Accessing Information on Montana's Animals, Plants and Biological Communities Through the Montana Natural Heritage Program's Web Applications: Recent Updates (Poster)

Bryce Maxell*, Montana Natural Heritage Program, Helena
Dave Ratz, Montana Natural Heritage Program, Helena
Karen Coleman, Montana Natural Heritage Program, Helena
Linda Vance, Montana Natural Heritage Program, Helena
Andrea Pipp, Montana Natural Heritage Program, Helena

The Montana Natural Heritage Program (MTNHP) was established by the Montana State Legislature in 1983 and charged with statutory responsibility for acquisition, storage and retrieval of information documenting Montana's flora, fauna and biological communities (Montana Code Annotated 90-15). Information managed by MTNHP includes taxonomy, biology, ecology and conservation status information for nearly 8,000 plant and animal species and nearly 150 terrestrial and aquatic communities, nearly 1.7 million animal observation records, over 182,000 locations where a formal structured animal survey protocol has been followed, predictive distribution models for animal and plant species, species occurrence and wetland and riparian mapping polygons that are used in environmental reviews, land cover mapping and land management information. We deliver this information via staff facilitated requests and web applications that include the Montana Animal and Plant Species of Concern reports, the Montana Field Guide, the Natural Heritage MapViewer and the Species Snapshot. In this presentation we will provide a brief overview of how biologists and natural resource managers can access information via our websites. We will focus on recent updates to our Species Snapshot and Montana Field Guide applications that allow users to create custom species summaries and field guides using spatial, taxonomy and conservation status filters and our vision for the development of an environmental review tool that can be used by agency resource managers, planners and consultants to speed environmental reviews.