of NWI types is located at our www.mtnhp.org website with additional information to be added as mapping continues. The mapping is dependent on partner funding and is ongoing in several areas of Montana with efforts to secure more funding underway. Contact Greg Kudray at gkudray@mt.gov or 444-0915 for additional information.