



United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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In reply refer to:
80270

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Memorandum

To: Assistant Regional Directors, Region 8
All Project Leaders, Region 8

From: ~~Active~~ Deputy Regional Director, Region 8
Sacramento, California

John Morris

Subject: Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit

The following information is a brief description of the Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CESU) Cooperative Agreement. Please share this information with all of your staff.

The Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CESU) network is a partnership between 13 federal agencies and over 100 universities located throughout the country. This network is designed specifically to provide research, technical assistance, and education in a collaborative process to federal agencies through universities. The objectives of the Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit Network are to:

- provide resource managers with high-quality scientific research, technical assistance, and education;
- deliver research and technical assistance that is timely, and relevant, to resource managers
- ensure the independence and objectivity of research;
- create and maintain effective partnerships among Federal agencies and universities to share resources and expertise;
- take full advantage of university resources while benefiting faculty and students;
- encourage professional development of Federal scientists; and
- manage Federal science resources efficiently.

The CESU network is structured into 17 biogeographically-defined units. Each CESU is structured as a working collaboration among federal agencies and universities. FWS is a member of at least 7 CESUs and is joining more all the time.

The Region 8 office of the FWS joined the Californian Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CESU) in FY05. In FY06 Region 8 offices successfully developed 3 CESU projects. The projects included: an evaluation of off-highway vehicle impacts to Northern Spotted Owl, microchemistry analysis of Mokelumne River salmon otoliths and sediment transport experiments on the Yuba River. In FY07 Region 8 offices successfully developed thirteen CA

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CESU projects.

If you would like to utilize any of the CESUs, keep in mind the following points:

- The CESU host university and the other university partners are linked to the FWS and the other participating federal agencies through a cooperative agreement.
- FWS and the other participating federal agencies can initiate task agreements directly with the host universities, any of their university partners, or other partner institutions.
- Task Orders can be developed directly with CESU universities, but must be advertised as CESU opportunities on Grants.gov.
- The overhead rate is currently capped at 17.5%.
- Project funds may be transferred from agencies to their university partners and partner institutions but not directly between the agencies.
- CESU projects must be collaborative, so substantial federal involvement is required. These projects may not be used to circumvent applicable Federal acquisition laws and regulations.

I believe that the CESU Cooperative Agreement is a cost-effective tool for obtaining high quality research, analyses, and work products. The CESU Cooperative agreements also provide opportunities for our staff to learn cutting-edge research techniques and associate with accomplished researchers. I encourage all our offices to utilize the CESU Cooperative Agreement. Currently the Stockton FWO is acting as the Region 8 coordinator for the Californian CESU. If you are interested in learning more about the CESU, please review the attached FAQs or contact Kim Webb at 209-946-6400, Kim_Webb@fws.gov or Cesar Blanco at 916-978-6190, Cesar_Blanco@fws.gov or visit the CESU website at <http://www.cesu.org/currentcesus/californian/>

Attachments: CESU FAQs.doc
draft CNO CESU process.doc
CESU mapLarge.jpg

Sent to: Region 8 Assistant Regional Directors
Region 8 Project Leaders

Region 8
Draft Procedures for Establishing Cooperative Ecosystem Study
Unit Agreements

11/06/07

Kim Webb, Stockton FWO

1. For a CESU Project, the USFWS Principal Investigator (PI) will contact the PI from the academic institution and agree on a collaborative project. Then the USFWS-PI and the academic-PI will develop a **Statement of Work**. This includes a description of the project, how and where the project will take place, what objectives should be met, procedures implemented, who will be part of the study, and identify any third parties involved.
2. The USFWS-PI submits the following to CNO CESU Coordinator (Kim Webb- Stockton FWO)
 - A. **Statement of Work** (from above).
 - B. **FWS Form 3-2109** – this is the requisition for the agreement.
 - C. **Federal Involvement Statement** - a simple narrative explaining how USFWS will have substantial involvement in the study as a federal agency partnering with the academic institution.
 - D. **Budget Information**: an informal document that identifies the internal agreement source that will fund this collaboration.
3. The academic-PI submits the following federal forms to the USFWS-PI:
 - A. **Form 424** (Application for Federal Assistance)
 - B. **Form 424A** (the Budget portion of the application)
The budget must be broken down yearly and/or for the entire life of the Agreement. This should include overhead, salaries, benefits, travel, supplies and services. If the budget changes, a new statement of work, budget and SF 424 & 424A must be filled out by the academic institution).
 - C. **Form 424B** (Assurances – Non-Construction Programs) – this form verifies that the academic institution has the authority to apply for federal funding and complies with a variety of federal regulations.
4. The CNO CESU Coordinator will review the package for consistency with CESU objectives and maintain documentation for annual reporting. Once approved, the CESU opportunity must be posted on Grants.gov. After posting, the package can be forwarded to our CESU Contracting Officer for sufficiency review in Portland, OR for processing.
5. CESU agreements can be active for up to five years.

3/29/06

CESU – Frequently Asked Questions

1. Is the CESU Network a Department of the Interior effort?

The Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CESU) concept was initiated in discussions between the Biological Resources Division of the USGS and the National Park Service. The potential of CESUs to serve resource management and environmental agencies throughout the Federal government quickly became apparent. The DOI Science Board took an active interest in the CESU concept soon after, and encouraged DOI agencies to consider participating. Additional agencies outside the DOI are now involved, and the CESU Network is a multi-agency and interdepartmental effort.

2. How many CESUs are envisioned in the Network?

Seventeen CESUs have been established competitively since FY99, and in 2005 the Network was completed.

3. Must an agency decide to be involved at this time?

No. Agencies can decide to join the CESU Network at any time. However, decisions on implementing the CESU Network and establishing individual CESUs are being made by those agencies that commit resources (funds and/or staff) to the Network.

4. Must an agency be involved in each CESU that is established?

No. Agencies can elect to be involved in only those CESUs that meet their needs and available resources.

5. If an agency joins a CESU and the CESU Network, does it relinquish control of positions or funds?

No. Personnel duty-stationed at a CESU report to their agency, and funds are administered by the agency. Agencies may collaborate and share resources on activities that meet mutual needs.

6. How are partner universities involved?

Partner universities significantly expand the capability and resources of a CESU. A partner university may provide unique facilities, expertise or access to research materials. Through cooperative agreements, projects at partner institutions can be efficiently initiated and conducted.

7. How are CESUs selected and located?

The CESU Council has developed criteria for selection of CESUs. A Request for Proposals is distributed, and interested universities submit brief proposals. Participating agencies and the selected universities then work together to establish a CESU.

8. How long will cooperative and joint venture agreements last?

CESU agreements will be for a minimum of five years, with renewal options.

9. Must all CESUs involve all disciplines of research needed by resource managers?

No, but broad interdisciplinary skills will be highly valued in selecting CESU host and partner universities. Across the Network, host and partner universities make accessible to managers the full range of expertise, skills and disciplines needed for sound management of natural resources.

10. How will CESUs affect existing cooperative programs between Federal resource management agencies and universities?

Establishing a CESU at a host or partner university does not alter existing arrangements or cooperative agreements. By augmenting those programs and relationships, CESUs create additional opportunities for interdisciplinary and multi-agency research and technical assistance.

11. Will the CESU Network result in more bureaucracy?

No. Each agency's personnel and budgets will be controlled by that agency and managed within its existing administrative structures. The CESU Council provides coordination and technical support to the CESU Network, and is composed of current staff of the participating agencies.

12. Why is the CESU Network necessary?

Many of the elements of a CESU and the CESU Network currently exist in other organizations. However, there is no multi-agency, university-based, broadly interdisciplinary, and ecosystem-oriented system currently providing scientific research, technical assistance, and education to Federal resource managers. The CESU Network complements existing Federal research programs, and is an innovation in the delivery of Federal science. Such an innovation is necessary to increase agency coordination, share scarce resources and valuable expertise, and deal with the broad and complex problems associated with resource management in the 21st century.

13. How can I learn more about the CESU Network?

For more information, use this website or contact the CESU National Coordinator. www.cesu.org/cesu