

MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS

Technology Services Division

OVERVIEW

The Technology Services Division (TSD) is responsible for FWP's technology infrastructure and website frameworks; software development; technology related oversight and guidance to ensure business alignment; collection, analysis, and dissemination of biological and geographical information via GIS technology; and user support, to ensure consistent and effective use of technology expenditures, products, and services. TSD strives to execute its mission using industry best practices, well-trained staff, and in-depth understanding of the agency's business processes to deliver solutions in the most cost-effective and efficient manner possible. FWP's technology program is designed with the state's enterprise principles, sustainable and achievable service levels, and the department's mission in mind.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Launched a new website in coordination with the Communication and Education Division. Our contemporary website is mobile-friendly, ADA compliant, and built on a modern, secure platform.
- Released a new online license sales website that allowed the agency to continue licenses sales at the conclusion of the state's eGovernment contract.
- Created an ESRI ArcGIS Online Elk Shoulder Season Evaluation dashboard to communicate information from the three-year shoulder season evaluation to the public and our Commissioners.
- Released an updated Hunting Regulations application that includes a functional, digital history of hunting and trapping regulations from prior years; support for migratory bird, upland game bird, bear, bison, wolf, and turkey regulations; and includes the capability for dynamic website (or third party) integration in future development work.
- Implemented new security measures on FWP's website and public facing web applications including the new online license sales application and the sales portal for license providers to meet the state's security requirements.
- Launched a new Commission Rules Tracking application to track commission decisions and make it simpler for staff to look up and cite any rules passed by the authority of the FWP Fish and Wildlife Commission.
- Supported Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) mitigation by:
 - Automating the mapping processing to allows for more consistent data quality and the creation of maps for staff. ROI for this project was 135%.
 - Creating the ability for mobile data entry and automatic upload of CWD data at check stations. This project saved over 1,500 hours in data entry an over 100 hours in calls.
 - Developing a CWD dashboard to allow hunters to look up the status of their CWD samples and review the lab results.
- Facilitated the development of an RFP (Request for Proposals) to replace the Automated License System (ALS) and incorporated the ability to reserve campsite and register for events. To address the budget uncertainty that resulted from COVID19, the RFP was scaled back into a Contractor Engagement Proposal (CEP) to replace ALS first.
- Supported Aquatic Invasive Species mitigation by:
 - Creating a Boat Inspection dashboard that included statistics and maps with real time data on boats in Montana that were carrying AIS.
 - Providing an AIS Sampling dashboard with information on where and what samplings were conducted around the state.

- Automated the download of data from GPS transmitters and collars deployed on gray wolves. These projects included acquiring data, building maps, and automatic notifications for changes in data.
- Completed the Bad Rock Canyon Forest legacy map. This effort aided in securing four million dollars in grant funding.
- Transitioned to Kanban methodology for production support development work. This resulted in a 23% increase in development efficiency and consequently, decreased response time for internal customers.
- Established a matrix to rate new technology projects or requests and the priority they take in the organization with input from every business unit. This matrix is an Enterprise Architecture tool that will allow the agency to align the business needs and information technology within Fish, Wildlife and Parks.
- Hosted a podcast tool for the FWP director to communicate more personally with staff.
- Ongoing completion of the department's business continuity plans. Continuity plans (143 plans) for all processes originating at the Helena Headquarters office have been completed.
- Expanded the Department of Justice's SmartCop system within the FWP Enforcement Division to include a boating accident interface.
- Worked with the Wildlife Division and the State Library for the digitization of the hunter harvest surveys (1963-2003, various species) and hunting regulations (1951-2005) in order to provide accessibility to the public and to meet records management requirements.

CHALLENGES

- Retaining staff due to the state's defined technology salaries that lag behind competitive employers and tight technology labor markets.
- Managing, maintaining, and enhancing aging systems, especially our ALS.
- Ensuring technology efforts continue to be consistently applied to the highest value projects and are in alignment with the department's goals and objectives.
- Meeting the needs of increasing workloads due to increased use of technology and escalating internal and external customer expectations for information and services.
- Continuing to provide quality products and services for an ever-expanding workload, impacted by state and federal compliance requirements, on a limited budget and with a limited number of staff.
- Combating constant and increasing cybersecurity threats.