

Outreach and training on the National Vegetation Classification system to support framework layer development in Montana

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Who we are

- Part of an international network of Heritage programs providing information about rare and endangered species and threatened ecosystems.
- A repository of data, maps, and expertise on all Montana's species and habitats;
- Theme stewards for the MSDI Land Cover and Wetlands layers.
- Our staff includes ecologists, zoologists, botanists, database managers, image analysts and digitizers, and web programmers.

MONTANA Natural Heritage Program

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What's New

The Pre-release version of *TRACKER 2* is now available.

Wetlands of the Bitterroot Valley: Change and Ecological Functions. Read...

Post-fire Recovery of Wyoming Big Sagebrush Shrub-steppe in Central and Southeast Montana. Read...

More Publications...

The Natural Heritage Program provides information on Montana's species & habitats, emphasizing those of conservation concern. The Program is operated by the [University of Montana](#) in partnership with the [Montana State Library](#).

MONTANA NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM

- NATURAL HERITAGE TRACKER
- SEARCH SPECIES OF CONCERN
- MONTANA FIELD GUIDE
- VIEW ECOLOGY INFORMATION
- REQUEST INFORMATION

A Montana Species of Concern

Michigan Moonwort *Botrychium michiganense*
Image from the [Montana Field Guide](#)

Other Resources

MONTANA Natural Resource Information System

Montana Stewardship Data & Maps

We're part a **network** of over 80 Natural Heritage Programs that share data through **NatureServe**. Find species and ecological data for North America at **NatureServe Explorer**.

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What we're doing

- Our plan is to create outreach and training materials on the NVC, including
 - interpretation and implementation guides and keys
 - crosswalks between classification system
 - data collection protocols
- Our target audience and partners are:
 - the Bureau of Land Management,
 - the Natural Resource Conservation Service,
 - the National Park Service
 - The Forest Service
 - the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Our goals are
 - to encourage broad adoption of a consistent national vegetation classification methods
 - to develop templates and data submission protocols that will facilitate incorporation of vegetation data into our statewide Land Cover data layer



Why we're doing it

- Ecological systems –the basis for GAP maps--will have to be aggregated for display purposes. The NVC will provide a coherent framework for both aggregation and refinement
- We will need standards to guide data submission if the maps are to be corrected or refined to more detailed classification. The NVC and its protocols are ideal.
- We want to incorporate plot data into our web applications. We need consistent data submission formats to do that well.
- We want to be able to use plot data for future image classification. Consistency in data can save time and money.
- Without training, agency staff will just crosswalk familiar classification to formations or divisions. We want to encourage detailed classification to we can refine our maps.
- **OUR VISION:** better data, better maps, broader sharing of geospatial data resources, and greater capacity to report on vegetation resources at the state, regional level and national level.

How we plan to do it

- Assemble a working team to review the NVC standard
 - agency partners will determine what changes will be necessary in their data collection, classification, and metadata creation practices to meet the standard
- Identify training needs and develop a training framework
 - the team will determine line staff training needs (e.g. data collection, classification, crosswalking)
 - the team will identify optimal training approaches (e.g. train-the-trainer, manuals, webinars, field days)
- Create materials and training modules.
 - MTNHP will develop materials and schedule training sessions
- Create templates and data submission protocols
 - MTNHP will use NVC protocols to design data submission standards to facilitate database entry
- Develop outreach materials and web guides
 - design materials that explain the NVC and its relationship to map units used in GAP and the Montana Land cover layer