MONTANA
Natural Heritage
Program

P.O. Box 201800 • 1515 East Sixth Avenue • Helena, MT 59620-1800 • tel 406.444.5354 • fax 406.444.0581 • http://mtnhp.org/

To: Lynda Saul, MTDEQ

From: Linda Vance, MTNHP/University of Montana

Date: March 24, 2009

Re: Closeout memo and final report, MLIAC Southwest Mapping Year 1

This contract is substantially completed. 75 USGS quads have been mapped, field-checked, and submitted to the NWI Regional Coordinator for final QA/QC and inclusion in the NWI database.

Deliverables 1, 2 and 3 were reported in earlier progress reports. Deliverable 4 was met in September 2008 with the submission of 20 quads to the NWI:

Home Park Ranch
Iron Creek
Isaac Meadows
Jumbo Mountain
Laurin Canyon
Metzel Ranch
Mine Gulch
Noble Peak
Old Baldy Mountain
Proposal Rock
Ramshorn Mountain
Red Canyon
Ruby Dam
Shaw Mountain
Sheridan
Spur Mountain
Stonehouse Mountain
Swamp Creek
Vendome
Waterloo

Deliverable 5 will be met by this memo, which serves as our final report on this project. As discussed during meetings, staff transitions at MTNHP, coupled with NWI delays in returning submitted mapping to us, substantially delayed completion of this contract. In December 2008, the NWI coordinator returned all the mapping that had been submitted since March of 2008 with general comments that it needed additional internal QC and a reworking of some of the water regimes prior to being accepted by the NWI. We consulted with Dennis Lichtenberg, who is a USGS photointerpreter working on contract with the Conferederated Salish and Kootenai on their wetland mapping, and with Larry Handley of the USGS to ensure that we were making consistent and correct interpretations of the often-confusing water regimes in the heavily irrigated, ditched and drained valleys of Southwest Montana. We also reviewed notes and field photos from three field trips (totaling 8 days) to verify the wetland mapping (Deliverable 5(1)). All mapping has been redone, and a second round of QA/QC has been completed. We have consulted with the NWI coordinator and sent him screenshots to ensure that the interpretations are correct. The maps are currently being resubmitted to him for his final QA/QC.

Standard operating procedure is for him to make comments, return the mapping to us for minor revisions, and then accept the final revised maps for inclusion into the NWI. This final revision is typically done outside the contract.

Our standard operating procedure once maps are accepted for inclusion into the NWI is to either hand-deliver the maps to NRIS for inclusion in their GIS data layers, or to request that they download the approved maps from the NWI. This has been done with all previous mapping submitted to and approved by the USGS. To ensure broader public availability, we met with NRIS personnel on March 19 to discuss other ways to disseminate the information. It was decided that we would make a webpage, accessible through the Montana GIS portal (the "point of discovery" for MSDI theme layers), the MTNHP Wetland and Riparian Mapping Center and the MTDEQ wetlands website, showing current status of wetland mapping in Montana, and allowing users to download PDF files covering individual quads before maps are formally incorporated into the NWI. The page will also give contact information for users to request provisional GIS data from MTNHP. This arrangement was not part of the original contract between DEQ, MLIAC and MTNHP, but carries the spirit of Task 5(2) further. We have also supplied provisional maps to agency and private interests working in SW MT>

We did not find wetland sites suitable for restoration in our field investigations (5(3)), in part because we could not gain access to all private lands. However, we visited four sites which are in the process of being restored, and asked permission to collect data in 2009. That data will be entered into our databases. We also used the SW MT wetland mapping to identify wetlands suitable for trumpeter swan reintroduction. A report on that project is available on request, and data collected pursuant to it has been entered into our databases. Additionally, we have identified areas of SW MT where we expect high-quality wetlands will be found, and these areas will be ground-surveyed during 2009.

Field data from early field trips taken as part of this study has been entered into the wetland plot database, and was used as part of the online NWI fieldguide (5(4)). A new wetland plot database, incorporating additional assessment data, has been established. This database will support revisions of the online NWI field guide, which are currently underway, and will be completed during phase two of this project.

Stu Kirkpatrick
Department of Administration, ITSD
Base Map Service Center
910 Helena Ave, Second Floor 2
Helena, MT 59620

April 1, 2009
RE: Final Report - Grant MLIA_2008_06

Dear Stu,

I have received, reviewed, and approved the final deliverable from MT Natural Heritage Program Wetland Mapping Center for the Montana Land Information Act 2008 Grant MLIA_2008_06. I have confirmed receipt of the final 20 USGS quads in the Southwestern Montana study area with Kevin Bon, USFWS National Wetland Inventory Mapping Coordinator in Denver, for QA/QC. He received these in early October 2008. This satisfactorily completes the acceptance criteria for deliverables 1, 2, 3, and 4 of the grant totaling 75 USGS quads.

In addition a final grant project report was submitted by the contractor late March 2009 documenting deliverable 5 of the Grant Agreement and is included for your reference. I have confirmed with Kevin Bon that all 75 quads from this grant agreement are on target for inclusion into the NWI National Geodatabase, wetlands were mapped according to FGDC mapping standards, and that QA/QC and other review protocols are in place and operating to ensure quality product.

Thank you for the opportunity to develop this important information for Montana with a Montana Land Information Act Grant. Requests for the NWI information from local government officials, land use planners, and the aquatic restoration and protection community in Southwestern Montana and across the state confirm that MLIA funding for wetland data development is providing a valuable service to Montanans.

Please find the attached invoice and contact me if you have any questions about the close out of this grant.

Sincerely,

Lynda Saul
Wetland Program Coordinator

c. Linda Vance