

USER SURVEY OF THE UW-WYNDD DATA EXPLORER APPLICATION

23 January – 4 February 2026

WYNDD Director G. Beauvais sent a twelve-question survey by email to 948 active WYNDD Data Explorer “Pro” users. The survey went “live” with an initiation notice to all users on 23 January 2026; a reminder notice was sent to the same list on 30 January 2026; and the survey was closed on 4 February 2026.

Eighty-eight total responses were received (9.3% response rate).

QUESTION 1 – What is your organization type? (88 responses)

ORGANIZATION TYPE	% of TOTAL RESPONDENTS
United States Federal Government	34.1
Consultant	30.7
Wyoming State Government	11.4
Higher Education	9.1
Other	4.5
Commercial	3.4
Wyoming Local Government	2.3
Non-Profit	2.3
Museum, Herbarium, or Research Collection	1.1
Other State Gov't	1.1
K-12 Education	0
Military	0
Tribal	0

QUESTION 2 - Please indicate the project types for which you use WYNDD Data Explorer (rate all that apply using a 1-5 scale to indicate frequency of project use). (88 responses)

PROJECT TYPE	RELATIVE CUMULATIVE FREQUENCY
Wildlife/ habitat conservation	1 (highest cumulative rating)
Traditional (coal, oil, gas, uranium) energy exploration/ extraction/ transport	0.74
Restoration and reclamation	0.67
Renewable (e.g., wind, solar) energy exploration/ extraction/ transportation	0.66
Education and outreach	0.61
Road/ railroad/ other transportation projects	0.58
Trona/ gravel/ other non-energy mineral extraction	0.57
Policy/ regulation development and implementation	0.57
Invasive weed management	0.56
Fire/ fuels mitigation	0.53
Recreation planning/ infrastructure	0.53
Water development	0.52
Timber extraction	0.51
Agricultural operations	0.49
Cell phone/ radio tower/ other small infrastructure	0.48
Other	0.46
Land transfers/ real estate transaction	0.42
Conservation easement planning	0.39
Urban/ suburban planning and development	0.36

QUESTION 3 - If you answered 'other' above, please specify the project type. (19 responses)

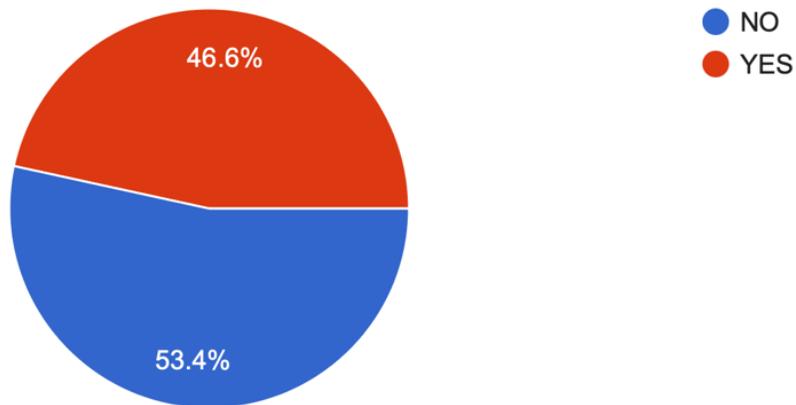
Summary:

- **Research and Conservation:** Used for ecological research, understanding species distribution, general rare plant species information, informing special status species assessments, and conservation planning.
- **Field Work and Planning:** Used for field surveys for rare species, wetland surveys, prescribed burning, and landscape-level planning, including Forest Plan Revision and developing Natural Resource Management Plans.
- **Guide and Reference Preparation:** Used for field guide preparation and range map accuracy for a new field guide.
- **Infrastructure and Development:** Used for Electrical Utility projects and Energy/Powerline projects.
- **Other Uses:** Used for advising others, planning outings, grant applications, and general curiosity or exploring how Wyoming manages data.

QUESTION 4 - I use data and information from WYNDD Data Explorer Pro to (check all that apply): (88 responses)

USES OF INFORMATION	% of TOTAL RESPONDENTS INDICATING USE
Identify possible conflicts between projects and natural resources	74
Help generate lists of priority species	68
Explore potential project locations and boundaries	56
Identify sites for field work, including further research/ data collection	43
Permit projects and project operating plans	35
Identify sites for conservation work	31
Adjust project boundaries and operating plans	28
Identify priority management actions	25
Craft large-scale management plans, strategies, and guidelines	25
Build education and outreach materials and programs	17
Other	14

QUESTION 5 – Do you work on similar projects in states other than Wyoming? (88 responses)

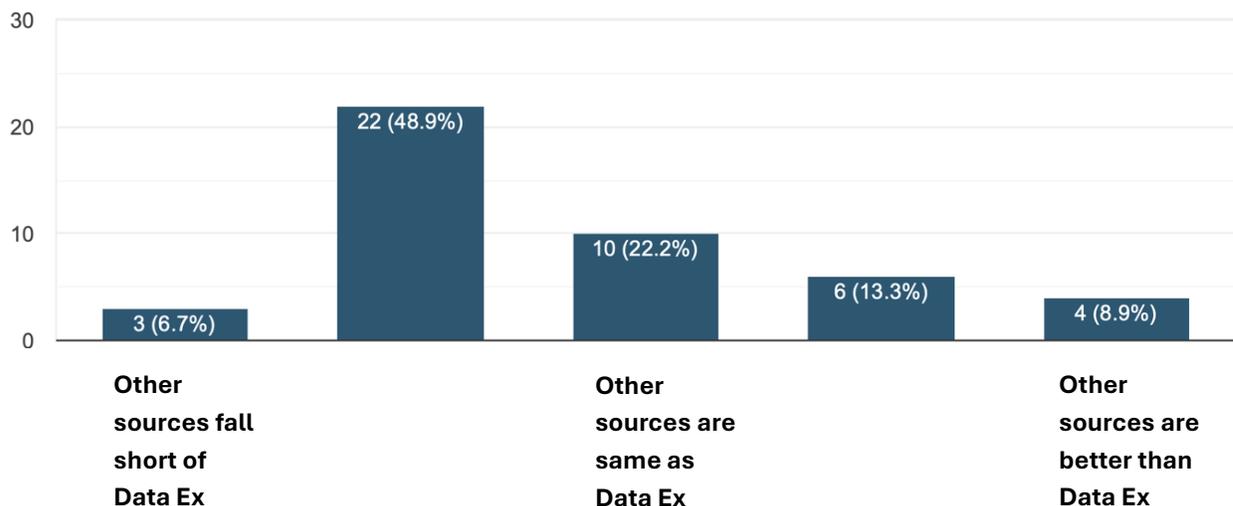


QUESTION 6 – Please indicate how you acquire necessary biological data in other states. (42 responses)

Summary:

- **Natural Heritage Programs (NHP) and Equivalents:** Many respondents acquire data through state Heritage Programs (e.g., Montana Natural Heritage Program, CODEX, BISON-M) or similar state natural diversity databases and online portals.
- **Direct Agency Contact and Requests:** Data is frequently obtained by contacting state Fish and Game or wildlife agencies, or through formal data requests, which can sometimes be tedious and slow.
- **Online Databases and Mapping Tools:** Respondents utilize various online resources such as USFWS IPaC, CNHP CODEX, GBIF, VertNet, iDigiBio, iNaturalist, state-specific GIS and ecological review tools, and online map viewers.
- **Internal and Literature Sources:** Other methods include using internal agency databases (e.g., Forest Service, Idaho FWS), personal communication, field collection, museum/herbarium specimens, journal articles, and scientific literature.

QUESTION 7 - If you work on similar projects in other states, please rank other sources of biological data relative to WYNDD Data Explorer Pro. (45 responses)

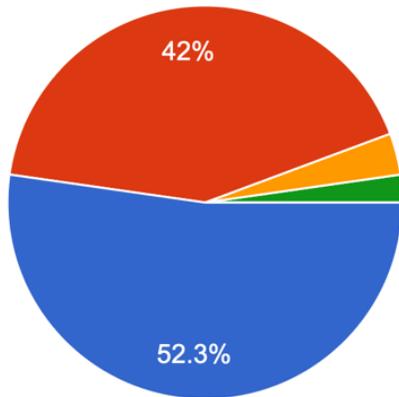


QUESTION 8 - Briefly describe the ways in which the other sources of biological data are better or worse than WYNDD Data Explorer Pro. (42 responses)

Summary:

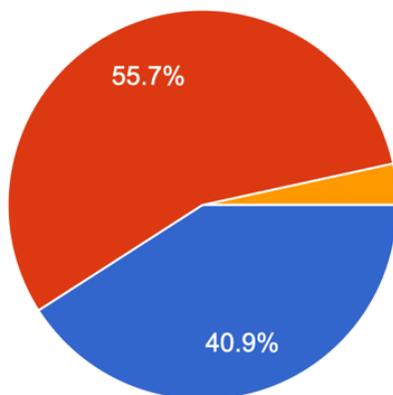
- **WYNDD Data Explorer Strengths:** Respondents highlighted that WYNDD provides a comprehensive, detailed dataset applicable to various project planning and implementation areas, often superior to other sources. Key benefits include the immediate, free availability of data, easier access, and the convenience of finding different types of information (species observations, distribution models, range maps, federal/state status, etc.) in one place, which saves time compared to hunting down data in other states. The species reports, the WY-exclusive field guide, and the inclusion of older and newer records were also noted as valuable additions.
- **WYNDD Data Explorer Weaknesses/Areas for Improvement:** Several users found the interface to be less intuitive or "clunky," particularly regarding the many filters/categories, the lack of an immediate map showing distributions/observations, and the sorting of species. Multiple federal employees requested access to **pinpoint locations** of species observations, noting that other programs (like Montana Natural Heritage Program) or their past federal access allowed this, as WYNDD only offers buffers to the general public. Suggestions for improved functionality included the ability to upload KMZ/KML files and a more user-friendly experience for new users.
- **Comparison to Other State Programs:** Compared to other states, WYNDD is generally considered more functional and user-friendly for accessing quick species location data and state rank information, especially compared to states where similar data is only provided in GIS or PDF format. However, some users noted that other states have more functional platforms, better data quality, better file sharing, and more detailed databases that describe ecological history and species descriptions. The Montana Natural Heritage Program and CODEX were specifically mentioned for allowing pinpoint locations or grouping protected species by type.
- **Comparison to iNaturalist and GBIF:** While iNaturalist often has more unverified records with useful metadata, WYNDD is viewed as a better, more filtered repository of necessary data. GBIF was cited as a database that falls short and could use a major update.
- **Complementary Data Sources:** Many respondents acknowledged that other sources, such as protection buffers (PHMA, Crucial Winter Range), complement WYNDD data, and that all sources have their own pros and cons, requiring users to adjust.

QUESTION 9 – Which of these statements best describes your experience with WYNDD Data Explorer Pro? (88 responses)



- It saves significant time in my work.
- It saves a little bit of time in my work.
- It doesn't save me any more time compared to other available sources of information.
- It takes more time to use compared to other available sources of information.

QUESTION 10 – In your experience, data and information products from WYNDD Data Explorer Pro are: (88 responses)



- More accurate, current, and comprehensive than similar products available elsewhere
- As accurate, current, and comprehensive as similar products available elsewhere
- Less accurate, current, and comprehensive similar products available elsewhere

QUESTION 11 – Please briefly describe a typical instance in which you access WYNDD Data Explorer Pro, the features and outputs you find most useful, and the improvements you would most like to see. (86 responses)

Summary:

- **Determine species of concern and project impact:** The most common use is determining the presence, range, and potential impact of special status species (rare plants, T&E, BLM sensitive) within proposed project areas for purposes like permitting, NEPA reviews, biological assessments, and land use planning.
- **Key useful features and outputs:** Users frequently rely on species observation data (precise locations, generalized locations, sightings), species distribution models, range maps, the ability to upload an Area of Interest (AOI), and the resulting exportable species lists/datasets.
- **Improvement suggestions - Data presentation & download:** Users request the ability to download multiple layers/lists at once, clip species lists to an AOI, see precise observations as points by default, have an attribute table to browse associated data, and have more easily filterable data (e.g., by BLM status).
- **Improvement suggestions - Mapping & data quality:** Desired improvements include a satellite layer, a feature to create map products, a layer for critical habitat of listed species, and more regularly updated/accurate data, particularly for amphibians.
- **Other use cases:** The data is also used for educational materials, informing comments on proposed development, planning field surveys/research, creating better range maps, and developing species rankings.

QUESTION 12 - Please provide any other feedback you'd like to share regarding WYNDD Data Explorer Pro. (70 responses)

Summary:

- **Positive Feedback and Appreciation:** Many users expressed that the WYNDD Data Explorer Pro is an "awesome," "great," "valuable," and "very useful" resource and tool, praising its comprehensive nature, intuitiveness, and the hard work of the WYNDD staff. Several also noted that the maps and overall application have improved.
- **Data Accuracy and Precision Concerns:** A significant concern was raised regarding the "precise observations" filter displaying questionable or inaccurate data, which can be misleading. Additionally, there are continued issues with the lack of site-specific locations for planning, as information only to the township level is not helpful for siting.
- **Requested Feature Enhancements (Filtering and Data):** Users requested a "date" feature for filtering observations (e.g., a time interval like Nov 1 to Feb 28), and the ability to filter distributions of higher classifications (like families). They also suggested including photos associated with records for better validation, especially for rare species, and including negative data (searched for X, but didn't find it).
- **Content/Data Expansion Requests:** There were multiple requests for expanding the data to include more fish/aquatics data (especially historic/current distributions and barriers like stream crossings), migration corridors (e.g., big game, raptors), more inclusive eagle and raptor nest data, and other major species like bison and snowshoe hares. A wish to see the Wyoming Field Guide updated to include fish species was also mentioned.
- **Usability Issues and Technical Bugs:** Some users reported issues such as filtering being cumbersome, occasional application failures requiring a restart, and layers failing. Specific bugs noted include a saved project loading as a blank page, and downloading all precise observations by Area of Interest only including data for the last selected county. Map usability suggestions include having more roads/T&Rs shown as an option, and issues with how adding a project boundary automatically sets it as a species filter.