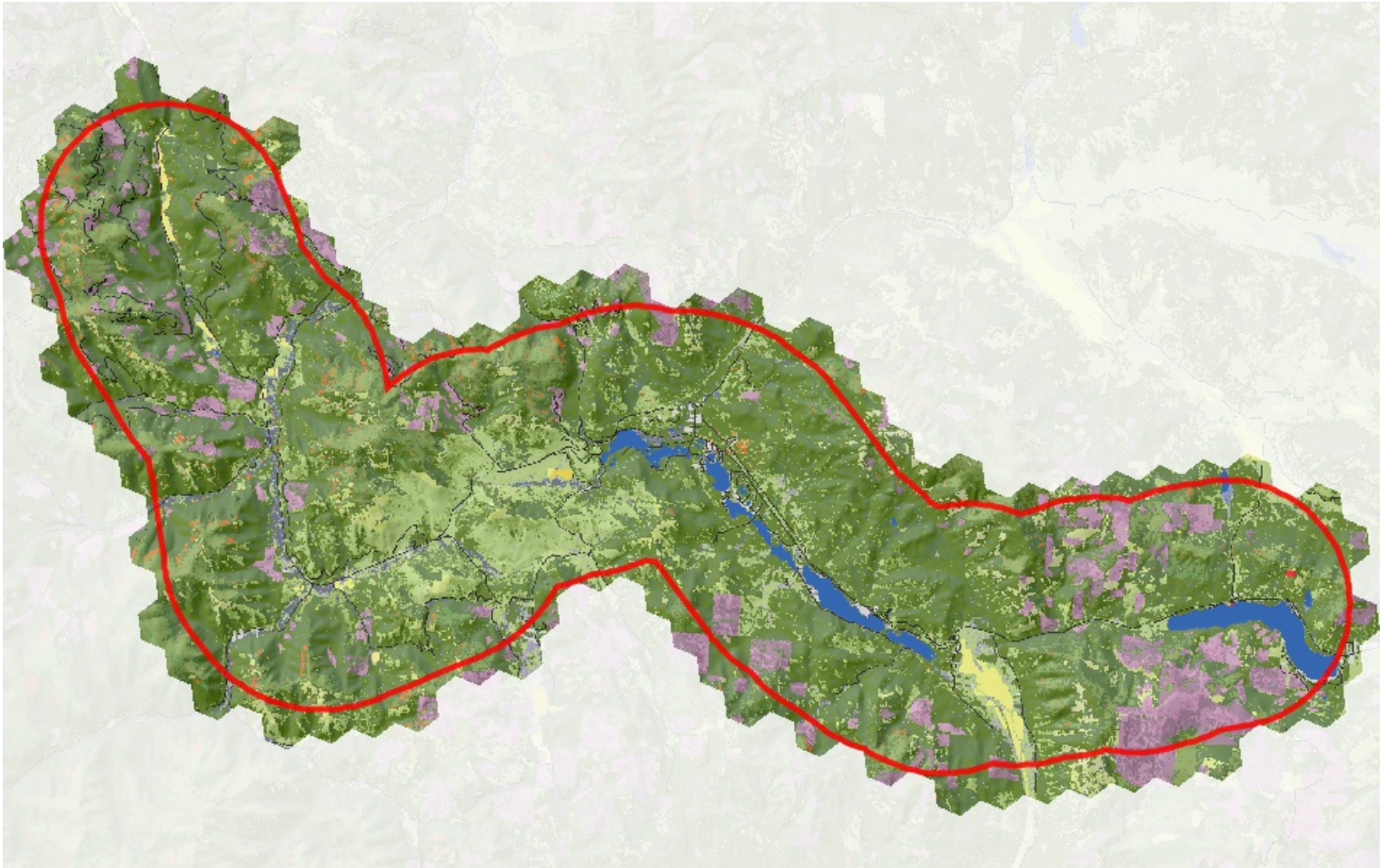


Attachment 6: Landcover Reports



Land Cover Summary



187,257 Acres (0.2% of Montana)

Notes on and Appropriate Uses of Land Cover

The Land Cover data used in Map Viewer are based on classifications of 30-meter Landsat satellite imagery. The base data were classified as part of the national ReGAP project, using imagery from the late 1990s and early 2000s. Classification accuracy varies from system to system, but statewide and local assessments have not been completed to-date. Generally, systems occurring as small patches (e.g., fens, mountain mahogany shrublands) or those making up smaller percentages of various administrative boundaries (e.g. all of those listed under the Additional Limited Land Cover folder below) will be less accurately classified than systems occurring as matrices or large patches (e.g., mixed grass prairie, lodgepole pine forests). Similarly, areas where land use and land cover has changed significantly over the past decade may not be correctly classified. Users are cautioned that the appropriate scale for use of the data is 1:100,000. Accuracy improvements are ongoing. To submit updated information, please email mtnhp@mt.gov.



29%
(53,797
Acres)

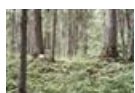
Forest and Woodland Systems

Conifer-dominated forest and woodland (xeric-mesic)

Rocky Mountain Dry-Mesic Montane Mixed Conifer Forest

This ecological system, composed of highly variable montane conifer forests, is found throughout Montana. It is associated with a submesic climate regime with annual precipitation ranging from 250 to 1,000 millimeters (10-39 inches), with most precipitation occurring during winter, and April through June. Winter snowpacks typically melt off in early spring at lower elevations. Elevations range from valley bottoms to 1,676 meters (5,500 feet) in northwestern Montana and up to 2,286 meters (7,500 feet) on warm aspects in southern Montana. In northwestern and west-central Montana, this ecosystem forms a forest belt on warm, dry to slightly moist sites. It generally occurs on gravelly soils with good aeration and drainage and a neutral to slightly acidic pH. In the western part of the state, it is seen mostly on well drained mountain slopes and valleys from lower treeline to up to 1,676 meters (5,500 feet). Immediately east of the Continental Divide, in north-central Montana, it occurs at montane elevations. Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) is the dominant conifer both as a seral and climax species. West of the Continental Divide, occurrences can be dominated by any combination of Douglas-fir and long-lived, seral western larch (*Larix occidentalis*), grand fir (*Abies grandis*), ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*) and lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*). Aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) and western white pine (*Pinus monticola*) have a minor status, with western white pine only in extreme western Montana. East of the

Continental Divide, larch is absent and lodgepole pine is the co-dominant. Engelmann spruce (*Picea engelmannii*), white spruce, (*Picea glauca*) or their hybrid, become increasingly common towards the eastern edge of the Douglas-fir forest belt.



28%
(51,504
Acres)

Forest and Woodland Systems

Conifer-dominated forest and woodland (mesic-wet)

Rocky Mountain Mesic Montane Mixed Conifer Forest

These forests are generally dominated by western hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*), western red cedar (*Thuja plicata*), and grand fir (*Abies grandis*). They are found in areas influenced by incursions of mild, wet, Pacific maritime air masses west of the Continental Divide in Montana. Occurrences are found on all slopes and aspects but grow best on sites with high soil moisture, such as toeslopes and bottomlands. At the periphery of its distribution, this system is confined to moist canyons and cooler, moister aspects. Generally, these are moist, non-flooded or upland forest sites that are not saturated yearlong. In northwestern Montana, western hemlock and western red cedar forests occur on bottomland and northerly exposures between 609-1,585 meters (2,000-5,200 feet) on sites with an average annual precipitation of 635 millimeters (25 inches). These forests are common in extreme northwestern Montana, and extend eastward to the Continental Divide in the Lake McDonald drainage of Glacier National Park. Isolated stands of western hemlock occur in the Swan Valley, but are found most commonly in the Libby and Thompson Falls vicinities, west to the Idaho border. Western red cedar occurs extensively in the Mission Mountain ranges south to Missoula, and on lower flanks of the Swan Range north of Lion Creek. It is confined to the riparian zone of major streams on the east face of the Bitterroot Mountain Range. Grand fir, being less moisture dependent, occurs in more southerly and easterly sites than western red cedar and western hemlock. This system is similar to Rocky Mountain Dry-Mesic Mixed Montane Conifer Forest, which can be described as a seral phase of this system on appropriate sites west of the Continental Divide.



8% (14,419
Acres)

Grassland Systems

Montane Grassland

Rocky Mountain Lower Montane, Foothill, and Valley Grassland

This grassland system of the northern Rocky Mountains is found at lower montane to foothill elevations in mountains and valleys throughout Montana. These grasslands are floristically similar to Big Sagebrush Steppe but are defined by shorter summers, colder winters, and young soils derived from recent glacial and alluvial material. They are found at elevations from 548 - 1,650 meters (1,800-5,413 feet). In the lower montane zone, they range from small meadows to large open parks surrounded by conifers; below the lower treeline, they occur as extensive foothill and valley grasslands. Soils are relatively deep, fine-textured, often with coarse fragments, and non-saline. Microphytic crust may be present in high-quality occurrences. This system is typified by cool-season perennial bunch grasses and forbs (>25%) cover, with a sparse shrub cover (<10%). Rough fescue (*Festuca campestris*) is dominant in the northwestern portion of the state and Idaho fescue (*Festuca idahoensis*) is dominant or co-dominant throughout the range of the system. Bluebunch wheatgrass (*Pseudoroegneria spicata*) occurs as a co-dominant throughout the range as well, especially on xeric sites. Western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*) is consistently present, often with appreciable coverage (>10%) in lower elevation occurrences in western Montana and virtually always present, with relatively high coverages (>25%), on the edge of the Northwestern Great Plains region. Species diversity ranges from a high of more than 50 per 400 square meter plot on mesic sites to 15 (or fewer) on xeric and disturbed sites. Most occurrences have at least 25 vascular species present. Farmland conversion, noxious species invasion, fire suppression, heavy grazing and oil and gas development are major threats to this system.



5% (10,180
Acres)

Forest and Woodland Systems

Conifer-dominated forest and woodland (mesic-wet)

Rocky Mountain Subalpine Mesic Spruce-Fir Forest and Woodland

These forests are similar to Rocky Mountain Subalpine Dry-Mesic Spruce-Fir Forest and Woodland (4242), but occur in locations with cold-air drainage or ponding, or where snowpacks linger late into the summer, such as north-facing slopes and high-elevation ravines. They are distinguished by their occurrence on mesic to wet microsites within the matrix of the drier (and warmer) subalpine spruce-fir or lodgepole pine forests. The microsites include north-facing slopes, swales or ravines, toeslopes, cold pockets, and other locations where available soil moisture is higher or lasts longer into the growing season. This system can extend down in elevation below the subalpine zone in places where cold-air ponding occurs, especially on north and east aspects. Elevations range from 884 to 1,981 meters (2,900-6,500 feet) west of the Continental Divide, and 1,585 to 2,682 meters (5,200-8,800 feet) east of the Continental Divide. Spruce is usually associated with subalpine fir and occurs either as a climax co-dominant or as a persistent, long-lived seral species in most upper elevation subalpine fir stands. Mountain hemlock (*Tsuga mertensiana*) occurs as small patches within the matrix of this mesic spruce-fir system, but only in the most maritime of environments of northwestern Montana, in the coldest and wettest sites. The shrub understory contains many ericaceous species such as rusty leaf menziesia (*Menziesia ferruginea*), dwarf huckleberry (*Vaccinium caespitosum*), mountain huckleberry (*Vaccinium membranaceum*), bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*), grouse whortleberry (*Vaccinium scoparium*), pink mountain heath (*Phyllodoce empetriformis*), black twinberry honeysuckle (*Lonicera involucrata*), gooseberry (*Ribes* species) and thimbleberry (*Rubus parviflorus*). The herbaceous understory contains mesic forbs, graminoids, and ferns and fern allies on the wettest sites. Moss cover is often high. Stand-replacing fires are less common in mesic spruce-fir forests than in dry-mesic forests.



5% (8,897
Acres)

Recently Disturbed or Modified

Harvested Forest

Harvested forest-tree regeneration

Land cover has been modified by logging. New growth is primarily trees.



3% (6,438
Acres)

Recently Disturbed or Modified

Harvested Forest

Harvested forest-grass regeneration

Land cover has been modified by logging. New growth is primarily herbaceous species.

3%

(5,824
Acres)

Shrubland, Steppe and Savanna Systems

Deciduous Shrubland

Rocky Mountain Montane-Foothill Deciduous Shrubland

This system is found in the lower montane and foothill regions of western Montana, and north and east into the northern Rocky Mountains. These shrublands typically occur below treeline, within the matrix of surrounding low-elevation grasslands and sagebrush shrublands. They are usually found on steep slopes of canyons, on toeslopes and occasionally on valley bottom lands. These communities can occur on all aspects. In northwestern and west-central Montana, this system forms within Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) and ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*) forests and adjacent to fescue grasslands and big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*) shrublands. In northwestern Montana, these shrublands commonly occur within the upper montane grasslands and forests along the Rocky Mountain Front. Immediately east of the Continental Divide, this system is found within montane grasslands and steep canyon slopes. Most sites have shallow soils that are either loess deposits or volcanic clays. Common ninebark (*Physocarpus malvaceus*), bittercherry (*Prunus emarginata*), common chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*), rose (*Rosa* spp.), smooth sumac (*Rhus glabra*), Rocky Mountain maple (*Acer glabrum*), serviceberry (*Amelanchier alnifolia*), and oceanspray (*Holodiscus discolor*) are the most common dominant shrubs.



3% (4,775
Acres)

Forest and Woodland Systems

Conifer-dominated forest and woodland (xeric-mesic)

Rocky Mountain Subalpine Dry-Mesic Spruce-Fir Forest and Woodland

Engelmann spruce (*Picea engelmannii*) and subalpine fir (*Abies lasiocarpa*) make up a substantial part of the montane and lower subalpine forests of the Montana Rocky Mountains and mountain island ranges of north-central and west-central Montana. Spruce is usually associated with fir and occurs as either a climax co-dominant or as a persistent, long-lived seral species in most upper elevation fir habitat types. Dry to mesic spruce-dominated forests range from 884-1,585 meters (2,900-5,200 feet) west of the Continental Divide, and 1585-2,073 meters (5,200-6,800 feet) east of the Continental Divide in the northern and central portions of the state. This system can be found at elevations up to 2,896 meters (9,500 feet) in southwestern Montana. Forests are found on gentle to very steep mountain slopes, high-elevation ridge tops and upper slopes, plateau-like surfaces, basins, alluvial terraces, well-drained benches, and inactive stream terraces. Tree canopy characteristics are relatively uniform. In northern Montana, Engelmann spruce hybridizes with its boreal counterpart, white spruce (*Picea glauca*). Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*), and western larch (*Larix occidentalis*) (west of the Continental Divide) are seral but often present in these forests. The understory is comprised of a mixture of shrubs, forbs and graminoids tolerant of warmer and drier soil conditions than those found on the more mesic to wet spruce-fir system. The drier occurrences of this system are especially common on steep slopes at upper elevations throughout the eastern Rocky Mountains, whereas the more mesic occurrences form substantial cover west of the Continental Divide in the Flathead, Lolo, Bitterroot and Kootenai river drainages.



3% (4,723
Acres)

Forest and Woodland Systems

Conifer-dominated forest and woodland (xeric-mesic)

Rocky Mountain Lodgepole Pine Forest

This forested system is widespread in upper montane to subalpine zones of the Montana Rocky Mountains, and east into island ranges of north-central Montana and the Bighorn and Beartooth ranges of south-central Montana. These are montane to subalpine forests where the dominance of lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*) is related to fire history and topographic conditions. In Montana, elevation ranges from 975 to 2,743 meters (3,200-9000 feet). These forests occur on flats to slopes of all degrees and aspect, as well as valley bottoms. Fire is frequent, and stand-replacing fires are common. Following stand-replacing fires, lodgepole pinewill rapidly colonize and develop into dense, even-aged stands. Most forests in this ecological system occur as early- to mid-successional forests persisting for 50-200 years on warmer, lower elevation forests, and 150-400 years in subalpine forests. They generally occur on dry to intermediate sites with a wide seasonal range of temperatures and long precipitation-free periods in summer. Snowfall is heavy and supplies the major source of soil water used for growth in early summer. Vigorous stands occur where the precipitation exceeds 533 millimeters (21 inches). These lodgepole forests are typically associated with rock types weathering to acidic substrates, such as granite and rhyolite. In west-central Montana ranges such the Big Belts and the Rocky Mountain Front, these forests are found on limestone substrates. These systems are especially well developed on the broad ridges and high valleys near and east of the Continental Divide. Succession proceeds at different rates, moving relatively quickly on low-elevation, mesic sites and particularly slowly in high-elevation forests such as those along the Continental Divide in Montana.



2% (3,571
Acres)

Forest and Woodland Systems

Conifer-dominated forest and woodland (xeric-mesic)

Rocky Mountain Ponderosa Pine Woodland and Savanna

This system occurs on warm, dry, exposed sites in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains in west-central and central Montana, at the ecotone between grasslands or shrublands and more mesic coniferous forests. Elevations range from 1,066 to 1,676 meters (3,500-5,500 feet), with higher elevation examples mostly confined to central Montana. Occurrences are found on all slopes and aspects; however, moderately steep to very steep slopes or ridgetops are most common. True savanna types are infrequent; the system is more characteristically an open forest with a grassy understory. In the western part of the state, this system is seen mostly on dry slopes in the rainshadow of the Bitterroot Mountains. East of the Continental Divide, it is most widespread around Helena and Lewistown, although it occurs throughout mountain ranges as far east as the Little Rocky and Bearpaw Mountains. Ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*) is the dominant conifer. Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) and western larch (*Larix occidentalis*) may be present in the tree canopy in the more western areas, but are usually absent. In central Montana, limber pine (*Pinus flexilis*) and horizontal juniper (*Juniperus horizontalis*) are frequently components. Although the understory of ponderosa pine forests is often shrubby in other states, in Montana, habitats are mostly dominated by graminoids, although bitterbrush (*Purshia tridentata*), white snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*), and skunkrush (*Rhus trilobata*) occur in forests on benchlands and rocky slopes in the central portion of the state. Understory vegetation is more typically grasses and forbs that resprout following low to moderate intensity surface fires. Prolonged drought, beetle kill and exotic invasion are rapidly changing the dynamics of this system.



2% (3,370 Acres)

Wetland and Riparian Systems

Open Water

Open Water

All areas of open water, generally with less than 25% cover of vegetation or soil



2% (3,223 Acres)

Grassland Systems

Montane Grassland

Rocky Mountain Subalpine-Upper Montane Grassland

These lush grassland systems are found in upper montane to subalpine, high-elevation, zones, and are shaped by short summers, cold winters, and young soils derived from recent glacial and alluvial material. In subalpine settings, dry grasslands may occur as small meadows or large open parks surrounded by higher elevational forests, but typically will have no tree cover within them. In general, soil textures are much finer, and soils are often deeper than in the neighboring forests. Most precipitation occurs as heavy snowpack in the mountains with spring and early summer rains. This system is composed of bunch grass species, with a diversity of cool season forbs. It is similar to the Rocky Mountain Lower Montane, Foothill and Valley Grassland ecological system, but is found at higher elevations and has additional floristic components with more subalpine taxa. In Montana, this system generally occurs as two plant communities: a rough fescue-Idaho fescue (*Festuca campestris*-*Festuca idahoensis*) association occurring on moister sites, such as the north and east-facing slopes and benches in the mountains; and the Idaho Fescue-bluebunch wheatgrass (*Festuca idahoensis*-*Pseudoroegneria spicata*) association occurring on drier sites, such as ridges, hilltops, and south and west facing slopes and benches. At elevations greater than 2286 meters (7,500 feet), Idaho fescue becomes dominant, sometimes associated with slender wheatgrass (*Elymus trachycaulus*), or in certain areas, tufted hairgrass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*). Noxious species invasion, fire suppression, heavy grazing, and oil and gas development are major threats to this system.

2%
(3,118 Acres)

Human Land Use

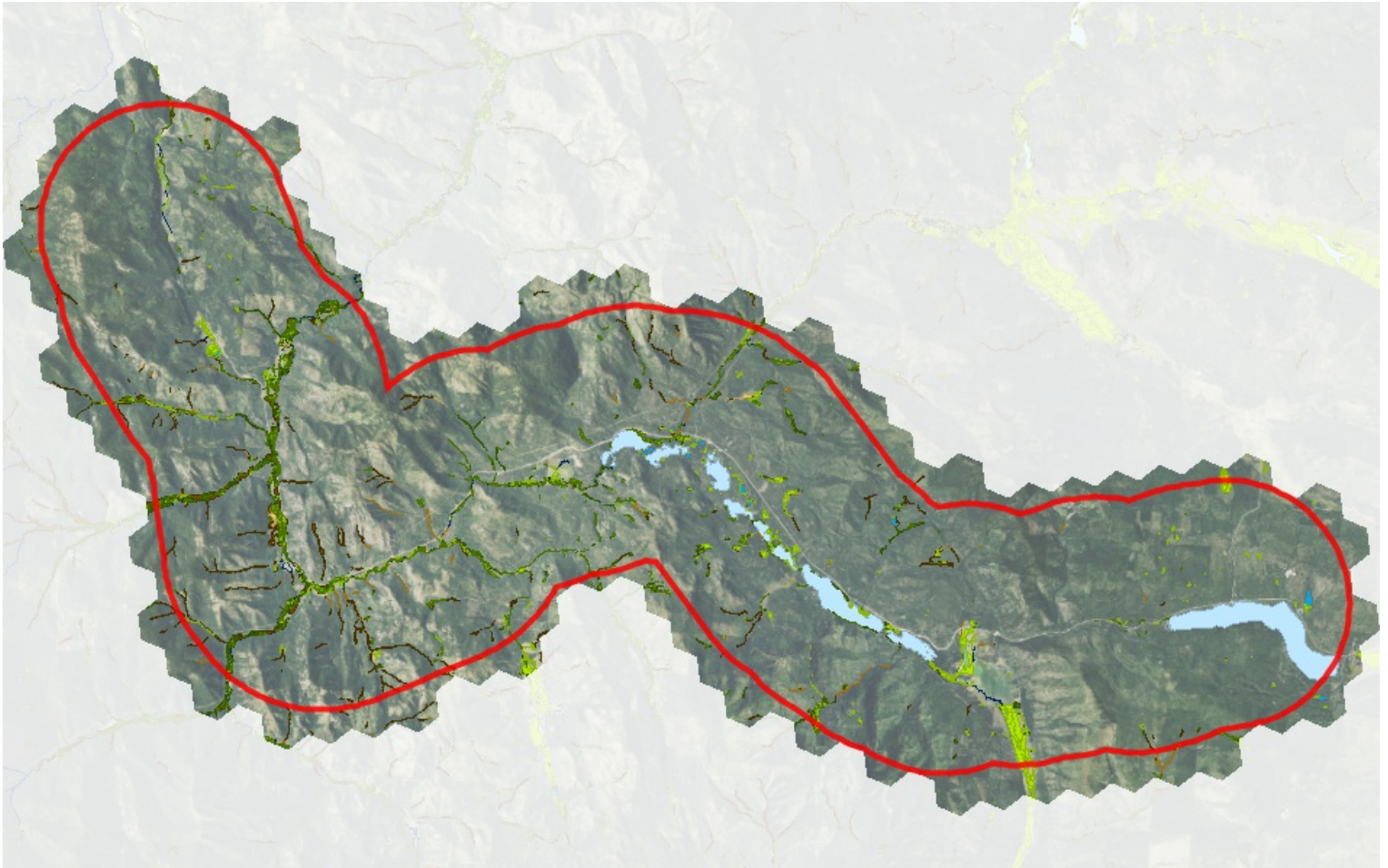
Developed

Other Roads

County, city and or rural roads generally open to motor vehicles.



Wetland Summary



187,257 Acres (0.2% of Montana)

Notes on Appropriate Uses of Wetland and Riparian Mapping

Federal, State, and local regulatory agencies with jurisdiction over wetlands may define and describe wetlands differently than the NWI. MTNHP Wetland and Riparian Mapping data are intended for use in publications at a scale of 1:12,000 or smaller. Historic wetland mapping is intended for use in publications at a scale of 1:24,000 or smaller. Mapped wetlands do not represent precise wetland boundaries, and digital wetland data cannot substitute for an on-site determination of jurisdictional wetlands.

Wetland and Riparian Mapping

[Explain](#)

Palustrine

■ PAB Aquatic Bed

Acres

212 Wetlands with vegetation growing on or below the water surface for most of the growing season.

■ PUS Unconsolidated Shore

14 Wetlands with less than 75% areal cover of stones, boulders, or bedrock AND with less than 30% vegetative cover AND the wetland is irregularly exposed due to seasonal or irregular flooding and subsequent drying.

■ PEM Emergent

1,381 Wetlands with erect, rooted herbaceous vegetation present during most of the growing season.

■ PSS Scrub-Shrub

1,494 Wetlands dominated by woody vegetation less than 6 meters (20 feet) tall. Woody vegetation includes tree saplings and trees that are stunted due to environmental conditions.

■ PFO Forested

753 Wetlands dominated by woody vegetation greater than 6 meters (20 feet) tall.

Lacustrine (Lakes)

Limnetic

■ L1UB Unconsolidated Bottom 3,159 Deep waterbodies with mud or silt covering at least 25% of the bottom.

Littoral

■ L2UB Unconsolidated Bottom 5 Shorelines where mud, silt or other fine particles comprise at least 25% of the substrate.

□ L2AB Aquatic Bed

□ L2EM Emergent

73 Shorelines with vegetation growing on or below the water surface for most of the growing season.

<1 Shorelines that have nonpersistent, erect, rooted herbaceous vegetation during most of the growing season.

Riverine (Rivers)

Upper Perennial

■ R3UB Unconsolidated Bottom

228 Stream channels where the substrate is at least 25% mud, silt or other fine particles.

■ R3US Unconsolidated Shore

93 Shorelines with less than 75% areal cover of stones, boulders, or bedrock and less than 30% vegetation cover.
The area is also irregularly exposed due to seasonal or irregular flooding and subsequent drying.

Intermittent

■ R4SB Streambed

6 Active channel that contains periodic water flow.

Riparian

Lotic

■ Rp1SS Scrub-Shrub

154 This type of riparian area is dominated by woody vegetation that is less than 6 meters (20 feet) tall.
Woody vegetation includes tree saplings and trees that are stunted due to environmental conditions.

■ Rp1FO Forested

1,102 This riparian class has woody vegetation that is greater than 6 meters (20 feet) tall.

■ Rp1EM Emergent

57 Riparian areas that have erect, rooted herbaceous vegetation during most of the growing season.

Lentic

■ Rp2SS Scrub-Shrub

2 This type of riparian area is dominated by woody vegetation that is less than 6 meters (20 feet) tall.
Woody vegetation includes tree saplings and trees that are stunted due to environmental conditions.

■ Rp2FO Forested

12 This riparian class has woody vegetation that is greater than 6 meters (20 feet) tall.

■ Rp2EM Emergent

1 Riparian areas that have erect, rooted herbaceous vegetation during most of the growing season.



Land Management Summary



187,257 Acres (0.2% of Montana)

Land Management Summary

[Explain](#)

	Ownership	Tribal	Easements	Other Boundaries (possible overlap)
Public Lands	66,622 Acres (36%)			
Federal	55,717 Acres (30%)			
US Forest Service	55,605 Acres (30%)			
USFS Owned	55,605 Acres (30%)			
USFS Ranger Districts				106,137 Acres
Kootenai National Forest, Libby Ranger District				101,996 Acres
Lolo National Forest, Plains/Thompson Falls Ranger District				4,141 Acres
USFS National Forest Boundaries				106,137 Acres
Kootenai National Forest				101,996 Acres
Lolo National Forest				4,141 Acres
USFS Special Interest Areas				33 Acres
Barnum Wetland Botanical Area				33 Acres
US Fish and Wildlife Services	112 Acres (<1%)			
USFWS Owned	112 Acres (<1%)			
USFWS Wetland Management Districts				115 Acres
Northwest Montana Wetland Management District				115 Acres
State	10,874 Acres (6%)			
Montana State Trust Lands	7,821 Acres (4%)			
MT State Trust Owned	7,821 Acres (4%)			



Biological Reports

Within the report area you have requested, citations for all reports and publications associated with plant or animal observations in Montana Natural Heritage Program (MTNHP) databases are listed and, where possible, links to the documents are included.

The MTNHP plans to include reports associated with terrestrial and aquatic communities in the future as allowed for by staff resources. If you know of reports or publications associated with species or biological communities within the report area that are not shown in this report, please let us know: mtnhp@mt.gov

- Edson, S.A. 1992. Sculpin (*Cottus*) distribution in the Kootenai National Forest and northwestern portions of the Flathead National Forest, Montana. Montana Natural Heritage Program, Helena. 37 pp. including appendices.
- Gangemi, J.T. 1992. Sculpin (*Cottus*) distribution in the Kootenai National Forest and western portions of the Lolo National Forest, Montana. Montana Natural Heritage Program, Helena, MT 59620. 54 pp.
- Hendricks, P., K.A. Jurist, D.L. Genter, and J.D. Reichel. 1995. **Bat survey of the Kootenai National Forest, Montana: 1994**. MTNHP report.
 - Hendricks, Paul. 1996. **Datasheets and correspondence regarding *Cottus* sp. in Montana used in production of a report (U97HEN04MTUS)**.
- Jones, W.M., and D.P. Hendricks. 2002. Ecological inventory of wetland sites in the Thompson-Fisher conservation easement. Report to the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks. Montana Natural Heritage Program, Helena, Montana. 23p.
 - Loomis, H.F. and Rupert Schmitt. 1971. **The ecology, distribution, and taxonomy of the millipeds of Montana west of the continental divide**. Northwest Science. Vol. 45 No. 2:107-131.
 - Martinez, S. 1996. **Evaluation of selected bat habitat sites in south central and north western Montana, 1995**. Unpublished report to the Montana Natural Heritage Program and The Nature Conservancy.
- Reichel, J.D. and S.G. Beckstrom. 1993. **Northern bog lemming survey: 1992**. Unpublished report. Montana Natural Heritage Program, Helena, MT. 64 pp.
 - Skaar, D. 1990. Montana Common Loon management plan. U.S. Forest Service, Kalispell, Montana.
 - Skaar, D. 1985. **The Montana loon study: 3rd annual report**. Unpublished report. 6 pp.
 - Skaar, Don. 1986. **The Montana loon study: 4th annual report**. Unpublished report.
 - Stark Bill P. and Juliana W. Kyzar. 2001. **Systematics of Nearctic *Paraleuctra* with description of a new genus (Plecoptera: Leuctridae)**. Tijdschrift voor Entomologie, 144: 119-135.
- Werner, J.K. and J.D. Reichel. 1994. **Amphibian and reptile survey of the Kootenai National Forest: 1994**. Montana Natural Heritage Program, Helena, MT. 104 p.
 - Zenger, J.T. and R.W. Baumann. 2004. The Holarctic winter stonefly genus ***Isocapnia***, with an emphasis on the North American fauna (Plecoptera: Capniidae). Monographs of the Western North American Naturalist 2(1):65-95.

Introduction to Montana Natural Heritage Program



P.O. Box 201800 • 1515 East Sixth Avenue • Helena, MT 59620-1800 • fax 406.444.0266 • tel 406.444.0241 • mtnhp.org

INTRODUCTION

The Montana Natural Heritage Program (MTNHP) is Montana's source for reliable and objective information on Montana's native species and habitats, emphasizing those of conservation concern. MTNHP was created by the Montana legislature in 1983 as part of the Natural Resource Information System (NRIS) at the Montana State Library (MSL). MTNHP is "a program of information acquisition, storage, and retrieval for data relating to the flora, fauna, and biological community types of Montana" (MCA 90-15-102). MTNHP's activities are guided by statute (MCA 90-15) as well as through ongoing interaction with, and feedback from, principal data source agencies such as Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, the Montana Department of Environmental Quality, the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, the Montana University System, the US Forest Service, and the US Bureau of Land Management. The enabling legislation for MTNHP provides the State Library with the option to contract the operation of the Program. Since 2006, MTNHP has been operated as a program under the Office of the Vice President for Research and Creative Scholarship at the University of Montana (UM) through a renewable 2-year contract with the MSL. Since the first staff was hired in 1985, the Program has logged a long record of success, and developed into a highly respected, service-oriented program. MTNHP is widely recognized as one of the most advanced and effective of over 80 natural heritage programs throughout the Western Hemisphere.

VISION

Our vision is that public agencies, the private sector, the education sector, and the general public will trust and rely upon MTNHP as the source for information and expertise on Montana's species and habitats, especially those of conservation concern. We strive to provide easy access to our information in order for users to save time and money, speed environmental reviews, and inform decision making.

CORE VALUES

- We endeavor to be a single statewide source of accurate and up-to-date information on Montana's plants, animals, and aquatic and terrestrial biological communities.
- We actively listen to our data users and work responsively to meet their information and training needs.
- We strive to provide neutral, trusted, timely, and equitable service to all of our information users.
- We make every effort to be transparent to our data users in setting work priorities and providing data products.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All information requests made to the Montana Natural Heritage Program are considered library records and are protected from disclosure by the Montana Library Records Confidentiality Act (MCA 22-1-11).

INFORMATION MANAGED

Information managed at the Montana Natural Heritage Program includes: (1) lists of, and basic information on, plant and animal species and biological communities; (2) plant and animal surveys, observations, species occurrences, predictive distribution models, range polygons, and conservation status ranks; and (3) land cover and wetland and riparian mapping and the conservation status of these and other biological communities.

Data Use Terms and Conditions


- Montana Natural Heritage Program (MTNHP) products and services are based on biological data and the objective interpretation of those data by professional scientists. MTNHP does not advocate any particular philosophy of natural resource protection, management, development, or public policy.
- MTNHP has no natural resource management or regulatory authority. Products, statements, and services from MTNHP are intended to inform parties as to the state of scientific knowledge about certain natural resources, and to further develop that knowledge. The information is not intended as natural resource management guidelines or prescriptions or a determination of environmental impacts. MTNHP recommends consultation with appropriate state, federal, and tribal resource management agencies and authorities in the area where your project is located.
- Information on the status and spatial distribution of biological resources produced by MTNHP are intended to inform parties of the state-wide status, known occurrence, or the likelihood of the presence of those resources. **These products are not intended to substitute for field-collected data, nor are they intended to be the sole basis for natural resource management decisions.**
- MTNHP does not portray its data as exhaustive or comprehensive inventories of rare species or biological communities. **Field verification of the absence or presence of sensitive species and biological communities will always be an important obligation of users of our data.**
- MTNHP responds equally to all requests for products and services, regardless of the purpose or identity of the requester.
- Because MTNHP constantly updates and revises its databases with new data and information, products will become outdated over time. Interested parties are encouraged to obtain the most current information possible from MTNHP, rather than using older products. We add, review, update, and delete records on a daily basis. Consequently, we strongly advise that you update your MTNHP data sets at a minimum of every three months for most applications of our information.
- MTNHP data require a certain degree of biological expertise for proper analysis, interpretation, and application. Our staff is available to advise you on questions regarding the interpretation or appropriate use of the data that we provide. Contact information for MTNHP staff is posted at: <http://mtnhp.org/contact.asp>
- The information provided to you by MTNHP may include sensitive data that if publicly released might jeopardize the welfare of threatened, endangered, or sensitive species or biological communities. This information is intended for distribution or use only within your department, agency, or business. Subcontractors may have access to the data during the course of any given project, but should not be given a copy for their use on subsequent, unrelated work.
- MTNHP data are made freely available. Duplication of hard-copy or digital MTNHP products with the intent to sell is prohibited without written consent by MTNHP. Should you be asked by individuals outside your organization for the type of data that we provide, please refer them to MTNHP.
- MTNHP and appropriate staff members should be appropriately acknowledged as an information source in any third-party product involving MTNHP data, reports, papers, publications, or in maps that incorporate MTNHP graphic elements.
- Sources of our data include museum specimens, published and unpublished scientific literature, field surveys by state and federal agencies and private contractors, and reports from knowledgeable individuals. MTNHP actively solicits and encourages additions, corrections and updates, new observations or collections, and comments on any of the data we provide.
- MTNHP staff and contractors do not cross or survey privately-owned lands without express permission from the landowner. However, the program cannot guarantee that information provided to us by others was obtained under adherence to this policy.

Suggested Contacts for Natural Resource Agencies

As required by Montana statute (MCA 90-15), the Montana Natural Heritage Program works with state, federal, tribal, nongovernmental organizations, and private partners to ensure that the latest animal and plant distribution and status information is incorporated into our databases so that it can be used to inform a variety of planning processes and management decisions. In addition to the information you receive from us, we encourage you to contact state, federal, and tribal resource management agencies in the area where your project is located. They may have additional data or management guidelines relevant to your efforts. In particular, we encourage you to contact the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks for the latest data and management information regarding hunted and high profile management species and to use the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Information Planning and Conservation (IPAC) website <http://ecos.fws.gov/ipac/> regarding U.S. Endangered Species Act listed Threatened, Endangered, or Candidate species.

For your convenience, we have compiled a list of relevant agency contacts and links below:

Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks

Fish Species	Zachary Shattuck zshattuck@mt.gov (406) 444-1231 or Lee Nelson leenelson@mt.gov (406) 444-2447
American Bison Black-footed Ferret Black-tailed Prairie Dog Bald Eagle Golden Eagle Common Loon Least Tern Piping Plover Whooping Crane	Lauri Hanauska-Brown LHanauska-Brown@mt.gov (406) 444-5209
Grizzly Bear Greater Sage Grouse Trumpeter Swan Big Game Upland Game Birds Furbearers	John Vore jvore@mt.gov (406) 444-5209
Managed Terrestrial Game and Nongame Animal Data	Adam Messer – MFWP Data Analyst amesser@mt.gov (406) 444-0095
Fisheries Data	Bill Daigle – MFWP Fish Data Manager bdaigle@mt.gov (406) 444-3737
Wildlife and Fisheries Scientific Collector’s Permits	http://fwp.mt.gov/doingBusiness/licenses/scientificWildlife/ Merissa Hayes for Wildlife merhayes@mt.gov (406) 444-7321 Beth Giddings for Fisheries begiddings@mt.gov (406) 444-7319
Fish and Wildlife Recommendations for Subdivision Development	Renee Lemon RLemon@mt.gov (406) 444-3738 and see http://fwp.mt.gov/fishAndWildlife/livingWithWildlife/buildingWithWildlife/subdivisionRecommendations/
Regional Contacts 	Region 1 (Kalispell) (406) 752-5501 Region 2 (Missoula) (406) 542-5500 Region 3 (Bozeman) (406) 994-4042 Region 4 (Great Falls) (406) 454-5840 Region 5 (Billings) (406) 247-2940 Region 6 (Glasgow) (406) 228-3700 Region 7 (Miles City) (406) 234-0900

United States Fish and Wildlife Service:

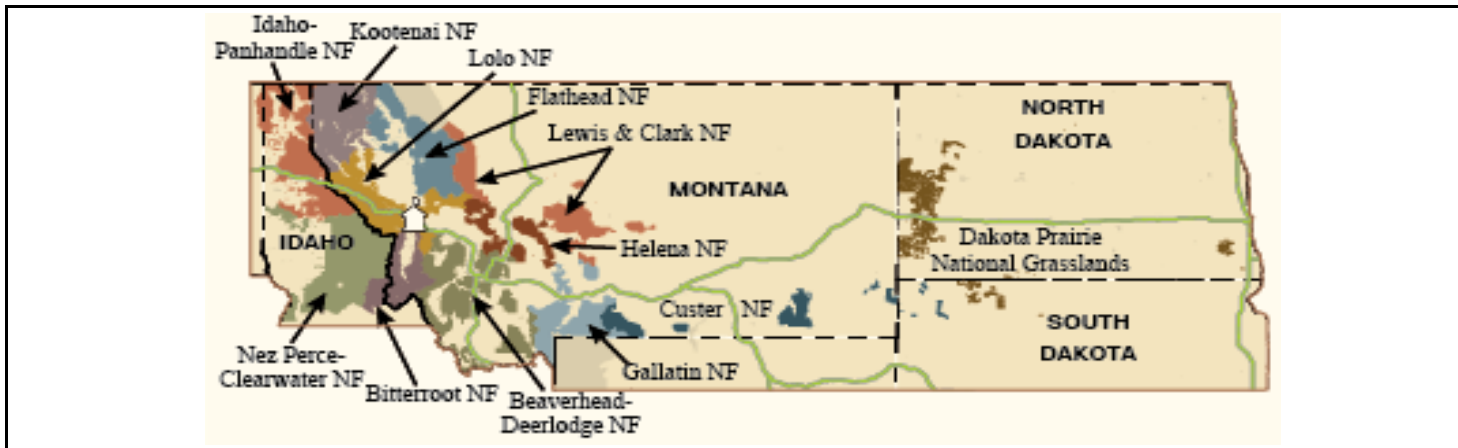
Information Planning and Conservation (IPAC) website: <http://ecos.fws.gov/ipac/>

Montana Ecological Services Field Office: <http://www.fws.gov/montanafieldoffice/> (406) 449-5225

Bureau of Land Management

Montana Field Office Contacts:	Billings	(406) 896-5013
	Butte	(406) 533-7600
	Dillon	(406) 683-8000
	Glasgow	(406) 228-3750
	Havre	(406) 262-2820
	Lewistown	(406) 538-1900
	Malta	(406) 654-5100
	Miles City	(406) 233-2800
	Missoula	(406) 329-3914

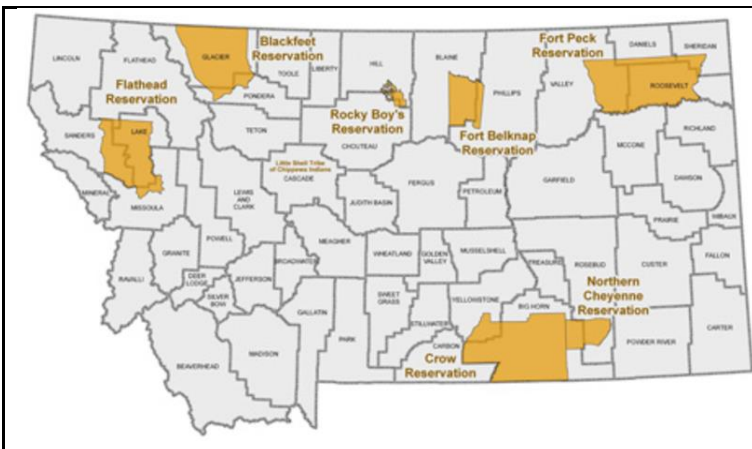
United States Forest Service



Regional Office – Missoula, Montana Contacts

Wildlife Program Leader	Tammy Fletcher	tammyfletcher@fs.fed.us	(406) 329-3588
Wildlife Ecologist	Cara Staab	cstaab@fs.fed.us	(406) 329-3677
Fish Program Leader	Scott Spaulding	scottspaulding@fs.fed.us	(406) 329-3287
Fish Ecologist	Cameron Thomas	cathomas@fs.fed.us	(406) 329-3087
TES Program	Lydia Allen	lrallen@fs.fed.us	(406) 329-3558
Interagency Grizzly Bear Coordinator	Scott Jackson	sjackson03@fs.fed.us	(406) 329-3664
Regional Botanist	Steve Shelly	sshelly@fs.fed.us	(406) 329-3041

Tribal Nations



- [Assiniboine & Gros Ventre Tribes – Fort Belknap Reservation](#)
- [Assiniboine & Sioux Tribes – Fort Peck Reservation](#)
- [Blackfoot Tribe - Blackfoot Reservation](#)
- [Chippewa Creek Tribe - Rocky Boy's Reservation](#)
- [Crow Tribe – Crow Reservation](#)
- [Little Shell Chippewa Tribe](#)
- [Northern Cheyenne Tribe – Northern Cheyenne Reservation](#)
- [Salish & Kootenai Tribes - Flathead Reservation](#)

Introduction to Species Summary

Within the report area you have requested, separate summaries are provided for: (1) Species Occurrences (SO) for plant and animal Species of Concern, Special Status Species (SSS), Important Animal Habitat (IAH) and some Potential Plant Species of Concern; (2) other observed non Species of Concern or Species of Concern without suitable documentation to create Species Occurrence polygons; and (3) other non-documented species that are potentially present based on their range, predicted suitable habitat model output, or presence of associated habitats. Each of these summaries provides the following information when present for a species: (1) the number of [Species Occurrences](#) and associated delineation criteria for construction of these polygons that have long been used for considerations of documented Species of Concern in environmental reviews; (2) the number of observations of each species; (3) the geographic range polygons for each species that the report area overlaps; (4) predicted relative habitat suitability classes that are present if a predicted suitable habitat model has been created; (5) the percent of the report area that is mapped as commonly associated or occasionally associated habitat as listed for each species in the [Montana Field Guide](#); and (6) a variety of conservation status ranks and links to species accounts in the [Montana Field Guide](#). Details on each of these information categories are included under relevant section headers below or are defined on our [Species Status Codes](#) page. In presenting this information, the Montana Natural Heritage Program (MTNHP) is working towards assisting the user with rapidly determining what species have been documented and what species are potentially present in the report area. We remind users that this information is likely incomplete as surveys to document native and introduced species are lacking in many areas of the state, information on introduced species has only been tracked relatively recently, the MTNHP's staff and resources are restricted by declining budgets, and information is constantly being added and updated in our databases. **Thus, field verification by professional biologists of the absence or presence of species and biological communities will always be an important obligation of users of our data.**

If you are aware of observation datasets that the MTNHP is missing, please report them to the Program Botanist apipp@mt.gov or Senior Zoologist dbachen@mt.gov. If you have observations that you would like to contribute, you can submit animal observations using our online data entry system at <http://mtnhp.org/AddObs/>, plant and animal observations via Excel spreadsheets posted at <http://mtnhp.org/observations.asp>, or to the Program Botanist or Senior Zoologist.

Observations

The MTNHP manages information on more than 1.8 million animal and plant observations that have been reported by professional biologists and private citizens from across Montana. The majority of these observations are submitted in digital format from standardized databases associated with research or monitoring efforts and spreadsheets of incidental observations submitted by professional biologists and amateur naturalists. At a minimum, accepted observation records must contain a credible species identification (i.e. appropriate geographic range, date, and habitat and, if species are difficult to identify, a photograph and notes on key identifying features), a date or date range, observer name, locational information (ideally with latitude and longitude in decimal degrees), notes on numbers observed, and species behavior or habitat use (e.g., is the observation likely associated with reproduction). Bird records are also required to have information associated with date-appropriate breeding or overwintering status of the species observed. MTNHP reviews observation records to ensure that they are mapped correctly, occur within date ranges when the species is known to be present or detectable, occur within the known seasonal geographic range of the species, and occur in appropriate habitats. MTNHP also assigns each record a locational uncertainty value in meters to indicate the spatial precision associated with the record's mapped coordinates. Only records with locational uncertainty values of 10,000 meters or less are included in environmental summary reports and number summaries are only provided for records with locational uncertainty values of 1,000 meters or less.

Species Occurrences

The MTNHP evaluates plant and animal observation records for species of higher conservation concern to determine whether they are worthy of inclusion in the [Species Occurrence](#) (SO) layer for use in environmental reviews; observations not worthy of inclusion in this layer include long distance dispersal events, migrants observed away from key migratory stopover habitats, and winter observations. An SO is a polygon depicting what is known about a species occupancy from direct observation with a defined level of locational uncertainty and any inference that can be made about adjacent habitat use from the latest peer-reviewed science. If an observation can be associated with a map feature that can be tracked (e.g., a wetland boundary for a wetland associated plant) then this polygon feature is used to represent the SO. Areas that can be inferred as probable occupied habitat based on direct observation of a species location and what is known about the foraging area or home range size of the species may be incorporated into the SO. Species Occurrences generally belong to one of the following categories:

Plant Species Occurrences

A documented location of a specimen collection or observed plant population. In some instances, adjacent, spatially separated clusters are considered subpopulations and are grouped as one occurrence (e.g., the subpopulations occur in ecologically similar habitats, and their spatial proximity likely allows them to interbreed). Tabular information for multiple observations at the same SO location is generally linked to a single polygon. Plant SO's are only created for Species of Concern and Potential Species of Concern.

Animal Species Occurrences

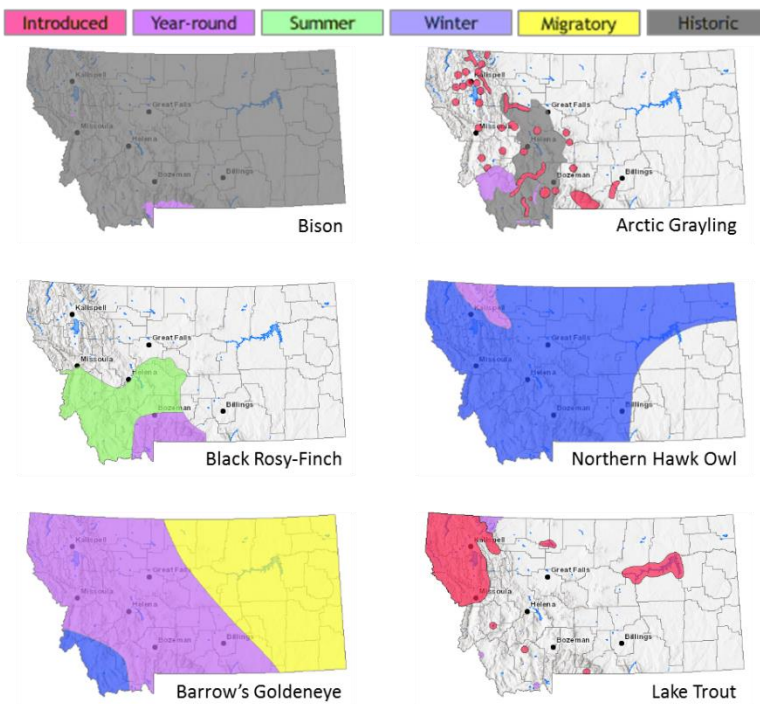
The location of a verified observation or specimen record typically known or assumed to represent a breeding population or a portion of a breeding population. Animal SO's are generally: (1) buffers of terrestrial point observations based on documented species' home range sizes; (2) buffers of stream segments to encompass occupied streams and immediate adjacent riparian habitats; (3) polygonal features encompassing known or likely breeding populations (e.g., a wetland for some amphibians or a forested portion of a mountain range for some wide ranging carnivores); or (4) combinations of the above. Tabular information for multiple observations at the same SO location is generally linked to a single polygon. Species Occurrence polygons may encompass some unsuitable habitat in some instances in order to avoid heavy data processing associated with clipping out habitats that are readily assessed as unsuitable by the data user (e.g., a point buffer of a terrestrial species may overlap into a portion of a lake that is obviously inappropriate habitat for the species). Animal SO's are only created for Species of Concern and Special Status Species (e.g., Bald Eagle).

Other Occurrence Polygons

These include significant biological features not included in the above categories, such as Important Animal Habitats like bird rookeries and bat roosts, and peatlands or other wetland and riparian communities that support diverse plant and animal communities.

Geographic Range Polygons

Geographic range polygons have not yet been defined for most plant species. Native year-round, summer, winter, migratory and historic geographic range polygons as well as polygons for introduced populations have



been defined for most animal species for which there are enough observations, surveys, and knowledge of appropriate seasonal habitat use to define them (see examples to left). These native or introduced range polygons bound the extent of known or likely occupied habitats for non-migratory and relative sedentary species and the regular extent of known or likely occupied habitats for migratory and long-distance dispersing species; polygons may include unsuitable intervening habitats. For most species, a single polygon can represent the year-round or seasonal range, but breeding ranges of some colonial nesting water birds and some introduced species are represented more patchily when supported by data. Some ranges are mapped more broadly than actual distributions in order to be visible on statewide maps (e.g., fish).

Predicted Suitable Habitat Models

Recent predicted suitable habitat suitability models have not yet been created for most plant species. For animal species for which models have been completed, the environmental summary report includes simple, rule-based, associations with streams for fish and other aquatic species and mathematically complex Maximum Entropy models (Phillips et al. 2006, *Ecological Modeling* 190:231-259) constructed from a variety of statewide biotic and abiotic layers and presence only data for individual species contributed to Montana Natural Heritage Program databases for most terrestrial species. For the Maximum Entropy models, we reclassified 90 x 90-meter continuous model output into suitability classes (unsuitable, low, moderate, and optimal) then aggregated that into the one square mile hexagons used in the environmental summary report; this is the finest spatial scale we suggest using this information in management decisions and survey planning. Full model write ups for individual species that discuss model goals, inputs, outputs, and evaluation in much greater detail are posted on the MTNHP's [Predicted Suitable Habitat Models](#) page. Evaluations of predictive accuracy and specific limitations are included with the metadata for models of individual species. **Model outputs should not be used in place of on-the-ground surveys for species. Instead model outputs should be used in conjunction with habitat evaluations to determine the need for on-the-ground surveys for species.** We suggest that the percentage of predicted optimal and moderate suitable habitat within the report area be used in conjunction with geographic range polygons and the percentage of commonly associated habitats to generate lists of potential species that may occupy broader landscapes for the purposes of landscape-level planning.

Associated Habitats

Within the boundary of the intersected hexagons, we provide the approximate percentage of commonly or occasionally associated habitat for vertebrate animal species that regularly breed, overwinter, or migrate through the state; a detailed list of commonly and occasionally associated habitats is provided in individual species accounts in the [Montana Field Guide](#). We assigned common or occasional use of each of the 82 ecological systems mapped in Montana by: (1) using personal knowledge and reviewing literature that

summarizes the breeding, overwintering, or migratory habitat requirements of each species; (2) evaluating structural characteristics and distribution of each ecological system relative to the species' range and habitat requirements; (3) examining the observation records for each species in the state-wide point observation database associated with each ecological system; and (4) calculating the percentage of observations associated with each ecological system relative to the percent of Montana covered by each ecological system to get a measure of numbers of observations versus availability of habitat. Species that breed in Montana were only evaluated for breeding habitat use, species that only overwinter in Montana were only evaluated for overwintering habitat use, and species that only migrate through Montana were only evaluated for migratory habitat use. In general, species were listed as associated with an ecological system if structural characteristics of used habitat documented in the literature were present in the ecological system or large numbers of point observations were associated with the ecological system. However, species were not listed as associated with an ecological system if there was no support in the literature for use of structural characteristics in an ecological system, even if point observations were associated with that system. Common versus occasional association with an ecological system was assigned based on the degree to which the structural characteristics of an ecological system matched the preferred structural habitat characteristics for each species as represented in the scientific literature. The percentage of observations associated with each ecological system relative to the percent of Montana covered by each ecological system was also used to guide assignment of common versus occasional association.

We suggest that the percentage of commonly associated habitat within the report area be used in conjunction with geographic range polygons and the percentage of predicted optimal and moderate suitable habitat from predictive models to generate lists of potential species that may occupy broader landscapes for the purposes of landscape-level planning. Users of this information should be aware that land cover mapping accuracy is particularly problematic when the systems occur as small patches or where the land cover types have been altered over the past decade. Thus, particular caution should be used when using the associations in assessments of smaller areas (e.g., evaluations of public land survey sections).

Introduction to Land Cover Summary

Land Use/Land Cover is one of 15 [Montana Spatial Data Infrastructure](#) framework layers considered vital for making statewide maps of Montana and understanding its geography. The layer records all Montana natural vegetation, land cover and land use, classified from satellite and aerial imagery, mapped at a scale of 1:100000, and interpreted with supporting ground-level data. The baseline map is adapted from the Northwest ReGAP (NWGAP) project land cover classification, which used 30m resolution multi-spectral Landsat imagery acquired between 1999 and 2001. Vegetation classes were drawn from the Ecological System Classification developed by NatureServe (Comer et al. 2003). The land cover classes were developed by Anderson et al. (1976). The NWGAP effort encompasses 12 map zones. Montana overlaps seven of these zones. The two NWGAP teams responsible for the initial land cover mapping effort in Montana were Sanborn and NWGAP at the University of Idaho. Both Sanborn and NWGAP employed a similar modeling approach in which Classification and Regression Tree (CART) models were applied to Landsat ETM+ scenes. The Spatial Analysis Lab within the Montana Natural Heritage Program was responsible for developing a seamless Montana land cover map with a consistent statewide legend from these two separate products. Additionally, the Montana land cover layer incorporates several other land cover and land use products (e.g., MSDI Structures and Transportation themes and the Montana Department of Revenue Final Land Unit classification) and reclassifications based on plot-level data and the latest NAIP imagery to improve accuracy and enhance the usability of the theme. Updates are done as partner support and funding allow, or when other MSDI datasets can be incorporated. Recent updates include fire perimeters and agricultural land use (annually), energy developments such as wind, oil and gas installations (2014), roads, structures and other impervious surfaces (various years): and local updates/improvements to specific ecological systems (e.g., central Montana grassland and sagebrush ecosystems). Current and previous versions of the Land Use/Land Cover layer with full metadata are available for download at the Montana State Library's [Geographic Information Clearinghouse](#).

Within the report area you have requested, land cover is summarized by acres of Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3 Ecological Systems.

Literature Cited

- Anderson, J.R. E.E. Hardy, J.T. Roach, and R.E. Witmer. 1976. A land use and land cover classification system for use with remote sensor data. U.S. Geological Survey Professional Paper 964.
- Comer, P., D. Faber-Langendoen, R. Evans, S. Gawler, C. Josse, G. Kittel, S. Menard, M. Pyne, M. Reid, K. Schulz, K. Snow, and J. Teague. 2003. Ecological systems of the United States: A working classification of U.S. terrestrial systems. NatureServe, Arlington, VA.

Introduction to Wetland and Riparian Summary

Within the report area you have requested, wetland and riparian mapping is summarized by acres of each classification present. Summaries are only provided for modern MTNHP wetland and riparian mapping and not for outdated (NWI Legacy) or incomplete (NWI Scalable) mapping efforts; [described here](#). MTNHP has made all three of these datasets and associated metadata available for separate download on the [Montana Wetland and Riparian Framework MSDI download page](#).

Wetland and Riparian mapping is one of 15 [Montana Spatial Data Infrastructure](#) framework layers considered vital for making statewide maps of Montana and understanding its geography. The wetland and riparian framework layer consists of spatial data representing the extent, type, and approximate location of wetlands, riparian areas, and deepwater habitats in Montana.

Wetland and riparian mapping is completed through photointerpretation of 1-m resolution color infrared aerial imagery acquired from 2005 or later. A coding convention using letters and numbers is assigned to each mapped wetland. These letters and numbers describe the broad landscape context of the wetland, its vegetation type, its water regime, and the kind of alterations that may have occurred. Ancillary data layers such as topographic maps, digital elevation models, soils data, and other aerial imagery sources are also used to improve mapping accuracy. Wetland mapping follows the federal Wetland Mapping Standard and classifies wetlands according to the Cowardin classification system of the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) (Cowardin et al. 1979, FGDC Wetlands Subcommittee 2013). Federal, State, and local regulatory agencies with jurisdiction over wetlands may define and describe wetlands differently than the NWI. Similar coding, based on U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service conventions, is applied to riparian areas (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 2009). These are mapped areas where vegetation composition and growth is influenced by nearby water bodies, but where soils, plant communities, and hydrology do not display true wetland characteristics. **These data are intended for use in publications at a scale of 1:12,000 or smaller. Mapped wetland and riparian areas do not represent precise boundaries and digital wetland data cannot substitute for an on-site determination of jurisdictional wetlands.**

A detailed overview, with examples, of both wetland and riparian classification systems and associated codes can be found at: http://mtnhp.org/help/MapView/WetRip_Classification.asp

Literature Cited

- Cowardin, L.M., V. Carter, F.C. Golet, and E.T. LaRoe. 1979. Classification of wetlands and deepwater habitats of the United States. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, FWS/OBS-79/31. Washington, D.C. 103pp.
- Federal Geographic Data Committee. 2013. Classification of wetlands and deepwater habitats of the United States. FGDC-STD-004-2013. Second Edition. Wetlands Subcommittee, Federal Geographic Data Committee and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services. 2009. A system for mapping riparian areas in the western United States. Division of Habitat and Resource Conservation, Branch of Resource and Mapping Support, Arlington, Virginia.

Introduction to Land Management Summary

Within the report area you have requested, land management information is summarized by acres of federal, state, and local government lands, tribal reservation boundaries, private conservation lands, and federal, state, local, and private conservation easements. Acreage for “Owned”, “Tribal”, or “Easement” categories represents non-overlapping areas that may be totaled. However, “Other Boundaries” represents managed areas such as National Forest boundaries containing private inholdings and other mixed ownership which may cause boundaries to overlap (e.g. a wilderness area within a forest). Therefore, acreages may not total in a straight-forward manner.

Because information on land stewardship is critical to effective land management, the Montana Natural Heritage Program (MTNHP) began compiling ownership and management data in 1997. The goal of the Montana Land Management Database is to manage a single, statewide digital data set that incorporates information from both public and private entities. The database assembles information on public lands, private conservation lands, and conservation easements held by state and federal agencies and land trusts and is updated on a regular basis. Since 2011, the Information Management group in the Montana State Library’s Digital Library Division has taken an increasingly active role in managing layers of the Montana Land Management Database in partnership with the MTNHP.

Public and private conservation land polygons are attributed with the name of the entity that owns it. The data are derived from the statewide Montana Cadastral Parcel layer. Conservation easement data shows land parcels on which a public agency or qualified land trust has placed a conservation easement in cooperation with the land owner. The dataset contains no information about ownership or status of the mineral estate. For questions about the dataset or to report errors, please contact the Montana Natural Heritage Program at (406) 444-5354 or mtnhp@mt.gov. You can download various components of the Land Management Database and view associated metadata at the Montana State Library’s [GIS Data List](#) at the following links:

[Public Lands](#)

[Conservation Easements](#)

[Private Conservation Lands](#)

[Managed Areas](#)

Map features in the Montana Land Management Database or summaries provided in this report are not intended as a legal depiction of public or private surface land ownership boundaries and should not be used in place of a survey conducted by a licensed land surveyor. Similarly, map features do not imply public access to any lands. The Montana Natural Heritage Program makes no representations or warranties whatsoever with respect to the accuracy or completeness of this data and assumes no responsibility for the suitability of the data for a particular purpose. The Montana Natural Heritage Program will not be liable for any damages incurred as a result of errors displayed here. Consumers of this information should review or consult the primary data and information sources to ascertain the viability of the information for their purposes.

Additional Information Resources

[Home Page for Montana Natural Heritage Program \(MTNHP\)](#)

[MTNHP Staff Contact Information](#)

[Montana Field Guide](#)

[MTNHP Species of Concern Report - Animals and Plants](#)

[MTNHP Species Status Codes - Explanation](#)

[MTNHP Predicted Suitable Habitat Models](#) (for select Animals and Plants)

[MTNHP Request Information page](#)

[Montana Cadastral](#)

[Montana Code Annotated](#)

[Montana Department of Environmental Quality](#)

[Montana Fisheries Information System](#)

[Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Subdivision Recommendations](#)

[Montana GIS Data Layers](#)

[Montana GIS Data Bundler](#)

[Montana Greater Sage-Grouse Project Submittal Site](#)

[Montana Ground Water Information Center](#)

[Montana Legislative Environmental Policy Office Publications](#)

(Including Index of Environmental Permits required in Montana and Guide to the Montana Environmental Policy Act)

[Laws, Treaties, Regulations, and Permits on Animals and Plants](#)

[Montana Spatial Data Infrastructure Layers](#)

[Montana State Historic Preservation Office Review and Compliance](#)

[Montana Water Information System](#)

[Montana Web Map Services](#)

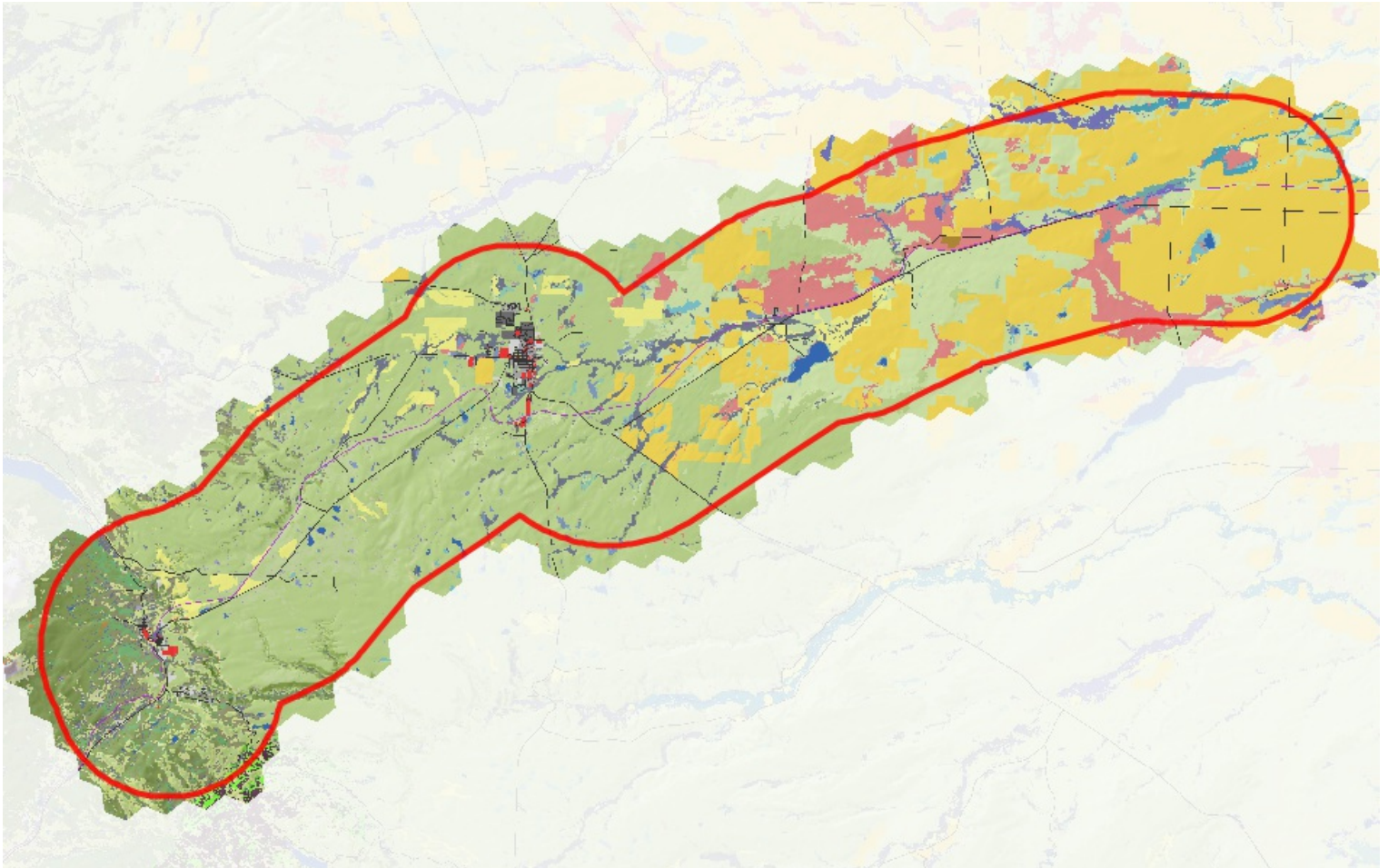
[National Environmental Policy Act](#)

[U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Information for Planning and Conservation](#) (Section 7 Consultation)

[Web Soil Survey Tool](#)



Land Cover Summary



179,018 Acres (0.19% of Montana)

Notes on and Appropriate Uses of Land Cover

The Land Cover data used in Map Viewer are based on classifications of 30-meter Landsat satellite imagery. The base data were classified as part of the national ReGAP project, using imagery from the late 1990s and early 2000s. Classification accuracy varies from system to system, but statewide and local assessments have not been completed to-date. Generally, systems occurring as small patches (e.g., fens, mountain mahogany shrublands) or those making up smaller percentages of various administrative boundaries (e.g. all of those listed under the Additional Limited Land Cover folder below) will be less accurately classified than systems occurring as matrices or large patches (e.g., mixed grass prairie, lodgepole pine forests). Similarly, areas where land use and land cover has changed significantly over the past decade may not be correctly classified. Users are cautioned that the appropriate scale for use of the data is 1:100,000. Accuracy improvements are ongoing. To submit updated information, please email mtnhp@mt.gov.



34%
(60,872
Acres)

Grassland Systems Montane Grassland

Rocky Mountain Lower Montane, Foothill, and Valley Grassland

This grassland system of the northern Rocky Mountains is found at lower montane to foothill elevations in mountains and valleys throughout Montana. These grasslands are floristically similar to Big Sagebrush Steppe but are defined by shorter summers, colder winters, and young soils derived from recent glacial and alluvial material. They are found at elevations from 548 - 1,650 meters (1,800-5,413 feet). In the lower montane zone, they range from small meadows to large open parks surrounded by conifers; below the lower treeline, they occur as extensive foothill and valley grasslands. Soils are relatively deep, fine-textured, often with coarse fragments, and non-saline. Microphytic crust may be present in high-quality occurrences. This system is typified by cool-season perennial bunch grasses and forbs (>25%) cover, with a sparse shrub cover (<10%). Rough fescue (*Festuca campestris*) is dominant in the northwestern portion of the state and Idaho fescue (*Festuca idahoensis*) is dominant or co-dominant throughout the range of the system. Bluebunch wheatgrass (*Pseudoroegneria spicata*) occurs as a co-dominant throughout the range as well, especially on xeric sites. Western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*) is consistently present, often with appreciable coverage (>10%) in lower elevation occurrences in western Montana and virtually always present, with relatively high coverages (>25%), on the edge of the Northwestern Great Plains region. Species diversity ranges from a high of more than 50 per 400 square

meter plot on mesic sites to 15 (or fewer) on xeric and disturbed sites. Most occurrences have at least 25 vascular species present. Farmland conversion, noxious species invasion, fire suppression, heavy grazing and oil and gas development are major threats to this system.



23%
(40,689
Acres)

Human Land Use

Agriculture

Cultivated Crops

These areas used for the production of crops, such as corn, soybeans, small grains, sunflowers, vegetables, and cotton, typically on an annual cycle. Agricultural plant cover is variable depending on season and type of farming. Other areas include more stable land cover of orchards and vineyards.



12%
(21,021
Acres)

Grassland Systems

Lowland/Prairie Grassland

Great Plains Mixedgrass Prairie

The system covers much of the eastern two-thirds of Montana, occurring continuously for hundreds of square kilometers, interrupted only by wetland/riparian areas or sand prairies. Soils are primarily fine and medium-textured. The growing season averages 115 days, ranging from 100 days on the Canadian border to 130 days on the Wyoming border. Climate is typical of mid-continental regions with long severe winters and hot summers. Grasses typically comprise the greatest canopy cover, and western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*) is usually dominant. Other species include thickspike wheatgrass (*Elymus lanceolatus*), green needlegrass (*Nassella viridula*), blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), and needle and thread (*Hesperostipa comata*). Near the Canadian border in north-central Montana, this system grades into rough fescue (*Festuca campestris*) and Idaho fescue (*Festuca idahoensis*) grasslands. Remnants of shortbristle needle and thread (*Hesperostipa curtisetata*) dominated vegetation are found in northernmost Montana and North Dakota, and are associated with productive sites, now mostly converted to farmland. Forb diversity is typically high. In areas of southeastern and central Montana where sagebrush steppe borders the mixed grass prairie, common plant associations include Wyoming big sagebrush-western wheatgrass (*Artemisia tridentata* ssp. *wyomingensis*/ *Pascopyrum smithii*). Fire and grazing are the primary drivers of this system. Drought can also impact it, in general favoring the shortgrass component at the expense of the mid-height grasses. With intensive grazing, cool season exotics such as Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*), smooth brome (*Bromus inermis*), and Japanese brome (*Bromus japonicus*) increase in dominance; both of these rhizomatous species have been shown to markedly decrease species diversity. Previously cultivated acres that have been re-vegetated with non-native plants have been transformed into associations such as Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*)/western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*) or into pure crested wheatgrass (*Agropyron cristatum*) stands.



5% (9,251
Acres)

Recently Disturbed or Modified

Introduced Vegetation

Introduced Upland Vegetation - Annual and Biennial Forbland

Land cover is significantly altered/disturbed by introduced annual and biennial forbs. Natural vegetation types are no longer recognizable. Typical species that dominate these areas are knapweed, oxeye daisy, Canada thistle, leafy spurge, pepperweed, and yellow sweetclover.



4% (6,740
Acres)

Shrubland, Steppe and Savanna Systems

Deciduous Shrubland

Great Plains Shrubland

This ecological system is found from southern Alberta through northern Montana's glaciated and unglaciated plains, typically at elevations ranging from 1,220 to 1,524 meters (4,000-5,000 feet). It can occur on all aspects but is more common on mesic sites with moderately shallow or deep, fine to sandy loam soils. Often it is located on slopes near breaklands and on the edge of coulees, or on upper terraces of rivers and streams. It differs from the Northwestern Great Plains Mixedgrass Prairie in that shrub cover is more than 10%, although the grass component is similar, and may occur where fire suppression in grasslands has allowed shrubs to establish. Dominant shrubs include serviceberry (*Amelanchier alnifolia*), skunkbush sumac (*Rhus trilobata*), snowberry (*Symphoricarpos* species), silver buffaloberry (*Shepherdia argentea*), shrubby cinquefoil (*Dasiphora fruticosa* ssp. *floribunda*), silverberry (*Elaeagnus commutata*) and horizontal rug juniper (*Juniperus horizontalis*). Silver sage (*Artemisia cana* ssp. *cana*) shrublands may occur on flat alluvial deposits on floodplains, terraces or benches, and alluvial fans.



3% (6,004
Acres)

Forest and Woodland Systems

Conifer-dominated forest and woodland (xeric-mesic)

Rocky Mountain Subalpine Dry-Mesic Spruce-Fir Forest and Woodland

Engelmann spruce (*Picea engelmannii*) and subalpine fir (*Abies lasiocarpa*) make up a substantial part of the montane and lower subalpine forests of the Montana Rocky Mountains and mountain island ranges of north-central and west-central Montana. Spruce is usually associated with fir and occurs as either a climax co-dominant or as a persistent, long-lived seral species in most upper elevation fir habitat types. Dry to mesic spruce-dominated forests range from 884-1,585 meters (2,900-5,200 feet) west of the Continental Divide, and 1585-2,073 meters (5,200-6,800 feet) east of the Continental Divide in the northern and central portions of the state. This system can be found at elevations up to 2,896 meters (9,500 feet) in southwestern Montana. Forests are found on gentle to very steep mountain slopes, high-elevation ridge tops and upper slopes, plateau-like surfaces, basins, alluvial terraces, well-drained benches, and inactive stream terraces. Tree canopy characteristics are relatively uniform. In northern Montana, Engelmann spruce hybridizes with its boreal counterpart, white spruce (*Picea glauca*). Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*), and western larch (*Larix occidentalis*) (west of the Continental Divide) are seral but often present in these forests. The understory is comprised of a mixture of shrubs, forbs and graminoids tolerant of warmer and drier soil conditions than those found on the more mesic to wet spruce-fir system. The drier occurrences of this system are especially common on steep slopes at upper elevations throughout the eastern Rocky Mountains, whereas the more mesic occurrences form substantial cover west of the Continental Divide in the Flathead, Lolo, Bitterroot and Kootenai river drainages.



3% (4,939 Acres)

Wetland and Riparian Systems Floodplain and Riparian

Northern Rocky Mountain Lower Montane Riparian Woodland and Shrubland

This ecological system is found throughout the Rocky Mountain and Colorado Plateau regions. In Montana, sites occur at elevations of 609-1,219 meters (2,000-4,000 feet) west of the Continental Divide. East of the Continental Divide, this system ranges up to 1,676 meters (5,500 feet). It generally comprises a mosaic of multiple communities that are tree-dominated with a diverse shrub component. It is dependent on a natural hydrologic regime with annual to episodic flooding, so it is usually found within the flood zone of rivers, on islands, sand or cobble bars, and along streambanks. It can form large, wide occurrences on mid-channel islands in larger rivers, or narrow bands on small, rocky canyon tributaries and well-drained benches. It is also typically found in backwater channels and other perennially wet but less scoured sites, such as floodplains, swales and irrigation ditches. In some locations, occurrences extend into moderately high intermountain basins where the adjacent vegetation is sage steppe. Black cottonwood (*Populus balsamifera* ssp. *trichocarpa*) is the key indicator species. Other dominant trees may include boxelder maple (*Acer negundo*), narrowleaf cottonwood (*Populus angustifolia*), eastern cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*), Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), peachleaf willow (*Salix amygdaloides*), or Rocky Mountain juniper (*Juniperus scopulorum*). Dominant shrubs include Rocky Mountain maple (*Acer glabrum*), thinleaf alder (*Alnus incana*), river birch (*Betula occidentalis*), redbud (*Cornus sericea*), hawthorne (*Crataegus* species), chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*), skunkbush sumac (*Rhus trilobata*), willows (*Salix* species), rose (*Rosa* species), silver buffaloberry (*Shepherdia argentea*), or snowberry (*Symphoricarpos* species).



2% (4,259 Acres)

Human Land Use Agriculture

Pasture/Hay

These agriculture lands typically have perennial herbaceous cover (e.g. regularly-shaped plantings) used for livestock grazing or the production of hay. There are obvious signs of management such as irrigation and haying that distinguish it from natural grasslands. Identified CRP lands are included in this land cover type.



2% (4,111 Acres)

Forest and Woodland Systems Deciduous dominated forest and woodland

Aspen Forest and Woodland

This widespread ecological system is more common in the southern and central Rocky Mountains, but occurs in the montane and subalpine zones throughout much of Montana north into Canada. It is similar to the Inter-Mountain Basins Aspen Mixed Conifer Forest-Woodland found in the Big Snowy Mountains, but lacks the conifer component. Distribution of this system is primarily limited by adequate soil moisture required to meet its high evapotranspirative demand, length of growing season, and temperatures. Mean annual precipitation where these systems occur is generally greater than 38 centimeters (15 inches) and typically greater than 51 centimeters (20 inches), except in semi-arid environments where occurrences are restricted to mesic microsites such as seeps or areas below large snow drifts. Stands can occur on gentle to moderate slopes, in swales, or on level sites. At lower elevations, occurrences are found on cooler, north aspects and mesic sites. Soils are usually deep and well developed with rock often absent from the soil. Soil texture ranges from sandy loam to clay loams. This system describes mesic forests and woodlands dominated by quaking aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) without a significant conifer component (<25% relative tree cover). This aspen system can be stable and long-lived with little encroachment of coniferous species. The understory structure may be complex with multiple shrub and herbaceous layers, or simple, with just an herbaceous layer. The herbaceous layer may be dense or sparse, dominated by mesic grasses or forbs. Occurrences of this system often originate, and are likely maintained, by stand-replacing disturbances such as crown fire, disease, windthrow, elk and beaver activity.



MONTANA
**Natural Heritage
Program**

A program of the Montana State Library's
Natural Resource Information System
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Latitude	Longitude
48.37094	-112.53118
48.68658	-113.30082

Wetland Summary



No Wetland records were found in the selected area



Land Management Summary







179,018 Acres (0.19% of Montana)

Land Management Summary

[Explain](#)

	Ownership	Tribal	Easements	Other Boundaries (possible overlap)
Public Lands	7,340 Acres (4%)			
Federal	7,194 Acres (4%)			
US Forest Service	2,627 Acres (1%)			
USFS Owned	2,627 Acres (1%)			
USFS Ranger Districts				3,117 Acres
Helena-Lewis & Clark National Forest, Rocky Mountain Ranger District				3,117 Acres
USFS National Forest Boundaries				3,117 Acres
Helena-Lewis & Clark National Forest				3,117 Acres
National Parks	4,567 Acres (3%)			
National Park Service Owned	4,567 Acres (3%)			
National Parks				4,493 Acres
Glacier National Park				4,493 Acres
Local	146 Acres (<1%)			
Local Government	146 Acres (<1%)			
Local Government Owned	146 Acres (<1%)			
Reservation Boundaries				171,587 Acres (96%)
Blackfeet Indian Reservation				171,587 Acres (96%)

+  Private Conservation Lands 871 Acres (<1%)
■ Blackfeet Land Trust 871 Acres (<1%)
+  Conservation Easements 1,708 Acres (1%)
+  Federal 1,708 Acres (1%)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> US Fish and Wildlife Service 1,708 Acres (1%)
+  Private Lands or Unknown Ownership -2,488 Acres (0%)



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Biological Reports

Within the report area you have requested, citations for all reports and publications associated with plant or animal observations in Montana Natural Heritage Program (MTNHP) databases are listed and, where possible, links to the documents are included.

The MTNHP plans to include reports associated with terrestrial and aquatic communities in the future as allowed for by staff resources. If you know of reports or publications associated with species or biological communities within the report area that are not shown in this report, please let us know: mtnhp@mt.gov

- Berry, S.S. 1919. *Mollusca of Glacier National Park, Montana*. Proceedings of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia 71:195-205.
- Marnell, L. E. 1997. *Herpetofauna of Glacier National Park*. Northwestern Naturalist 78:17-33.

Introduction to Montana Natural Heritage Program



P.O. Box 201800 • 1515 East Sixth Avenue • Helena, MT 59620-1800 • fax 406.444.0266 • tel 406.444.0241 • mtnhp.org

INTRODUCTION

The Montana Natural Heritage Program (MTNHP) is Montana's source for reliable and objective information on Montana's native species and habitats, emphasizing those of conservation concern. MTNHP was created by the Montana legislature in 1983 as part of the Natural Resource Information System (NRIS) at the Montana State Library (MSL). MTNHP is "a program of information acquisition, storage, and retrieval for data relating to the flora, fauna, and biological community types of Montana" (MCA 90-15-102). MTNHP's activities are guided by statute (MCA 90-15) as well as through ongoing interaction with, and feedback from, principal data source agencies such as Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, the Montana Department of Environmental Quality, the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, the Montana University System, the US Forest Service, and the US Bureau of Land Management. The enabling legislation for MTNHP provides the State Library with the option to contract the operation of the Program. Since 2006, MTNHP has been operated as a program under the Office of the Vice President for Research and Creative Scholarship at the University of Montana (UM) through a renewable 2-year contract with the MSL. Since the first staff was hired in 1985, the Program has logged a long record of success, and developed into a highly respected, service-oriented program. MTNHP is widely recognized as one of the most advanced and effective of over 80 natural heritage programs throughout the Western Hemisphere.

VISION

Our vision is that public agencies, the private sector, the education sector, and the general public will trust and rely upon MTNHP as the source for information and expertise on Montana's species and habitats, especially those of conservation concern. We strive to provide easy access to our information in order for users to save time and money, speed environmental reviews, and inform decision making.

CORE VALUES

- We endeavor to be a single statewide source of accurate and up-to-date information on Montana's plants, animals, and aquatic and terrestrial biological communities.
- We actively listen to our data users and work responsively to meet their information and training needs.
- We strive to provide neutral, trusted, timely, and equitable service to all of our information users.
- We make every effort to be transparent to our data users in setting work priorities and providing data products.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All information requests made to the Montana Natural Heritage Program are considered library records and are protected from disclosure by the Montana Library Records Confidentiality Act (MCA 22-1-11).

INFORMATION MANAGED

Information managed at the Montana Natural Heritage Program includes: (1) lists of, and basic information on, plant and animal species and biological communities; (2) plant and animal surveys, observations, species occurrences, predictive distribution models, range polygons, and conservation status ranks; and (3) land cover and wetland and riparian mapping and the conservation status of these and other biological communities.

Data Use Terms and Conditions

- Montana Natural Heritage Program (MTNHP) products and services are based on biological data and the objective interpretation of those data by professional scientists. MTNHP does not advocate any particular philosophy of natural resource protection, management, development, or public policy.
- MTNHP has no natural resource management or regulatory authority. Products, statements, and services from MTNHP are intended to inform parties as to the state of scientific knowledge about certain natural resources, and to further develop that knowledge. The information is not intended as natural resource management guidelines or prescriptions or a determination of environmental impacts. MTNHP recommends consultation with appropriate state, federal, and tribal resource management agencies and authorities in the area where your project is located.
- Information on the status and spatial distribution of biological resources produced by MTNHP are intended to inform parties of the state-wide status, known occurrence, or the likelihood of the presence of those resources. **These products are not intended to substitute for field-collected data, nor are they intended to be the sole basis for natural resource management decisions.**
- MTNHP does not portray its data as exhaustive or comprehensive inventories of rare species or biological communities. **Field verification of the absence or presence of sensitive species and biological communities will always be an important obligation of users of our data.**
- MTNHP responds equally to all requests for products and services, regardless of the purpose or identity of the requester.
- Because MTNHP constantly updates and revises its databases with new data and information, products will become outdated over time. Interested parties are encouraged to obtain the most current information possible from MTNHP, rather than using older products. We add, review, update, and delete records on a daily basis. Consequently, we strongly advise that you update your MTNHP data sets at a minimum of every three months for most applications of our information.
- MTNHP data require a certain degree of biological expertise for proper analysis, interpretation, and application. Our staff is available to advise you on questions regarding the interpretation or appropriate use of the data that we provide. Contact information for MTNHP staff is posted at: <http://mtnhp.org/contact.asp>
- The information provided to you by MTNHP may include sensitive data that if publicly released might jeopardize the welfare of threatened, endangered, or sensitive species or biological communities. This information is intended for distribution or use only within your department, agency, or business. Subcontractors may have access to the data during the course of any given project, but should not be given a copy for their use on subsequent, unrelated work.
- MTNHP data are made freely available. Duplication of hard-copy or digital MTNHP products with the intent to sell is prohibited without written consent by MTNHP. Should you be asked by individuals outside your organization for the type of data that we provide, please refer them to MTNHP.
- MTNHP and appropriate staff members should be appropriately acknowledged as an information source in any third-party product involving MTNHP data, reports, papers, publications, or in maps that incorporate MTNHP graphic elements.
- Sources of our data include museum specimens, published and unpublished scientific literature, field surveys by state and federal agencies and private contractors, and reports from knowledgeable individuals. MTNHP actively solicits and encourages additions, corrections and updates, new observations or collections, and comments on any of the data we provide.
- MTNHP staff and contractors do not cross or survey privately-owned lands without express permission from the landowner. However, the program cannot guarantee that information provided to us by others was obtained under adherence to this policy.

Suggested Contacts for Natural Resource Agencies

As required by Montana statute (MCA 90-15), the Montana Natural Heritage Program works with state, federal, tribal, nongovernmental organizations, and private partners to ensure that the latest animal and plant distribution and status information is incorporated into our databases so that it can be used to inform a variety of planning processes and management decisions. In addition to the information you receive from us, we encourage you to contact state, federal, and tribal resource management agencies in the area where your project is located. They may have additional data or management guidelines relevant to your efforts. In particular, we encourage you to contact the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks for the latest data and management information regarding hunted and high profile management species and to use the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Information Planning and Conservation (IPAC) website <http://ecos.fws.gov/ipac/> regarding U.S. Endangered Species Act listed Threatened, Endangered, or Candidate species.

For your convenience, we have compiled a list of relevant agency contacts and links below:

Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks

Fish Species	Zachary Shattuck zshattuck@mt.gov (406) 444-1231 or Lee Nelson leenelson@mt.gov (406) 444-2447
American Bison Black-footed Ferret Black-tailed Prairie Dog Bald Eagle Golden Eagle Common Loon Least Tern Piping Plover Whooping Crane	Lauri Hanauska-Brown LHanauska-Brown@mt.gov (406) 444-5209
Grizzly Bear Greater Sage Grouse Trumpeter Swan Big Game Upland Game Birds Furbearers	John Vore jvore@mt.gov (406) 444-5209
Managed Terrestrial Game and Nongame Animal Data	Adam Messer – MFWP Data Analyst amesser@mt.gov (406) 444-0095
Fisheries Data	Bill Daigle – MFWP Fish Data Manager bdaigle@mt.gov (406) 444-3737
Wildlife and Fisheries Scientific Collector’s Permits	http://fwp.mt.gov/doingBusiness/licenses/scientificWildlife/ Merissa Hayes for Wildlife merhayes@mt.gov (406) 444-7321 Beth Giddings for Fisheries begiddings@mt.gov (406) 444-7319
Fish and Wildlife Recommendations for Subdivision Development	Renee Lemon RLemon@mt.gov (406) 444-3738 and see http://fwp.mt.gov/fishAndWildlife/livingWithWildlife/buildingWithWildlife/subdivisionRecommendations/
Regional Contacts 	Region 1 (Kalispell) (406) 752-5501 Region 2 (Missoula) (406) 542-5500 Region 3 (Bozeman) (406) 994-4042 Region 4 (Great Falls) (406) 454-5840 Region 5 (Billings) (406) 247-2940 Region 6 (Glasgow) (406) 228-3700 Region 7 (Miles City) (406) 234-0900

United States Fish and Wildlife Service:

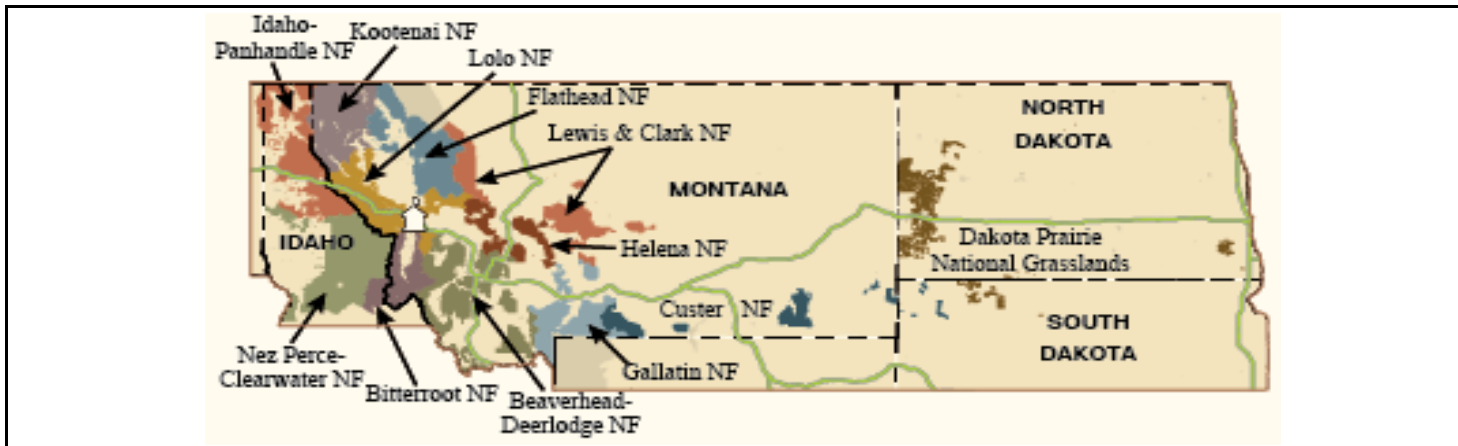
Information Planning and Conservation (IPAC) website: <http://ecos.fws.gov/ipac/>

Montana Ecological Services Field Office: <http://www.fws.gov/montanafieldoffice/> (406) 449-5225

Bureau of Land Management

Montana Field Office Contacts:	Billings	(406) 896-5013
	Butte	(406) 533-7600
	Dillon	(406) 683-8000
	Glasgow	(406) 228-3750
	Havre	(406) 262-2820
	Lewistown	(406) 538-1900
	Malta	(406) 654-5100
	Miles City	(406) 233-2800
	Missoula	(406) 329-3914

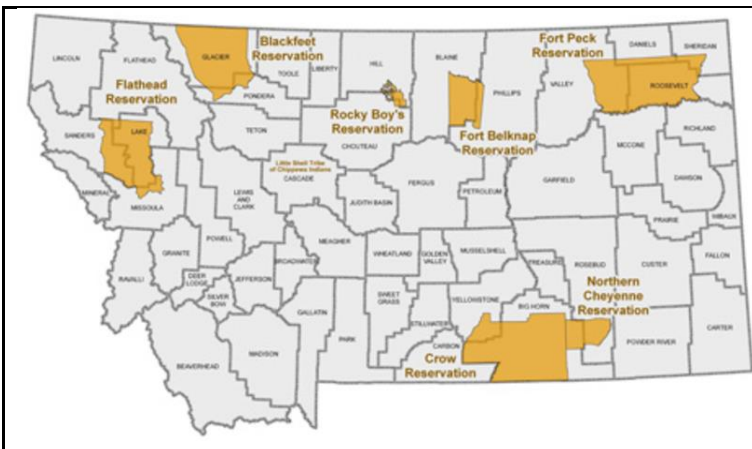
United States Forest Service



Regional Office – Missoula, Montana Contacts

Wildlife Program Leader	Tammy Fletcher	tammyfletcher@fs.fed.us	(406) 329-3588
Wildlife Ecologist	Cara Staab	cstaab@fs.fed.us	(406) 329-3677
Fish Program Leader	Scott Spaulding	scottspaulding@fs.fed.us	(406) 329-3287
Fish Ecologist	Cameron Thomas	cathomas@fs.fed.us	(406) 329-3087
TES Program	Lydia Allen	lrallen@fs.fed.us	(406) 329-3558
Interagency Grizzly Bear Coordinator	Scott Jackson	sjackson03@fs.fed.us	(406) 329-3664
Regional Botanist	Steve Shelly	sshelly@fs.fed.us	(406) 329-3041

Tribal Nations



- [Assiniboine & Gros Ventre Tribes – Fort Belknap Reservation](#)
- [Assiniboine & Sioux Tribes – Fort Peck Reservation](#)
- [Blackfoot Tribe - Blackfoot Reservation](#)
- [Chippewa Creek Tribe - Rocky Boy's Reservation](#)
- [Crow Tribe – Crow Reservation](#)
- [Little Shell Chippewa Tribe](#)
- [Northern Cheyenne Tribe – Northern Cheyenne Reservation](#)
- [Salish & Kootenai Tribes - Flathead Reservation](#)

Introduction to Species Summary

Within the report area you have requested, separate summaries are provided for: (1) Species Occurrences (SO) for plant and animal Species of Concern, Special Status Species (SSS), Important Animal Habitat (IAH) and some Potential Plant Species of Concern; (2) other observed non Species of Concern or Species of Concern without suitable documentation to create Species Occurrence polygons; and (3) other non-documented species that are potentially present based on their range, predicted suitable habitat model output, or presence of associated habitats. Each of these summaries provides the following information when present for a species: (1) the number of [Species Occurrences](#) and associated delineation criteria for construction of these polygons that have long been used for considerations of documented Species of Concern in environmental reviews; (2) the number of observations of each species; (3) the geographic range polygons for each species that the report area overlaps; (4) predicted relative habitat suitability classes that are present if a predicted suitable habitat model has been created; (5) the percent of the report area that is mapped as commonly associated or occasionally associated habitat as listed for each species in the [Montana Field Guide](#); and (6) a variety of conservation status ranks and links to species accounts in the [Montana Field Guide](#). Details on each of these information categories are included under relevant section headers below or are defined on our [Species Status Codes](#) page. In presenting this information, the Montana Natural Heritage Program (MTNHP) is working towards assisting the user with rapidly determining what species have been documented and what species are potentially present in the report area. We remind users that this information is likely incomplete as surveys to document native and introduced species are lacking in many areas of the state, information on introduced species has only been tracked relatively recently, the MTNHP's staff and resources are restricted by declining budgets, and information is constantly being added and updated in our databases. **Thus, field verification by professional biologists of the absence or presence of species and biological communities will always be an important obligation of users of our data.**

If you are aware of observation datasets that the MTNHP is missing, please report them to the Program Botanist apipp@mt.gov or Senior Zoologist dbachen@mt.gov. If you have observations that you would like to contribute, you can submit animal observations using our online data entry system at <http://mtnhp.org/AddObs/>, plant and animal observations via Excel spreadsheets posted at <http://mtnhp.org/observations.asp>, or to the Program Botanist or Senior Zoologist.

Observations

The MTNHP manages information on more than 1.8 million animal and plant observations that have been reported by professional biologists and private citizens from across Montana. The majority of these observations are submitted in digital format from standardized databases associated with research or monitoring efforts and spreadsheets of incidental observations submitted by professional biologists and amateur naturalists. At a minimum, accepted observation records must contain a credible species identification (i.e. appropriate geographic range, date, and habitat and, if species are difficult to identify, a photograph and notes on key identifying features), a date or date range, observer name, locational information (ideally with latitude and longitude in decimal degrees), notes on numbers observed, and species behavior or habitat use (e.g., is the observation likely associated with reproduction). Bird records are also required to have information associated with date-appropriate breeding or overwintering status of the species observed. MTNHP reviews observation records to ensure that they are mapped correctly, occur within date ranges when the species is known to be present or detectable, occur within the known seasonal geographic range of the species, and occur in appropriate habitats. MTNHP also assigns each record a locational uncertainty value in meters to indicate the spatial precision associated with the record's mapped coordinates. Only records with locational uncertainty values of 10,000 meters or less are included in environmental summary reports and number summaries are only provided for records with locational uncertainty values of 1,000 meters or less.

Species Occurrences

The MTNHP evaluates plant and animal observation records for species of higher conservation concern to determine whether they are worthy of inclusion in the [Species Occurrence](#) (SO) layer for use in environmental reviews; observations not worthy of inclusion in this layer include long distance dispersal events, migrants observed away from key migratory stopover habitats, and winter observations. An SO is a polygon depicting what is known about a species occupancy from direct observation with a defined level of locational uncertainty and any inference that can be made about adjacent habitat use from the latest peer-reviewed science. If an observation can be associated with a map feature that can be tracked (e.g., a wetland boundary for a wetland associated plant) then this polygon feature is used to represent the SO. Areas that can be inferred as probable occupied habitat based on direct observation of a species location and what is known about the foraging area or home range size of the species may be incorporated into the SO. Species Occurrences generally belong to one of the following categories:

Plant Species Occurrences

A documented location of a specimen collection or observed plant population. In some instances, adjacent, spatially separated clusters are considered subpopulations and are grouped as one occurrence (e.g., the subpopulations occur in ecologically similar habitats, and their spatial proximity likely allows them to interbreed). Tabular information for multiple observations at the same SO location is generally linked to a single polygon. Plant SO's are only created for Species of Concern and Potential Species of Concern.

Animal Species Occurrences

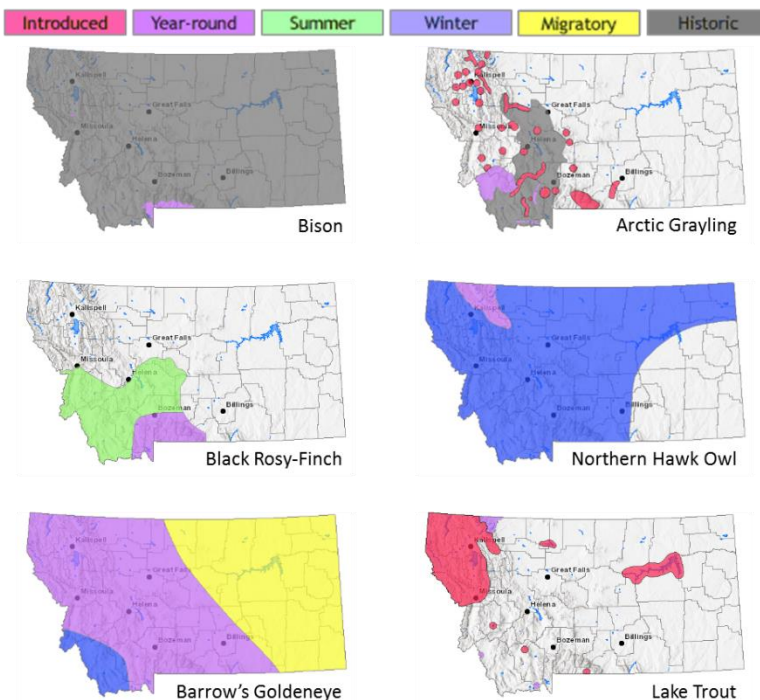
The location of a verified observation or specimen record typically known or assumed to represent a breeding population or a portion of a breeding population. Animal SO's are generally: (1) buffers of terrestrial point observations based on documented species' home range sizes; (2) buffers of stream segments to encompass occupied streams and immediate adjacent riparian habitats; (3) polygonal features encompassing known or likely breeding populations (e.g., a wetland for some amphibians or a forested portion of a mountain range for some wide ranging carnivores); or (4) combinations of the above. Tabular information for multiple observations at the same SO location is generally linked to a single polygon. Species Occurrence polygons may encompass some unsuitable habitat in some instances in order to avoid heavy data processing associated with clipping out habitats that are readily assessed as unsuitable by the data user (e.g., a point buffer of a terrestrial species may overlap into a portion of a lake that is obviously inappropriate habitat for the species). Animal SO's are only created for Species of Concern and Special Status Species (e.g., Bald Eagle).

Other Occurrence Polygons

These include significant biological features not included in the above categories, such as Important Animal Habitats like bird rookeries and bat roosts, and peatlands or other wetland and riparian communities that support diverse plant and animal communities.

Geographic Range Polygons

Geographic range polygons have not yet been defined for most plant species. Native year-round, summer, winter, migratory and historic geographic range polygons as well as polygons for introduced populations have



been defined for most animal species for which there are enough observations, surveys, and knowledge of appropriate seasonal habitat use to define them (see examples to left). These native or introduced range polygons bound the extent of known or likely occupied habitats for non-migratory and relative sedentary species and the regular extent of known or likely occupied habitats for migratory and long-distance dispersing species; polygons may include unsuitable intervening habitats. For most species, a single polygon can represent the year-round or seasonal range, but breeding ranges of some colonial nesting water birds and some introduced species are represented more patchily when supported by data. Some ranges are mapped more broadly than actual distributions in order to be visible on statewide maps (e.g., fish).

Predicted Suitable Habitat Models

Recent predicted suitable habitat suitability models have not yet been created for most plant species. For animal species for which models have been completed, the environmental summary report includes simple, rule-based, associations with streams for fish and other aquatic species and mathematically complex Maximum Entropy models (Phillips et al. 2006, *Ecological Modeling* 190:231-259) constructed from a variety of statewide biotic and abiotic layers and presence only data for individual species contributed to Montana Natural Heritage Program databases for most terrestrial species. For the Maximum Entropy models, we reclassified 90 x 90-meter continuous model output into suitability classes (unsuitable, low, moderate, and optimal) then aggregated that into the one square mile hexagons used in the environmental summary report; this is the finest spatial scale we suggest using this information in management decisions and survey planning. Full model write ups for individual species that discuss model goals, inputs, outputs, and evaluation in much greater detail are posted on the MTNHP's [Predicted Suitable Habitat Models](#) page. Evaluations of predictive accuracy and specific limitations are included with the metadata for models of individual species. **Model outputs should not be used in place of on-the-ground surveys for species. Instead model outputs should be used in conjunction with habitat evaluations to determine the need for on-the-ground surveys for species.** We suggest that the percentage of predicted optimal and moderate suitable habitat within the report area be used in conjunction with geographic range polygons and the percentage of commonly associated habitats to generate lists of potential species that may occupy broader landscapes for the purposes of landscape-level planning.

Associated Habitats

Within the boundary of the intersected hexagons, we provide the approximate percentage of commonly or occasionally associated habitat for vertebrate animal species that regularly breed, overwinter, or migrate through the state; a detailed list of commonly and occasionally associated habitats is provided in individual species accounts in the [Montana Field Guide](#). We assigned common or occasional use of each of the 82 ecological systems mapped in Montana by: (1) using personal knowledge and reviewing literature that

summarizes the breeding, overwintering, or migratory habitat requirements of each species; (2) evaluating structural characteristics and distribution of each ecological system relative to the species' range and habitat requirements; (3) examining the observation records for each species in the state-wide point observation database associated with each ecological system; and (4) calculating the percentage of observations associated with each ecological system relative to the percent of Montana covered by each ecological system to get a measure of numbers of observations versus availability of habitat. Species that breed in Montana were only evaluated for breeding habitat use, species that only overwinter in Montana were only evaluated for overwintering habitat use, and species that only migrate through Montana were only evaluated for migratory habitat use. In general, species were listed as associated with an ecological system if structural characteristics of used habitat documented in the literature were present in the ecological system or large numbers of point observations were associated with the ecological system. However, species were not listed as associated with an ecological system if there was no support in the literature for use of structural characteristics in an ecological system, even if point observations were associated with that system. Common versus occasional association with an ecological system was assigned based on the degree to which the structural characteristics of an ecological system matched the preferred structural habitat characteristics for each species as represented in the scientific literature. The percentage of observations associated with each ecological system relative to the percent of Montana covered by each ecological system was also used to guide assignment of common versus occasional association.

We suggest that the percentage of commonly associated habitat within the report area be used in conjunction with geographic range polygons and the percentage of predicted optimal and moderate suitable habitat from predictive models to generate lists of potential species that may occupy broader landscapes for the purposes of landscape-level planning. Users of this information should be aware that land cover mapping accuracy is particularly problematic when the systems occur as small patches or where the land cover types have been altered over the past decade. Thus, particular caution should be used when using the associations in assessments of smaller areas (e.g., evaluations of public land survey sections).

Introduction to Land Cover Summary

Land Use/Land Cover is one of 15 [Montana Spatial Data Infrastructure](#) framework layers considered vital for making statewide maps of Montana and understanding its geography. The layer records all Montana natural vegetation, land cover and land use, classified from satellite and aerial imagery, mapped at a scale of 1:100000, and interpreted with supporting ground-level data. The baseline map is adapted from the Northwest ReGAP (NWGAP) project land cover classification, which used 30m resolution multi-spectral Landsat imagery acquired between 1999 and 2001. Vegetation classes were drawn from the Ecological System Classification developed by NatureServe (Comer et al. 2003). The land cover classes were developed by Anderson et al. (1976). The NWGAP effort encompasses 12 map zones. Montana overlaps seven of these zones. The two NWGAP teams responsible for the initial land cover mapping effort in Montana were Sanborn and NWGAP at the University of Idaho. Both Sanborn and NWGAP employed a similar modeling approach in which Classification and Regression Tree (CART) models were applied to Landsat ETM+ scenes. The Spatial Analysis Lab within the Montana Natural Heritage Program was responsible for developing a seamless Montana land cover map with a consistent statewide legend from these two separate products. Additionally, the Montana land cover layer incorporates several other land cover and land use products (e.g., MSDI Structures and Transportation themes and the Montana Department of Revenue Final Land Unit classification) and reclassifications based on plot-level data and the latest NAIP imagery to improve accuracy and enhance the usability of the theme. Updates are done as partner support and funding allow, or when other MSDI datasets can be incorporated. Recent updates include fire perimeters and agricultural land use (annually), energy developments such as wind, oil and gas installations (2014), roads, structures and other impervious surfaces (various years): and local updates/improvements to specific ecological systems (e.g., central Montana grassland and sagebrush ecosystems). Current and previous versions of the Land Use/Land Cover layer with full metadata are available for download at the Montana State Library's [Geographic Information Clearinghouse](#).

Within the report area you have requested, land cover is summarized by acres of Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3 Ecological Systems.

Literature Cited

- Anderson, J.R. E.E. Hardy, J.T. Roach, and R.E. Witmer. 1976. A land use and land cover classification system for use with remote sensor data. U.S. Geological Survey Professional Paper 964.
- Comer, P., D. Faber-Langendoen, R. Evans, S. Gawler, C. Josse, G. Kittel, S. Menard, M. Pyne, M. Reid, K. Schulz, K. Snow, and J. Teague. 2003. Ecological systems of the United States: A working classification of U.S. terrestrial systems. NatureServe, Arlington, VA.

Introduction to Wetland and Riparian Summary

Within the report area you have requested, wetland and riparian mapping is summarized by acres of each classification present. Summaries are only provided for modern MTNHP wetland and riparian mapping and not for outdated (NWI Legacy) or incomplete (NWI Scalable) mapping efforts; [described here](#). MTNHP has made all three of these datasets and associated metadata available for separate download on the [Montana Wetland and Riparian Framework MSDI download page](#).

Wetland and Riparian mapping is one of 15 [Montana Spatial Data Infrastructure](#) framework layers considered vital for making statewide maps of Montana and understanding its geography. The wetland and riparian framework layer consists of spatial data representing the extent, type, and approximate location of wetlands, riparian areas, and deepwater habitats in Montana.

Wetland and riparian mapping is completed through photointerpretation of 1-m resolution color infrared aerial imagery acquired from 2005 or later. A coding convention using letters and numbers is assigned to each mapped wetland. These letters and numbers describe the broad landscape context of the wetland, its vegetation type, its water regime, and the kind of alterations that may have occurred. Ancillary data layers such as topographic maps, digital elevation models, soils data, and other aerial imagery sources are also used to improve mapping accuracy. Wetland mapping follows the federal Wetland Mapping Standard and classifies wetlands according to the Cowardin classification system of the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) (Cowardin et al. 1979, FGDC Wetlands Subcommittee 2013). Federal, State, and local regulatory agencies with jurisdiction over wetlands may define and describe wetlands differently than the NWI. Similar coding, based on U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service conventions, is applied to riparian areas (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 2009). These are mapped areas where vegetation composition and growth is influenced by nearby water bodies, but where soils, plant communities, and hydrology do not display true wetland characteristics. **These data are intended for use in publications at a scale of 1:12,000 or smaller. Mapped wetland and riparian areas do not represent precise boundaries and digital wetland data cannot substitute for an on-site determination of jurisdictional wetlands.**

A detailed overview, with examples, of both wetland and riparian classification systems and associated codes can be found at: http://mtnhp.org/help/MapView/WetRip_Classification.asp

Literature Cited

- Cowardin, L.M., V. Carter, F.C. Golet, and E.T. LaRoe. 1979. Classification of wetlands and deepwater habitats of the United States. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, FWS/OBS-79/31. Washington, D.C. 103pp.
- Federal Geographic Data Committee. 2013. Classification of wetlands and deepwater habitats of the United States. FGDC-STD-004-2013. Second Edition. Wetlands Subcommittee, Federal Geographic Data Committee and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services. 2009. A system for mapping riparian areas in the western United States. Division of Habitat and Resource Conservation, Branch of Resource and Mapping Support, Arlington, Virginia.

Introduction to Land Management Summary

Within the report area you have requested, land management information is summarized by acres of federal, state, and local government lands, tribal reservation boundaries, private conservation lands, and federal, state, local, and private conservation easements. Acreage for “Owned”, “Tribal”, or “Easement” categories represents non-overlapping areas that may be totaled. However, “Other Boundaries” represents managed areas such as National Forest boundaries containing private inholdings and other mixed ownership which may cause boundaries to overlap (e.g. a wilderness area within a forest). Therefore, acreages may not total in a straight-forward manner.

Because information on land stewardship is critical to effective land management, the Montana Natural Heritage Program (MTNHP) began compiling ownership and management data in 1997. The goal of the Montana Land Management Database is to manage a single, statewide digital data set that incorporates information from both public and private entities. The database assembles information on public lands, private conservation lands, and conservation easements held by state and federal agencies and land trusts and is updated on a regular basis. Since 2011, the Information Management group in the Montana State Library’s Digital Library Division has taken an increasingly active role in managing layers of the Montana Land Management Database in partnership with the MTNHP.

Public and private conservation land polygons are attributed with the name of the entity that owns it. The data are derived from the statewide Montana Cadastral Parcel layer. Conservation easement data shows land parcels on which a public agency or qualified land trust has placed a conservation easement in cooperation with the land owner. The dataset contains no information about ownership or status of the mineral estate. For questions about the dataset or to report errors, please contact the Montana Natural Heritage Program at (406) 444-5354 or mtnhp@mt.gov. You can download various components of the Land Management Database and view associated metadata at the Montana State Library’s [GIS Data List](#) at the following links:

[Public Lands](#)

[Conservation Easements](#)

[Private Conservation Lands](#)

[Managed Areas](#)

Map features in the Montana Land Management Database or summaries provided in this report are not intended as a legal depiction of public or private surface land ownership boundaries and should not be used in place of a survey conducted by a licensed land surveyor. Similarly, map features do not imply public access to any lands. The Montana Natural Heritage Program makes no representations or warranties whatsoever with respect to the accuracy or completeness of this data and assumes no responsibility for the suitability of the data for a particular purpose. The Montana Natural Heritage Program will not be liable for any damages incurred as a result of errors displayed here. Consumers of this information should review or consult the primary data and information sources to ascertain the viability of the information for their purposes.

Additional Information Resources

[Home Page for Montana Natural Heritage Program \(MTNHP\)](#)

[MTNHP Staff Contact Information](#)

[Montana Field Guide](#)

[MTNHP Species of Concern Report - Animals and Plants](#)

[MTNHP Species Status Codes - Explanation](#)

[MTNHP Predicted Suitable Habitat Models](#) (for select Animals and Plants)

[MTNHP Request Information page](#)

[Montana Cadastral](#)

[Montana Code Annotated](#)

[Montana Department of Environmental Quality](#)

[Montana Fisheries Information System](#)

[Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Subdivision Recommendations](#)

[Montana GIS Data Layers](#)

[Montana GIS Data Bundler](#)

[Montana Greater Sage-Grouse Project Submittal Site](#)

[Montana Ground Water Information Center](#)

[Montana Legislative Environmental Policy Office Publications](#)

(Including Index of Environmental Permits required in Montana and Guide to the Montana Environmental Policy Act)

[Laws, Treaties, Regulations, and Permits on Animals and Plants](#)

[Montana Spatial Data Infrastructure Layers](#)

[Montana State Historic Preservation Office Review and Compliance](#)

[Montana Water Information System](#)

[Montana Web Map Services](#)

[National Environmental Policy Act](#)

[U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Information for Planning and Conservation](#) (Section 7 Consultation)

[Web Soil Survey Tool](#)



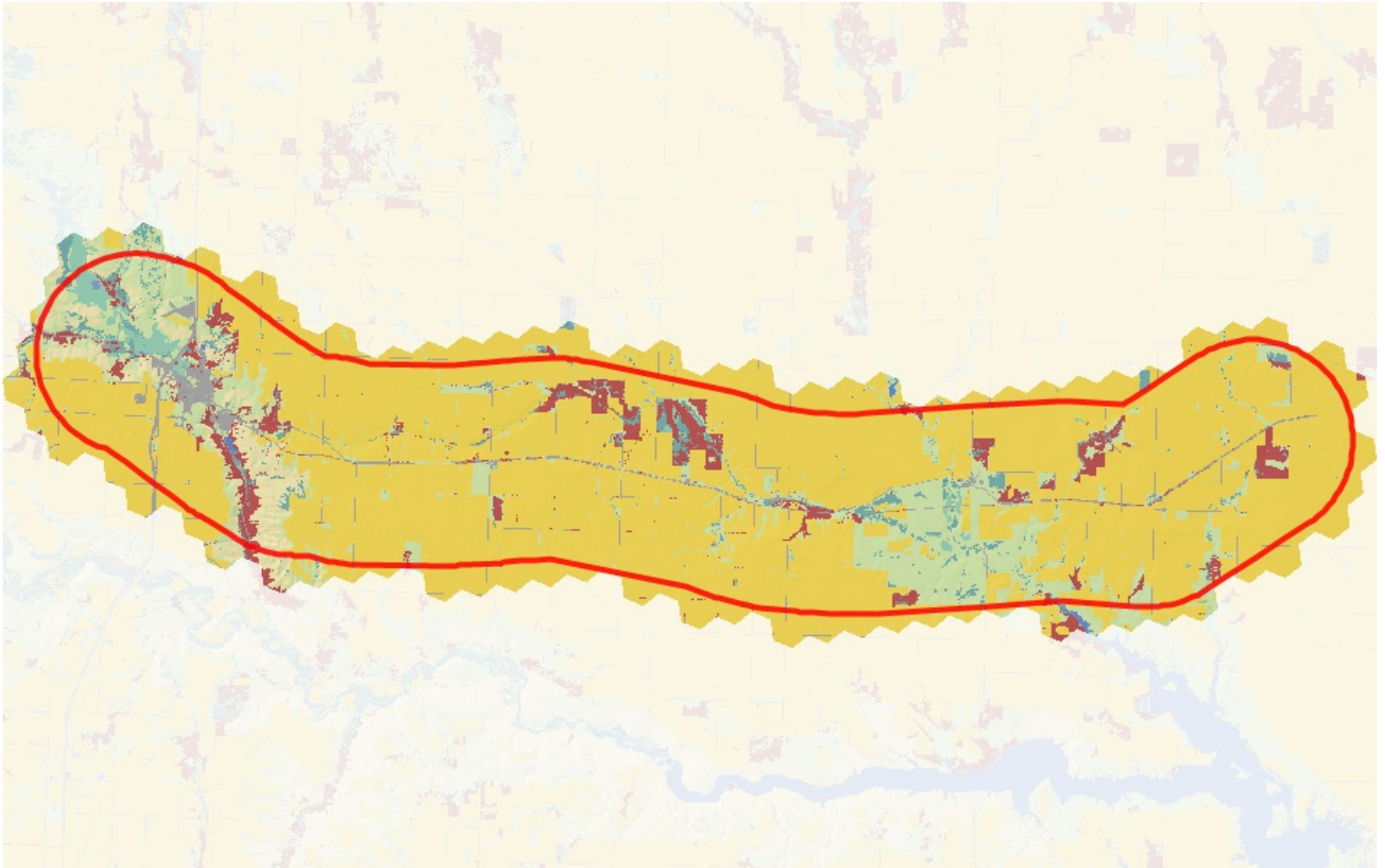
MONTANA Natural Heritage Program

A program of the Montana State Library's Natural Resource Information System operated by the University of Montana.



Latitude 48.39227
Longitude -111.09142
48.59222 -111.97941

Land Cover Summary



188,597 Acres (0.2% of Montana)

Notes on and Appropriate Uses of Land Cover

The Land Cover data used in Map Viewer are based on classifications of 30-meter Landsat satellite imagery. The base data were classified as part of the national ReGAP project, using imagery from the late 1990s and early 2000s. Classification accuracy varies from system to system, but statewide and local assessments have not been completed to-date. Generally, systems occurring as small patches (e.g., fens, mountain mahogany shrublands) or those making up smaller percentages of various administrative boundaries (e.g. all of those listed under the Additional Limited Land Cover folder below) will be less accurately classified than systems occurring as matrices or large patches (e.g., mixed grass prairie, lodgepole pine forests). Similarly, areas where land use and land cover has changed significantly over the past decade may not be correctly classified. Users are cautioned that the appropriate scale for use of the data is 1:100,000. Accuracy improvements are ongoing. To submit updated information, please email mtnhp@mt.gov.



73%
(136,870 Acres)

Human Land Use

Agriculture

Cultivated Crops

These areas used for the production of crops, such as corn, soybeans, small grains, sunflowers, vegetables, and cotton, typically on an annual cycle. Agricultural plant cover is variable depending on season and type of farming. Other areas include more stable land cover of orchards and vineyards.



13%
(24,815 Acres)

Grassland Systems

Lowland/Prairie Grassland

Great Plains Mixedgrass Prairie

The system covers much of the eastern two-thirds of Montana, occurring continuously for hundreds of square kilometers, interrupted only by wetland/riparian areas or sand prairies. Soils are primarily fine and medium-textured. The growing season averages 115 days, ranging from 100 days on the Canadian border to 130 days on the Wyoming border. Climate is typical of mid-continental regions with long severe winters and hot summers. Grasses typically comprise the greatest canopy cover, and western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*) is usually dominant. Other species include thickspike wheatgrass (*Elymus lanceolatus*), green needlegrass (*Nassella viridula*), blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), and

needle and thread (*Hesperostipa comata*). Near the Canadian border in north-central Montana, this system grades into rough fescue (*Festuca campestris*) and Idaho fescue (*Festuca idahoensis*) grasslands. Remnants of shortbristle needle and thread (*Hesperostipa curtisetata*) dominated vegetation are found in northernmost Montana and North Dakota, and are associated with productive sites, now mostly converted to farmland. Forb diversity is typically high. In areas of southeastern and central Montana where sagebrush steppe borders the mixed grass prairie, common plant associations include Wyoming big sagebrush-western wheatgrass (*Artemisia tridentata* ssp. *wyomingensis*/*Pascopyrum smithii*). Fire and grazing are the primary drivers of this system. Drought can also impact it, in general favoring the shortgrass component at the expense of the mid-height grasses. With intensive grazing, cool season exotics such as Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*), smooth brome (*Bromus inermis*), and Japanese brome (*Bromus japonicus*) increase in dominance; both of these rhizomatous species have been shown to markedly decrease species diversity. Previously cultivated acres that have been re-vegetated with non-native plants have been transformed into associations such as Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*)/western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*) or into pure crested wheatgrass (*Agropyron cristatum*) stands.



4% (8,343 Acres)

Recently Disturbed or Modified Introduced Vegetation

Introduced Upland Vegetation - Annual and Biennial Forbland

Land cover is significantly altered/disturbed by introduced annual and biennial forbs. Natural vegetation types are no longer recognizable. Typical species that dominate these areas are knapweed, oxeye daisy, Canada thistle, leafy spurge, pepperweed, and yellow sweetclover.



3% (6,254 Acres)

Sparse and Barren Systems Bluff, Badland and Dune

Great Plains Badlands

The Western Great Plains Badlands ecological system occurs within the mixed grass and sand prairie regions of eastern and southeastern Montana, where the land lies well above or below its local base level, shaped by the carving action of streams, erosion, and erodible parent material. It is easily recognized by its rugged, eroded, and often colorful land formations, and the relative absence of vegetative cover. In those areas with vegetation, species can include scattered individuals of many dryland shrubs or herbaceous taxa, including curlycup gumweed (*Grindelia squarrosa*), threadleaf snakeweed (*Gutierrezia sarothrae*) (especially with overuse and grazing), greasewood (*Sarcobatus vermiculatus*), Gardner's saltbush (*Atriplex gardneri*), buckwheat (*Eriogonum* species), plains muhly (*Muhlenbergia cuspidata*), bluebunch wheatgrass (*Pseudoroegneria spicata*), and Hooker's sandwort (*Arenaria hookeri*). Patches of sagebrush (*Artemisia* spp.) can also occur. Climate is typical of mid continental regions with long severe winters and warm summers. Precipitation ranges from 7 to 14 inches per year, with two-thirds of the precipitation falling during the summer, and a third falling in the spring. The sedimentary parent material of exposed rocks and the resultant eroded clay soils are derived from Cretaceous sea beds and are often fossil-rich. Dominant soil types are in the order Entisols. These mineral soils are found primarily on uplands, slopes, and creek bottoms and are easily erodible. The growing season is short, averaging 115 days, with a range from 100 days on the Canadian border to 130 days on the Wyoming border. Land use is limited, except for off-highway vehicle recreation and incidental grazing.



2% (2,887 Acres)

Wetland and Riparian Systems Floodplain and Riparian

Greasewood Flat

This system occurs in central, north-central and eastern Montana and as a minor occurrence in southwestern Montana. Elsewhere, it occurs throughout the western U.S. including the Intermountain Basin states, the Columbia Plateau, the Rocky Mountains and the western Great Plains. It is found on nearly level, older alluvial terraces on broad or narrow floodplains and coalescing alluvial fans in valleys. It may also occur on broad expanses along lake shores and playas. Sites typically have saline soil and a shallow water table. They flood intermittently, but the surface is dry for most of the growing season. The water table remains high enough to maintain vegetation, despite salt accumulations. Sites occur where overland flow or soils or a combination of both allow for greater than normal moisture regime. In many cases, fine textured soils result in a perched water table. The structure of this system usually consists of open to moderately dense shrubs dominated by greasewood (*Sarcobatus vermiculatus*) with a sparse graminoid understory most commonly consisting of western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*).



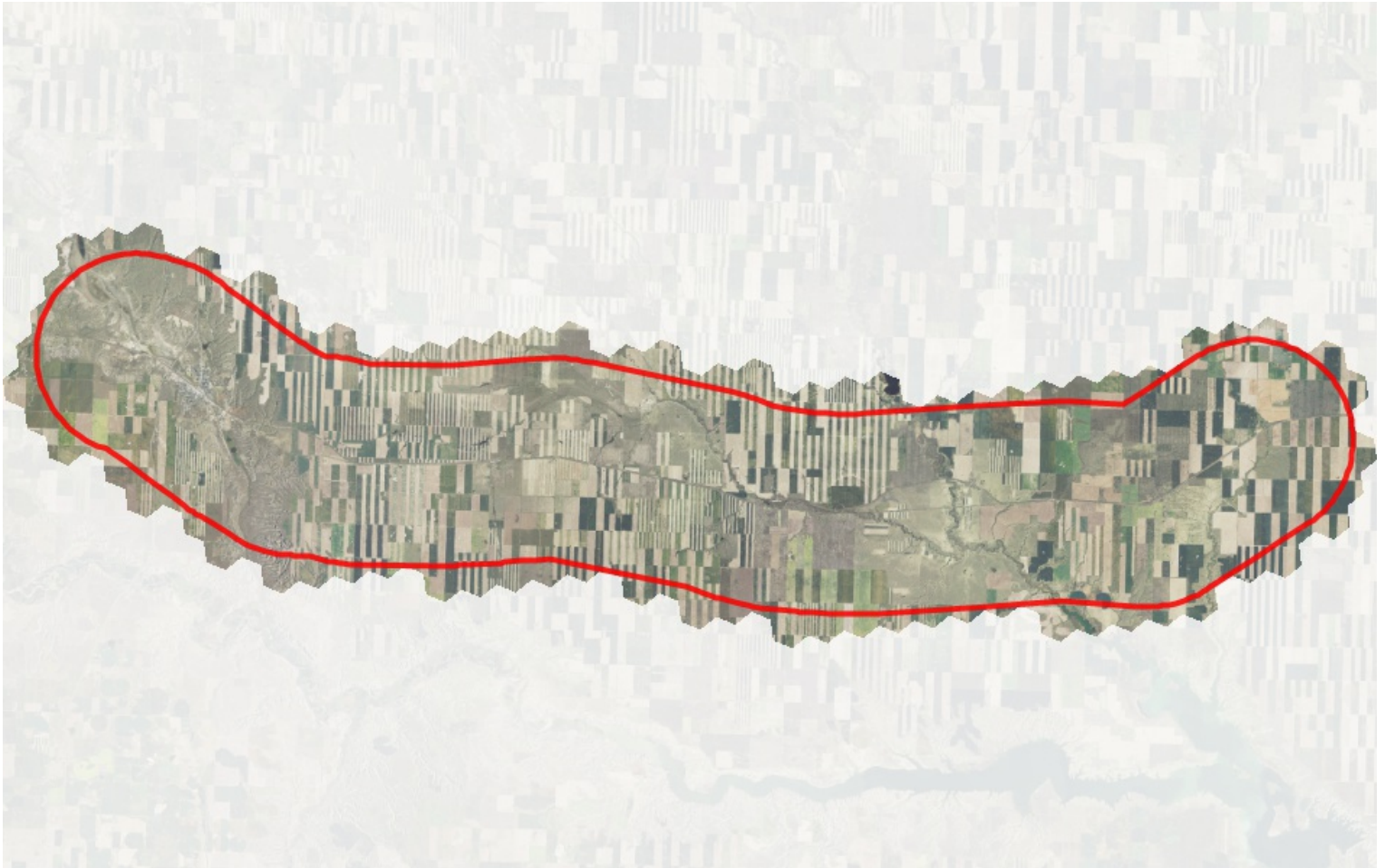
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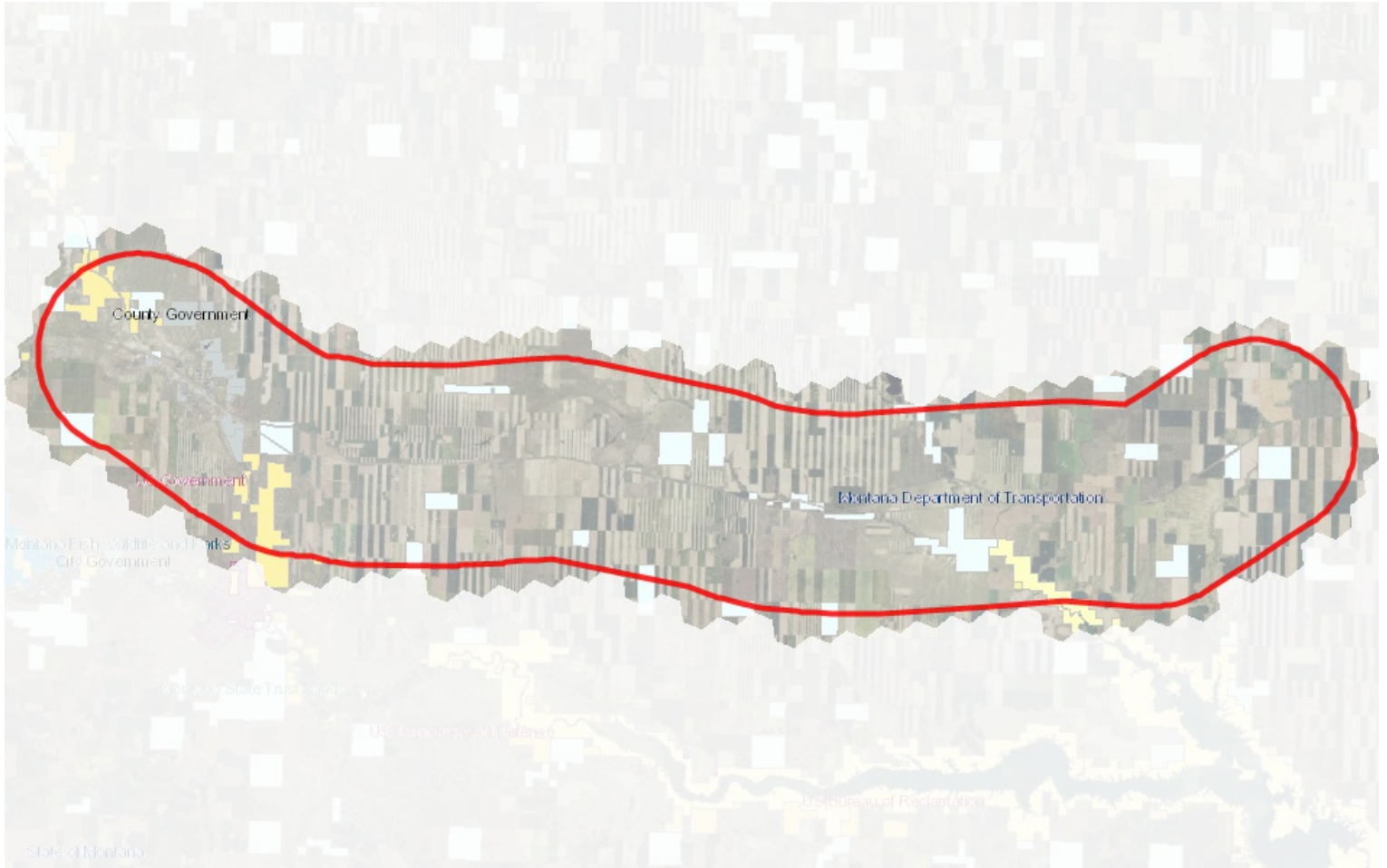
Wetland Summary



No Wetland records were found in the selected area



Land Management Summary



188,597 Acres (0.2% of Montana)

Land Management Summary

[Explain](#)

	Ownership	Tribal	Easements	Other Boundaries (possible overlap)
Public Lands	16,720 Acres (9%)			
Federal	5,040 Acres (3%)			
US Bureau of Land Management	3,586 Acres (2%)			
BLM Owned	3,586 Acres (2%)			
US Bureau of Reclamation	1,421 Acres (1%)			
USBR Owned	1,421 Acres (1%)			
US Department of Defense	12 Acres (<1%)			
USDOD Owned	12 Acres (<1%)			
US Government	21 Acres (<1%)			
US Government Owned	21 Acres (<1%)			
State	9,934 Acres (5%)			
Montana State Trust Lands	9,923 Acres (5%)			
MT State Trust Owned	9,923 Acres (5%)			
Montana Department of Transportation	11 Acres (<1%)			
MTDOT Owned	11 Acres (<1%)			
Local	1,746 Acres (1%)			
Local Government	1,746 Acres (1%)			
Local Government Owned	1,746 Acres (1%)			
Conservation Easements			11 Acres (<1%)	
Private			11 Acres (<1%)	

 Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation

11 Acres (<1%)

 **Private Lands or Unknown Ownership** 171,866 Acres (91%)



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Biological Reports

Within the report area you have requested, citations for all reports and publications associated with plant or animal observations in Montana Natural Heritage Program (MTNHP) databases are listed and, where possible, links to the documents are included.

The MTNHP plans to include reports associated with terrestrial and aquatic communities in the future as allowed for by staff resources. If you know of reports or publications associated with species or biological communities within the report area that are not shown in this report, please let us know: mtnhp@mt.gov

- Faunawest Wildlife Consultants. 1998. Status of the black-tailed and white-tailed prairie dog in Montana. Prepared for Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks.

Introduction to Montana Natural Heritage Program



P.O. Box 201800 • 1515 East Sixth Avenue • Helena, MT 59620-1800 • fax 406.444.0266 • tel 406.444.0241 • mtnhp.org

INTRODUCTION

The Montana Natural Heritage Program (MTNHP) is Montana's source for reliable and objective information on Montana's native species and habitats, emphasizing those of conservation concern. MTNHP was created by the Montana legislature in 1983 as part of the Natural Resource Information System (NRIS) at the Montana State Library (MSL). MTNHP is "a program of information acquisition, storage, and retrieval for data relating to the flora, fauna, and biological community types of Montana" (MCA 90-15-102). MTNHP's activities are guided by statute (MCA 90-15) as well as through ongoing interaction with, and feedback from, principal data source agencies such as Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, the Montana Department of Environmental Quality, the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, the Montana University System, the US Forest Service, and the US Bureau of Land Management. The enabling legislation for MTNHP provides the State Library with the option to contract the operation of the Program. Since 2006, MTNHP has been operated as a program under the Office of the Vice President for Research and Creative Scholarship at the University of Montana (UM) through a renewable 2-year contract with the MSL. Since the first staff was hired in 1985, the Program has logged a long record of success, and developed into a highly respected, service-oriented program. MTNHP is widely recognized as one of the most advanced and effective of over 80 natural heritage programs throughout the Western Hemisphere.

VISION

Our vision is that public agencies, the private sector, the education sector, and the general public will trust and rely upon MTNHP as the source for information and expertise on Montana's species and habitats, especially those of conservation concern. We strive to provide easy access to our information in order for users to save time and money, speed environmental reviews, and inform decision making.

CORE VALUES

- We endeavor to be a single statewide source of accurate and up-to-date information on Montana's plants, animals, and aquatic and terrestrial biological communities.
- We actively listen to our data users and work responsively to meet their information and training needs.
- We strive to provide neutral, trusted, timely, and equitable service to all of our information users.
- We make every effort to be transparent to our data users in setting work priorities and providing data products.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All information requests made to the Montana Natural Heritage Program are considered library records and are protected from disclosure by the Montana Library Records Confidentiality Act (MCA 22-1-11).

INFORMATION MANAGED

Information managed at the Montana Natural Heritage Program includes: (1) lists of, and basic information on, plant and animal species and biological communities; (2) plant and animal surveys, observations, species occurrences, predictive distribution models, range polygons, and conservation status ranks; and (3) land cover and wetland and riparian mapping and the conservation status of these and other biological communities.

Data Use Terms and Conditions


- Montana Natural Heritage Program (MTNHP) products and services are based on biological data and the objective interpretation of those data by professional scientists. MTNHP does not advocate any particular philosophy of natural resource protection, management, development, or public policy.
- MTNHP has no natural resource management or regulatory authority. Products, statements, and services from MTNHP are intended to inform parties as to the state of scientific knowledge about certain natural resources, and to further develop that knowledge. The information is not intended as natural resource management guidelines or prescriptions or a determination of environmental impacts. MTNHP recommends consultation with appropriate state, federal, and tribal resource management agencies and authorities in the area where your project is located.
- Information on the status and spatial distribution of biological resources produced by MTNHP are intended to inform parties of the state-wide status, known occurrence, or the likelihood of the presence of those resources. **These products are not intended to substitute for field-collected data, nor are they intended to be the sole basis for natural resource management decisions.**
- MTNHP does not portray its data as exhaustive or comprehensive inventories of rare species or biological communities. **Field verification of the absence or presence of sensitive species and biological communities will always be an important obligation of users of our data.**
- MTNHP responds equally to all requests for products and services, regardless of the purpose or identity of the requester.
- Because MTNHP constantly updates and revises its databases with new data and information, products will become outdated over time. Interested parties are encouraged to obtain the most current information possible from MTNHP, rather than using older products. We add, review, update, and delete records on a daily basis. Consequently, we strongly advise that you update your MTNHP data sets at a minimum of every three months for most applications of our information.
- MTNHP data require a certain degree of biological expertise for proper analysis, interpretation, and application. Our staff is available to advise you on questions regarding the interpretation or appropriate use of the data that we provide. Contact information for MTNHP staff is posted at: <http://mtnhp.org/contact.asp>
- The information provided to you by MTNHP may include sensitive data that if publicly released might jeopardize the welfare of threatened, endangered, or sensitive species or biological communities. This information is intended for distribution or use only within your department, agency, or business. Subcontractors may have access to the data during the course of any given project, but should not be given a copy for their use on subsequent, unrelated work.
- MTNHP data are made freely available. Duplication of hard-copy or digital MTNHP products with the intent to sell is prohibited without written consent by MTNHP. Should you be asked by individuals outside your organization for the type of data that we provide, please refer them to MTNHP.
- MTNHP and appropriate staff members should be appropriately acknowledged as an information source in any third-party product involving MTNHP data, reports, papers, publications, or in maps that incorporate MTNHP graphic elements.
- Sources of our data include museum specimens, published and unpublished scientific literature, field surveys by state and federal agencies and private contractors, and reports from knowledgeable individuals. MTNHP actively solicits and encourages additions, corrections and updates, new observations or collections, and comments on any of the data we provide.
- MTNHP staff and contractors do not cross or survey privately-owned lands without express permission from the landowner. However, the program cannot guarantee that information provided to us by others was obtained under adherence to this policy.

Suggested Contacts for Natural Resource Agencies

As required by Montana statute (MCA 90-15), the Montana Natural Heritage Program works with state, federal, tribal, nongovernmental organizations, and private partners to ensure that the latest animal and plant distribution and status information is incorporated into our databases so that it can be used to inform a variety of planning processes and management decisions. In addition to the information you receive from us, we encourage you to contact state, federal, and tribal resource management agencies in the area where your project is located. They may have additional data or management guidelines relevant to your efforts. In particular, we encourage you to contact the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks for the latest data and management information regarding hunted and high profile management species and to use the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Information Planning and Conservation (IPAC) website <http://ecos.fws.gov/ipac/> regarding U.S. Endangered Species Act listed Threatened, Endangered, or Candidate species.

For your convenience, we have compiled a list of relevant agency contacts and links below:

Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks

Fish Species	Zachary Shattuck zshattuck@mt.gov (406) 444-1231 or Lee Nelson leenelson@mt.gov (406) 444-2447
American Bison Black-footed Ferret Black-tailed Prairie Dog Bald Eagle Golden Eagle Common Loon Least Tern Piping Plover Whooping Crane	Lauri Hanauska-Brown LHanauska-Brown@mt.gov (406) 444-5209
Grizzly Bear Greater Sage Grouse Trumpeter Swan Big Game Upland Game Birds Furbearers	John Vore jvore@mt.gov (406) 444-5209
Managed Terrestrial Game and Nongame Animal Data	Adam Messer – MFWP Data Analyst amesser@mt.gov (406) 444-0095
Fisheries Data	Bill Daigle – MFWP Fish Data Manager bdaigle@mt.gov (406) 444-3737
Wildlife and Fisheries Scientific Collector’s Permits	http://fwp.mt.gov/doingBusiness/licenses/scientificWildlife/ Merissa Hayes for Wildlife merhayes@mt.gov (406) 444-7321 Beth Giddings for Fisheries begiddings@mt.gov (406) 444-7319
Fish and Wildlife Recommendations for Subdivision Development	Renee Lemon RLemon@mt.gov (406) 444-3738 and see http://fwp.mt.gov/fishAndWildlife/livingWithWildlife/buildingWithWildlife/subdivisionRecommendations/
Regional Contacts 	Region 1 (Kalispell) (406) 752-5501 Region 2 (Missoula) (406) 542-5500 Region 3 (Bozeman) (406) 994-4042 Region 4 (Great Falls) (406) 454-5840 Region 5 (Billings) (406) 247-2940 Region 6 (Glasgow) (406) 228-3700 Region 7 (Miles City) (406) 234-0900

United States Fish and Wildlife Service:

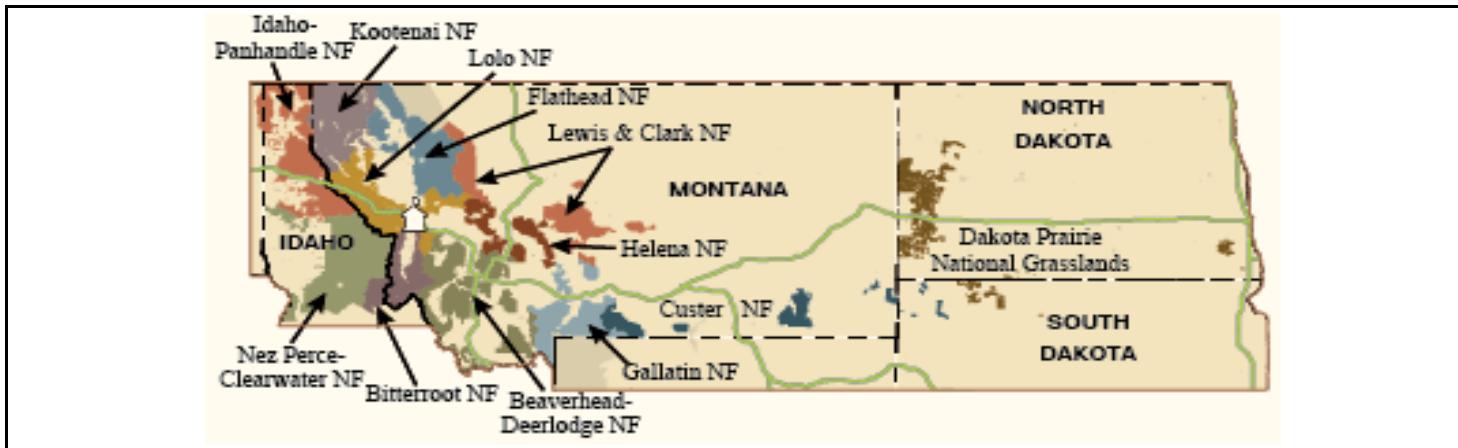
Information Planning and Conservation (IPAC) website: <http://ecos.fws.gov/ipac/>

Montana Ecological Services Field Office: <http://www.fws.gov/montanafieldoffice/> (406) 449-5225

Bureau of Land Management

Montana Field Office Contacts:	Billings	(406) 896-5013
	Butte	(406) 533-7600
	Dillon	(406) 683-8000
	Glasgow	(406) 228-3750
	Havre	(406) 262-2820
	Lewistown	(406) 538-1900
	Malta	(406) 654-5100
	Miles City	(406) 233-2800
	Missoula	(406) 329-3914

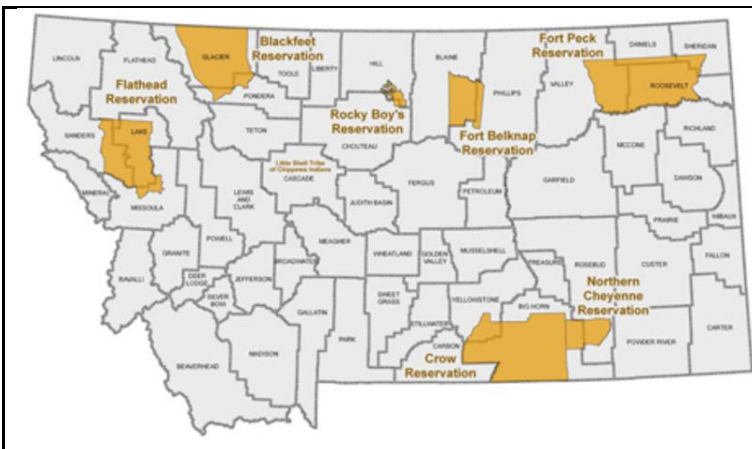
United States Forest Service



Regional Office – Missoula, Montana Contacts

Wildlife Program Leader	Tammy Fletcher	tammyfletcher@fs.fed.us	(406) 329-3588
Wildlife Ecologist	Cara Staab	cstaab@fs.fed.us	(406) 329-3677
Fish Program Leader	Scott Spaulding	scottspaulding@fs.fed.us	(406) 329-3287
Fish Ecologist	Cameron Thomas	cathomas@fs.fed.us	(406) 329-3087
TES Program	Lydia Allen	lrallen@fs.fed.us	(406) 329-3558
Interagency Grizzly Bear Coordinator	Scott Jackson	sjackson03@fs.fed.us	(406) 329-3664
Regional Botanist	Steve Shelly	sshelly@fs.fed.us	(406) 329-3041

Tribal Nations



- [Assiniboine & Gros Ventre Tribes – Fort Belknap Reservation](#)
- [Assiniboine & Sioux Tribes – Fort Peck Reservation](#)
- [Blackfoot Tribe - Blackfoot Reservation](#)
- [Chippewa Creek Tribe - Rocky Boy's Reservation](#)
- [Crow Tribe – Crow Reservation](#)
- [Little Shell Chippewa Tribe](#)
- [Northern Cheyenne Tribe – Northern Cheyenne Reservation](#)
- [Salish & Kootenai Tribes - Flathead Reservation](#)

Introduction to Species Summary

Within the report area you have requested, separate summaries are provided for: (1) Species Occurrences (SO) for plant and animal Species of Concern, Special Status Species (SSS), Important Animal Habitat (IAH) and some Potential Plant Species of Concern; (2) other observed non Species of Concern or Species of Concern without suitable documentation to create Species Occurrence polygons; and (3) other non-documented species that are potentially present based on their range, predicted suitable habitat model output, or presence of associated habitats. Each of these summaries provides the following information when present for a species: (1) the number of [Species Occurrences](#) and associated delineation criteria for construction of these polygons that have long been used for considerations of documented Species of Concern in environmental reviews; (2) the number of observations of each species; (3) the geographic range polygons for each species that the report area overlaps; (4) predicted relative habitat suitability classes that are present if a predicted suitable habitat model has been created; (5) the percent of the report area that is mapped as commonly associated or occasionally associated habitat as listed for each species in the [Montana Field Guide](#); and (6) a variety of conservation status ranks and links to species accounts in the [Montana Field Guide](#). Details on each of these information categories are included under relevant section headers below or are defined on our [Species Status Codes](#) page. In presenting this information, the Montana Natural Heritage Program (MTNHP) is working towards assisting the user with rapidly determining what species have been documented and what species are potentially present in the report area. We remind users that this information is likely incomplete as surveys to document native and introduced species are lacking in many areas of the state, information on introduced species has only been tracked relatively recently, the MTNHP's staff and resources are restricted by declining budgets, and information is constantly being added and updated in our databases. **Thus, field verification by professional biologists of the absence or presence of species and biological communities will always be an important obligation of users of our data.**

If you are aware of observation datasets that the MTNHP is missing, please report them to the Program Botanist apipp@mt.gov or Senior Zoologist dbachen@mt.gov. If you have observations that you would like to contribute, you can submit animal observations using our online data entry system at <http://mtnhp.org/AddObs/>, plant and animal observations via Excel spreadsheets posted at <http://mtnhp.org/observations.asp>, or to the Program Botanist or Senior Zoologist.

Observations

The MTNHP manages information on more than 1.8 million animal and plant observations that have been reported by professional biologists and private citizens from across Montana. The majority of these observations are submitted in digital format from standardized databases associated with research or monitoring efforts and spreadsheets of incidental observations submitted by professional biologists and amateur naturalists. At a minimum, accepted observation records must contain a credible species identification (i.e. appropriate geographic range, date, and habitat and, if species are difficult to identify, a photograph and notes on key identifying features), a date or date range, observer name, locational information (ideally with latitude and longitude in decimal degrees), notes on numbers observed, and species behavior or habitat use (e.g., is the observation likely associated with reproduction). Bird records are also required to have information associated with date-appropriate breeding or overwintering status of the species observed. MTNHP reviews observation records to ensure that they are mapped correctly, occur within date ranges when the species is known to be present or detectable, occur within the known seasonal geographic range of the species, and occur in appropriate habitats. MTNHP also assigns each record a locational uncertainty value in meters to indicate the spatial precision associated with the record's mapped coordinates. Only records with locational uncertainty values of 10,000 meters or less are included in environmental summary reports and number summaries are only provided for records with locational uncertainty values of 1,000 meters or less.

Species Occurrences

The MTNHP evaluates plant and animal observation records for species of higher conservation concern to determine whether they are worthy of inclusion in the [Species Occurrence](#) (SO) layer for use in environmental reviews; observations not worthy of inclusion in this layer include long distance dispersal events, migrants observed away from key migratory stopover habitats, and winter observations. An SO is a polygon depicting what is known about a species occupancy from direct observation with a defined level of locational uncertainty and any inference that can be made about adjacent habitat use from the latest peer-reviewed science. If an observation can be associated with a map feature that can be tracked (e.g., a wetland boundary for a wetland associated plant) then this polygon feature is used to represent the SO. Areas that can be inferred as probable occupied habitat based on direct observation of a species location and what is known about the foraging area or home range size of the species may be incorporated into the SO. Species Occurrences generally belong to one of the following categories:

Plant Species Occurrences

A documented location of a specimen collection or observed plant population. In some instances, adjacent, spatially separated clusters are considered subpopulations and are grouped as one occurrence (e.g., the subpopulations occur in ecologically similar habitats, and their spatial proximity likely allows them to interbreed). Tabular information for multiple observations at the same SO location is generally linked to a single polygon. Plant SO's are only created for Species of Concern and Potential Species of Concern.

Animal Species Occurrences

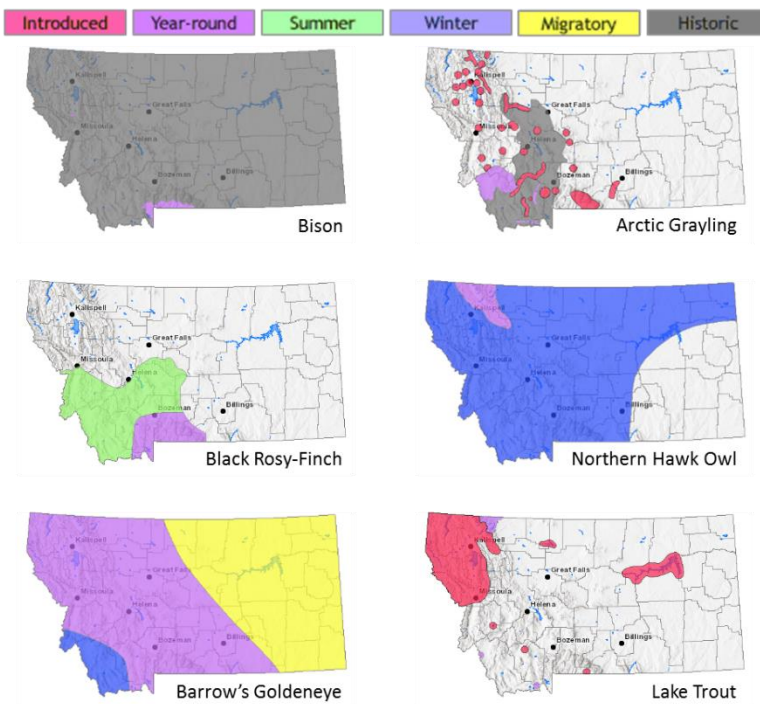
The location of a verified observation or specimen record typically known or assumed to represent a breeding population or a portion of a breeding population. Animal SO's are generally: (1) buffers of terrestrial point observations based on documented species' home range sizes; (2) buffers of stream segments to encompass occupied streams and immediate adjacent riparian habitats; (3) polygonal features encompassing known or likely breeding populations (e.g., a wetland for some amphibians or a forested portion of a mountain range for some wide ranging carnivores); or (4) combinations of the above. Tabular information for multiple observations at the same SO location is generally linked to a single polygon. Species Occurrence polygons may encompass some unsuitable habitat in some instances in order to avoid heavy data processing associated with clipping out habitats that are readily assessed as unsuitable by the data user (e.g., a point buffer of a terrestrial species may overlap into a portion of a lake that is obviously inappropriate habitat for the species). Animal SO's are only created for Species of Concern and Special Status Species (e.g., Bald Eagle).

Other Occurrence Polygons

These include significant biological features not included in the above categories, such as Important Animal Habitats like bird rookeries and bat roosts, and peatlands or other wetland and riparian communities that support diverse plant and animal communities.

Geographic Range Polygons

Geographic range polygons have not yet been defined for most plant species. Native year-round, summer, winter, migratory and historic geographic range polygons as well as polygons for introduced populations have



been defined for most animal species for which there are enough observations, surveys, and knowledge of appropriate seasonal habitat use to define them (see examples to left). These native or introduced range polygons bound the extent of known or likely occupied habitats for non-migratory and relative sedentary species and the regular extent of known or likely occupied habitats for migratory and long-distance dispersing species; polygons may include unsuitable intervening habitats. For most species, a single polygon can represent the year-round or seasonal range, but breeding ranges of some colonial nesting water birds and some introduced species are represented more patchily when supported by data. Some ranges are mapped more broadly than actual distributions in order to be visible on statewide maps (e.g., fish).

Predicted Suitable Habitat Models

Recent predicted suitable habitat suitability models have not yet been created for most plant species. For animal species for which models have been completed, the environmental summary report includes simple, rule-based, associations with streams for fish and other aquatic species and mathematically complex Maximum Entropy models (Phillips et al. 2006, *Ecological Modeling* 190:231-259) constructed from a variety of statewide biotic and abiotic layers and presence only data for individual species contributed to Montana Natural Heritage Program databases for most terrestrial species. For the Maximum Entropy models, we reclassified 90 x 90-meter continuous model output into suitability classes (unsuitable, low, moderate, and optimal) then aggregated that into the one square mile hexagons used in the environmental summary report; this is the finest spatial scale we suggest using this information in management decisions and survey planning. Full model write ups for individual species that discuss model goals, inputs, outputs, and evaluation in much greater detail are posted on the MTNHP's [Predicted Suitable Habitat Models](#) page. Evaluations of predictive accuracy and specific limitations are included with the metadata for models of individual species. **Model outputs should not be used in place of on-the-ground surveys for species. Instead model outputs should be used in conjunction with habitat evaluations to determine the need for on-the-ground surveys for species.** We suggest that the percentage of predicted optimal and moderate suitable habitat within the report area be used in conjunction with geographic range polygons and the percentage of commonly associated habitats to generate lists of potential species that may occupy broader landscapes for the purposes of landscape-level planning.

Associated Habitats

Within the boundary of the intersected hexagons, we provide the approximate percentage of commonly or occasionally associated habitat for vertebrate animal species that regularly breed, overwinter, or migrate through the state; a detailed list of commonly and occasionally associated habitats is provided in individual species accounts in the [Montana Field Guide](#). We assigned common or occasional use of each of the 82 ecological systems mapped in Montana by: (1) using personal knowledge and reviewing literature that

summarizes the breeding, overwintering, or migratory habitat requirements of each species; (2) evaluating structural characteristics and distribution of each ecological system relative to the species' range and habitat requirements; (3) examining the observation records for each species in the state-wide point observation database associated with each ecological system; and (4) calculating the percentage of observations associated with each ecological system relative to the percent of Montana covered by each ecological system to get a measure of numbers of observations versus availability of habitat. Species that breed in Montana were only evaluated for breeding habitat use, species that only overwinter in Montana were only evaluated for overwintering habitat use, and species that only migrate through Montana were only evaluated for migratory habitat use. In general, species were listed as associated with an ecological system if structural characteristics of used habitat documented in the literature were present in the ecological system or large numbers of point observations were associated with the ecological system. However, species were not listed as associated with an ecological system if there was no support in the literature for use of structural characteristics in an ecological system, even if point observations were associated with that system. Common versus occasional association with an ecological system was assigned based on the degree to which the structural characteristics of an ecological system matched the preferred structural habitat characteristics for each species as represented in the scientific literature. The percentage of observations associated with each ecological system relative to the percent of Montana covered by each ecological system was also used to guide assignment of common versus occasional association.

We suggest that the percentage of commonly associated habitat within the report area be used in conjunction with geographic range polygons and the percentage of predicted optimal and moderate suitable habitat from predictive models to generate lists of potential species that may occupy broader landscapes for the purposes of landscape-level planning. Users of this information should be aware that land cover mapping accuracy is particularly problematic when the systems occur as small patches or where the land cover types have been altered over the past decade. Thus, particular caution should be used when using the associations in assessments of smaller areas (e.g., evaluations of public land survey sections).

Introduction to Land Cover Summary

Land Use/Land Cover is one of 15 [Montana Spatial Data Infrastructure](#) framework layers considered vital for making statewide maps of Montana and understanding its geography. The layer records all Montana natural vegetation, land cover and land use, classified from satellite and aerial imagery, mapped at a scale of 1:100000, and interpreted with supporting ground-level data. The baseline map is adapted from the Northwest ReGAP (NWGAP) project land cover classification, which used 30m resolution multi-spectral Landsat imagery acquired between 1999 and 2001. Vegetation classes were drawn from the Ecological System Classification developed by NatureServe (Comer et al. 2003). The land cover classes were developed by Anderson et al. (1976). The NWGAP effort encompasses 12 map zones. Montana overlaps seven of these zones. The two NWGAP teams responsible for the initial land cover mapping effort in Montana were Sanborn and NWGAP at the University of Idaho. Both Sanborn and NWGAP employed a similar modeling approach in which Classification and Regression Tree (CART) models were applied to Landsat ETM+ scenes. The Spatial Analysis Lab within the Montana Natural Heritage Program was responsible for developing a seamless Montana land cover map with a consistent statewide legend from these two separate products. Additionally, the Montana land cover layer incorporates several other land cover and land use products (e.g., MSDI Structures and Transportation themes and the Montana Department of Revenue Final Land Unit classification) and reclassifications based on plot-level data and the latest NAIP imagery to improve accuracy and enhance the usability of the theme. Updates are done as partner support and funding allow, or when other MSDI datasets can be incorporated. Recent updates include fire perimeters and agricultural land use (annually), energy developments such as wind, oil and gas installations (2014), roads, structures and other impervious surfaces (various years): and local updates/improvements to specific ecological systems (e.g., central Montana grassland and sagebrush ecosystems). Current and previous versions of the Land Use/Land Cover layer with full metadata are available for download at the Montana State Library's [Geographic Information Clearinghouse](#).

Within the report area you have requested, land cover is summarized by acres of Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3 Ecological Systems.

Literature Cited

- Anderson, J.R. E.E. Hardy, J.T. Roach, and R.E. Witmer. 1976. A land use and land cover classification system for use with remote sensor data. U.S. Geological Survey Professional Paper 964.
- Comer, P., D. Faber-Langendoen, R. Evans, S. Gawler, C. Josse, G. Kittel, S. Menard, M. Pyne, M. Reid, K. Schulz, K. Snow, and J. Teague. 2003. Ecological systems of the United States: A working classification of U.S. terrestrial systems. NatureServe, Arlington, VA.

Introduction to Wetland and Riparian Summary

Within the report area you have requested, wetland and riparian mapping is summarized by acres of each classification present. Summaries are only provided for modern MTNHP wetland and riparian mapping and not for outdated (NWI Legacy) or incomplete (NWI Scalable) mapping efforts; [described here](#). MTNHP has made all three of these datasets and associated metadata available for separate download on the [Montana Wetland and Riparian Framework MSDI download page](#).

Wetland and Riparian mapping is one of 15 [Montana Spatial Data Infrastructure](#) framework layers considered vital for making statewide maps of Montana and understanding its geography. The wetland and riparian framework layer consists of spatial data representing the extent, type, and approximate location of wetlands, riparian areas, and deepwater habitats in Montana.

Wetland and riparian mapping is completed through photointerpretation of 1-m resolution color infrared aerial imagery acquired from 2005 or later. A coding convention using letters and numbers is assigned to each mapped wetland. These letters and numbers describe the broad landscape context of the wetland, its vegetation type, its water regime, and the kind of alterations that may have occurred. Ancillary data layers such as topographic maps, digital elevation models, soils data, and other aerial imagery sources are also used to improve mapping accuracy. Wetland mapping follows the federal Wetland Mapping Standard and classifies wetlands according to the Cowardin classification system of the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) (Cowardin et al. 1979, FGDC Wetlands Subcommittee 2013). Federal, State, and local regulatory agencies with jurisdiction over wetlands may define and describe wetlands differently than the NWI. Similar coding, based on U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service conventions, is applied to riparian areas (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 2009). These are mapped areas where vegetation composition and growth is influenced by nearby water bodies, but where soils, plant communities, and hydrology do not display true wetland characteristics. **These data are intended for use in publications at a scale of 1:12,000 or smaller. Mapped wetland and riparian areas do not represent precise boundaries and digital wetland data cannot substitute for an on-site determination of jurisdictional wetlands.**

A detailed overview, with examples, of both wetland and riparian classification systems and associated codes can be found at: http://mtnhp.org/help/MapView/WetRip_Classification.asp

Literature Cited

- Cowardin, L.M., V. Carter, F.C. Golet, and E.T. LaRoe. 1979. Classification of wetlands and deepwater habitats of the United States. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, FWS/OBS-79/31. Washington, D.C. 103pp.
- Federal Geographic Data Committee. 2013. Classification of wetlands and deepwater habitats of the United States. FGDC-STD-004-2013. Second Edition. Wetlands Subcommittee, Federal Geographic Data Committee and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services. 2009. A system for mapping riparian areas in the western United States. Division of Habitat and Resource Conservation, Branch of Resource and Mapping Support, Arlington, Virginia.

Introduction to Land Management Summary

Within the report area you have requested, land management information is summarized by acres of federal, state, and local government lands, tribal reservation boundaries, private conservation lands, and federal, state, local, and private conservation easements. Acreage for “Owned”, “Tribal”, or “Easement” categories represents non-overlapping areas that may be totaled. However, “Other Boundaries” represents managed areas such as National Forest boundaries containing private inholdings and other mixed ownership which may cause boundaries to overlap (e.g. a wilderness area within a forest). Therefore, acreages may not total in a straight-forward manner.

Because information on land stewardship is critical to effective land management, the Montana Natural Heritage Program (MTNHP) began compiling ownership and management data in 1997. The goal of the Montana Land Management Database is to manage a single, statewide digital data set that incorporates information from both public and private entities. The database assembles information on public lands, private conservation lands, and conservation easements held by state and federal agencies and land trusts and is updated on a regular basis. Since 2011, the Information Management group in the Montana State Library’s Digital Library Division has taken an increasingly active role in managing layers of the Montana Land Management Database in partnership with the MTNHP.

Public and private conservation land polygons are attributed with the name of the entity that owns it. The data are derived from the statewide Montana Cadastral Parcel layer. Conservation easement data shows land parcels on which a public agency or qualified land trust has placed a conservation easement in cooperation with the land owner. The dataset contains no information about ownership or status of the mineral estate. For questions about the dataset or to report errors, please contact the Montana Natural Heritage Program at (406) 444-5354 or mtnhp@mt.gov. You can download various components of the Land Management Database and view associated metadata at the Montana State Library’s [GIS Data List](#) at the following links:

[Public Lands](#)

[Conservation Easements](#)

[Private Conservation Lands](#)

[Managed Areas](#)

Map features in the Montana Land Management Database or summaries provided in this report are not intended as a legal depiction of public or private surface land ownership boundaries and should not be used in place of a survey conducted by a licensed land surveyor. Similarly, map features do not imply public access to any lands. The Montana Natural Heritage Program makes no representations or warranties whatsoever with respect to the accuracy or completeness of this data and assumes no responsibility for the suitability of the data for a particular purpose. The Montana Natural Heritage Program will not be liable for any damages incurred as a result of errors displayed here. Consumers of this information should review or consult the primary data and information sources to ascertain the viability of the information for their purposes.

Additional Information Resources

[Home Page for Montana Natural Heritage Program \(MTNHP\)](#)

[MTNHP Staff Contact Information](#)

[Montana Field Guide](#)

[MTNHP Species of Concern Report - Animals and Plants](#)

[MTNHP Species Status Codes - Explanation](#)

[MTNHP Predicted Suitable Habitat Models](#) (for select Animals and Plants)

[MTNHP Request Information page](#)

[Montana Cadastral](#)

[Montana Code Annotated](#)

[Montana Department of Environmental Quality](#)

[Montana Fisheries Information System](#)

[Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Subdivision Recommendations](#)

[Montana GIS Data Layers](#)

[Montana GIS Data Bundler](#)

[Montana Greater Sage-Grouse Project Submittal Site](#)

[Montana Ground Water Information Center](#)

[Montana Legislative Environmental Policy Office Publications](#)

(Including Index of Environmental Permits required in Montana and Guide to the Montana Environmental Policy Act)

[Laws, Treaties, Regulations, and Permits on Animals and Plants](#)

[Montana Spatial Data Infrastructure Layers](#)

[Montana State Historic Preservation Office Review and Compliance](#)

[Montana Water Information System](#)

[Montana Web Map Services](#)

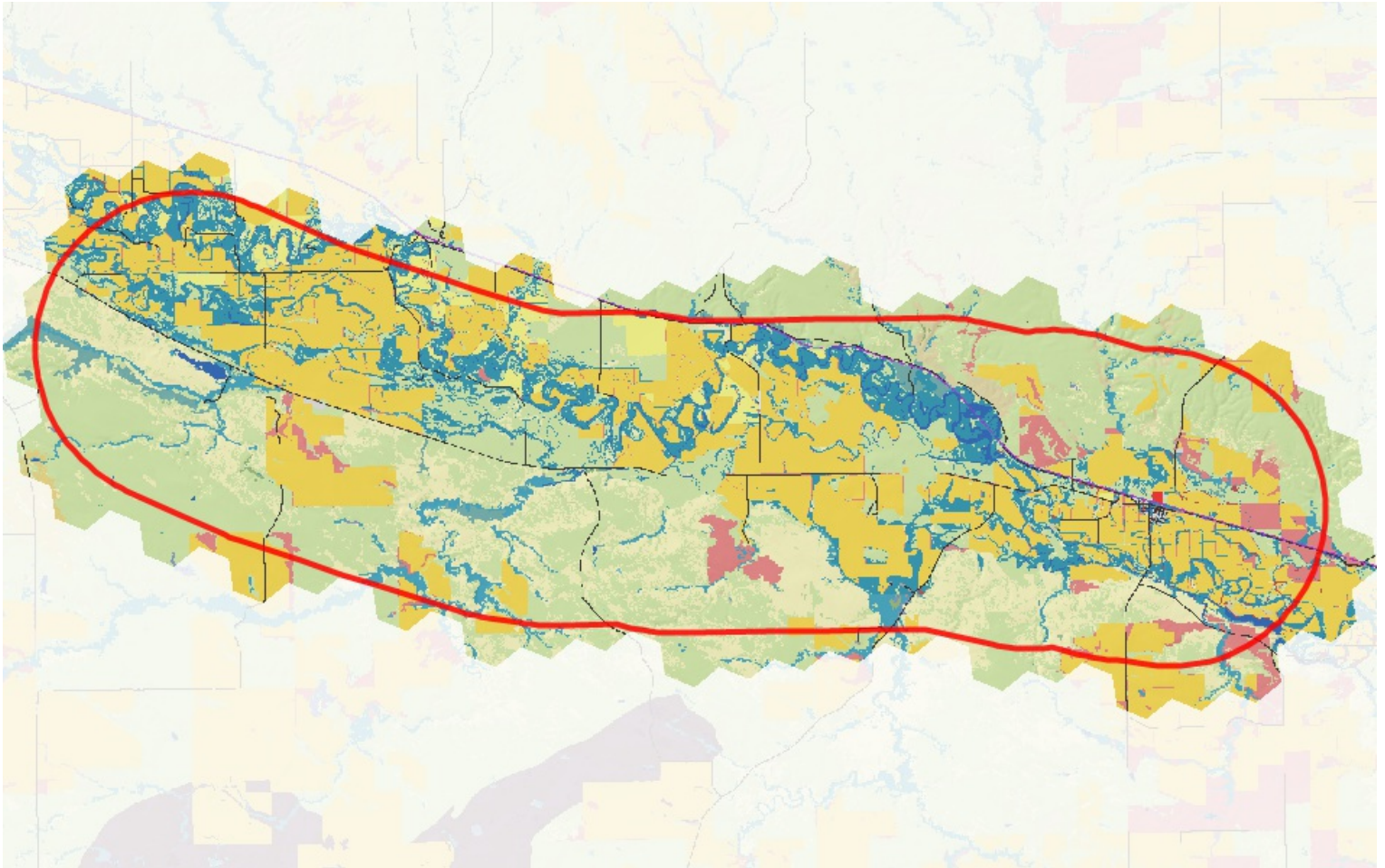
[National Environmental Policy Act](#)

[U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Information for Planning and Conservation](#) (Section 7 Consultation)

[Web Soil Survey Tool](#)



Land Cover Summary



114,430 Acres (0.12% of Montana)

Notes on and Appropriate Uses of Land Cover

The Land Cover data used in Map Viewer are based on classifications of 30-meter Landsat satellite imagery. The base data were classified as part of the national ReGAP project, using imagery from the late 1990s and early 2000s. Classification accuracy varies from system to system, but statewide and local assessments have not been completed to-date. Generally, systems occurring as small patches (e.g., fens, mountain mahogany shrublands) or those making up smaller percentages of various administrative boundaries (e.g. all of those listed under the Additional Limited Land Cover folder below) will be less accurately classified than systems occurring as matrices or large patches (e.g., mixed grass prairie, lodgepole pine forests). Similarly, areas where land use and land cover has changed significantly over the past decade may not be correctly classified. Users are cautioned that the appropriate scale for use of the data is 1:100,000. Accuracy improvements are ongoing. To submit updated information, please email mtnhp@mt.gov.



37%
(42,255
Acres)

Grassland Systems Lowland/Prairie Grassland

Great Plains Mixedgrass Prairie

The system covers much of the eastern two-thirds of Montana, occurring continuously for hundreds of square kilometers, interrupted only by wetland/riparian areas or sand prairies. Soils are primarily fine and medium-textured. The growing season averages 115 days, ranging from 100 days on the Canadian border to 130 days on the Wyoming border. Climate is typical of mid-continental regions with long severe winters and hot summers. Grasses typically comprise the greatest canopy cover, and western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*) is usually dominant. Other species include thickspike wheatgrass (*Elymus lanceolatus*), green needlegrass (*Nassella viridula*), blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), and needle and thread (*Hesperostipa comata*). Near the Canadian border in north-central Montana, this system grades into rough fescue (*Festuca campestris*) and Idaho fescue (*Festuca idahoensis*) grasslands. Remnants of shortbristle needle and thread (*Hesperostipa curtisetata*) dominated vegetation are found in northernmost Montana and North Dakota, and are associated with productive sites, now mostly converted to farmland. Forb diversity is typically high. In areas of southeastern and central Montana where sagebrush steppe borders the mixed grass prairie, common plant associations include Wyoming big sagebrush-western wheatgrass (*Artemisia tridentata* ssp. *wyomingensis*/ *Pascopyrum smithii*). Fire and grazing are the primary drivers of this system. Drought can also impact it, in general favoring the shortgrass

component at the expense of the mid-height grasses. With intensive grazing, cool season exotics such as Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*), smooth brome (*Bromus inermis*), and Japanese brome (*Bromus japonicus*) increase in dominance; both of these rhizomatous species have been shown to markedly decrease species diversity. Previously cultivated acres that have been re-vegetated with non-native plants have been transformed into associations such as Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*)/western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*) or into pure crested wheatgrass (*Agropyron cristatum*) stands.



26%
(29,910
Acres)

Human Land Use Agriculture

Cultivated Crops

These areas used for the production of crops, such as corn, soybeans, small grains, sunflowers, vegetables, and cotton, typically on an annual cycle. Agricultural plant cover is variable depending on season and type of farming. Other areas include more stable land cover of orchards and vineyards.



13%
(15,446
Acres)

Shrubland, Steppe and Savanna Systems Sagebrush Steppe

Big Sagebrush Steppe

This widespread ecological system occurs throughout much of central Montana, and north and east onto the western fringe of the Great Plains. In central Montana, where this system occurs on both glaciated and non-glaciated landscapes, it differs slightly, with more summer rain than winter precipitation and more precipitation annually. Throughout its distribution, soils are typically deep and non-saline, often with a microphytic crust. This shrub-steppe is dominated by perennial grasses and forbs with greater than 25% cover. Overall shrub cover is less than 10 percent. In Montana and Wyoming, stands are more mesic, with more biomass of grass, and have less shrub diversity than stands farther to the west, and 50 to 90% of the occurrences are dominated by Wyoming big sagebrush with western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*). Japanese brome (*Bromus japonicus*) and cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*) are indicators of disturbance, but cheatgrass is typically not as abundant as in the Intermountain West, possibly due to a colder climate. The natural fire regime of this ecological system maintains a patchy distribution of shrubs, preserving the steppe character. Shrubs may increase following heavy grazing and/or with fire suppression. In central and eastern Montana, complexes of prairie dog towns are common in this ecological system.



10%
(11,143
Acres)

Wetland and Riparian Systems Floodplain and Riparian

Great Plains Floodplain

This system occurs along the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers and their larger tributaries, including parts of the Little Missouri, Clark's Fork Yellowstone, Powder, Tongue, Bighorn, Milk, and Musselshell rivers. These are the big perennial rivers of the region, with hydrologic dynamics largely driven by snowmelt and rainfall originating in their headwater watersheds, rather than local precipitation events. In the absence of disturbance, periodic flooding of fluvial and alluvial soils and channel migration will create depressions and backwaters that support a mosaic of wetland and riparian vegetation, whose composition and structure is sustained, altered and redistributed by hydrology. Dominant communities within this system range from floodplain forests to wet meadows to gravel/sand flats, linked by underlying soils and flooding regimes. In the western part of the system's range in Montana, the overstory dominant species is black cottonwood (*Populus balsamifera ssp. trichocarpa*) with narrowleaf cottonwood (*Populus angustifolia*) and eastern cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*) occurring as co-dominants in the riparian/floodplain interface near the mountains. Further east, narrowleaf cottonwood and Plains cottonwood become dominant. In relatively undisturbed stands, willow (*Salix* species), redosier dogwood (*Cornus sericea*) and common chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*) form a thick, multi-layered shrub understory, with a mixture of cool and warm season graminoid species below.

In Montana, many occurrences are now degraded to the point where the cottonwood overstory is the only remaining natural component. The hydrology of these floodplain systems has been affected by dams, highways, railroads and agricultural ditches, and as a result, they have lost their characteristic wetland /riparian mosaic structure. This has resulted in a highly altered community consisting of relict cottonwood stands with little regeneration. The understory vegetation is dominated by non-native pasture grasses, legumes and other introduced forbs, or by the disclimax western snowberry (*Symphoricarpos occidentalis*) and rose (*Rosa* species) shrub community.



4% (4,212
Acres)

Recently Disturbed or Modified Introduced Vegetation

Introduced Upland Vegetation - Annual and Biennial Forbland

Land cover is significantly altered/disturbed by introduced annual and biennial forbs. Natural vegetation types are no longer recognizable. Typical species that dominate these areas are knapweed, oxeye daisy, Canada thistle, leafy spurge, pepperweed, and yellow sweetclover.



2% (2,805
Acres)

Wetland and Riparian Systems Floodplain and Riparian

Great Plains Riparian

This system is associated with perennial to intermittent or ephemeral streams throughout the northwestern Great Plains. In Montana, it occurs along smaller tributaries of the Yellowstone and Missouri rivers, as well as tributaries to the large floodplain rivers that feed them (e.g. the Milk, Marias, Musselshell, Powder, Clark's Fork Yellowstone, Tongue, etc). In areas adjacent to the mountain ranges of central and southeastern Montana, and near the Rocky Mountain Front, it grades into Rocky Mountain Lower Montane-Foothill Riparian Woodland and Shrubland systems. This system is found on alluvial soils in highly variable landscape settings, from confined, deep cut ravines to wide, braided streambeds. Channel migration occurs in less-confined areas, but within a more narrow range than would occur in broad, alluvial floodplains. Typically, the rivers are wadeable by mid-summer.

The primary inputs of water to these systems include groundwater discharge, overland flow, and subsurface interflow from the adjacent upland. Flooding is the key ecosystem process, creating suitable sites for seed dispersal and seedling establishment, and controlling vegetation succession. Communities within this system range from riparian forests and

shrublands to tallgrass wet meadows and gravel/sand flats. Dominant species are similar to those found in the Great Plains Floodplain System. In the western part of the system's range in Montana, the dominant overstory species is black cottonwood (*Populus balsamifera ssp. trichocarpa*) with narrowleaf cottonwood (*Populus angustifolia*) and Plains cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*) occurring as co-dominants in the riparian/floodplain interface near the mountains. Further east, narrowleaf cottonwood and Plains cottonwood become dominant. In wetter systems, the understory is typically willow (*Salix spp.*) and redosier dogwood (*Cornus stolonifera*) with graminoids such as western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*) and forbs like American licorice (*Glycyrrhiza lepidota*). In areas where the channel is incised, the understory may be dominated by big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*) or silver sagebrush (*Artemisia cana*). Like floodplain systems, riparian systems are often subjected to overgrazing and/or agriculture and can be heavily degraded, with salt cedar (*Tamarix ramosissima*) and Russian olive (*Eleagnus angustifolia*) replacing native woody vegetation and regrowth. Groundwater depletion and lack of fire have resulted in additional species changes.



2% (2,351 Acres)

Human Land Use

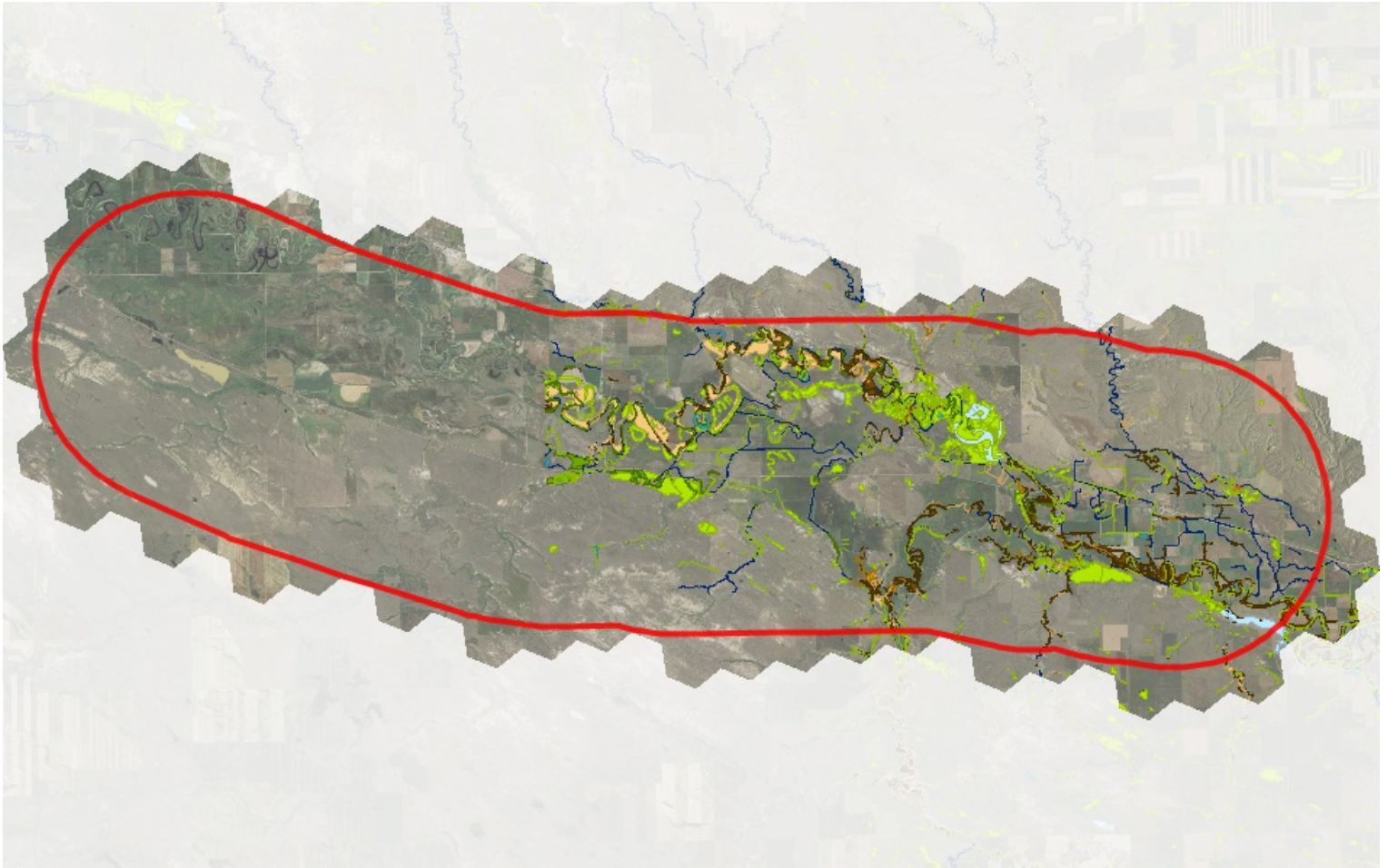
Agriculture

Pasture/Hay

These agriculture lands typically have perennial herbaceous cover (e.g. regularly-shaped plantings) used for livestock grazing or the production of hay. There are obvious signs of management such as irrigation and haying that distinguish it from natural grasslands. Identified CRP lands are included in this land cover type.



Wetland Summary



114,430 Acres (0.12% of Montana)

Notes on Appropriate Uses of Wetland and Riparian Mapping

Federal, State, and local regulatory agencies with jurisdiction over wetlands may define and describe wetlands differently than the NWI. MTNHP Wetland and Riparian Mapping data are intended for use in publications at a scale of 1:12,000 or smaller. Historic wetland mapping is intended for use in publications at a scale of 1:24,000 or smaller. Mapped wetlands do not represent precise wetland boundaries, and digital wetland data cannot substitute for an on-site determination of jurisdictional wetlands.

Wetland and Riparian Mapping

[Explain](#)

Palustrine

- PAB Aquatic Bed
- PUS Unconsolidated Shore
- PEM Emergent
- PSS Scrub-Shrub

Acres

- 207 Wetlands with vegetation growing on or below the water surface for most of the growing season.
- 27 Wetlands with less than 75% areal cover of stones, boulders, or bedrock. AND with less than 30% vegetative cover AND the wetland is irregularly exposed due to seasonal or irregular flooding and subsequent drying.
- 2,603 Wetlands with erect, rooted herbaceous vegetation present during most of the growing season.
- 393 Wetlands dominated by woody vegetation less than 6 meters (20 feet) tall. Woody vegetation includes tree saplings and trees that are stunted due to environmental conditions.

Lacustrine (Lakes)

Limnetic

- L1UB Unconsolidated Bottom

310 Deep waterbodies with mud or silt covering at least 25% of the bottom.

Littoral

- L2US Unconsolidated Shore

1 Shorelines where there is less than 75% areal cover of stones, boulders, or bedrock, and less than 30% vegetation cover.

□ L2EM Emergent

The area is also irregularly exposed due to seasonal or irregular flooding and subsequent drying.

35 Shorelines that have nonpersistent, erect, rooted herbaceous vegetation during most of the growing season.

Riverine (Rivers)

Lower Perennial

■ R2UB Unconsolidated Bottom

188 Stream channels where the substrate is at least 25% mud, silt or other fine particles.

■ R2US Unconsolidated Shore

1 Shorelines with less than 75% areal cover of stones, boulders, or bedrock and less than 30% vegetation cover.
The area is also irregularly exposed due to seasonal or irregular flooding and subsequent drying.

Upper Perennial

■ R3UB Unconsolidated Bottom

409 Stream channels where the substrate is at least 25% mud, silt or other fine particles.

■ R3US Unconsolidated Shore

5 Shorelines with less than 75% areal cover of stones, boulders, or bedrock and less than 30% vegetation cover.
The area is also irregularly exposed due to seasonal or irregular flooding and subsequent drying.

Intermittent

■ R4SB Streambed

173 Active channel that contains periodic water flow.

Riparian

Lotic

■ Rp1SS Scrub-Shrub

187 This type of riparian area is dominated by woody vegetation that is less than 6 meters (20 feet) tall.
Woody vegetation includes tree saplings and trees that are stunted due to environmental conditions.

■ Rp1FO Forested

1,385 This riparian class has woody vegetation that is greater than 6 meters (20 feet) tall.

■ Rp1EM Emergent

969 Riparian areas that have erect, rooted herbaceous vegetation during most of the growing season.

Lentic

■ Rp2SS Scrub-Shrub

5 This type of riparian area is dominated by woody vegetation that is less than 6 meters (20 feet) tall.
Woody vegetation includes tree saplings and trees that are stunted due to environmental conditions.

■ Rp2FO Forested

12 This riparian class has woody vegetation that is greater than 6 meters (20 feet) tall.

■ Rp2EM Emergent

6 Riparian areas that have erect, rooted herbaceous vegetation during most of the growing season.



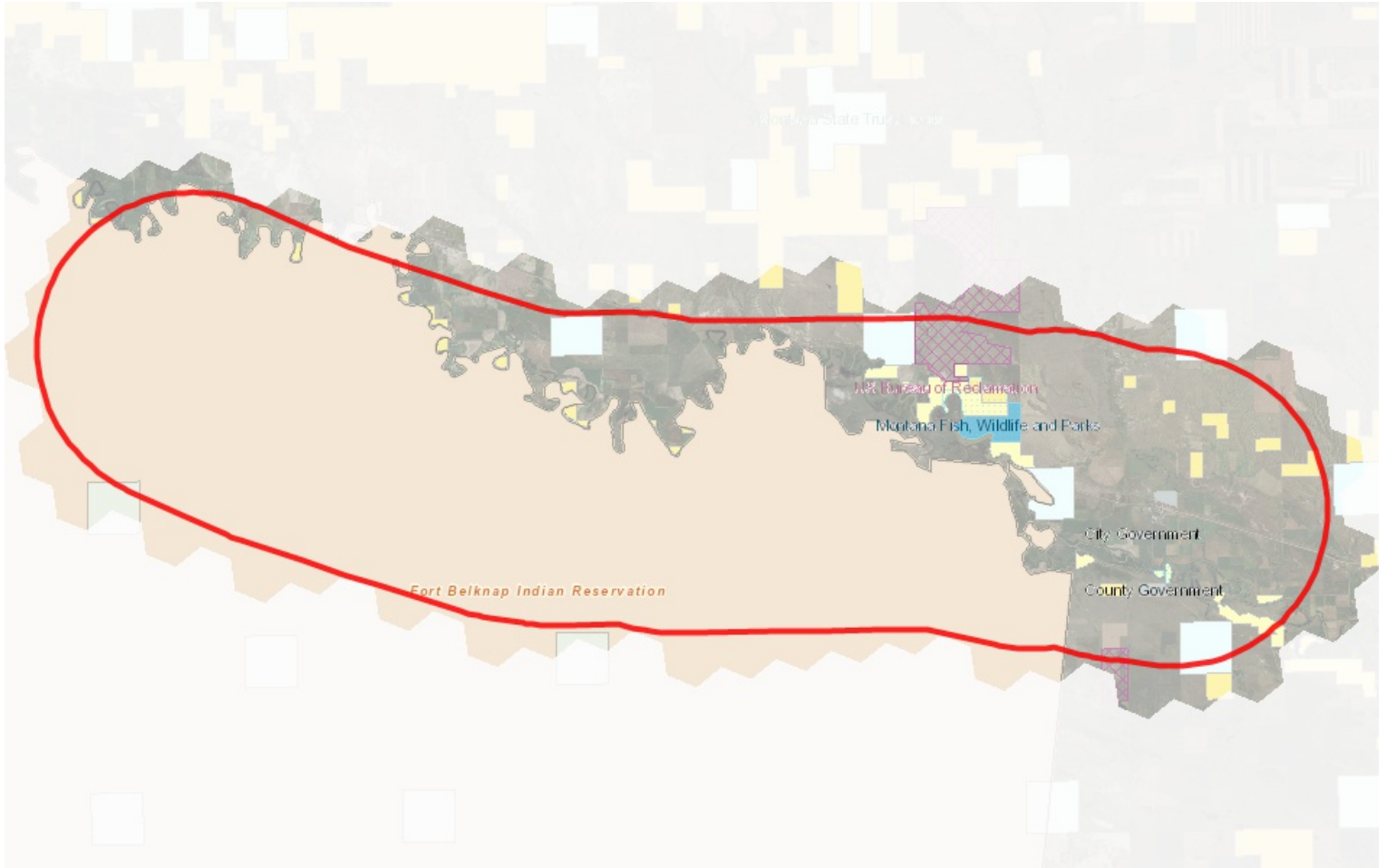
**MONTANA
Natural Heritage
Program**

A program of the Montana State Library's
Natural Resource Information System
operated by the University of Montana.



Latitude 48.34194
Longitude -108.15104
48.49473 -108.72862

Land Management Summary



114,430 Acres (0.12% of Montana)

Land Management Summary

[Explain](#)

	Ownership	Tribal	Easements	Other Boundaries (possible overlap)
Public Lands	6,889 Acres (6%)			
Federal	2,932 Acres (3%)			
US Bureau of Land Management	1,794 Acres (2%)			
BLM Owned	1,794 Acres (2%)			
US Bureau of Reclamation	1,138 Acres (1%)			
USBR Owned	1,138 Acres (1%)			
State	3,769 Acres (3%)			
Montana State Trust Lands	3,386 Acres (3%)			
MT State Trust Owned	3,386 Acres (3%)			
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks	383 Acres (<1%)			
MTFWP Owned	383 Acres (<1%)			
MTFWP Wildlife Management Areas				781 Acres
Dodson Creek Wildlife Management Area				39 Acres
Dodson Dam Wildlife Management Area				742 Acres
Local	188 Acres (<1%)			
Local Government	188 Acres (<1%)			
Local Government Owned	188 Acres (<1%)			

+  **Reservation Boundaries**
Fort Belknap Indian Reservation

68,315 Acres (60%)
.....
68,315 Acres (60%)

+  **Conservation Easements**

1,569 Acres (1%)

+  **Federal**

1,569 Acres (1%)

US Fish and Wildlife Service

219 Acres (<1%)

US Department of Agriculture

1,350 Acres (1%)

 **Private Lands or Unknown
Ownership**

37,657 Acres (33%)
.....



Biological Reports

Within the report area you have requested, citations for all reports and publications associated with plant or animal observations in Montana Natural Heritage Program (MTNHP) databases are listed and, where possible, links to the documents are included.

The MTNHP plans to include reports associated with terrestrial and aquatic communities in the future as allowed for by staff resources. If you know of reports or publications associated with species or biological communities within the report area that are not shown in this report, please let us know: mtnhp@mt.gov

- Bramblett, R.G., and A.V. Zale. 2002. Montana Prairie Riparian Native Species Report. Montana Cooperative Fishery Research Unit, Montana State University - Bozeman.
-  Confluence Consulting Inc. 2011. **Montana Department of Transportation Wetland Mitigation Monitoring Reports (various sites)**. MDT Helena, MT.
-  Confluence Consulting Inc. 2012. **Montana Department of Transportation Wetland Mitigation Monitoring Reports (various sites)**. MDT Helena, MT.
-  Confluence Consulting Inc. 2013. **Montana Department of Transportation Wetland Mitigation Monitoring Reports (various sites)**. MDT Helena, MT.
- FaunaWest Wildlife Consultants. 1991. **Status and breeding distribution of the mountain plover in Montana**. Report to USDI Bureau of Land Management. FaunaWest Wildlife Consultants, Boulder, MT. 44 pp.

Introduction to Montana Natural Heritage Program



P.O. Box 201800 • 1515 East Sixth Avenue • Helena, MT 59620-1800 • fax 406.444.0266 • tel 406.444.0241 • mtnhp.org

INTRODUCTION

The Montana Natural Heritage Program (MTNHP) is Montana's source for reliable and objective information on Montana's native species and habitats, emphasizing those of conservation concern. MTNHP was created by the Montana legislature in 1983 as part of the Natural Resource Information System (NRIS) at the Montana State Library (MSL). MTNHP is "a program of information acquisition, storage, and retrieval for data relating to the flora, fauna, and biological community types of Montana" (MCA 90-15-102). MTNHP's activities are guided by statute (MCA 90-15) as well as through ongoing interaction with, and feedback from, principal data source agencies such as Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, the Montana Department of Environmental Quality, the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, the Montana University System, the US Forest Service, and the US Bureau of Land Management. The enabling legislation for MTNHP provides the State Library with the option to contract the operation of the Program. Since 2006, MTNHP has been operated as a program under the Office of the Vice President for Research and Creative Scholarship at the University of Montana (UM) through a renewable 2-year contract with the MSL. Since the first staff was hired in 1985, the Program has logged a long record of success, and developed into a highly respected, service-oriented program. MTNHP is widely recognized as one of the most advanced and effective of over 80 natural heritage programs throughout the Western Hemisphere.

VISION

Our vision is that public agencies, the private sector, the education sector, and the general public will trust and rely upon MTNHP as the source for information and expertise on Montana's species and habitats, especially those of conservation concern. We strive to provide easy access to our information in order for users to save time and money, speed environmental reviews, and inform decision making.

CORE VALUES

- We endeavor to be a single statewide source of accurate and up-to-date information on Montana's plants, animals, and aquatic and terrestrial biological communities.
- We actively listen to our data users and work responsively to meet their information and training needs.
- We strive to provide neutral, trusted, timely, and equitable service to all of our information users.
- We make every effort to be transparent to our data users in setting work priorities and providing data products.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All information requests made to the Montana Natural Heritage Program are considered library records and are protected from disclosure by the Montana Library Records Confidentiality Act (MCA 22-1-11).

INFORMATION MANAGED

Information managed at the Montana Natural Heritage Program includes: (1) lists of, and basic information on, plant and animal species and biological communities; (2) plant and animal surveys, observations, species occurrences, predictive distribution models, range polygons, and conservation status ranks; and (3) land cover and wetland and riparian mapping and the conservation status of these and other biological communities.

Data Use Terms and Conditions


- Montana Natural Heritage Program (MTNHP) products and services are based on biological data and the objective interpretation of those data by professional scientists. MTNHP does not advocate any particular philosophy of natural resource protection, management, development, or public policy.
- MTNHP has no natural resource management or regulatory authority. Products, statements, and services from MTNHP are intended to inform parties as to the state of scientific knowledge about certain natural resources, and to further develop that knowledge. The information is not intended as natural resource management guidelines or prescriptions or a determination of environmental impacts. MTNHP recommends consultation with appropriate state, federal, and tribal resource management agencies and authorities in the area where your project is located.
- Information on the status and spatial distribution of biological resources produced by MTNHP are intended to inform parties of the state-wide status, known occurrence, or the likelihood of the presence of those resources. **These products are not intended to substitute for field-collected data, nor are they intended to be the sole basis for natural resource management decisions.**
- MTNHP does not portray its data as exhaustive or comprehensive inventories of rare species or biological communities. **Field verification of the absence or presence of sensitive species and biological communities will always be an important obligation of users of our data.**
- MTNHP responds equally to all requests for products and services, regardless of the purpose or identity of the requester.
- Because MTNHP constantly updates and revises its databases with new data and information, products will become outdated over time. Interested parties are encouraged to obtain the most current information possible from MTNHP, rather than using older products. We add, review, update, and delete records on a daily basis. Consequently, we strongly advise that you update your MTNHP data sets at a minimum of every three months for most applications of our information.
- MTNHP data require a certain degree of biological expertise for proper analysis, interpretation, and application. Our staff is available to advise you on questions regarding the interpretation or appropriate use of the data that we provide. Contact information for MTNHP staff is posted at: <http://mtnhp.org/contact.asp>
- The information provided to you by MTNHP may include sensitive data that if publicly released might jeopardize the welfare of threatened, endangered, or sensitive species or biological communities. This information is intended for distribution or use only within your department, agency, or business. Subcontractors may have access to the data during the course of any given project, but should not be given a copy for their use on subsequent, unrelated work.
- MTNHP data are made freely available. Duplication of hard-copy or digital MTNHP products with the intent to sell is prohibited without written consent by MTNHP. Should you be asked by individuals outside your organization for the type of data that we provide, please refer them to MTNHP.
- MTNHP and appropriate staff members should be appropriately acknowledged as an information source in any third-party product involving MTNHP data, reports, papers, publications, or in maps that incorporate MTNHP graphic elements.
- Sources of our data include museum specimens, published and unpublished scientific literature, field surveys by state and federal agencies and private contractors, and reports from knowledgeable individuals. MTNHP actively solicits and encourages additions, corrections and updates, new observations or collections, and comments on any of the data we provide.
- MTNHP staff and contractors do not cross or survey privately-owned lands without express permission from the landowner. However, the program cannot guarantee that information provided to us by others was obtained under adherence to this policy.

Suggested Contacts for Natural Resource Agencies

As required by Montana statute (MCA 90-15), the Montana Natural Heritage Program works with state, federal, tribal, nongovernmental organizations, and private partners to ensure that the latest animal and plant distribution and status information is incorporated into our databases so that it can be used to inform a variety of planning processes and management decisions. In addition to the information you receive from us, we encourage you to contact state, federal, and tribal resource management agencies in the area where your project is located. They may have additional data or management guidelines relevant to your efforts. In particular, we encourage you to contact the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks for the latest data and management information regarding hunted and high profile management species and to use the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Information Planning and Conservation (IPAC) website <http://ecos.fws.gov/ipac/> regarding U.S. Endangered Species Act listed Threatened, Endangered, or Candidate species.

For your convenience, we have compiled a list of relevant agency contacts and links below:

Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks

Fish Species	Zachary Shattuck zshattuck@mt.gov (406) 444-1231 or Lee Nelson leenelson@mt.gov (406) 444-2447
American Bison Black-footed Ferret Black-tailed Prairie Dog Bald Eagle Golden Eagle Common Loon Least Tern Piping Plover Whooping Crane	Lauri Hanauska-Brown LHanauska-Brown@mt.gov (406) 444-5209
Grizzly Bear Greater Sage Grouse Trumpeter Swan Big Game Upland Game Birds Furbearers	John Vore jvore@mt.gov (406) 444-5209
Managed Terrestrial Game and Nongame Animal Data	Adam Messer – MFWP Data Analyst amesser@mt.gov (406) 444-0095
Fisheries Data	Bill Daigle – MFWP Fish Data Manager bdaigle@mt.gov (406) 444-3737
Wildlife and Fisheries Scientific Collector’s Permits	http://fwp.mt.gov/doingBusiness/licenses/scientificWildlife/ Merissa Hayes for Wildlife merhayes@mt.gov (406) 444-7321 Beth Giddings for Fisheries begiddings@mt.gov (406) 444-7319
Fish and Wildlife Recommendations for Subdivision Development	Renee Lemon RLemon@mt.gov (406) 444-3738 and see http://fwp.mt.gov/fishAndWildlife/livingWithWildlife/buildingWithWildlife/subdivisionRecommendations/
Regional Contacts 	Region 1 (Kalispell) (406) 752-5501 Region 2 (Missoula) (406) 542-5500 Region 3 (Bozeman) (406) 994-4042 Region 4 (Great Falls) (406) 454-5840 Region 5 (Billings) (406) 247-2940 Region 6 (Glasgow) (406) 228-3700 Region 7 (Miles City) (406) 234-0900

United States Fish and Wildlife Service:

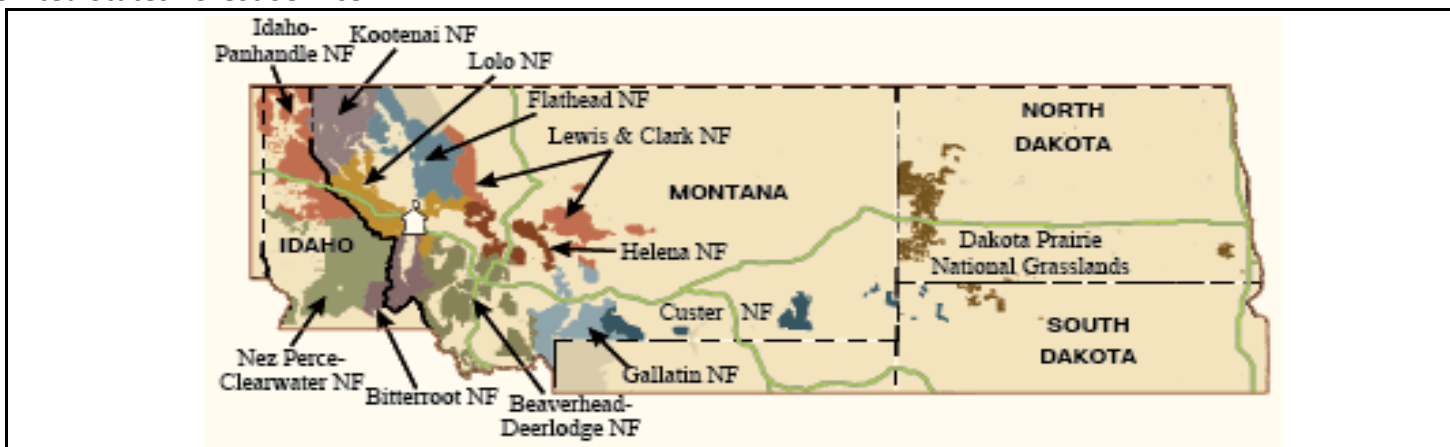
Information Planning and Conservation (IPAC) website: <http://ecos.fws.gov/ipac/>

Montana Ecological Services Field Office: <http://www.fws.gov/montanafieldoffice/> (406) 449-5225

Bureau of Land Management

Montana Field Office Contacts:	Billings	(406) 896-5013
	Butte	(406) 533-7600
	Dillon	(406) 683-8000
	Glasgow	(406) 228-3750
	Havre	(406) 262-2820
	Lewistown	(406) 538-1900
	Malta	(406) 654-5100
	Miles City	(406) 233-2800
	Missoula	(406) 329-3914

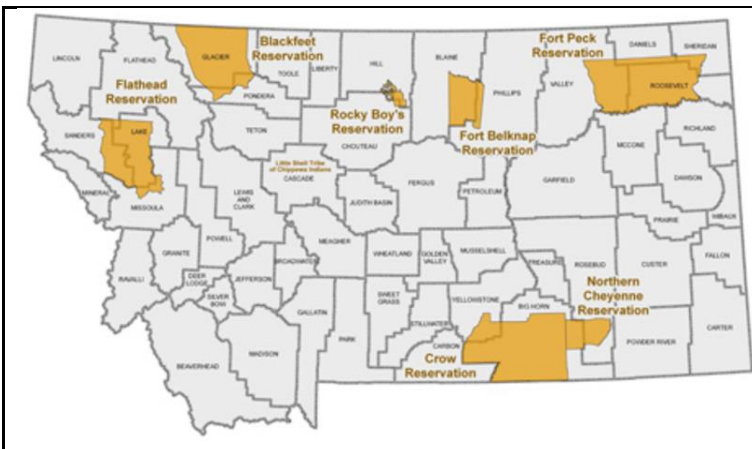
United States Forest Service



Regional Office – Missoula, Montana Contacts

Wildlife Program Leader	Tammy Fletcher	tammyfletcher@fs.fed.us	(406) 329-3588
Wildlife Ecologist	Cara Staab	cstaab@fs.fed.us	(406) 329-3677
Fish Program Leader	Scott Spaulding	scottspaulding@fs.fed.us	(406) 329-3287
Fish Ecologist	Cameron Thomas	cathomas@fs.fed.us	(406) 329-3087
TES Program	Lydia Allen	lrallen@fs.fed.us	(406) 329-3558
Interagency Grizzly Bear Coordinator	Scott Jackson	sjackson03@fs.fed.us	(406) 329-3664
Regional Botanist	Steve Shelly	sshelly@fs.fed.us	(406) 329-3041

Tribal Nations



- [Assiniboine & Gros Ventre Tribes – Fort Belknap Reservation](#)
- [Assiniboine & Sioux Tribes – Fort Peck Reservation](#)
- [Blackfoot Tribe - Blackfoot Reservation](#)
- [Chippewa Creek Tribe - Rocky Boy's Reservation](#)
- [Crow Tribe – Crow Reservation](#)
- [Little Shell Chippewa Tribe](#)
- [Northern Cheyenne Tribe – Northern Cheyenne Reservation](#)
- [Salish & Kootenai Tribes - Flathead Reservation](#)

Introduction to Species Summary

Within the report area you have requested, separate summaries are provided for: (1) Species Occurrences (SO) for plant and animal Species of Concern, Special Status Species (SSS), Important Animal Habitat (IAH) and some Potential Plant Species of Concern; (2) other observed non Species of Concern or Species of Concern without suitable documentation to create Species Occurrence polygons; and (3) other non-documented species that are potentially present based on their range, predicted suitable habitat model output, or presence of associated habitats. Each of these summaries provides the following information when present for a species: (1) the number of [Species Occurrences](#) and associated delineation criteria for construction of these polygons that have long been used for considerations of documented Species of Concern in environmental reviews; (2) the number of observations of each species; (3) the geographic range polygons for each species that the report area overlaps; (4) predicted relative habitat suitability classes that are present if a predicted suitable habitat model has been created; (5) the percent of the report area that is mapped as commonly associated or occasionally associated habitat as listed for each species in the [Montana Field Guide](#); and (6) a variety of conservation status ranks and links to species accounts in the [Montana Field Guide](#). Details on each of these information categories are included under relevant section headers below or are defined on our [Species Status Codes](#) page. In presenting this information, the Montana Natural Heritage Program (MTNHP) is working towards assisting the user with rapidly determining what species have been documented and what species are potentially present in the report area. We remind users that this information is likely incomplete as surveys to document native and introduced species are lacking in many areas of the state, information on introduced species has only been tracked relatively recently, the MTNHP's staff and resources are restricted by declining budgets, and information is constantly being added and updated in our databases. **Thus, field verification by professional biologists of the absence or presence of species and biological communities will always be an important obligation of users of our data.**

If you are aware of observation datasets that the MTNHP is missing, please report them to the Program Botanist apipp@mt.gov or Senior Zoologist dbachen@mt.gov. If you have observations that you would like to contribute, you can submit animal observations using our online data entry system at <http://mtnhp.org/AddObs/>, plant and animal observations via Excel spreadsheets posted at <http://mtnhp.org/observations.asp>, or to the Program Botanist or Senior Zoologist.

Observations

The MTNHP manages information on more than 1.8 million animal and plant observations that have been reported by professional biologists and private citizens from across Montana. The majority of these observations are submitted in digital format from standardized databases associated with research or monitoring efforts and spreadsheets of incidental observations submitted by professional biologists and amateur naturalists. At a minimum, accepted observation records must contain a credible species identification (i.e. appropriate geographic range, date, and habitat and, if species are difficult to identify, a photograph and notes on key identifying features), a date or date range, observer name, locational information (ideally with latitude and longitude in decimal degrees), notes on numbers observed, and species behavior or habitat use (e.g., is the observation likely associated with reproduction). Bird records are also required to have information associated with date-appropriate breeding or overwintering status of the species observed. MTNHP reviews observation records to ensure that they are mapped correctly, occur within date ranges when the species is known to be present or detectable, occur within the known seasonal geographic range of the species, and occur in appropriate habitats. MTNHP also assigns each record a locational uncertainty value in meters to indicate the spatial precision associated with the record's mapped coordinates. Only records with locational uncertainty values of 10,000 meters or less are included in environmental summary reports and number summaries are only provided for records with locational uncertainty values of 1,000 meters or less.

Species Occurrences

The MTNHP evaluates plant and animal observation records for species of higher conservation concern to determine whether they are worthy of inclusion in the [Species Occurrence](#) (SO) layer for use in environmental reviews; observations not worthy of inclusion in this layer include long distance dispersal events, migrants observed away from key migratory stopover habitats, and winter observations. An SO is a polygon depicting what is known about a species occupancy from direct observation with a defined level of locational uncertainty and any inference that can be made about adjacent habitat use from the latest peer-reviewed science. If an observation can be associated with a map feature that can be tracked (e.g., a wetland boundary for a wetland associated plant) then this polygon feature is used to represent the SO. Areas that can be inferred as probable occupied habitat based on direct observation of a species location and what is known about the foraging area or home range size of the species may be incorporated into the SO. Species Occurrences generally belong to one of the following categories:

Plant Species Occurrences

A documented location of a specimen collection or observed plant population. In some instances, adjacent, spatially separated clusters are considered subpopulations and are grouped as one occurrence (e.g., the subpopulations occur in ecologically similar habitats, and their spatial proximity likely allows them to interbreed). Tabular information for multiple observations at the same SO location is generally linked to a single polygon. Plant SO's are only created for Species of Concern and Potential Species of Concern.

Animal Species Occurrences

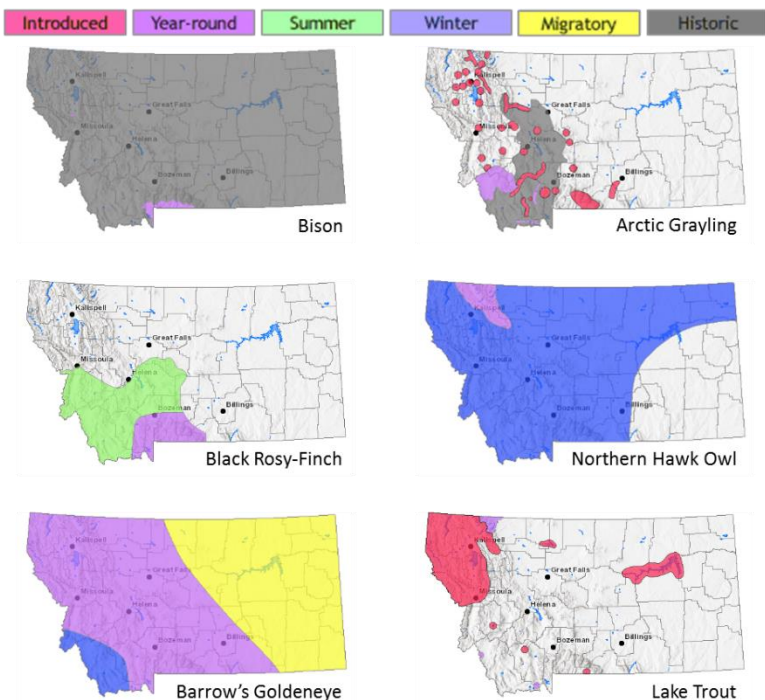
The location of a verified observation or specimen record typically known or assumed to represent a breeding population or a portion of a breeding population. Animal SO's are generally: (1) buffers of terrestrial point observations based on documented species' home range sizes; (2) buffers of stream segments to encompass occupied streams and immediate adjacent riparian habitats; (3) polygonal features encompassing known or likely breeding populations (e.g., a wetland for some amphibians or a forested portion of a mountain range for some wide ranging carnivores); or (4) combinations of the above. Tabular information for multiple observations at the same SO location is generally linked to a single polygon. Species Occurrence polygons may encompass some unsuitable habitat in some instances in order to avoid heavy data processing associated with clipping out habitats that are readily assessed as unsuitable by the data user (e.g., a point buffer of a terrestrial species may overlap into a portion of a lake that is obviously inappropriate habitat for the species). Animal SO's are only created for Species of Concern and Special Status Species (e.g., Bald Eagle).

Other Occurrence Polygons

These include significant biological features not included in the above categories, such as Important Animal Habitats like bird rookeries and bat roosts, and peatlands or other wetland and riparian communities that support diverse plant and animal communities.

Geographic Range Polygons

Geographic range polygons have not yet been defined for most plant species. Native year-round, summer, winter, migratory and historic geographic range polygons as well as polygons for introduced populations have



been defined for most animal species for which there are enough observations, surveys, and knowledge of appropriate seasonal habitat use to define them (see examples to left). These native or introduced range polygons bound the extent of known or likely occupied habitats for non-migratory and relative sedentary species and the regular extent of known or likely occupied habitats for migratory and long-distance dispersing species; polygons may include unsuitable intervening habitats. For most species, a single polygon can represent the year-round or seasonal range, but breeding ranges of some colonial nesting water birds and some introduced species are represented more patchily when supported by data. Some ranges are mapped more broadly than actual distributions in order to be visible on statewide maps (e.g., fish).

Predicted Suitable Habitat Models

Recent predicted suitable habitat suitability models have not yet been created for most plant species. For animal species for which models have been completed, the environmental summary report includes simple, rule-based, associations with streams for fish and other aquatic species and mathematically complex Maximum Entropy models (Phillips et al. 2006, *Ecological Modeling* 190:231-259) constructed from a variety of statewide biotic and abiotic layers and presence only data for individual species contributed to Montana Natural Heritage Program databases for most terrestrial species. For the Maximum Entropy models, we reclassified 90 x 90-meter continuous model output into suitability classes (unsuitable, low, moderate, and optimal) then aggregated that into the one square mile hexagons used in the environmental summary report; this is the finest spatial scale we suggest using this information in management decisions and survey planning. Full model write ups for individual species that discuss model goals, inputs, outputs, and evaluation in much greater detail are posted on the MTNHP's [Predicted Suitable Habitat Models](#) page. Evaluations of predictive accuracy and specific limitations are included with the metadata for models of individual species. **Model outputs should not be used in place of on-the-ground surveys for species. Instead model outputs should be used in conjunction with habitat evaluations to determine the need for on-the-ground surveys for species.** We suggest that the percentage of predicted optimal and moderate suitable habitat within the report area be used in conjunction with geographic range polygons and the percentage of commonly associated habitats to generate lists of potential species that may occupy broader landscapes for the purposes of landscape-level planning.

Associated Habitats

Within the boundary of the intersected hexagons, we provide the approximate percentage of commonly or occasionally associated habitat for vertebrate animal species that regularly breed, overwinter, or migrate through the state; a detailed list of commonly and occasionally associated habitats is provided in individual species accounts in the [Montana Field Guide](#). We assigned common or occasional use of each of the 82 ecological systems mapped in Montana by: (1) using personal knowledge and reviewing literature that

summarizes the breeding, overwintering, or migratory habitat requirements of each species; (2) evaluating structural characteristics and distribution of each ecological system relative to the species' range and habitat requirements; (3) examining the observation records for each species in the state-wide point observation database associated with each ecological system; and (4) calculating the percentage of observations associated with each ecological system relative to the percent of Montana covered by each ecological system to get a measure of numbers of observations versus availability of habitat. Species that breed in Montana were only evaluated for breeding habitat use, species that only overwinter in Montana were only evaluated for overwintering habitat use, and species that only migrate through Montana were only evaluated for migratory habitat use. In general, species were listed as associated with an ecological system if structural characteristics of used habitat documented in the literature were present in the ecological system or large numbers of point observations were associated with the ecological system. However, species were not listed as associated with an ecological system if there was no support in the literature for use of structural characteristics in an ecological system, even if point observations were associated with that system. Common versus occasional association with an ecological system was assigned based on the degree to which the structural characteristics of an ecological system matched the preferred structural habitat characteristics for each species as represented in the scientific literature. The percentage of observations associated with each ecological system relative to the percent of Montana covered by each ecological system was also used to guide assignment of common versus occasional association.

We suggest that the percentage of commonly associated habitat within the report area be used in conjunction with geographic range polygons and the percentage of predicted optimal and moderate suitable habitat from predictive models to generate lists of potential species that may occupy broader landscapes for the purposes of landscape-level planning. Users of this information should be aware that land cover mapping accuracy is particularly problematic when the systems occur as small patches or where the land cover types have been altered over the past decade. Thus, particular caution should be used when using the associations in assessments of smaller areas (e.g., evaluations of public land survey sections).

Introduction to Land Cover Summary

Land Use/Land Cover is one of 15 [Montana Spatial Data Infrastructure](#) framework layers considered vital for making statewide maps of Montana and understanding its geography. The layer records all Montana natural vegetation, land cover and land use, classified from satellite and aerial imagery, mapped at a scale of 1:100000, and interpreted with supporting ground-level data. The baseline map is adapted from the Northwest ReGAP (NWGAP) project land cover classification, which used 30m resolution multi-spectral Landsat imagery acquired between 1999 and 2001. Vegetation classes were drawn from the Ecological System Classification developed by NatureServe (Comer et al. 2003). The land cover classes were developed by Anderson et al. (1976). The NWGAP effort encompasses 12 map zones. Montana overlaps seven of these zones. The two NWGAP teams responsible for the initial land cover mapping effort in Montana were Sanborn and NWGAP at the University of Idaho. Both Sanborn and NWGAP employed a similar modeling approach in which Classification and Regression Tree (CART) models were applied to Landsat ETM+ scenes. The Spatial Analysis Lab within the Montana Natural Heritage Program was responsible for developing a seamless Montana land cover map with a consistent statewide legend from these two separate products. Additionally, the Montana land cover layer incorporates several other land cover and land use products (e.g., MSDI Structures and Transportation themes and the Montana Department of Revenue Final Land Unit classification) and reclassifications based on plot-level data and the latest NAIP imagery to improve accuracy and enhance the usability of the theme. Updates are done as partner support and funding allow, or when other MSDI datasets can be incorporated. Recent updates include fire perimeters and agricultural land use (annually), energy developments such as wind, oil and gas installations (2014), roads, structures and other impervious surfaces (various years): and local updates/improvements to specific ecological systems (e.g., central Montana grassland and sagebrush ecosystems). Current and previous versions of the Land Use/Land Cover layer with full metadata are available for download at the Montana State Library's [Geographic Information Clearinghouse](#).

Within the report area you have requested, land cover is summarized by acres of Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3 Ecological Systems.

Literature Cited

- Anderson, J.R. E.E. Hardy, J.T. Roach, and R.E. Witmer. 1976. A land use and land cover classification system for use with remote sensor data. U.S. Geological Survey Professional Paper 964.
- Comer, P., D. Faber-Langendoen, R. Evans, S. Gawler, C. Josse, G. Kittel, S. Menard, M. Pyne, M. Reid, K. Schulz, K. Snow, and J. Teague. 2003. Ecological systems of the United States: A working classification of U.S. terrestrial systems. NatureServe, Arlington, VA.

Introduction to Wetland and Riparian Summary

Within the report area you have requested, wetland and riparian mapping is summarized by acres of each classification present. Summaries are only provided for modern MTNHP wetland and riparian mapping and not for outdated (NWI Legacy) or incomplete (NWI Scalable) mapping efforts; [described here](#). MTNHP has made all three of these datasets and associated metadata available for separate download on the [Montana Wetland and Riparian Framework MSDI download page](#).

Wetland and Riparian mapping is one of 15 [Montana Spatial Data Infrastructure](#) framework layers considered vital for making statewide maps of Montana and understanding its geography. The wetland and riparian framework layer consists of spatial data representing the extent, type, and approximate location of wetlands, riparian areas, and deepwater habitats in Montana.

Wetland and riparian mapping is completed through photointerpretation of 1-m resolution color infrared aerial imagery acquired from 2005 or later. A coding convention using letters and numbers is assigned to each mapped wetland. These letters and numbers describe the broad landscape context of the wetland, its vegetation type, its water regime, and the kind of alterations that may have occurred. Ancillary data layers such as topographic maps, digital elevation models, soils data, and other aerial imagery sources are also used to improve mapping accuracy. Wetland mapping follows the federal Wetland Mapping Standard and classifies wetlands according to the Cowardin classification system of the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) (Cowardin et al. 1979, FGDC Wetlands Subcommittee 2013). Federal, State, and local regulatory agencies with jurisdiction over wetlands may define and describe wetlands differently than the NWI. Similar coding, based on U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service conventions, is applied to riparian areas (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 2009). These are mapped areas where vegetation composition and growth is influenced by nearby water bodies, but where soils, plant communities, and hydrology do not display true wetland characteristics. **These data are intended for use in publications at a scale of 1:12,000 or smaller. Mapped wetland and riparian areas do not represent precise boundaries and digital wetland data cannot substitute for an on-site determination of jurisdictional wetlands.**

A detailed overview, with examples, of both wetland and riparian classification systems and associated codes can be found at: http://mtnhp.org/help/MapView/WetRip_Classification.asp

Literature Cited

- Cowardin, L.M., V. Carter, F.C. Golet, and E.T. LaRoe. 1979. Classification of wetlands and deepwater habitats of the United States. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, FWS/OBS-79/31. Washington, D.C. 103pp.
- Federal Geographic Data Committee. 2013. Classification of wetlands and deepwater habitats of the United States. FGDC-STD-004-2013. Second Edition. Wetlands Subcommittee, Federal Geographic Data Committee and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services. 2009. A system for mapping riparian areas in the western United States. Division of Habitat and Resource Conservation, Branch of Resource and Mapping Support, Arlington, Virginia.

Introduction to Land Management Summary

Within the report area you have requested, land management information is summarized by acres of federal, state, and local government lands, tribal reservation boundaries, private conservation lands, and federal, state, local, and private conservation easements. Acreage for “Owned”, “Tribal”, or “Easement” categories represents non-overlapping areas that may be totaled. However, “Other Boundaries” represents managed areas such as National Forest boundaries containing private inholdings and other mixed ownership which may cause boundaries to overlap (e.g. a wilderness area within a forest). Therefore, acreages may not total in a straight-forward manner.

Because information on land stewardship is critical to effective land management, the Montana Natural Heritage Program (MTNHP) began compiling ownership and management data in 1997. The goal of the Montana Land Management Database is to manage a single, statewide digital data set that incorporates information from both public and private entities. The database assembles information on public lands, private conservation lands, and conservation easements held by state and federal agencies and land trusts and is updated on a regular basis. Since 2011, the Information Management group in the Montana State Library’s Digital Library Division has taken an increasingly active role in managing layers of the Montana Land Management Database in partnership with the MTNHP.

Public and private conservation land polygons are attributed with the name of the entity that owns it. The data are derived from the statewide Montana Cadastral Parcel layer. Conservation easement data shows land parcels on which a public agency or qualified land trust has placed a conservation easement in cooperation with the land owner. The dataset contains no information about ownership or status of the mineral estate. For questions about the dataset or to report errors, please contact the Montana Natural Heritage Program at (406) 444-5354 or mtnhp@mt.gov. You can download various components of the Land Management Database and view associated metadata at the Montana State Library’s [GIS Data List](#) at the following links:

[Public Lands](#)

[Conservation Easements](#)

[Private Conservation Lands](#)

[Managed Areas](#)

Map features in the Montana Land Management Database or summaries provided in this report are not intended as a legal depiction of public or private surface land ownership boundaries and should not be used in place of a survey conducted by a licensed land surveyor. Similarly, map features do not imply public access to any lands. The Montana Natural Heritage Program makes no representations or warranties whatsoever with respect to the accuracy or completeness of this data and assumes no responsibility for the suitability of the data for a particular purpose. The Montana Natural Heritage Program will not be liable for any damages incurred as a result of errors displayed here. Consumers of this information should review or consult the primary data and information sources to ascertain the viability of the information for their purposes.

Additional Information Resources

[Home Page for Montana Natural Heritage Program \(MTNHP\)](#)

[MTNHP Staff Contact Information](#)

[Montana Field Guide](#)

[MTNHP Species of Concern Report - Animals and Plants](#)

[MTNHP Species Status Codes - Explanation](#)

[MTNHP Predicted Suitable Habitat Models](#) (for select Animals and Plants)

[MTNHP Request Information page](#)

[Montana Cadastral](#)

[Montana Code Annotated](#)

[Montana Department of Environmental Quality](#)

[Montana Fisheries Information System](#)

[Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Subdivision Recommendations](#)

[Montana GIS Data Layers](#)

[Montana GIS Data Bundler](#)

[Montana Greater Sage-Grouse Project Submittal Site](#)

[Montana Ground Water Information Center](#)

[Montana Legislative Environmental Policy Office Publications](#)

(Including Index of Environmental Permits required in Montana and Guide to the Montana Environmental Policy Act)

[Laws, Treaties, Regulations, and Permits on Animals and Plants](#)

[Montana Spatial Data Infrastructure Layers](#)

[Montana State Historic Preservation Office Review and Compliance](#)

[Montana Water Information System](#)

[Montana Web Map Services](#)

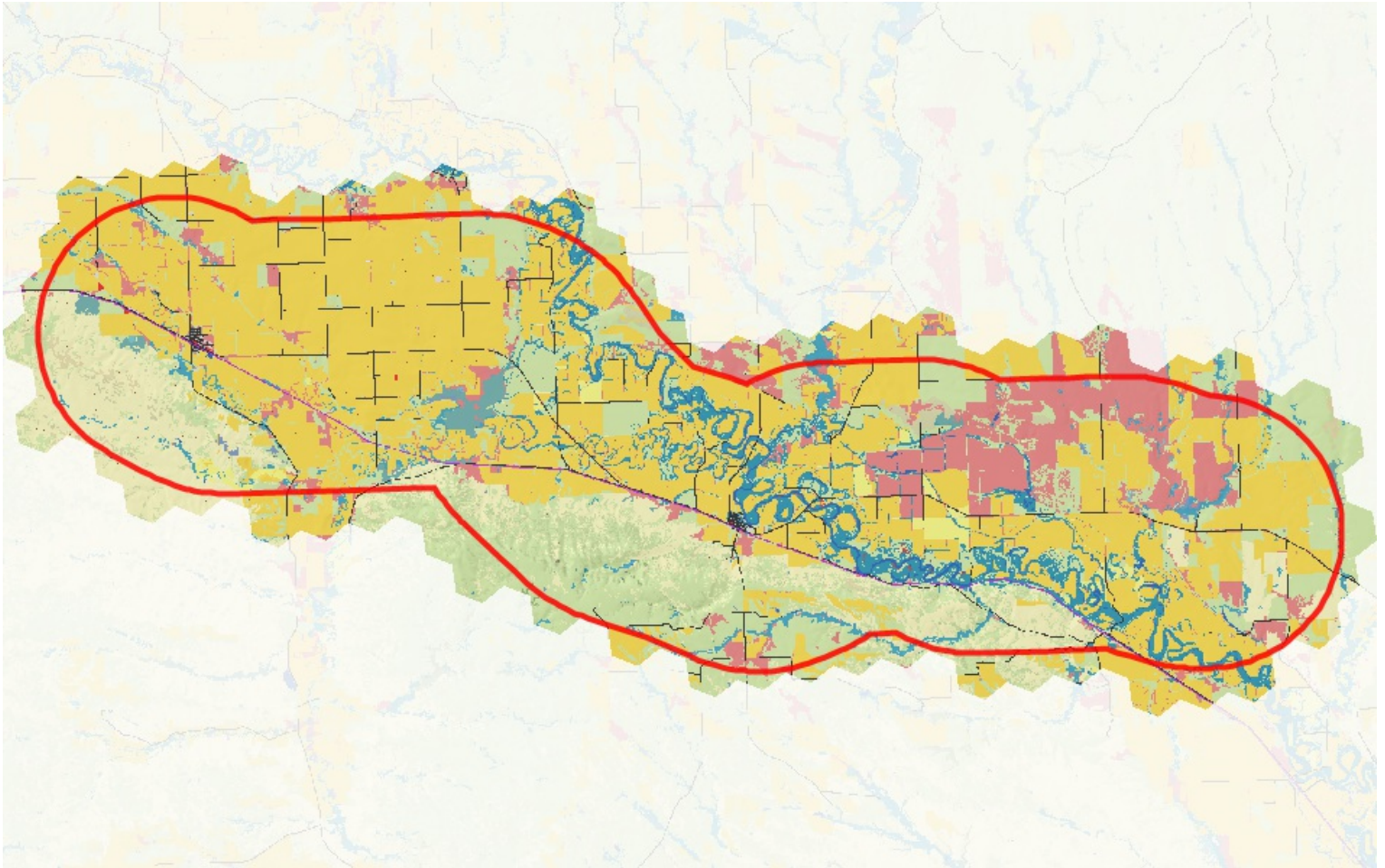
[National Environmental Policy Act](#)

[U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Information for Planning and Conservation](#) (Section 7 Consultation)

[Web Soil Survey Tool](#)



Land Cover Summary



141,280 Acres (0.15% of Montana)

Notes on and Appropriate Uses of Land Cover

The Land Cover data used in Map Viewer are based on classifications of 30-meter Landsat satellite imagery. The base data were classified as part of the national ReGAP project, using imagery from the late 1990s and early 2000s. Classification accuracy varies from system to system, but statewide and local assessments have not been completed to-date. Generally, systems occurring as small patches (e.g., fens, mountain mahogany shrublands) or those making up smaller percentages of various administrative boundaries (e.g. all of those listed under the Additional Limited Land Cover folder below) will be less accurately classified than systems occurring as matrices or large patches (e.g., mixed grass prairie, lodgepole pine forests). Similarly, areas where land use and land cover has changed significantly over the past decade may not be correctly classified. Users are cautioned that the appropriate scale for use of the data is 1:100,000. Accuracy improvements are ongoing. To submit updated information, please email mtnhp@mt.gov.



42%
(58,931
Acres)

Human Land Use Agriculture

Cultivated Crops

These areas used for the production of crops, such as corn, soybeans, small grains, sunflowers, vegetables, and cotton, typically on an annual cycle. Agricultural plant cover is variable depending on season and type of farming. Other areas include more stable land cover of orchards and vineyards.



24%
(33,950
Acres)

Grassland Systems Lowland/Prairie Grassland

Great Plains Mixedgrass Prairie

The system covers much of the eastern two-thirds of Montana, occurring continuously for hundreds of square kilometers, interrupted only by wetland/riparian areas or sand prairies. Soils are primarily fine and medium-textured. The growing season averages 115 days, ranging from 100 days on the Canadian border to 130 days on the Wyoming border. Climate is typical of mid-continental regions with long severe winters and hot summers. Grasses typically comprise the greatest canopy cover, and western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*) is usually dominant. Other species include thickspike wheatgrass (*Elymus lanceolatus*), green needlegrass (*Nassella viridula*), blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), and

needle and thread (*Hesperostipa comata*). Near the Canadian border in north-central Montana, this system grades into rough fescue (*Festuca campestris*) and Idaho fescue (*Festuca idahoensis*) grasslands. Remnants of shortbristle needle and thread (*Hesperostipa curtiseta*) dominated vegetation are found in northernmost Montana and North Dakota, and are associated with productive sites, now mostly converted to farmland. Forb diversity is typically high. In areas of southeastern and central Montana where sagebrush steppe borders the mixed grass prairie, common plant associations include Wyoming big sagebrush-western wheatgrass (*Artemisia tridentata* ssp. *wyomingensis*/ *Pascopyrum smithii*). Fire and grazing are the primary drivers of this system. Drought can also impact it, in general favoring the shortgrass component at the expense of the mid-height grasses. With intensive grazing, cool season exotics such as Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*), smooth brome (*Bromus inermis*), and Japanese brome (*Bromus japonicus*) increase in dominance; both of these rhizomatous species have been shown to markedly decrease species diversity. Previously cultivated acres that have been re-vegetated with non-native plants have been transformed into associations such as Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*)/western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*) or into pure crested wheatgrass (*Agropyron cristatum*) stands.



11%
(15,731
Acres)

Shrubland, Steppe and Savanna Systems

Sagebrush Steppe

Big Sagebrush Steppe

This widespread ecological system occurs throughout much of central Montana, and north and east onto the western fringe of the Great Plains. In central Montana, where this system occurs on both glaciated and non-glaciated landscapes, it differs slightly, with more summer rain than winter precipitation and more precipitation annually. Throughout its distribution, soils are typically deep and non-saline, often with a microphytic crust. This shrub-steppe is dominated by perennial grasses and forbs with greater than 25% cover. Overall shrub cover is less than 10 percent. In Montana and Wyoming, stands are more mesic, with more biomass of grass, and have less shrub diversity than stands farther to the west, and 50 to 90% of the occurrences are dominated by Wyoming big sagebrush with western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*). Japanese brome (*Bromus japonicus*) and cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*) are indicators of disturbance, but cheatgrass is typically not as abundant as in the Intermountain West, possibly due to a colder climate. The natural fire regime of this ecological system maintains a patchy distribution of shrubs, preserving the steppe character. Shrubs may increase following heavy grazing and/or with fire suppression. In central and eastern Montana, complexes of prairie dog towns are common in this ecological system.



10%
(13,846
Acres)

Recently Disturbed or Modified

Introduced Vegetation

Introduced Upland Vegetation - Annual and Biennial Forbland

Land cover is significantly altered/disturbed by introduced annual and biennial forbs. Natural vegetation types are no longer recognizable. Typical species that dominate these areas are knapweed, oxeye daisy, Canada thistle, leafy spurge, pepperweed, and yellow sweetclover.



4% (5,995
Acres)

Wetland and Riparian Systems

Floodplain and Riparian

Great Plains Floodplain

This system occurs along the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers and their larger tributaries, including parts of the Little Missouri, Clark's Fork Yellowstone, Powder, Tongue, Bighorn, Milk, and Musselshell rivers. These are the big perennial rivers of the region, with hydrologic dynamics largely driven by snowmelt and rainfall originating in their headwater watersheds, rather than local precipitation events. In the absence of disturbance, periodic flooding of fluvial and alluvial soils and channel migration will create depressions and backwaters that support a mosaic of wetland and riparian vegetation, whose composition and structure is sustained, altered and redistributed by hydrology. Dominant communities within this system range from floodplain forests to wet meadows to gravel/sand flats, linked by underlying soils and flooding regimes. In the western part of the system's range in Montana, the overstory dominant species is black cottonwood (*Populus balsamifera* ssp. *trichocarpa*) with narrowleaf cottonwood (*Populus angustifolia*) and eastern cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*) occurring as co-dominants in the riparian/floodplain interface near the mountains. Further east, narrowleaf cottonwood and Plains cottonwood become dominant. In relatively undisturbed stands, willow (*Salix* species), redosier dogwood (*Cornus sericea*) and common chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*) form a thick, multi-layered shrub understory, with a mixture of cool and warm season graminoid species below.

In Montana, many occurrences are now degraded to the point where the cottonwood overstory is the only remaining natural component. The hydrology of these floodplain systems has been affected by dams, highways, railroads and agricultural ditches, and as a result, they have lost their characteristic wetland /riparian mosaic structure. This has resulted in a highly altered community consisting of relict cottonwood stands with little regeneration. The understory vegetation is dominated by non-native pasture grasses, legumes and other introduced forbs, or by the disclimax western snowberry (*Symphoricarpos occidentalis*) and rose (*Rosa* species) shrub community.



2% (2,606
Acres)

Wetland and Riparian Systems

Floodplain and Riparian

Great Plains Riparian

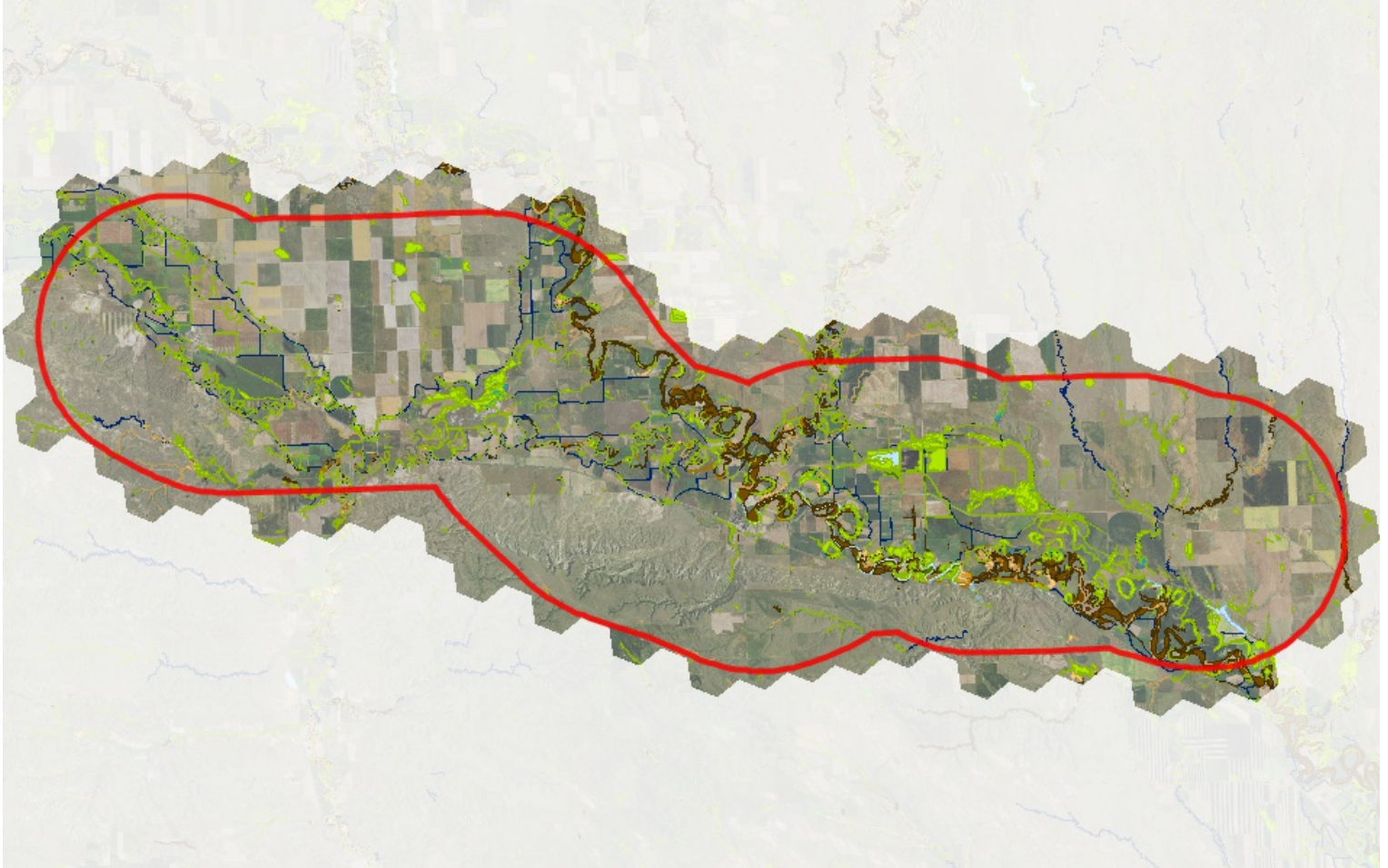
This system is associated with perennial to intermittent or ephemeral streams throughout the northwestern Great Plains. In Montana, it occurs along smaller tributaries of the Yellowstone and Missouri rivers, as well as tributaries to the large floodplain rivers that feed them (e.g. the Milk, Marias, Musselshell, Powder, Clark's Fork Yellowstone, Tongue, etc.). In areas adjacent to the mountain ranges of central and southeastern Montana, and near the Rocky Mountain Front, it grades into Rocky Mountain Lower Montane-Foothill Riparian Woodland and Shrubland systems. This system is found on alluvial soils in highly variable landscape settings, from confined, deep cut ravines to wide, braided streambeds. Channel migration occurs in less-confined areas, but within a more narrow range than would occur in broad, alluvial floodplains. Typically, the rivers are wadeable by mid-summer.

The primary inputs of water to these systems include groundwater discharge, overland flow, and subsurface interflow from the adjacent upland. Flooding is the key ecosystem process, creating suitable sites for seed dispersal and seedling establishment, and controlling vegetation succession. Communities within this system range from riparian forests and shrublands to tallgrass wet meadows and gravel/sand flats. Dominant species are similar to those found in the Great

Plains Floodplain System. In the western part of the system's range in Montana, the dominant overstory species is black cottonwood (*Populus balsamifera ssp. trichocarpa*) with narrowleaf cottonwood (*Populus angustifolia*) and Plains cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*) occurring as co-dominants in the riparian/floodplain interface near the mountains. Further east, narrowleaf cottonwood and Plains cottonwood become dominant. In wetter systems, the understory is typically willow (*Salix spp.*) and redosier dogwood (*Cornus stolonifera*) with graminoids such as western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*) and forbs like American licorice (*Glycyrrhiza lepidota*). In areas where the channel is incised, the understory may be dominated by big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*) or silver sagebrush (*Artemisia cana*). Like floodplain systems, riparian systems are often subjected to overgrazing and/or agriculture and can be heavily degraded, with salt cedar (*Tamarix ramosissima*) and Russian olive (*Eleagnus angustifolia*) replacing native woody vegetation and regrowth. Groundwater depletion and lack of fire have resulted in additional species changes.



Wetland Summary



141,280 Acres (0.15% of Montana)

Notes on Appropriate Uses of Wetland and Riparian Mapping

Federal, State, and local regulatory agencies with jurisdiction over wetlands may define and describe wetlands differently than the NWI. MTNHP Wetland and Riparian Mapping data are intended for use in publications at a scale of 1:12,000 or smaller. Historic wetland mapping is intended for use in publications at a scale of 1:24,000 or smaller. Mapped wetlands do not represent precise wetland boundaries, and digital wetland data cannot substitute for an on-site determination of jurisdictional wetlands.

Wetland and Riparian Mapping

[Explain](#)

Palustrine

Code	Description	Acres	Notes
PUB	Unconsolidated Bottom	<1	Wetlands where mud, silt or similar fine particles cover at least 25% of the bottom, and where vegetation cover is less than 30%.
PAB	Aquatic Bed	373	Wetlands with vegetation growing on or below the water surface for most of the growing season.
PUS	Unconsolidated Shore	129	Wetlands with less than 75% areal cover of stones, boulders, or bedrock. AND with less than 30% vegetative cover AND the wetland is irregularly exposed due to seasonal or irregular flooding and subsequent drying.
PEM	Emergent	5,042	Wetlands with erect, rooted herbaceous vegetation present during most of the growing season.
PSS	Scrub-Shrub	39	Wetlands dominated by woody vegetation less than 6 meters (20 feet) tall. Woody vegetation includes tree saplings and trees that are stunted due to environmental conditions.

Lacustrine (Lakes)

Limnetic

L1UB	Unconsolidated Bottom	430	Deep waterbodies with mud or silt covering at least 25% of the bottom.
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Littoral

■ L2AB Aquatic Bed

118 Shorelines with vegetation growing on or below the water surface for most of the growing season.

Riverine (Rivers)

Lower Perennial

■ R2UB Unconsolidated Bottom

16 Stream channels where the substrate is at least 25% mud, silt or other fine particles.

■ R2US Unconsolidated Shore

7 Shorelines with less than 75% areal cover of stones, boulders, or bedrock and less than 30% vegetation cover.
The area is also irregularly exposed due to seasonal or irregular flooding and subsequent drying.

Upper Perennial

■ R3UB Unconsolidated Bottom

780 Stream channels where the substrate is at least 25% mud, silt or other fine particles.

■ R3US Unconsolidated Shore

35 Shorelines with less than 75% areal cover of stones, boulders, or bedrock and less than 30% vegetation cover.
The area is also irregularly exposed due to seasonal or irregular flooding and subsequent drying.

Intermittent

■ R4SB Streambed

222 Active channel that contains periodic water flow.

Riparian

Lotic

■ Rp1SS Scrub-Shrub

199 This type of riparian area is dominated by woody vegetation that is less than 6 meters (20 feet) tall.
Woody vegetation includes tree saplings and trees that are stunted due to environmental conditions.

■ Rp1FO Forested

3,084 This riparian class has woody vegetation that is greater than 6 meters (20 feet) tall.

■ Rp1EM Emergent

637 Riparian areas that have erect, rooted herbaceous vegetation during most of the growing season.

Lentic

■ Rp2SS Scrub-Shrub

10 This type of riparian area is dominated by woody vegetation that is less than 6 meters (20 feet) tall.
Woody vegetation includes tree saplings and trees that are stunted due to environmental conditions.

■ Rp2FO Forested

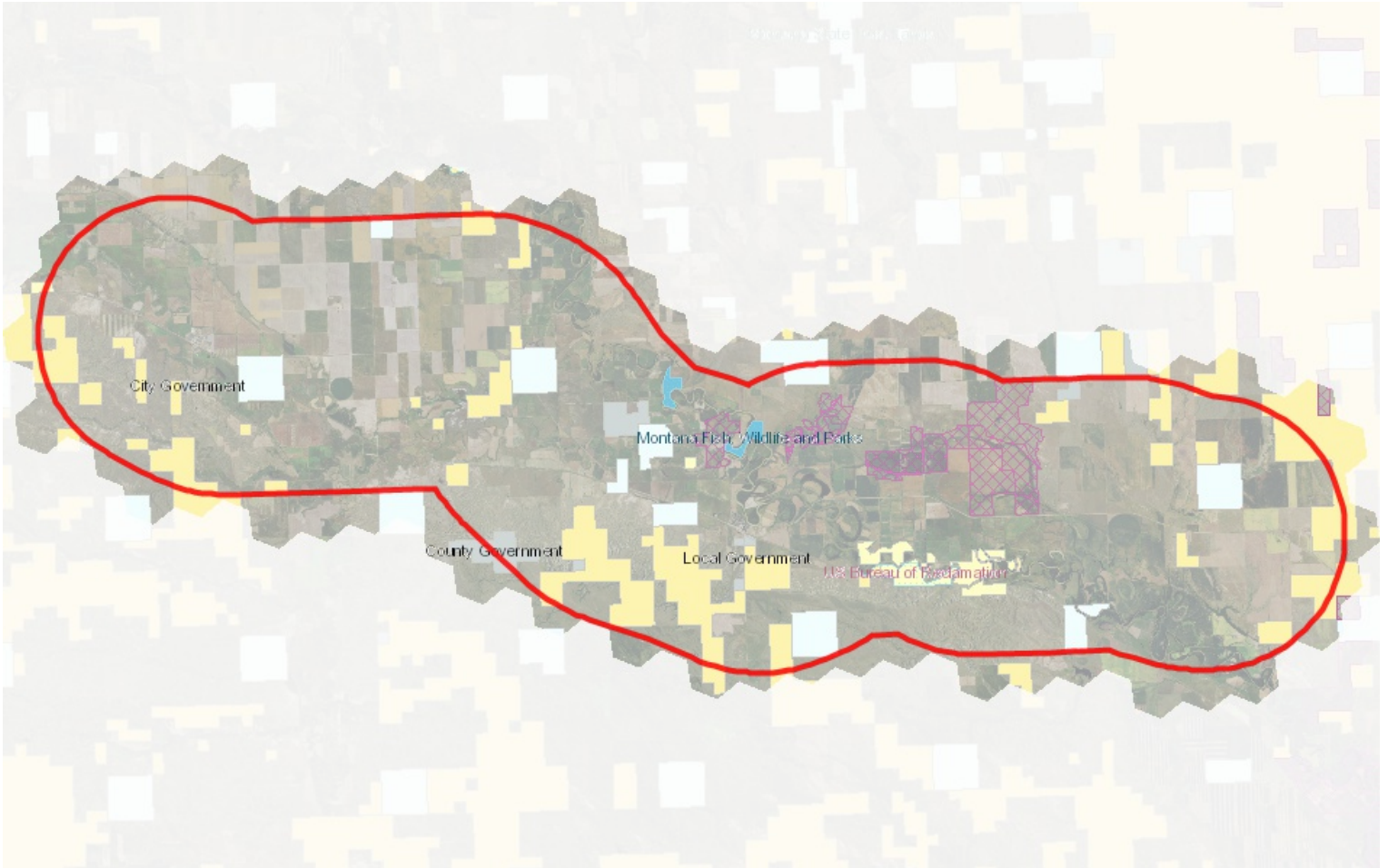
54 This riparian class has woody vegetation that is greater than 6 meters (20 feet) tall.

■ Rp2EM Emergent

65 Riparian areas that have erect, rooted herbaceous vegetation during most of the growing season.



Land Management Summary



141,280 Acres (0.15% of Montana)

Land Management Summary

[Explain](#)

	Ownership	Tribal	Easements	Other Boundaries (possible overlap)
Public Lands	23,381 Acres (17%)			
Federal	15,569 Acres (11%)			
US Bureau of Land Management	14,370 Acres (10%)			
BLM Owned	14,370 Acres (10%)			
US Bureau of Reclamation	1,199 Acres (1%)			
USBR Owned	1,199 Acres (1%)			
State	6,328 Acres (4%)			
Montana State Trust Lands	6,064 Acres (4%)			
MT State Trust Owned	6,064 Acres (4%)			
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks	264 Acres (<1%)			
MTFWP Owned	264 Acres (<1%)			
MTFWP Fishing Access Sites				11 Acres
Bjornberg Bridge Fishing Access Site				11 Acres
MTFWP Wildlife Management Areas				628 Acres
Hinsdale Wildlife Management Area				264 Acres
Vandalia Wildlife Management Area				364 Acres
Local	1,484 Acres (1%)			
Local Government	1,484 Acres (1%)			
Local Government Owned	1,484 Acres (1%)			
Conservation Easements			4,300 Acres (3%)	

+	Private	145 Acres (<1%)
	The Nature Conservancy	145 Acres (<1%)
+	State & Local	523 Acres (<1%)
	Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks	403 Acres (<1%)
	Montana Department of Transportation	120 Acres (<1%)
+	Federal	3,632 Acres (3%)
	US Department of Agriculture	3,632 Acres (3%)
	Private Lands or Unknown Ownership	113,599 Acres (80%)



MONTANA
**Natural Heritage
Program**

A program of the **Montana State Library's
Natural Resource Information System**
operated by the **University of Montana**.



Latitude	Longitude
48.33889	-106.77426
48.50501	-107.43998

Biological Reports

Within the report area you have requested, citations for all reports and publications associated with plant or animal observations in Montana Natural Heritage Program (MTNHP) databases are listed and, where possible, links to the documents are included.

The MTNHP plans to include reports associated with terrestrial and aquatic communities in the future as allowed for by staff resources. If you know of reports or publications associated with species or biological communities within the report area that are not shown in this report, please let us know: mtnhp@mt.gov

 Confluence Consulting Inc. 2010. **Montana Department of Transportation Wetland Mitigation Monitoring Reports (various sites). MDT
Helena, MT.**

Introduction to Montana Natural Heritage Program



P.O. Box 201800 • 1515 East Sixth Avenue • Helena, MT 59620-1800 • fax 406.444.0266 • tel 406.444.0241 • mtnhp.org

INTRODUCTION

The Montana Natural Heritage Program (MTNHP) is Montana's source for reliable and objective information on Montana's native species and habitats, emphasizing those of conservation concern. MTNHP was created by the Montana legislature in 1983 as part of the Natural Resource Information System (NRIS) at the Montana State Library (MSL). MTNHP is "a program of information acquisition, storage, and retrieval for data relating to the flora, fauna, and biological community types of Montana" (MCA 90-15-102). MTNHP's activities are guided by statute (MCA 90-15) as well as through ongoing interaction with, and feedback from, principal data source agencies such as Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, the Montana Department of Environmental Quality, the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, the Montana University System, the US Forest Service, and the US Bureau of Land Management. The enabling legislation for MTNHP provides the State Library with the option to contract the operation of the Program. Since 2006, MTNHP has been operated as a program under the Office of the Vice President for Research and Creative Scholarship at the University of Montana (UM) through a renewable 2-year contract with the MSL. Since the first staff was hired in 1985, the Program has logged a long record of success, and developed into a highly respected, service-oriented program. MTNHP is widely recognized as one of the most advanced and effective of over 80 natural heritage programs throughout the Western Hemisphere.

VISION

Our vision is that public agencies, the private sector, the education sector, and the general public will trust and rely upon MTNHP as the source for information and expertise on Montana's species and habitats, especially those of conservation concern. We strive to provide easy access to our information in order for users to save time and money, speed environmental reviews, and inform decision making.

CORE VALUES

- We endeavor to be a single statewide source of accurate and up-to-date information on Montana's plants, animals, and aquatic and terrestrial biological communities.
- We actively listen to our data users and work responsively to meet their information and training needs.
- We strive to provide neutral, trusted, timely, and equitable service to all of our information users.
- We make every effort to be transparent to our data users in setting work priorities and providing data products.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All information requests made to the Montana Natural Heritage Program are considered library records and are protected from disclosure by the Montana Library Records Confidentiality Act (MCA 22-1-11).

INFORMATION MANAGED

Information managed at the Montana Natural Heritage Program includes: (1) lists of, and basic information on, plant and animal species and biological communities; (2) plant and animal surveys, observations, species occurrences, predictive distribution models, range polygons, and conservation status ranks; and (3) land cover and wetland and riparian mapping and the conservation status of these and other biological communities.

Data Use Terms and Conditions


- Montana Natural Heritage Program (MTNHP) products and services are based on biological data and the objective interpretation of those data by professional scientists. MTNHP does not advocate any particular philosophy of natural resource protection, management, development, or public policy.
- MTNHP has no natural resource management or regulatory authority. Products, statements, and services from MTNHP are intended to inform parties as to the state of scientific knowledge about certain natural resources, and to further develop that knowledge. The information is not intended as natural resource management guidelines or prescriptions or a determination of environmental impacts. MTNHP recommends consultation with appropriate state, federal, and tribal resource management agencies and authorities in the area where your project is located.
- Information on the status and spatial distribution of biological resources produced by MTNHP are intended to inform parties of the state-wide status, known occurrence, or the likelihood of the presence of those resources. **These products are not intended to substitute for field-collected data, nor are they intended to be the sole basis for natural resource management decisions.**
- MTNHP does not portray its data as exhaustive or comprehensive inventories of rare species or biological communities. **Field verification of the absence or presence of sensitive species and biological communities will always be an important obligation of users of our data.**
- MTNHP responds equally to all requests for products and services, regardless of the purpose or identity of the requester.
- Because MTNHP constantly updates and revises its databases with new data and information, products will become outdated over time. Interested parties are encouraged to obtain the most current information possible from MTNHP, rather than using older products. We add, review, update, and delete records on a daily basis. Consequently, we strongly advise that you update your MTNHP data sets at a minimum of every three months for most applications of our information.
- MTNHP data require a certain degree of biological expertise for proper analysis, interpretation, and application. Our staff is available to advise you on questions regarding the interpretation or appropriate use of the data that we provide. Contact information for MTNHP staff is posted at: <http://mtnhp.org/contact.asp>
- The information provided to you by MTNHP may include sensitive data that if publicly released might jeopardize the welfare of threatened, endangered, or sensitive species or biological communities. This information is intended for distribution or use only within your department, agency, or business. Subcontractors may have access to the data during the course of any given project, but should not be given a copy for their use on subsequent, unrelated work.
- MTNHP data are made freely available. Duplication of hard-copy or digital MTNHP products with the intent to sell is prohibited without written consent by MTNHP. Should you be asked by individuals outside your organization for the type of data that we provide, please refer them to MTNHP.
- MTNHP and appropriate staff members should be appropriately acknowledged as an information source in any third-party product involving MTNHP data, reports, papers, publications, or in maps that incorporate MTNHP graphic elements.
- Sources of our data include museum specimens, published and unpublished scientific literature, field surveys by state and federal agencies and private contractors, and reports from knowledgeable individuals. MTNHP actively solicits and encourages additions, corrections and updates, new observations or collections, and comments on any of the data we provide.
- MTNHP staff and contractors do not cross or survey privately-owned lands without express permission from the landowner. However, the program cannot guarantee that information provided to us by others was obtained under adherence to this policy.

Suggested Contacts for Natural Resource Agencies

As required by Montana statute (MCA 90-15), the Montana Natural Heritage Program works with state, federal, tribal, nongovernmental organizations, and private partners to ensure that the latest animal and plant distribution and status information is incorporated into our databases so that it can be used to inform a variety of planning processes and management decisions. In addition to the information you receive from us, we encourage you to contact state, federal, and tribal resource management agencies in the area where your project is located. They may have additional data or management guidelines relevant to your efforts. In particular, we encourage you to contact the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks for the latest data and management information regarding hunted and high profile management species and to use the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Information Planning and Conservation (IPAC) website <http://ecos.fws.gov/ipac/> regarding U.S. Endangered Species Act listed Threatened, Endangered, or Candidate species.

For your convenience, we have compiled a list of relevant agency contacts and links below:

Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks

Fish Species	Zachary Shattuck zshattuck@mt.gov (406) 444-1231 or Lee Nelson leenelson@mt.gov (406) 444-2447
American Bison Black-footed Ferret Black-tailed Prairie Dog Bald Eagle Golden Eagle Common Loon Least Tern Piping Plover Whooping Crane	Lauri Hanauska-Brown LHanauska-Brown@mt.gov (406) 444-5209
Grizzly Bear Greater Sage Grouse Trumpeter Swan Big Game Upland Game Birds Furbearers	John Vore jvore@mt.gov (406) 444-5209
Managed Terrestrial Game and Nongame Animal Data	Adam Messer – MFWP Data Analyst amesser@mt.gov (406) 444-0095
Fisheries Data	Bill Daigle – MFWP Fish Data Manager bdaigle@mt.gov (406) 444-3737
Wildlife and Fisheries Scientific Collector’s Permits	http://fwp.mt.gov/doingBusiness/licenses/scientificWildlife/ Merissa Hayes for Wildlife merhayes@mt.gov (406) 444-7321 Beth Giddings for Fisheries begiddings@mt.gov (406) 444-7319
Fish and Wildlife Recommendations for Subdivision Development	Renee Lemon RLemon@mt.gov (406) 444-3738 and see http://fwp.mt.gov/fishAndWildlife/livingWithWildlife/buildingWithWildlife/subdivisionRecommendations/
Regional Contacts 	Region 1 (Kalispell) (406) 752-5501 Region 2 (Missoula) (406) 542-5500 Region 3 (Bozeman) (406) 994-4042 Region 4 (Great Falls) (406) 454-5840 Region 5 (Billings) (406) 247-2940 Region 6 (Glasgow) (406) 228-3700 Region 7 (Miles City) (406) 234-0900

United States Fish and Wildlife Service:

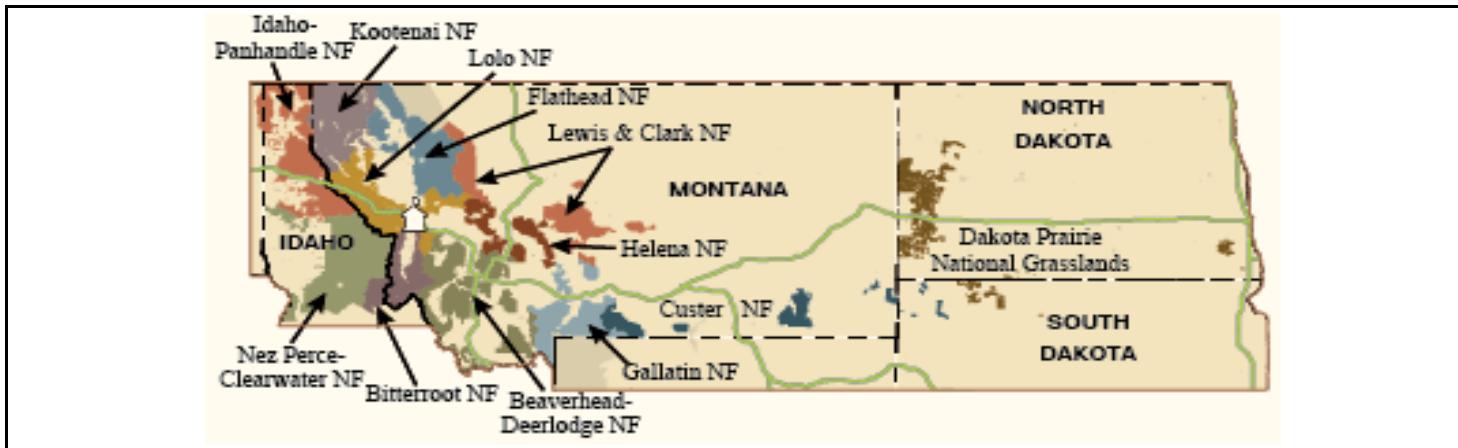
Information Planning and Conservation (IPAC) website: <http://ecos.fws.gov/ipac/>

Montana Ecological Services Field Office: <http://www.fws.gov/montanafieldoffice/> (406) 449-5225

Bureau of Land Management

Montana Field Office Contacts:	Billings	(406) 896-5013
	Butte	(406) 533-7600
	Dillon	(406) 683-8000
	Glasgow	(406) 228-3750
	Havre	(406) 262-2820
	Lewistown	(406) 538-1900
	Malta	(406) 654-5100
	Miles City	(406) 233-2800
	Missoula	(406) 329-3914

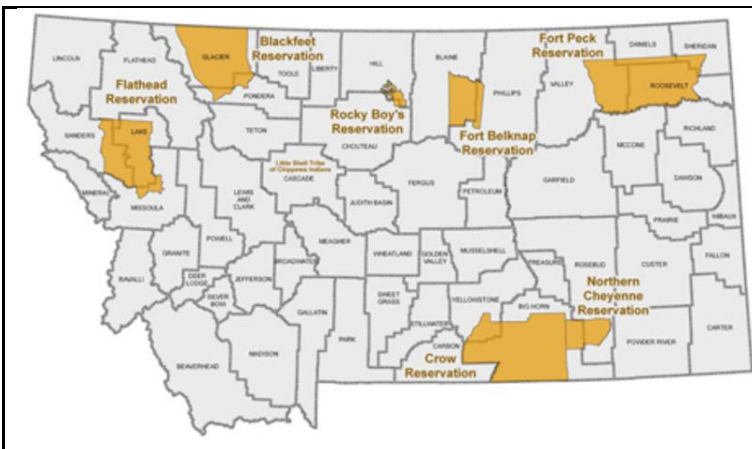
United States Forest Service



Regional Office – Missoula, Montana Contacts

Wildlife Program Leader	Tammy Fletcher	tammyfletcher@fs.fed.us	(406) 329-3588
Wildlife Ecologist	Cara Staab	cstaab@fs.fed.us	(406) 329-3677
Fish Program Leader	Scott Spaulding	scottspaulding@fs.fed.us	(406) 329-3287
Fish Ecologist	Cameron Thomas	cathomas@fs.fed.us	(406) 329-3087
TES Program	Lydia Allen	lrallen@fs.fed.us	(406) 329-3558
Interagency Grizzly Bear Coordinator	Scott Jackson	sjackson03@fs.fed.us	(406) 329-3664
Regional Botanist	Steve Shelly	sshelly@fs.fed.us	(406) 329-3041

Tribal Nations



- [Assiniboine & Gros Ventre Tribes – Fort Belknap Reservation](#)
- [Assiniboine & Sioux Tribes – Fort Peck Reservation](#)
- [Blackfoot Tribe - Blackfoot Reservation](#)
- [Chippewa Creek Tribe - Rocky Boy's Reservation](#)
- [Crow Tribe – Crow Reservation](#)
- [Little Shell Chippewa Tribe](#)
- [Northern Cheyenne Tribe – Northern Cheyenne Reservation](#)
- [Salish & Kootenai Tribes - Flathead Reservation](#)

Introduction to Species Summary

Within the report area you have requested, separate summaries are provided for: (1) Species Occurrences (SO) for plant and animal Species of Concern, Special Status Species (SSS), Important Animal Habitat (IAH) and some Potential Plant Species of Concern; (2) other observed non Species of Concern or Species of Concern without suitable documentation to create Species Occurrence polygons; and (3) other non-documented species that are potentially present based on their range, predicted suitable habitat model output, or presence of associated habitats. Each of these summaries provides the following information when present for a species: (1) the number of [Species Occurrences](#) and associated delineation criteria for construction of these polygons that have long been used for considerations of documented Species of Concern in environmental reviews; (2) the number of observations of each species; (3) the geographic range polygons for each species that the report area overlaps; (4) predicted relative habitat suitability classes that are present if a predicted suitable habitat model has been created; (5) the percent of the report area that is mapped as commonly associated or occasionally associated habitat as listed for each species in the [Montana Field Guide](#); and (6) a variety of conservation status ranks and links to species accounts in the [Montana Field Guide](#). Details on each of these information categories are included under relevant section headers below or are defined on our [Species Status Codes](#) page. In presenting this information, the Montana Natural Heritage Program (MTNHP) is working towards assisting the user with rapidly determining what species have been documented and what species are potentially present in the report area. We remind users that this information is likely incomplete as surveys to document native and introduced species are lacking in many areas of the state, information on introduced species has only been tracked relatively recently, the MTNHP's staff and resources are restricted by declining budgets, and information is constantly being added and updated in our databases. **Thus, field verification by professional biologists of the absence or presence of species and biological communities will always be an important obligation of users of our data.**

If you are aware of observation datasets that the MTNHP is missing, please report them to the Program Botanist apipp@mt.gov or Senior Zoologist dbachen@mt.gov. If you have observations that you would like to contribute, you can submit animal observations using our online data entry system at <http://mtnhp.org/AddObs/>, plant and animal observations via Excel spreadsheets posted at <http://mtnhp.org/observations.asp>, or to the Program Botanist or Senior Zoologist.

Observations

The MTNHP manages information on more than 1.8 million animal and plant observations that have been reported by professional biologists and private citizens from across Montana. The majority of these observations are submitted in digital format from standardized databases associated with research or monitoring efforts and spreadsheets of incidental observations submitted by professional biologists and amateur naturalists. At a minimum, accepted observation records must contain a credible species identification (i.e. appropriate geographic range, date, and habitat and, if species are difficult to identify, a photograph and notes on key identifying features), a date or date range, observer name, locational information (ideally with latitude and longitude in decimal degrees), notes on numbers observed, and species behavior or habitat use (e.g., is the observation likely associated with reproduction). Bird records are also required to have information associated with date-appropriate breeding or overwintering status of the species observed. MTNHP reviews observation records to ensure that they are mapped correctly, occur within date ranges when the species is known to be present or detectable, occur within the known seasonal geographic range of the species, and occur in appropriate habitats. MTNHP also assigns each record a locational uncertainty value in meters to indicate the spatial precision associated with the record's mapped coordinates. Only records with locational uncertainty values of 10,000 meters or less are included in environmental summary reports and number summaries are only provided for records with locational uncertainty values of 1,000 meters or less.

Species Occurrences

The MTNHP evaluates plant and animal observation records for species of higher conservation concern to determine whether they are worthy of inclusion in the [Species Occurrence](#) (SO) layer for use in environmental reviews; observations not worthy of inclusion in this layer include long distance dispersal events, migrants observed away from key migratory stopover habitats, and winter observations. An SO is a polygon depicting what is known about a species occupancy from direct observation with a defined level of locational uncertainty and any inference that can be made about adjacent habitat use from the latest peer-reviewed science. If an observation can be associated with a map feature that can be tracked (e.g., a wetland boundary for a wetland associated plant) then this polygon feature is used to represent the SO. Areas that can be inferred as probable occupied habitat based on direct observation of a species location and what is known about the foraging area or home range size of the species may be incorporated into the SO. Species Occurrences generally belong to one of the following categories:

Plant Species Occurrences

A documented location of a specimen collection or observed plant population. In some instances, adjacent, spatially separated clusters are considered subpopulations and are grouped as one occurrence (e.g., the subpopulations occur in ecologically similar habitats, and their spatial proximity likely allows them to interbreed). Tabular information for multiple observations at the same SO location is generally linked to a single polygon. Plant SO's are only created for Species of Concern and Potential Species of Concern.

Animal Species Occurrences

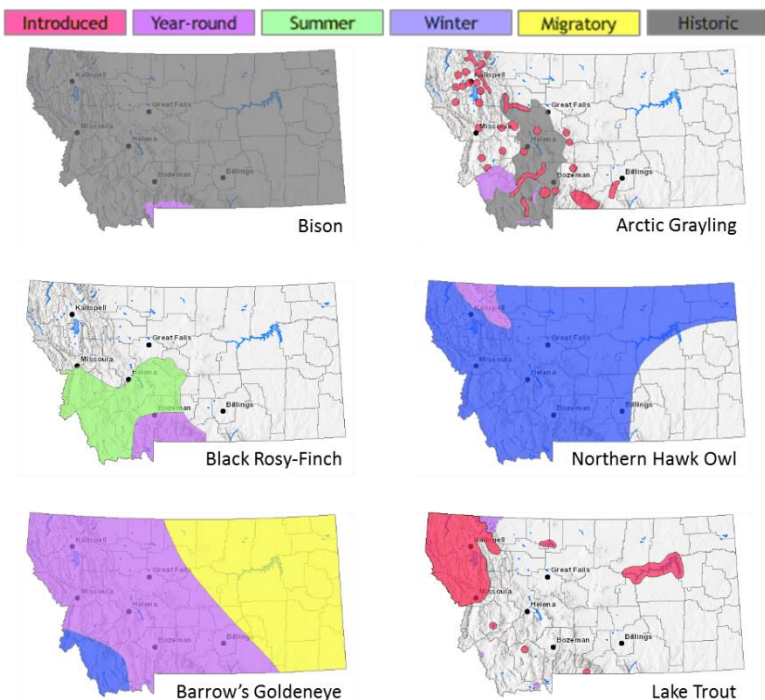
The location of a verified observation or specimen record typically known or assumed to represent a breeding population or a portion of a breeding population. Animal SO's are generally: (1) buffers of terrestrial point observations based on documented species' home range sizes; (2) buffers of stream segments to encompass occupied streams and immediate adjacent riparian habitats; (3) polygonal features encompassing known or likely breeding populations (e.g., a wetland for some amphibians or a forested portion of a mountain range for some wide ranging carnivores); or (4) combinations of the above. Tabular information for multiple observations at the same SO location is generally linked to a single polygon. Species Occurrence polygons may encompass some unsuitable habitat in some instances in order to avoid heavy data processing associated with clipping out habitats that are readily assessed as unsuitable by the data user (e.g., a point buffer of a terrestrial species may overlap into a portion of a lake that is obviously inappropriate habitat for the species). Animal SO's are only created for Species of Concern and Special Status Species (e.g., Bald Eagle).

Other Occurrence Polygons

These include significant biological features not included in the above categories, such as Important Animal Habitats like bird rookeries and bat roosts, and peatlands or other wetland and riparian communities that support diverse plant and animal communities.

Geographic Range Polygons

Geographic range polygons have not yet been defined for most plant species. Native year-round, summer, winter, migratory and historic geographic range polygons as well as polygons for introduced populations have



been defined for most animal species for which there are enough observations, surveys, and knowledge of appropriate seasonal habitat use to define them (see examples to left). These native or introduced range polygons bound the extent of known or likely occupied habitats for non-migratory and relative sedentary species and the regular extent of known or likely occupied habitats for migratory and long-distance dispersing species; polygons may include unsuitable intervening habitats. For most species, a single polygon can represent the year-round or seasonal range, but breeding ranges of some colonial nesting water birds and some introduced species are represented more patchily when supported by data. Some ranges are mapped more broadly than actual distributions in order to be visible on statewide maps (e.g., fish).

Predicted Suitable Habitat Models

Recent predicted suitable habitat suitability models have not yet been created for most plant species. For animal species for which models have been completed, the environmental summary report includes simple, rule-based, associations with streams for fish and other aquatic species and mathematically complex Maximum Entropy models (Phillips et al. 2006, *Ecological Modeling* 190:231-259) constructed from a variety of statewide biotic and abiotic layers and presence only data for individual species contributed to Montana Natural Heritage Program databases for most terrestrial species. For the Maximum Entropy models, we reclassified 90 x 90-meter continuous model output into suitability classes (unsuitable, low, moderate, and optimal) then aggregated that into the one square mile hexagons used in the environmental summary report; this is the finest spatial scale we suggest using this information in management decisions and survey planning. Full model write ups for individual species that discuss model goals, inputs, outputs, and evaluation in much greater detail are posted on the MTNHP's [Predicted Suitable Habitat Models](#) page. Evaluations of predictive accuracy and specific limitations are included with the metadata for models of individual species. **Model outputs should not be used in place of on-the-ground surveys for species. Instead model outputs should be used in conjunction with habitat evaluations to determine the need for on-the-ground surveys for species.** We suggest that the percentage of predicted optimal and moderate suitable habitat within the report area be used in conjunction with geographic range polygons and the percentage of commonly associated habitats to generate lists of potential species that may occupy broader landscapes for the purposes of landscape-level planning.

Associated Habitats

Within the boundary of the intersected hexagons, we provide the approximate percentage of commonly or occasionally associated habitat for vertebrate animal species that regularly breed, overwinter, or migrate through the state; a detailed list of commonly and occasionally associated habitats is provided in individual species accounts in the [Montana Field Guide](#). We assigned common or occasional use of each of the 82 ecological systems mapped in Montana by: (1) using personal knowledge and reviewing literature that

summarizes the breeding, overwintering, or migratory habitat requirements of each species; (2) evaluating structural characteristics and distribution of each ecological system relative to the species' range and habitat requirements; (3) examining the observation records for each species in the state-wide point observation database associated with each ecological system; and (4) calculating the percentage of observations associated with each ecological system relative to the percent of Montana covered by each ecological system to get a measure of numbers of observations versus availability of habitat. Species that breed in Montana were only evaluated for breeding habitat use, species that only overwinter in Montana were only evaluated for overwintering habitat use, and species that only migrate through Montana were only evaluated for migratory habitat use. In general, species were listed as associated with an ecological system if structural characteristics of used habitat documented in the literature were present in the ecological system or large numbers of point observations were associated with the ecological system. However, species were not listed as associated with an ecological system if there was no support in the literature for use of structural characteristics in an ecological system, even if point observations were associated with that system. Common versus occasional association with an ecological system was assigned based on the degree to which the structural characteristics of an ecological system matched the preferred structural habitat characteristics for each species as represented in the scientific literature. The percentage of observations associated with each ecological system relative to the percent of Montana covered by each ecological system was also used to guide assignment of common versus occasional association.

We suggest that the percentage of commonly associated habitat within the report area be used in conjunction with geographic range polygons and the percentage of predicted optimal and moderate suitable habitat from predictive models to generate lists of potential species that may occupy broader landscapes for the purposes of landscape-level planning. Users of this information should be aware that land cover mapping accuracy is particularly problematic when the systems occur as small patches or where the land cover types have been altered over the past decade. Thus, particular caution should be used when using the associations in assessments of smaller areas (e.g., evaluations of public land survey sections).

Introduction to Land Cover Summary

Land Use/Land Cover is one of 15 [Montana Spatial Data Infrastructure](#) framework layers considered vital for making statewide maps of Montana and understanding its geography. The layer records all Montana natural vegetation, land cover and land use, classified from satellite and aerial imagery, mapped at a scale of 1:100000, and interpreted with supporting ground-level data. The baseline map is adapted from the Northwest ReGAP (NWGAP) project land cover classification, which used 30m resolution multi-spectral Landsat imagery acquired between 1999 and 2001. Vegetation classes were drawn from the Ecological System Classification developed by NatureServe (Comer et al. 2003). The land cover classes were developed by Anderson et al. (1976). The NWGAP effort encompasses 12 map zones. Montana overlaps seven of these zones. The two NWGAP teams responsible for the initial land cover mapping effort in Montana were Sanborn and NWGAP at the University of Idaho. Both Sanborn and NWGAP employed a similar modeling approach in which Classification and Regression Tree (CART) models were applied to Landsat ETM+ scenes. The Spatial Analysis Lab within the Montana Natural Heritage Program was responsible for developing a seamless Montana land cover map with a consistent statewide legend from these two separate products. Additionally, the Montana land cover layer incorporates several other land cover and land use products (e.g., MSDI Structures and Transportation themes and the Montana Department of Revenue Final Land Unit classification) and reclassifications based on plot-level data and the latest NAIP imagery to improve accuracy and enhance the usability of the theme. Updates are done as partner support and funding allow, or when other MSDI datasets can be incorporated. Recent updates include fire perimeters and agricultural land use (annually), energy developments such as wind, oil and gas installations (2014), roads, structures and other impervious surfaces (various years): and local updates/improvements to specific ecological systems (e.g., central Montana grassland and sagebrush ecosystems). Current and previous versions of the Land Use/Land Cover layer with full metadata are available for download at the Montana State Library's [Geographic Information Clearinghouse](#).

Within the report area you have requested, land cover is summarized by acres of Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3 Ecological Systems.

Literature Cited

- Anderson, J.R. E.E. Hardy, J.T. Roach, and R.E. Witmer. 1976. A land use and land cover classification system for use with remote sensor data. U.S. Geological Survey Professional Paper 964.
- Comer, P., D. Faber-Langendoen, R. Evans, S. Gawler, C. Josse, G. Kittel, S. Menard, M. Pyne, M. Reid, K. Schulz, K. Snow, and J. Teague. 2003. Ecological systems of the United States: A working classification of U.S. terrestrial systems. NatureServe, Arlington, VA.

Introduction to Wetland and Riparian Summary

Within the report area you have requested, wetland and riparian mapping is summarized by acres of each classification present. Summaries are only provided for modern MTNHP wetland and riparian mapping and not for outdated (NWI Legacy) or incomplete (NWI Scalable) mapping efforts; [described here](#). MTNHP has made all three of these datasets and associated metadata available for separate download on the [Montana Wetland and Riparian Framework MSDI download page](#).

Wetland and Riparian mapping is one of 15 [Montana Spatial Data Infrastructure](#) framework layers considered vital for making statewide maps of Montana and understanding its geography. The wetland and riparian framework layer consists of spatial data representing the extent, type, and approximate location of wetlands, riparian areas, and deepwater habitats in Montana.

Wetland and riparian mapping is completed through photointerpretation of 1-m resolution color infrared aerial imagery acquired from 2005 or later. A coding convention using letters and numbers is assigned to each mapped wetland. These letters and numbers describe the broad landscape context of the wetland, its vegetation type, its water regime, and the kind of alterations that may have occurred. Ancillary data layers such as topographic maps, digital elevation models, soils data, and other aerial imagery sources are also used to improve mapping accuracy. Wetland mapping follows the federal Wetland Mapping Standard and classifies wetlands according to the Cowardin classification system of the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) (Cowardin et al. 1979, FGDC Wetlands Subcommittee 2013). Federal, State, and local regulatory agencies with jurisdiction over wetlands may define and describe wetlands differently than the NWI. Similar coding, based on U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service conventions, is applied to riparian areas (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 2009). These are mapped areas where vegetation composition and growth is influenced by nearby water bodies, but where soils, plant communities, and hydrology do not display true wetland characteristics. **These data are intended for use in publications at a scale of 1:12,000 or smaller. Mapped wetland and riparian areas do not represent precise boundaries and digital wetland data cannot substitute for an on-site determination of jurisdictional wetlands.**

A detailed overview, with examples, of both wetland and riparian classification systems and associated codes can be found at: http://mtnhp.org/help/MapView/WetRip_Classification.asp

Literature Cited

- Cowardin, L.M., V. Carter, F.C. Golet, and E.T. LaRoe. 1979. Classification of wetlands and deepwater habitats of the United States. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, FWS/OBS-79/31. Washington, D.C. 103pp.
- Federal Geographic Data Committee. 2013. Classification of wetlands and deepwater habitats of the United States. FGDC-STD-004-2013. Second Edition. Wetlands Subcommittee, Federal Geographic Data Committee and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services. 2009. A system for mapping riparian areas in the western United States. Division of Habitat and Resource Conservation, Branch of Resource and Mapping Support, Arlington, Virginia.

Introduction to Land Management Summary

Within the report area you have requested, land management information is summarized by acres of federal, state, and local government lands, tribal reservation boundaries, private conservation lands, and federal, state, local, and private conservation easements. Acreage for “Owned”, “Tribal”, or “Easement” categories represents non-overlapping areas that may be totaled. However, “Other Boundaries” represents managed areas such as National Forest boundaries containing private inholdings and other mixed ownership which may cause boundaries to overlap (e.g. a wilderness area within a forest). Therefore, acreages may not total in a straight-forward manner.

Because information on land stewardship is critical to effective land management, the Montana Natural Heritage Program (MTNHP) began compiling ownership and management data in 1997. The goal of the Montana Land Management Database is to manage a single, statewide digital data set that incorporates information from both public and private entities. The database assembles information on public lands, private conservation lands, and conservation easements held by state and federal agencies and land trusts and is updated on a regular basis. Since 2011, the Information Management group in the Montana State Library’s Digital Library Division has taken an increasingly active role in managing layers of the Montana Land Management Database in partnership with the MTNHP.

Public and private conservation land polygons are attributed with the name of the entity that owns it. The data are derived from the statewide Montana Cadastral Parcel layer. Conservation easement data shows land parcels on which a public agency or qualified land trust has placed a conservation easement in cooperation with the land owner. The dataset contains no information about ownership or status of the mineral estate. For questions about the dataset or to report errors, please contact the Montana Natural Heritage Program at (406) 444-5354 or mtnhp@mt.gov. You can download various components of the Land Management Database and view associated metadata at the Montana State Library’s [GIS Data List](#) at the following links:

[Public Lands](#)

[Conservation Easements](#)

[Private Conservation Lands](#)

[Managed Areas](#)

Map features in the Montana Land Management Database or summaries provided in this report are not intended as a legal depiction of public or private surface land ownership boundaries and should not be used in place of a survey conducted by a licensed land surveyor. Similarly, map features do not imply public access to any lands. The Montana Natural Heritage Program makes no representations or warranties whatsoever with respect to the accuracy or completeness of this data and assumes no responsibility for the suitability of the data for a particular purpose. The Montana Natural Heritage Program will not be liable for any damages incurred as a result of errors displayed here. Consumers of this information should review or consult the primary data and information sources to ascertain the viability of the information for their purposes.

Additional Information Resources

[Home Page for Montana Natural Heritage Program \(MTNHP\)](#)

[MTNHP Staff Contact Information](#)

[Montana Field Guide](#)

[MTNHP Species of Concern Report - Animals and Plants](#)

[MTNHP Species Status Codes - Explanation](#)

[MTNHP Predicted Suitable Habitat Models](#) (for select Animals and Plants)

[MTNHP Request Information page](#)

[Montana Cadastral](#)

[Montana Code Annotated](#)

[Montana Department of Environmental Quality](#)

[Montana Fisheries Information System](#)

[Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Subdivision Recommendations](#)

[Montana GIS Data Layers](#)

[Montana GIS Data Bundler](#)

[Montana Greater Sage-Grouse Project Submittal Site](#)

[Montana Ground Water Information Center](#)

[Montana Legislative Environmental Policy Office Publications](#)

(Including Index of Environmental Permits required in Montana and Guide to the Montana Environmental Policy Act)

[Laws, Treaties, Regulations, and Permits on Animals and Plants](#)

[Montana Spatial Data Infrastructure Layers](#)

[Montana State Historic Preservation Office Review and Compliance](#)

[Montana Water Information System](#)

[Montana Web Map Services](#)

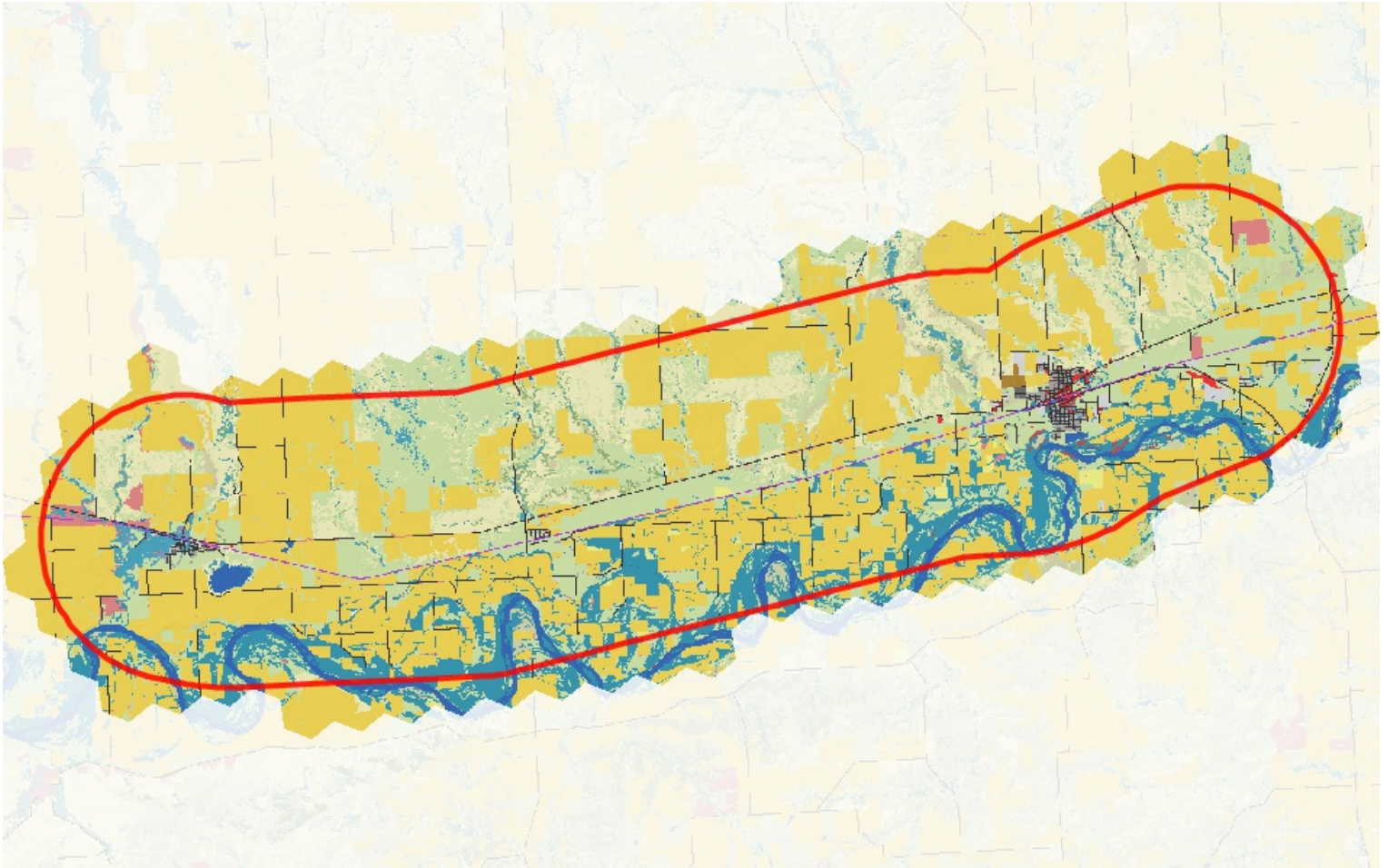
[National Environmental Policy Act](#)

[U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Information for Planning and Conservation](#) (Section 7 Consultation)

[Web Soil Survey Tool](#)



Land Cover Summary



127,822 Acres (0.14% of Montana)

Notes on and Appropriate Uses of Land Cover

The Land Cover data used in Map Viewer are based on classifications of 30-meter Landsat satellite imagery. The base data were classified as part of the national ReGAP project, using imagery from the late 1990s and early 2000s. Classification accuracy varies from system to system, but statewide and local assessments have not been completed to-date. Generally, systems occurring as small patches (e.g., fens, mountain mahogany shrublands) or those making up smaller percentages of various administrative boundaries (e.g. all of those listed under the Additional Limited Land Cover folder below) will be less accurately classified than systems occurring as matrices or large patches (e.g., mixed grass prairie, lodgepole pine forests). Similarly, areas where land use and land cover has changed significantly over the past decade may not be correctly classified. Users are cautioned that the appropriate scale for use of the data is 1:100,000. Accuracy improvements are ongoing. To submit updated information, please email mtnhp@mt.gov.



44%
(56,583
Acres)

Human Land Use

Agriculture

Cultivated Crops

These areas used for the production of crops, such as corn, soybeans, small grains, sunflowers, vegetables, and cotton, typically on an annual cycle. Agricultural plant cover is variable depending on season and type of farming. Other areas include more stable land cover of orchards and vineyards.



22%
(28,669
Acres)

Grassland Systems

Lowland/Prairie Grassland

Great Plains Mixedgrass Prairie

The system covers much of the eastern two-thirds of Montana, occurring continuously for hundreds of square kilometers, interrupted only by wetland/riparian areas or sand prairies. Soils are primarily fine and medium-textured. The growing season averages 115 days, ranging from 100 days on the Canadian border to 130 days on the Wyoming border. Climate is typical of mid-continental regions with long severe winters and hot summers. Grasses typically comprise the greatest canopy cover, and western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*) is usually dominant. Other species include thickspike wheatgrass (*Elymus lanceolatus*), green needlegrass (*Nassella viridula*), blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), and

needle and thread (*Hesperostipa comata*). Near the Canadian border in north-central Montana, this system grades into rough fescue (*Festuca campestris*) and Idaho fescue (*Festuca idahoensis*) grasslands. Remnants of shortbristle needle and thread (*Hesperostipa curtisetata*) dominated vegetation are found in northernmost Montana and North Dakota, and are associated with productive sites, now mostly converted to farmland. Forb diversity is typically high. In areas of southeastern and central Montana where sagebrush steppe borders the mixed grass prairie, common plant associations include Wyoming big sagebrush-western wheatgrass (*Artemisia tridentata* ssp. *wyomingensis*/ *Pascopyrum smithii*). Fire and grazing are the primary drivers of this system. Drought can also impact it, in general favoring the shortgrass component at the expense of the mid-height grasses. With intensive grazing, cool season exotics such as Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*), smooth brome (*Bromus inermis*), and Japanese brome (*Bromus japonicus*) increase in dominance; both of these rhizomatous species have been shown to markedly decrease species diversity. Previously cultivated acres that have been re-vegetated with non-native plants have been transformed into associations such as Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*)/western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*) or into pure crested wheatgrass (*Agropyron cristatum*) stands.



11%
(13,959
Acres)

Shrubland, Steppe and Savanna Systems

Sagebrush Steppe

Big Sagebrush Steppe

This widespread ecological system occurs throughout much of central Montana, and north and east onto the western fringe of the Great Plains. In central Montana, where this system occurs on both glaciated and non-glaciated landscapes, it differs slightly, with more summer rain than winter precipitation and more precipitation annually. Throughout its distribution, soils are typically deep and non-saline, often with a microphytic crust. This shrub-steppe is dominated by perennial grasses and forbs with greater than 25% cover. Overall shrub cover is less than 10 percent. In Montana and Wyoming, stands are more mesic, with more biomass of grass, and have less shrub diversity than stands farther to the west, and 50 to 90% of the occurrences are dominated by Wyoming big sagebrush with western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*). Japanese brome (*Bromus japonicus*) and cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*) are indicators of disturbance, but cheatgrass is typically not as abundant as in the Intermountain West, possibly due to a colder climate. The natural fire regime of this ecological system maintains a patchy distribution of shrubs, preserving the steppe character. Shrubs may increase following heavy grazing and/or with fire suppression. In central and eastern Montana, complexes of prairie dog towns are common in this ecological system.



10%
(12,450
Acres)

Wetland and Riparian Systems

Floodplain and Riparian

Great Plains Floodplain

This system occurs along the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers and their larger tributaries, including parts of the Little Missouri, Clark's Fork Yellowstone, Powder, Tongue, Bighorn, Milk, and Musselshell rivers. These are the big perennial rivers of the region, with hydrologic dynamics largely driven by snowmelt and rainfall originating in their headwater watersheds, rather than local precipitation events. In the absence of disturbance, periodic flooding of fluvial and alluvial soils and channel migration will create depressions and backwaters that support a mosaic of wetland and riparian vegetation, whose composition and structure is sustained, altered and redistributed by hydrology. Dominant communities within this system range from floodplain forests to wet meadows to gravel/sand flats, linked by underlying soils and flooding regimes. In the western part of the system's range in Montana, the overstory dominant species is black cottonwood (*Populus balsamifera* ssp. *trichocarpa*) with narrowleaf cottonwood (*Populus angustifolia*) and eastern cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*) occurring as co-dominants in the riparian/floodplain interface near the mountains. Further east, narrowleaf cottonwood and Plains cottonwood become dominant. In relatively undisturbed stands, willow (*Salix* species), redosier dogwood (*Cornus sericea*) and common chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*) form a thick, multi-layered shrub understory, with a mixture of cool and warm season graminoid species below.

In Montana, many occurrences are now degraded to the point where the cottonwood overstory is the only remaining natural component. The hydrology of these floodplain systems has been affected by dams, highways, railroads and agricultural ditches, and as a result, they have lost their characteristic wetland /riparian mosaic structure. This has resulted in a highly altered community consisting of relict cottonwood stands with little regeneration. The understory vegetation is dominated by non-native pasture grasses, legumes and other introduced forbs, or by the disclimax western snowberry (*Symphoricarpos occidentalis*) and rose (*Rosa* species) shrub community.



3% (3,572
Acres)

Wetland and Riparian Systems

Open Water

Open Water

All areas of open water, generally with less than 25% cover of vegetation or soil



2% (2,305
Acres)

Grassland Systems

Lowland/Prairie Grassland

Great Plains Sand Prairie

The sand prairies constitute a very unique system within the western Great Plains. The unifying and controlling feature for this system is that coarse-textured soils predominate and the dominant grasses are well-adapted to this condition. In the northwestern portion of the system's range, stand size corresponds to the area of exposed caprock sandstone, and small patches predominate, but larger patches are found embedded in the encompassing Great Plains Mixed Grass Prairie, and usually occupy higher positions in local landscapes where former caprock formations have eroded into more subdued and planar topography. In most of eastern Montana, substrates supporting this system have weathered in place from sandstone caprock. Soils can be relatively thin or deep due to varying amounts of downslope movement of weathered sands. Needle and thread (*Hesperostipa comata*) is the dominant grass species. Other frequent species include little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), often occurring with threadleaf sedge (*Carex filifolia*) and dominating both sandy sites and actively eroding sites. Prairie sandreed (*Calamovilfa longifolia*), sand bluestem (*Andropogon hallii*) and big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*) are sporadically distributed and found generally on the coarsest-textured sands. Other graminoids include bluebunch wheatgrass (*Pseudoroegneria spicata*), sun sedge (*Carex inops* ssp. *heliophila*), and purple threeawn (*Aristida purpurea*). Characteristic forbs differ by occurrence, but species of scurf pea (*Psoraleidium* species) and Indian breadroot (*Pediomelum*) species are common. Communities of silver sage

(*Artemisia cana* ssp. *cana*) or skunkbush sumac (*Rhus trilobata*) can occur within this system. Wind erosion, fire and grazing constitute the other major dynamic processes that can influence this system.

2%
(2,047
Acres)

Human Land Use

Developed



Other Roads

County, city and or rural roads generally open to motor vehicles.



2% (2,035
Acres)

Wetland and Riparian Systems

Floodplain and Riparian



Great Plains Riparian

This system is associated with perennial to intermittent or ephemeral streams throughout the northwestern Great Plains. In Montana, it occurs along smaller tributaries of the Yellowstone and Missouri rivers, as well as tributaries to the large floodplain rivers that feed them (e.g. the Milk, Marias, Musselshell, Powder, Clark's Fork Yellowstone, Tongue, etc). In areas adjacent to the mountain ranges of central and southeastern Montana, and near the Rocky Mountain Front, it grades into Rocky Mountain Lower Montane-Foothill Riparian Woodland and Shrubland systems. This system is found on alluvial soils in highly variable landscape settings, from confined, deep cut ravines to wide, braided streambeds. Channel migration occurs in less-confined areas, but within a more narrow range than would occur in broad, alluvial floodplains. Typically, the rivers are wadeable by mid-summer.

The primary inputs of water to these systems include groundwater discharge, overland flow, and subsurface interflow from the adjacent upland. Flooding is the key ecosystem process, creating suitable sites for seed dispersal and seedling establishment, and controlling vegetation succession. Communities within this system range from riparian forests and shrublands to tallgrass wet meadows and gravel/sand flats. Dominant species are similar to those found in the Great Plains Floodplain System. In the western part of the system's range in Montana, the dominant overstory species is black cottonwood (*Populus balsamifera* ssp. *trichocarpa*) with narrowleaf cottonwood (*Populus angustifolia*) and Plains cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*) occurring as co-dominants in the riparian/floodplain interface near the mountains. Further east, narrowleaf cottonwood and Plains cottonwood become dominant. In wetter systems, the understory is typically willow (*Salix* spp.) and redosier dogwood (*Cornus stolonifera*) with graminoids such as western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*) and forbs like American licorice (*Glycyrrhiza lepidota*). In areas where the channel is incised, the understory may be dominated by big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*) or silver sagebrush (*Artemisia cana*). Like floodplain systems, riparian systems are often subjected to overgrazing and/or agriculture and can be heavily degraded, with salt cedar (*Tamarix ramosissima*) and Russian olive (*Eleagnus angustifolia*) replacing native woody vegetation and regrowth. Groundwater depletion and lack of fire have resulted in additional species changes.



Wetland Summary



127,822 Acres (0.14% of Montana)

Notes on Appropriate Uses of Wetland and Riparian Mapping

Federal, State, and local regulatory agencies with jurisdiction over wetlands may define and describe wetlands differently than the NWI. MTNHP Wetland and Riparian Mapping data are intended for use in publications at a scale of 1:12,000 or smaller. Historic wetland mapping is intended for use in publications at a scale of 1:24,000 or smaller. Mapped wetlands do not represent precise wetland boundaries, and digital wetland data cannot substitute for an on-site determination of jurisdictional wetlands.

Wetland and Riparian Mapping

[Explain](#)

Riverine (Rivers)

Acres

Lower Perennial

■ R2US Unconsolidated Shore

<1 Shorelines with less than 75% areal cover of stones, boulders, or bedrock and less than 30% vegetation cover.
The area is also irregularly exposed due to seasonal or irregular flooding and subsequent drying.



**MONTANA
Natural Heritage
Program**

A program of the Montana State Library's
Natural Resource Information System
operated by the University of Montana.



Latitude 48.00309 Longitude -105.49134
48.16757 -106.12829

Land Management Summary



127,822 Acres (0.14% of Montana)

Land Management Summary		Ownership	Tribal	Easements	Other Boundaries (possible overlap)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊕ Public Lands Explain ⊕ Federal 192 Acres (<1%) ⊕ US Bureau of Land Management 192 Acres (<1%) ■ BLM Owned 192 Acres (<1%) ⊕ State 113 Acres (<1%) ⊕ Montana State Trust Lands 90 Acres (<1%) ■ MT State Trust Owned 90 Acres (<1%) ⊕ Montana Department of Transportation 23 Acres (<1%) ■ MTDOT Owned 23 Acres (<1%) ⊕ Local 643 Acres (1%) ⊕ Local Government 643 Acres (1%) ■ Local Government Owned 643 Acres (1%) ⊕ Reservation Boundaries 112,081 Acres (88%) ■ Fort Peck Indian Reservation 112,081 Acres (88%) ⊕ Private Lands or Unknown Ownership 14,793 Acres (12%) 					



Biological Reports

Within the report area you have requested, citations for all reports and publications associated with plant or animal observations in Montana Natural Heritage Program (MTNHP) databases are listed and, where possible, links to the documents are included.

The MTNHP plans to include reports associated with terrestrial and aquatic communities in the future as allowed for by staff resources. If you know of reports or publications associated with species or biological communities within the report area that are not shown in this report, please let us know: mtnhp@mt.gov

- Bramblett, R.G., and A.V. Zale. 2002. Montana Prairie Riparian Native Species Report. Montana Cooperative Fishery Research Unit, Montana State University - Bozeman.
- Christopherson, D. 1991. Results of surveys for piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*) and least tern (*Sterna antillarum*) in Montana, summer 1990. Unpublished report for the Montana Piping Plover Recovery Committee. 60 pp.
- Montana Piping Plover Recovery Committee. 1990. Results of surveys for Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*) and Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum*) in Montana - summer 1989. Unpublished report. 43 pp.
- Montana Piping Plover Recovery Committee. 1992. **Results of surveys for Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*) and Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum*) in Montana - summer 1991**. Unpublished report. 62 pp.
- Montana Piping Plover Recovery Committee. 1993. **Surveys for Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*) and Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum*) in Montana - summer 1992**. Unpublished report. 66 pp.
- Montana Piping Plover Recovery Committee. 1994. 1993 Surveys for piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*) and least tern (*Sterna antillarum*) in Montana. Unpublished report. 116 pp. plus appendices.
- Montana Piping Plover Recovery Committee. 1995. **1994 Surveys for Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*) and Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum*) in Montana**. 117 pp. plus appendices.
- Montana Piping Plover Recovery Committee. 1996. 1996 Surveys for piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*) and Least tern (*Sterna antillarum*) in Montana. Unpublished report.
- Montana Piping Plover Recovery Committee. 1997. 1995 Surveys for piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*) and Least tern (*Sterna antillarum*) in Montana. Unpublished report. 112 pp. plus appendix.

Introduction to Montana Natural Heritage Program



P.O. Box 201800 • 1515 East Sixth Avenue • Helena, MT 59620-1800 • fax 406.444.0266 • tel 406.444.0241 • mtnhp.org

INTRODUCTION

The Montana Natural Heritage Program (MTNHP) is Montana's source for reliable and objective information on Montana's native species and habitats, emphasizing those of conservation concern. MTNHP was created by the Montana legislature in 1983 as part of the Natural Resource Information System (NRIS) at the Montana State Library (MSL). MTNHP is "a program of information acquisition, storage, and retrieval for data relating to the flora, fauna, and biological community types of Montana" (MCA 90-15-102). MTNHP's activities are guided by statute (MCA 90-15) as well as through ongoing interaction with, and feedback from, principal data source agencies such as Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, the Montana Department of Environmental Quality, the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, the Montana University System, the US Forest Service, and the US Bureau of Land Management. The enabling legislation for MTNHP provides the State Library with the option to contract the operation of the Program. Since 2006, MTNHP has been operated as a program under the Office of the Vice President for Research and Creative Scholarship at the University of Montana (UM) through a renewable 2-year contract with the MSL. Since the first staff was hired in 1985, the Program has logged a long record of success, and developed into a highly respected, service-oriented program. MTNHP is widely recognized as one of the most advanced and effective of over 80 natural heritage programs throughout the Western Hemisphere.

VISION

Our vision is that public agencies, the private sector, the education sector, and the general public will trust and rely upon MTNHP as the source for information and expertise on Montana's species and habitats, especially those of conservation concern. We strive to provide easy access to our information in order for users to save time and money, speed environmental reviews, and inform decision making.

CORE VALUES

- We endeavor to be a single statewide source of accurate and up-to-date information on Montana's plants, animals, and aquatic and terrestrial biological communities.
- We actively listen to our data users and work responsively to meet their information and training needs.
- We strive to provide neutral, trusted, timely, and equitable service to all of our information users.
- We make every effort to be transparent to our data users in setting work priorities and providing data products.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All information requests made to the Montana Natural Heritage Program are considered library records and are protected from disclosure by the Montana Library Records Confidentiality Act (MCA 22-1-11).

INFORMATION MANAGED

Information managed at the Montana Natural Heritage Program includes: (1) lists of, and basic information on, plant and animal species and biological communities; (2) plant and animal surveys, observations, species occurrences, predictive distribution models, range polygons, and conservation status ranks; and (3) land cover and wetland and riparian mapping and the conservation status of these and other biological communities.

Data Use Terms and Conditions


- Montana Natural Heritage Program (MTNHP) products and services are based on biological data and the objective interpretation of those data by professional scientists. MTNHP does not advocate any particular philosophy of natural resource protection, management, development, or public policy.
- MTNHP has no natural resource management or regulatory authority. Products, statements, and services from MTNHP are intended to inform parties as to the state of scientific knowledge about certain natural resources, and to further develop that knowledge. The information is not intended as natural resource management guidelines or prescriptions or a determination of environmental impacts. MTNHP recommends consultation with appropriate state, federal, and tribal resource management agencies and authorities in the area where your project is located.
- Information on the status and spatial distribution of biological resources produced by MTNHP are intended to inform parties of the state-wide status, known occurrence, or the likelihood of the presence of those resources. **These products are not intended to substitute for field-collected data, nor are they intended to be the sole basis for natural resource management decisions.**
- MTNHP does not portray its data as exhaustive or comprehensive inventories of rare species or biological communities. **Field verification of the absence or presence of sensitive species and biological communities will always be an important obligation of users of our data.**
- MTNHP responds equally to all requests for products and services, regardless of the purpose or identity of the requester.
- Because MTNHP constantly updates and revises its databases with new data and information, products will become outdated over time. Interested parties are encouraged to obtain the most current information possible from MTNHP, rather than using older products. We add, review, update, and delete records on a daily basis. Consequently, we strongly advise that you update your MTNHP data sets at a minimum of every three months for most applications of our information.
- MTNHP data require a certain degree of biological expertise for proper analysis, interpretation, and application. Our staff is available to advise you on questions regarding the interpretation or appropriate use of the data that we provide. Contact information for MTNHP staff is posted at: <http://mtnhp.org/contact.asp>
- The information provided to you by MTNHP may include sensitive data that if publicly released might jeopardize the welfare of threatened, endangered, or sensitive species or biological communities. This information is intended for distribution or use only within your department, agency, or business. Subcontractors may have access to the data during the course of any given project, but should not be given a copy for their use on subsequent, unrelated work.
- MTNHP data are made freely available. Duplication of hard-copy or digital MTNHP products with the intent to sell is prohibited without written consent by MTNHP. Should you be asked by individuals outside your organization for the type of data that we provide, please refer them to MTNHP.
- MTNHP and appropriate staff members should be appropriately acknowledged as an information source in any third-party product involving MTNHP data, reports, papers, publications, or in maps that incorporate MTNHP graphic elements.
- Sources of our data include museum specimens, published and unpublished scientific literature, field surveys by state and federal agencies and private contractors, and reports from knowledgeable individuals. MTNHP actively solicits and encourages additions, corrections and updates, new observations or collections, and comments on any of the data we provide.
- MTNHP staff and contractors do not cross or survey privately-owned lands without express permission from the landowner. However, the program cannot guarantee that information provided to us by others was obtained under adherence to this policy.

Suggested Contacts for Natural Resource Agencies

As required by Montana statute (MCA 90-15), the Montana Natural Heritage Program works with state, federal, tribal, nongovernmental organizations, and private partners to ensure that the latest animal and plant distribution and status information is incorporated into our databases so that it can be used to inform a variety of planning processes and management decisions. In addition to the information you receive from us, we encourage you to contact state, federal, and tribal resource management agencies in the area where your project is located. They may have additional data or management guidelines relevant to your efforts. In particular, we encourage you to contact the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks for the latest data and management information regarding hunted and high profile management species and to use the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Information Planning and Conservation (IPAC) website <http://ecos.fws.gov/ipac/> regarding U.S. Endangered Species Act listed Threatened, Endangered, or Candidate species.

For your convenience, we have compiled a list of relevant agency contacts and links below:

Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks

Fish Species	Zachary Shattuck zshattuck@mt.gov (406) 444-1231 or Lee Nelson leenelson@mt.gov (406) 444-2447
American Bison Black-footed Ferret Black-tailed Prairie Dog Bald Eagle Golden Eagle Common Loon Least Tern Piping Plover Whooping Crane	Lauri Hanauska-Brown LHanauska-Brown@mt.gov (406) 444-5209
Grizzly Bear Greater Sage Grouse Trumpeter Swan Big Game Upland Game Birds Furbearers	John Vore jvore@mt.gov (406) 444-5209
Managed Terrestrial Game and Nongame Animal Data	Adam Messer – MFWP Data Analyst amesser@mt.gov (406) 444-0095
Fisheries Data	Bill Daigle – MFWP Fish Data Manager bdaigle@mt.gov (406) 444-3737
Wildlife and Fisheries Scientific Collector’s Permits	http://fwp.mt.gov/doingBusiness/licenses/scientificWildlife/ Merissa Hayes for Wildlife merhayes@mt.gov (406) 444-7321 Beth Giddings for Fisheries begiddings@mt.gov (406) 444-7319
Fish and Wildlife Recommendations for Subdivision Development	Renee Lemon RLemon@mt.gov (406) 444-3738 and see http://fwp.mt.gov/fishAndWildlife/livingWithWildlife/buildingWithWildlife/subdivisionRecommendations/
Regional Contacts 	Region 1 (Kalispell) (406) 752-5501 Region 2 (Missoula) (406) 542-5500 Region 3 (Bozeman) (406) 994-4042 Region 4 (Great Falls) (406) 454-5840 Region 5 (Billings) (406) 247-2940 Region 6 (Glasgow) (406) 228-3700 Region 7 (Miles City) (406) 234-0900

United States Fish and Wildlife Service:

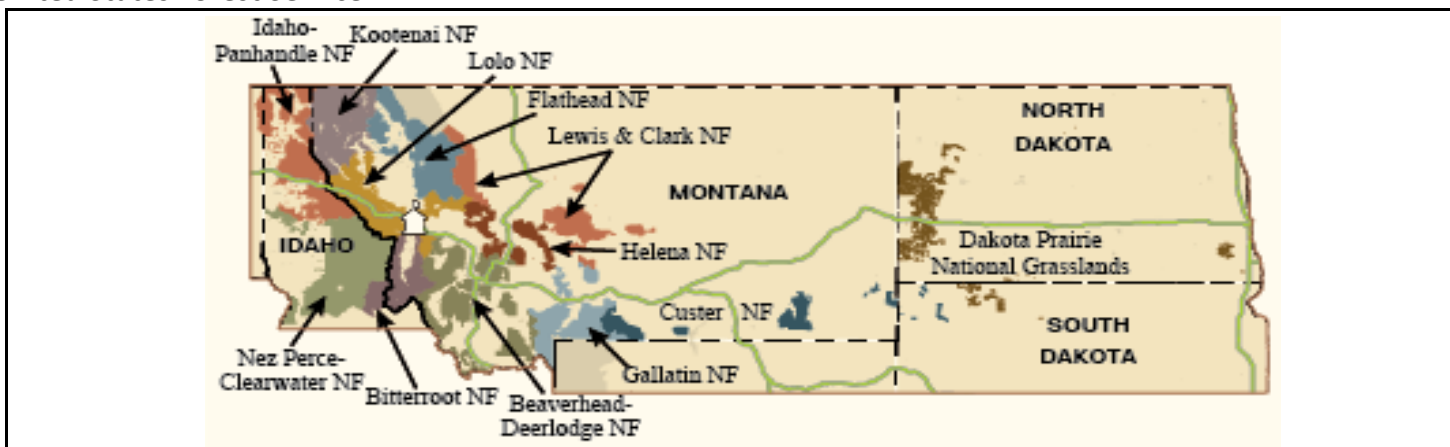
Information Planning and Conservation (IPAC) website: <http://ecos.fws.gov/ipac/>

Montana Ecological Services Field Office: <http://www.fws.gov/montanafieldoffice/> (406) 449-5225

Bureau of Land Management

Montana Field Office Contacts:	Billings	(406) 896-5013
	Butte	(406) 533-7600
	Dillon	(406) 683-8000
	Glasgow	(406) 228-3750
	Havre	(406) 262-2820
	Lewistown	(406) 538-1900
	Malta	(406) 654-5100
	Miles City	(406) 233-2800
	Missoula	(406) 329-3914

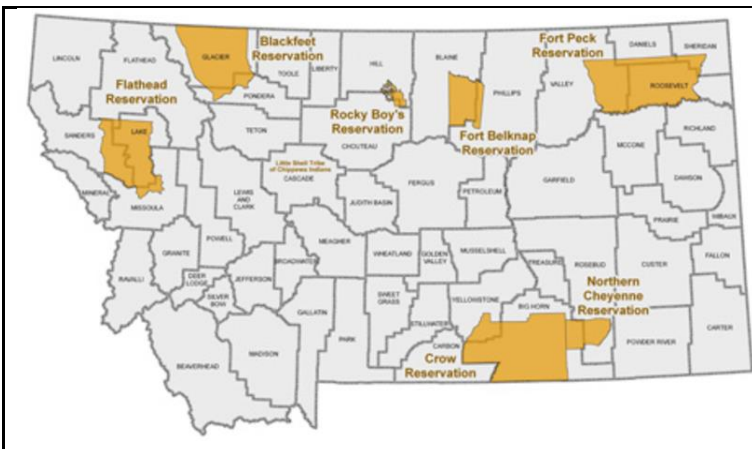
United States Forest Service



Regional Office – Missoula, Montana Contacts

Wildlife Program Leader	Tammy Fletcher	tammyfletcher@fs.fed.us	(406) 329-3588
Wildlife Ecologist	Cara Staab	cstaab@fs.fed.us	(406) 329-3677
Fish Program Leader	Scott Spaulding	scottspaulding@fs.fed.us	(406) 329-3287
Fish Ecologist	Cameron Thomas	cathomas@fs.fed.us	(406) 329-3087
TES Program	Lydia Allen	lrallen@fs.fed.us	(406) 329-3558
Interagency Grizzly Bear Coordinator	Scott Jackson	sjackson03@fs.fed.us	(406) 329-3664
Regional Botanist	Steve Shelly	sshelly@fs.fed.us	(406) 329-3041

Tribal Nations



- [Assiniboine & Gros Ventre Tribes – Fort Belknap Reservation](#)
- [Assiniboine & Sioux Tribes – Fort Peck Reservation](#)
- [Blackfoot Tribe - Blackfoot Reservation](#)
- [Chippewa Creek Tribe - Rocky Boy's Reservation](#)
- [Crow Tribe – Crow Reservation](#)
- [Little Shell Chippewa Tribe](#)
- [Northern Cheyenne Tribe – Northern Cheyenne Reservation](#)
- [Salish & Kootenai Tribes - Flathead Reservation](#)

Introduction to Species Summary

Within the report area you have requested, separate summaries are provided for: (1) Species Occurrences (SO) for plant and animal Species of Concern, Special Status Species (SSS), Important Animal Habitat (IAH) and some Potential Plant Species of Concern; (2) other observed non Species of Concern or Species of Concern without suitable documentation to create Species Occurrence polygons; and (3) other non-documented species that are potentially present based on their range, predicted suitable habitat model output, or presence of associated habitats. Each of these summaries provides the following information when present for a species: (1) the number of [Species Occurrences](#) and associated delineation criteria for construction of these polygons that have long been used for considerations of documented Species of Concern in environmental reviews; (2) the number of observations of each species; (3) the geographic range polygons for each species that the report area overlaps; (4) predicted relative habitat suitability classes that are present if a predicted suitable habitat model has been created; (5) the percent of the report area that is mapped as commonly associated or occasionally associated habitat as listed for each species in the [Montana Field Guide](#); and (6) a variety of conservation status ranks and links to species accounts in the [Montana Field Guide](#). Details on each of these information categories are included under relevant section headers below or are defined on our [Species Status Codes](#) page. In presenting this information, the Montana Natural Heritage Program (MTNHP) is working towards assisting the user with rapidly determining what species have been documented and what species are potentially present in the report area. We remind users that this information is likely incomplete as surveys to document native and introduced species are lacking in many areas of the state, information on introduced species has only been tracked relatively recently, the MTNHP's staff and resources are restricted by declining budgets, and information is constantly being added and updated in our databases. **Thus, field verification by professional biologists of the absence or presence of species and biological communities will always be an important obligation of users of our data.**

If you are aware of observation datasets that the MTNHP is missing, please report them to the Program Botanist apipp@mt.gov or Senior Zoologist dbachen@mt.gov. If you have observations that you would like to contribute, you can submit animal observations using our online data entry system at <http://mtnhp.org/AddObs/>, plant and animal observations via Excel spreadsheets posted at <http://mtnhp.org/observations.asp>, or to the Program Botanist or Senior Zoologist.

Observations

The MTNHP manages information on more than 1.8 million animal and plant observations that have been reported by professional biologists and private citizens from across Montana. The majority of these observations are submitted in digital format from standardized databases associated with research or monitoring efforts and spreadsheets of incidental observations submitted by professional biologists and amateur naturalists. At a minimum, accepted observation records must contain a credible species identification (i.e. appropriate geographic range, date, and habitat and, if species are difficult to identify, a photograph and notes on key identifying features), a date or date range, observer name, locational information (ideally with latitude and longitude in decimal degrees), notes on numbers observed, and species behavior or habitat use (e.g., is the observation likely associated with reproduction). Bird records are also required to have information associated with date-appropriate breeding or overwintering status of the species observed. MTNHP reviews observation records to ensure that they are mapped correctly, occur within date ranges when the species is known to be present or detectable, occur within the known seasonal geographic range of the species, and occur in appropriate habitats. MTNHP also assigns each record a locational uncertainty value in meters to indicate the spatial precision associated with the record's mapped coordinates. Only records with locational uncertainty values of 10,000 meters or less are included in environmental summary reports and number summaries are only provided for records with locational uncertainty values of 1,000 meters or less.

Species Occurrences

The MTNHP evaluates plant and animal observation records for species of higher conservation concern to determine whether they are worthy of inclusion in the [Species Occurrence](#) (SO) layer for use in environmental reviews; observations not worthy of inclusion in this layer include long distance dispersal events, migrants observed away from key migratory stopover habitats, and winter observations. An SO is a polygon depicting what is known about a species occupancy from direct observation with a defined level of locational uncertainty and any inference that can be made about adjacent habitat use from the latest peer-reviewed science. If an observation can be associated with a map feature that can be tracked (e.g., a wetland boundary for a wetland associated plant) then this polygon feature is used to represent the SO. Areas that can be inferred as probable occupied habitat based on direct observation of a species location and what is known about the foraging area or home range size of the species may be incorporated into the SO. Species Occurrences generally belong to one of the following categories:

Plant Species Occurrences

A documented location of a specimen collection or observed plant population. In some instances, adjacent, spatially separated clusters are considered subpopulations and are grouped as one occurrence (e.g., the subpopulations occur in ecologically similar habitats, and their spatial proximity likely allows them to interbreed). Tabular information for multiple observations at the same SO location is generally linked to a single polygon. Plant SO's are only created for Species of Concern and Potential Species of Concern.

Animal Species Occurrences

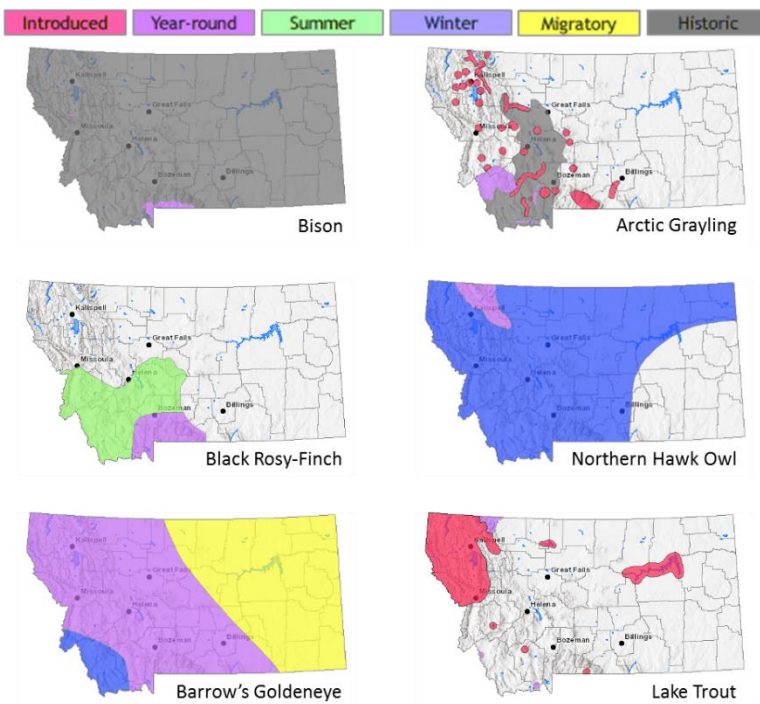
The location of a verified observation or specimen record typically known or assumed to represent a breeding population or a portion of a breeding population. Animal SO's are generally: (1) buffers of terrestrial point observations based on documented species' home range sizes; (2) buffers of stream segments to encompass occupied streams and immediate adjacent riparian habitats; (3) polygonal features encompassing known or likely breeding populations (e.g., a wetland for some amphibians or a forested portion of a mountain range for some wide ranging carnivores); or (4) combinations of the above. Tabular information for multiple observations at the same SO location is generally linked to a single polygon. Species Occurrence polygons may encompass some unsuitable habitat in some instances in order to avoid heavy data processing associated with clipping out habitats that are readily assessed as unsuitable by the data user (e.g., a point buffer of a terrestrial species may overlap into a portion of a lake that is obviously inappropriate habitat for the species). Animal SO's are only created for Species of Concern and Special Status Species (e.g., Bald Eagle).

Other Occurrence Polygons

These include significant biological features not included in the above categories, such as Important Animal Habitats like bird rookeries and bat roosts, and peatlands or other wetland and riparian communities that support diverse plant and animal communities.

Geographic Range Polygons

Geographic range polygons have not yet been defined for most plant species. Native year-round, summer, winter, migratory and historic geographic range polygons as well as polygons for introduced populations have



been defined for most animal species for which there are enough observations, surveys, and knowledge of appropriate seasonal habitat use to define them (see examples to left). These native or introduced range polygons bound the extent of known or likely occupied habitats for non-migratory and relative sedentary species and the regular extent of known or likely occupied habitats for migratory and long-distance dispersing species; polygons may include unsuitable intervening habitats. For most species, a single polygon can represent the year-round or seasonal range, but breeding ranges of some colonial nesting water birds and some introduced species are represented more patchily when supported by data. Some ranges are mapped more broadly than actual distributions in order to be visible on statewide maps (e.g., fish).

Predicted Suitable Habitat Models

Recent predicted suitable habitat suitability models have not yet been created for most plant species. For animal species for which models have been completed, the environmental summary report includes simple, rule-based, associations with streams for fish and other aquatic species and mathematically complex Maximum Entropy models (Phillips et al. 2006, *Ecological Modeling* 190:231-259) constructed from a variety of statewide biotic and abiotic layers and presence only data for individual species contributed to Montana Natural Heritage Program databases for most terrestrial species. For the Maximum Entropy models, we reclassified 90 x 90-meter continuous model output into suitability classes (unsuitable, low, moderate, and optimal) then aggregated that into the one square mile hexagons used in the environmental summary report; this is the finest spatial scale we suggest using this information in management decisions and survey planning. Full model write ups for individual species that discuss model goals, inputs, outputs, and evaluation in much greater detail are posted on the MTNHP's [Predicted Suitable Habitat Models](#) page. Evaluations of predictive accuracy and specific limitations are included with the metadata for models of individual species. **Model outputs should not be used in place of on-the-ground surveys for species. Instead model outputs should be used in conjunction with habitat evaluations to determine the need for on-the-ground surveys for species.** We suggest that the percentage of predicted optimal and moderate suitable habitat within the report area be used in conjunction with geographic range polygons and the percentage of commonly associated habitats to generate lists of potential species that may occupy broader landscapes for the purposes of landscape-level planning.

Associated Habitats

Within the boundary of the intersected hexagons, we provide the approximate percentage of commonly or occasionally associated habitat for vertebrate animal species that regularly breed, overwinter, or migrate through the state; a detailed list of commonly and occasionally associated habitats is provided in individual species accounts in the [Montana Field Guide](#). We assigned common or occasional use of each of the 82 ecological systems mapped in Montana by: (1) using personal knowledge and reviewing literature that

summarizes the breeding, overwintering, or migratory habitat requirements of each species; (2) evaluating structural characteristics and distribution of each ecological system relative to the species' range and habitat requirements; (3) examining the observation records for each species in the state-wide point observation database associated with each ecological system; and (4) calculating the percentage of observations associated with each ecological system relative to the percent of Montana covered by each ecological system to get a measure of numbers of observations versus availability of habitat. Species that breed in Montana were only evaluated for breeding habitat use, species that only overwinter in Montana were only evaluated for overwintering habitat use, and species that only migrate through Montana were only evaluated for migratory habitat use. In general, species were listed as associated with an ecological system if structural characteristics of used habitat documented in the literature were present in the ecological system or large numbers of point observations were associated with the ecological system. However, species were not listed as associated with an ecological system if there was no support in the literature for use of structural characteristics in an ecological system, even if point observations were associated with that system. Common versus occasional association with an ecological system was assigned based on the degree to which the structural characteristics of an ecological system matched the preferred structural habitat characteristics for each species as represented in the scientific literature. The percentage of observations associated with each ecological system relative to the percent of Montana covered by each ecological system was also used to guide assignment of common versus occasional association.

We suggest that the percentage of commonly associated habitat within the report area be used in conjunction with geographic range polygons and the percentage of predicted optimal and moderate suitable habitat from predictive models to generate lists of potential species that may occupy broader landscapes for the purposes of landscape-level planning. Users of this information should be aware that land cover mapping accuracy is particularly problematic when the systems occur as small patches or where the land cover types have been altered over the past decade. Thus, particular caution should be used when using the associations in assessments of smaller areas (e.g., evaluations of public land survey sections).

Introduction to Land Cover Summary

Land Use/Land Cover is one of 15 [Montana Spatial Data Infrastructure](#) framework layers considered vital for making statewide maps of Montana and understanding its geography. The layer records all Montana natural vegetation, land cover and land use, classified from satellite and aerial imagery, mapped at a scale of 1:100000, and interpreted with supporting ground-level data. The baseline map is adapted from the Northwest ReGAP (NWGAP) project land cover classification, which used 30m resolution multi-spectral Landsat imagery acquired between 1999 and 2001. Vegetation classes were drawn from the Ecological System Classification developed by NatureServe (Comer et al. 2003). The land cover classes were developed by Anderson et al. (1976). The NWGAP effort encompasses 12 map zones. Montana overlaps seven of these zones. The two NWGAP teams responsible for the initial land cover mapping effort in Montana were Sanborn and NWGAP at the University of Idaho. Both Sanborn and NWGAP employed a similar modeling approach in which Classification and Regression Tree (CART) models were applied to Landsat ETM+ scenes. The Spatial Analysis Lab within the Montana Natural Heritage Program was responsible for developing a seamless Montana land cover map with a consistent statewide legend from these two separate products. Additionally, the Montana land cover layer incorporates several other land cover and land use products (e.g., MSDI Structures and Transportation themes and the Montana Department of Revenue Final Land Unit classification) and reclassifications based on plot-level data and the latest NAIP imagery to improve accuracy and enhance the usability of the theme. Updates are done as partner support and funding allow, or when other MSDI datasets can be incorporated. Recent updates include fire perimeters and agricultural land use (annually), energy developments such as wind, oil and gas installations (2014), roads, structures and other impervious surfaces (various years): and local updates/improvements to specific ecological systems (e.g., central Montana grassland and sagebrush ecosystems). Current and previous versions of the Land Use/Land Cover layer with full metadata are available for download at the Montana State Library's [Geographic Information Clearinghouse](#).

Within the report area you have requested, land cover is summarized by acres of Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3 Ecological Systems.

Literature Cited

- Anderson, J.R. E.E. Hardy, J.T. Roach, and R.E. Witmer. 1976. A land use and land cover classification system for use with remote sensor data. U.S. Geological Survey Professional Paper 964.
- Comer, P., D. Faber-Langendoen, R. Evans, S. Gawler, C. Josse, G. Kittel, S. Menard, M. Pyne, M. Reid, K. Schulz, K. Snow, and J. Teague. 2003. Ecological systems of the United States: A working classification of U.S. terrestrial systems. NatureServe, Arlington, VA.

Introduction to Wetland and Riparian Summary

Within the report area you have requested, wetland and riparian mapping is summarized by acres of each classification present. Summaries are only provided for modern MTNHP wetland and riparian mapping and not for outdated (NWI Legacy) or incomplete (NWI Scalable) mapping efforts; [described here](#). MTNHP has made all three of these datasets and associated metadata available for separate download on the [Montana Wetland and Riparian Framework MSDI download page](#).

Wetland and Riparian mapping is one of 15 [Montana Spatial Data Infrastructure](#) framework layers considered vital for making statewide maps of Montana and understanding its geography. The wetland and riparian framework layer consists of spatial data representing the extent, type, and approximate location of wetlands, riparian areas, and deepwater habitats in Montana.

Wetland and riparian mapping is completed through photointerpretation of 1-m resolution color infrared aerial imagery acquired from 2005 or later. A coding convention using letters and numbers is assigned to each mapped wetland. These letters and numbers describe the broad landscape context of the wetland, its vegetation type, its water regime, and the kind of alterations that may have occurred. Ancillary data layers such as topographic maps, digital elevation models, soils data, and other aerial imagery sources are also used to improve mapping accuracy. Wetland mapping follows the federal Wetland Mapping Standard and classifies wetlands according to the Cowardin classification system of the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) (Cowardin et al. 1979, FGDC Wetlands Subcommittee 2013). Federal, State, and local regulatory agencies with jurisdiction over wetlands may define and describe wetlands differently than the NWI. Similar coding, based on U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service conventions, is applied to riparian areas (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 2009). These are mapped areas where vegetation composition and growth is influenced by nearby water bodies, but where soils, plant communities, and hydrology do not display true wetland characteristics. **These data are intended for use in publications at a scale of 1:12,000 or smaller. Mapped wetland and riparian areas do not represent precise boundaries and digital wetland data cannot substitute for an on-site determination of jurisdictional wetlands.**

A detailed overview, with examples, of both wetland and riparian classification systems and associated codes can be found at: http://mtnhp.org/help/MapView/WetRip_Classification.asp

Literature Cited

- Cowardin, L.M., V. Carter, F.C. Golet, and E.T. LaRoe. 1979. Classification of wetlands and deepwater habitats of the United States. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, FWS/OBS-79/31. Washington, D.C. 103pp.
- Federal Geographic Data Committee. 2013. Classification of wetlands and deepwater habitats of the United States. FGDC-STD-004-2013. Second Edition. Wetlands Subcommittee, Federal Geographic Data Committee and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services. 2009. A system for mapping riparian areas in the western United States. Division of Habitat and Resource Conservation, Branch of Resource and Mapping Support, Arlington, Virginia.

Introduction to Land Management Summary

Within the report area you have requested, land management information is summarized by acres of federal, state, and local government lands, tribal reservation boundaries, private conservation lands, and federal, state, local, and private conservation easements. Acreage for “Owned”, “Tribal”, or “Easement” categories represents non-overlapping areas that may be totaled. However, “Other Boundaries” represents managed areas such as National Forest boundaries containing private inholdings and other mixed ownership which may cause boundaries to overlap (e.g. a wilderness area within a forest). Therefore, acreages may not total in a straight-forward manner.

Because information on land stewardship is critical to effective land management, the Montana Natural Heritage Program (MTNHP) began compiling ownership and management data in 1997. The goal of the Montana Land Management Database is to manage a single, statewide digital data set that incorporates information from both public and private entities. The database assembles information on public lands, private conservation lands, and conservation easements held by state and federal agencies and land trusts and is updated on a regular basis. Since 2011, the Information Management group in the Montana State Library’s Digital Library Division has taken an increasingly active role in managing layers of the Montana Land Management Database in partnership with the MTNHP.

Public and private conservation land polygons are attributed with the name of the entity that owns it. The data are derived from the statewide Montana Cadastral Parcel layer. Conservation easement data shows land parcels on which a public agency or qualified land trust has placed a conservation easement in cooperation with the land owner. The dataset contains no information about ownership or status of the mineral estate. For questions about the dataset or to report errors, please contact the Montana Natural Heritage Program at (406) 444-5354 or mtnhp@mt.gov. You can download various components of the Land Management Database and view associated metadata at the Montana State Library’s [GIS Data List](#) at the following links:

[Public Lands](#)

[Conservation Easements](#)

[Private Conservation Lands](#)

[Managed Areas](#)

Map features in the Montana Land Management Database or summaries provided in this report are not intended as a legal depiction of public or private surface land ownership boundaries and should not be used in place of a survey conducted by a licensed land surveyor. Similarly, map features do not imply public access to any lands. The Montana Natural Heritage Program makes no representations or warranties whatsoever with respect to the accuracy or completeness of this data and assumes no responsibility for the suitability of the data for a particular purpose. The Montana Natural Heritage Program will not be liable for any damages incurred as a result of errors displayed here. Consumers of this information should review or consult the primary data and information sources to ascertain the viability of the information for their purposes.

Additional Information Resources

[Home Page for Montana Natural Heritage Program \(MTNHP\)](#)

[MTNHP Staff Contact Information](#)

[Montana Field Guide](#)

[MTNHP Species of Concern Report - Animals and Plants](#)

[MTNHP Species Status Codes - Explanation](#)

[MTNHP Predicted Suitable Habitat Models](#) (for select Animals and Plants)

[MTNHP Request Information page](#)

[Montana Cadastral](#)

[Montana Code Annotated](#)

[Montana Department of Environmental Quality](#)

[Montana Fisheries Information System](#)

[Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Subdivision Recommendations](#)

[Montana GIS Data Layers](#)

[Montana GIS Data Bundler](#)

[Montana Greater Sage-Grouse Project Submittal Site](#)

[Montana Ground Water Information Center](#)

[Montana Legislative Environmental Policy Office Publications](#)

(Including Index of Environmental Permits required in Montana and Guide to the Montana Environmental Policy Act)

[Laws, Treaties, Regulations, and Permits on Animals and Plants](#)

[Montana Spatial Data Infrastructure Layers](#)

[Montana State Historic Preservation Office Review and Compliance](#)

[Montana Water Information System](#)

[Montana Web Map Services](#)

[National Environmental Policy Act](#)

[U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Information for Planning and Conservation](#) (Section 7 Consultation)

[Web Soil Survey Tool](#)